

# Today

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## Region Conference Report

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as your Region 4 Representative for two years now.

The Spring Conference was held on April 17th in Rock Island, IL. The assembly opened as all business meetings of OA with the serenity prayer, preamble, steps, traditions, concepts & roll call. Many things were reported on, as the representatives work at home through e-mail throughout the year.

We were told that our first job is to stay abstinent. (It is VERY true, but I had never thought of it quite that way before.) Our second job is to report to Intergroup, who paid for our travel and hotel room & meals. Our third job is to communicate with the fellowship as much as possible, perhaps in the newsletter, which is what I am doing now.

We were reminded that WSO has a web site and for those who are electronically challenged (like me) each group should have a "designated downloader" to bring in information to the groups from World Service. There are many things on the web site that would be useful to groups and intergroups.

The Region Convention is in Omaha, Nebraska, July 9-11, 2004. Flyers about the convention are going to be passed out at the Intergroup meeting in May. Please come; it will be fun.

The Fall Conference, hosted by the Central Illinois Intergroup, will be in St. Louis, October 15-16, 2004, at the Ramada Inn (270 and Lindbergh). All are welcome to come and sit in on the meeting. Who knows, it might grow on you as it has on me.

Please think about coming to Intergroup and then running for Region Representative. It is work, but it's also fun and rewarding. We cannot keep this program unless we give it away. Thank you all for allowing me to be your Region Representative.

Love in the fellowship,  
Nancy H.

### No Matter

No matter where I am or how frightened I get, I always have a place to go. What a relief I don't ever have to do it alone! I had trouble making extra meetings this week. A friend shared some cassette tapes of OA Conventions with me. I listened and felt at home. Even if I didn't know the person speaking personally, I knew we still belonged to the same family. Thank you OA for giving me a place to call home.

~A grateful recovering compulsive overeater

### Taking the 5th

Are they called "Stand Stills?" No...they are called Steps for a reason.... you walk up/over/through or across them toward a better life.

I thought the Fourth would kill me, and it did hurt. I talked to other OA's too, but tapes eventually provided the best guide for me. The process was long and tedious, and once done, I wanted to hunker down before moving to #5.

Instead, my sponsor picked a day and we began to go over my list. I felt my sponsor could not possibly like me after seeing who I resented and why. She listened, encouraged and pushed me. When I was done, she said, "You are not terminally unique." She reassured me it was my secrets that kept me trapped and now that I had shared them, I could ask God to help me.

Today, I am living proof that the 4th and 5th do not kill, they cure. Now on the 9th Step, I feel peace and serenity entering my life.

It was the love of a sponsor and the 5th Step that began my healing.

Believe me, stepping up to the 5th is better than standing still in the food.

~ES

**Step 5**  
"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

### Step 5

"More than most people, the (compulsive overeater) leads a double life. He is very much the actor." (Big Book, pg. 73)

Taking Step 5 meant I shed my mask. I thought this mask was a permanent fixture; it was not. I thought others would cringe at my real face; so far they have not. I thought if I pretended, then I'd be okay; I was not.

Each day when I tell the whole truth to those I can trust, I am set free from that awful, expressionless "mask-life." Often, I feel so vulnerable that I want to run, but as I take my stand in honesty I learn to accept others' and my humanity. I learn to forgive and to be forgiven. I am set free.

~Christy W.

### Region IV Convention

The Region IV Convention is coming July 9-11 in Omaha, Nebraska. We would like to invite everyone in the St. Louis area to take the drive to another great convention. Going to the region convention will give you another life to your recovery and will allow you to meet some more people in OA.

There is a group of people planning on renting a couple of vans to make the trip. If riding is not your thing, you can fly Southwest Airlines roundtrip for about \$100.

Come join the fun and get some new and maybe different recovery. If you have any questions, please contact Jana at [iwanateach@yahoo.com](mailto:iwanateach@yahoo.com) or (314) 638-6070. You can save money if you register early!

~Jana G.

**I Can't...We Can**  
When I start believing that I can eat normally, then I'm smack dab in the middle of the River Denial, which leads to the Ocean of Insanity. Up ahead is the Island of Recovery, where other COE are using the Tools and Working the Steps on the way to Happy, Joyous and Free. HP says it's all about HOW and WE. Will you join me? I can't do it alone, but we can do it together.  
~Dawn S.

# Thoughts About Entertainment

I just want to thank the fellowship for allowing me to do service this year. And I want to thank each and every one of you who participated. It was amazing and wonderful and I was so privileged to be a part of it. Gosh, I didn't realize until I watched the videotape just HOW MANY people were involved (it was somewhere between 50 and 60... it's hard to tell cause some people wore more than one hat. There were representatives from at least 18 different meetings and at least 2 different Intergroups.)

Anyway, I just wanted to share some thoughts about how the whole thing evolved. About 2 or 3 years ago I heard "The Shape of My Heart" on the radio and just thought "Wow, that is exactly what Step 5 is." The thought occurred to me, "Wouldn't it be cool to figure out a song for each of the 12 Steps?" Immediately and stubbornly I said to myself, "You are NEVER going to chair entertainment again, so just forget about it." And I did just that.

But sometimes, miraculously stubbornness can turn to willingness.

When I saw Susan in New Orleans, I was SO TOUCHED by her presentation that I immediately started bugging people to try to get her and when I figured out that she was actually coming I was THRILLED.

Then the convention chair sent out the desperate plea for someone willing to take entertainment chair. I tentatively talked to her, saying "if no one else is available..."

A week or so later I remembered the idea about stuff for each of the steps. I couldn't get the idea out of my mind... How that it was a recovery fair and envisioned something akin to vaudeville which would have been popular at the time of the 1904 World's Fair. The plan

began to formulate, and, frankly, I got scared. I had managed to avoid situations where my character defect of CONTROL had an opportunity to rear its ugly head for some time. It was a risk. I wasn't sure I was willing to take it.

Darn it! I couldn't get it out of my mind. I was envisioning people from all kinds of different meetings participating. It became clearer and clearer and I finally just said, "OK, I will do it." Well, I actually told God first, I guess.

From the very beginning it just fell into place. I would hear back from meetings that they were willing just let them know what to do. Soon I had all the slots filled but a couple. I got a call with the idea for "All in the Steps" and knew that would make a great intro, but that left us another group short. I am not kidding that there was already an unchecked message on my answering machine from another group willing to help.

Steps 6 and 9 were the last to be filled. I put out an email request and someone emailed me back that she just kept thinking about the Lord of the Dance and the promises. I was on the phone NUMEROUS times trying to figure out the right song for making amends. When I finally thought about "Let There Be Peace on Earth." I knew that was it. Step 9 needed to include the amends part and the promises part to be complete.

Step 6, I knew, was going to probably be the "Is It Time?" skit. I wasn't worried about it ... it is simple. I couldn't think of anything else for Step 6. It is all about getting ready and willing and getting the timing right. I approached the convention committee and begged them to do it. I approached almost everyone I knew. I did some major recruiting right at the banquet.

Just a few words about my dance... I knew I wanted to do that song. The first time I remember hearing that song, I had been in a really rough meeting and I was so upset

when I left. I was feeling like I might just leave program or something. I got in my car and when I turned it on "Hero" came on the radio. I am telling you the words came straight from God's heart to me and from my heart to God. In a conversation. "Would you dance if I asked you to dance?" "Would you cry if You saw me crying?".... The conversation of Step 11.... Prayer and Meditation.

At first I wasn't going to do a dance, it was going to be a duet. But I couldn't talk anyone into it... (Gosh, maybe my manipulation defect is getting a LITTLE better.) I wasn't sure what I was going to do. Then one night I woke up at about 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning knowing that it had to be a dance. "Would I dance?" Yes, I guess I would. I still wanted it to be a conversation between God and me so I recorded my brother and I singing.

If I talk about all the amazing moments in the process I won't get this in by the deadline tomorrow, not to mention not having space for it in the newsletter. The turnout for the dress rehearsal on the 20th. The willingness for people to step in despite illness or disability or whatever. SO MANY BLESSINGS.

Now what does doing service get you? Well, this time it gave me back a sense of true belonging intergroup wide. I think that it helped me remember how much I love music. When my husband essentially asked me on February 3rd, what I want to be when I grow up, I said, "I want to go back to school and become a music therapist." I am not sure I would have realized even what my destiny was leading me to had I not been willing to do this particular service for OA. (cont. on Page 4)

## Thoughts About Entertainment

(cont. from Page 3)

Since Saturday, my food which had been pretty good has become real abstinence... the Step 10 promise kind (Big Book page 84-85). I am full. I am satisfied. I was talking to one of the other participants on Saturday night and I told her, "I never did want the cookie they gave me. I wanted to be held and loved and accepted and cherished and I wanted someone to be proud of me. When I get that, my inner child is just as happy without the cookie."

Figure out where it is God is calling you to serve, add willingness and watch the miracles happen.

In Love,  
Cindy H.

### I Took A Risk

My Higher Power gave me the idea to go to OA. I took the risk, and I'll tell you where it got me. I took the risk and went to my first meeting two years and four months ago.

I took a risk. I stopped eating after one plate. I trusted that I would not starve to death before morning and die. I trusted that mealtime would come again. The next morning, after breakfast, I trusted I would be able to eat again at lunch. I kept trusting HP and the group. After that, I took a risk and went back.

Then, I took a risk and I shared. I was scared of being rejected. I went back and asked someone to be my sponsor. She said "No," but I didn't feel so rejected. I asked someone else; they agreed. I took a risk and called them. I was afraid they would be too busy to talk. They weren't. She told me to write about my powerlessness over food and how it made my life unmanageable – and then share it with her! I took a risk. I did it. I was scared she would laugh at me or tell me that I really didn't belong.

I took a risk. I led a meeting. I took a risk. I started a meeting. I took a risk; I worked steps and continue working them, all of them. I took a risk. I changed sponsors, more than once, after I had prayed about it and thought it was best for my program.

I took a risk. I went to Intergroup. I was scared. I was scared I wouldn't have the time for it, and the people there really didn't want me or need me there. I thought I wasn't good enough. I still went. I had the time, and I was loved. I took a risk. I volunteered for a service position. I was scared I couldn't do it good enough. I do.

I took a risk. I signed up for entertainment for the convention. I was scared of so much: looking silly, not doing it perfectly, being laughed at, and people finding out just how unworthy I am. Those were my deepest fears. Instead that risk led me to connect with many people beyond my wildest dreams. While on stage, I gave it to over to HP. I was there, in the moment, with people who love me. It was fun.

I took a risk. I stayed for the dancing part of convention. I was scared that I would look stupid on the dance floor; no one would dance next to me; I would be too tired in the morning; yadda; yadda, yadda. I got up and danced. The real Lisa danced, not perfectly, but that's okay. This was a risk. I danced for hours. I felt happy, joyous, and free.

Near the end of the night, a slow song came on. A few OA'ers and I had our arms around each other and our eyes closed, and we were just sort of swaying to the music. I felt loved and accepted like I had never experience. I remember thinking, "I don't want this to ever end."

The unconditional love in this program is so healing. Thank you OA for loving and accepting me so much that I am finally learning how to love and accept myself. You all are a wonderful vessel for HP's love.

~Lisa B.

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### From the Editor

**For June's newsletter, I invite everyone to share a quote, poem, or article on Step 6. June will include an article on both Tradition 5 and 6.**

We also continue to look for "Meetings of the Month", "Heard Round the Rooms" and other submissions.

Send in your contributions by the June 1st to have them included in June's newsletter.

If you would like a reminder note one week before the due date, send an email to me at: [StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com](mailto:StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com)

~In service, Dawn S.

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## Restored to Our Original Beauty

When we moved Ron's Grandpa off of his farm, it seemed that all the most beautiful pieces of furniture were in his musty basement. The beautiful hardwood furniture that was handcrafted had taken a back seat to newer, more modern models. In the house were pieces of furniture made sometime in the 60's or 70's. In the basement, collecting dust and mold were the real treasures.

One such piece was an end table. It had numerous coats of dark varnish, drop leafs on either end and ornate carved legs on the bottom. We had had it in our old house for several years. It had some pretty big gashes on it that we covered with a doily. It wasn't much to look at but it was functional.

A couple of days ago, a friend of mine and I decided to finish a piece of unfinished furniture that had been hanging around for several years. While we were at it we would just refinish that old end table.

We started out with the safe kind of stripper... nontoxic and all. It started bubbling up and we were able to scrape off some of the old varnish. What a mess! Layers and layers of dark stain mixed with shellac. My hands were stained with it for days. I could hardly wait to get that

crap off of there to see what was under all of that mess. Slowly, the wood grain started to emerge. It was dark wood but the grain was almost a golden color... just beautiful.

I was reminded of how we, too, can be restored to our original beauty. We have to let God strip us of all the stuff we have used to hide who we really are... the food... the shame... the years of varnish upon varnish... layers of crud that hid the every grain of our being. That first stripper might be like that first Fourth Step... the one that is after our grosser handicaps. It stinks and we think that we are really being stripped of every defect in Steps 5 through 9, but it is just the beginning of the process.

We have to let God strip us over and over and sand us and polish us to the beauty only He understands is underneath. It was a rare opportunity for me to feel the excitement God must feel as we allow ourselves to be restored. I couldn't wait to see what lie beneath all the years of abuse. I was SO EXCITED to watch the true grain of the wood come through. God must feel that way, too, when we give ourselves over to His artisan hands and let Him work miracles on us.

It took a stronger refinisher and the toxic kind of stripper (the kind that hurts like a son

of a gun if you get it on your skin) to finish the job. Then several coats of polyurethane. Actually, the job is not really even finished; I still have to work on the legs and the more intricate parts, but that part will be later. It is a work in progress... and so are we. As we put ourselves into the hands of the Great Restorer, we can know that He will refine us and continue to refine us until we are the beautiful work of art that He created us to be.

Weight loss is terrifying to some of us who have been fat since childhood. I don't know how to be someone else. But it is dawning on me more and more that I am not afraid to become who I was meant to be. A person free from the layers of fat that keep me unhealthy. I want my true self to shine through. Through every phase of my recovery, I am amazed at how beautiful life can be... How beautiful I can be.

God, I offer myself to Thee. To build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties (and all that crud blocking the beauty of my grain) that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power (to restore), Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy Will always. Amen  
~Cindy H

### Service Vacancies

- 2 Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Intergroup Secretary
- Retreat Treasurer
- Twelve Step Within

### WANTED

#### Guest Newsletter Editors

The newsletter chair is looking for a committee.

If you are interested in being a guest newsletter editor, please contact Dawn S (see back of Where & When for trusted servant phone numbers) or send an email to the newsletter address.

Writing experience not necessary. Access to a computer is a must!

### Reminder

Where & Whens will be published quarterly. Each meeting is responsible for making sure there are enough copies at the meetings. If you need a copy, stop by the office or email the office, & we'll send you one.

### New Meetings

No New Meetings



### Contacting OA Electronically

**Bi-State Fax number:**

(314) 638-6071

**Intergroup Newsletter E-mail:**

StlouisOAtoday@hotmail.com

**St. Louis Bi-State Website:** www.stlouisoa.org

**WSO Website:** www.overeatersanonymous.org

**Region IV website:** www.oaregion4.org

## Upcoming Events & Business Info

**June 12**

**10:30-3:30**

Travelling Super Saturday  
Carbondale, IL  
salad bar lunch  
The Church of the Good Shepherd  
515 South Orchard Drive

**July St Charles**

Date TBA

**July 9-11**

Region IV Conference  
Omaha, NE  
(See flyer)

**August (open)**

To schedule, call Lisa M  
or email OA office

**September (open)**

To schedule, call Lisa M  
or email OA office

**October 1-3**

**OA Retreat**

**More info later**

To schedule a Super Saturday or other event, contact Lisa M. Any flyers for OA events submitted for dissemination to meetings or for publication in the newsletter must have received approval by the St. Louis Bi-State Area BOT (ask any BOT member).

### Editorial Policy

As suggested by WSO guidelines, newsletters are to be a forum for experience, strength and hope. We encourage and give top priority to original material written by members of this Intergroup.

We reserve the right to edit any and all articles submitted for publication. Submission of article or flyers does not necessarily guarantee publication.

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily that of the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup or OA as a whole.

Articles must be received by the Newsletter Chairperson by the third week of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter.