

Today

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Inside this Issue

- 1** Comments Heard at Region 5 Convention in Chicago
"A" Marks the Spot
- 2** Throwing Feelings
New Literature Items
How I Lost 40 Lbs.
- 3** If You're Struggling
Group of the Month
- 4** From A Newcomer
Payback
Calling All Hams!!!
- 5** Reflection
The Feast
Perspective
- 6** Business
Announcements

Overeaters Anonymous
 St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup
 9907-E Gravois Rd.
 St. Louis, MO 63123
 (314) 638-6070
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Comments Heard at the Region 5 Convention in Chicago

A head full of program and a belly full of food isn't recovery.

Isolation is where you go to prepare for your next binge.

My mind is like a bad neighborhood. I shouldn't go there alone.

God never takes out my trash.

Share it or wear it.

Watch out for the double D's: diet mentality and denial.

God won't deliver us from our friend. He will only deliver us from our enemy. Food will have to become our enemy in order to be delivered from it.

If you like everybody at your meetings, then you're not attending enough meetings.

NUTS: Not using the steps.

We share the mess with our sponsor. We share the message at our meetings.

If I'm not moving toward or maintaining a healthy weight, then I'm not abstinent.

~Shared by Ruth M.

What have you Heard Round the Rooms...?

Most of us write down the words of experience, strength, and hope that speak to us at meetings, Super Saturdays, and Convention.

Why don't you send your favorites to the newsletter to share with others in the area!

E-mail to the editor at stlouisatoday@hotmail.com

"A" Marks the Spot

Instead of marking off the days on my calendar with and "X," I use an "A" for **abstinent**. Nothing feels better than seeing a whole calendar page filled with big A's. It helps me to stay abstinent because I don't want to mess up and then not get my A on that day. It also reminds me to thank my Higher Power every day for my abstinence.

~Tamara H.

throwing feelings

no one was in the studio
 so i threw my emotions on the wheel
 hard with great intensity
 the clay landed sharply on the bat
 and the loud snap shocked my ears
 i set the wheel on high and it spun
 wildly
 quickly, i captured used water with
 my hands
 and tightly encircled my feelings
 pressuring the clay with my hands
 trying to dispel my anger and
 frustration
 trying to erase my sadness and
 embarrassment
 pushing hard with the left and then
 the right
 trying to eradicate my fear and
 loneliness
 trying to confine my worthlessness
 i turned down the wheel
 the abused clay collapsed
 tears made paths through the dust on
 my face
 i turned off the wheel and cleaned
 up my mess
 before anyone could come through
 the door
 and see how i threw my feelings

~ Julie H.

New Literature Items

Experience, Strength and Hope
\$9.00

The New AA book covers the stories from the 1st three editions that are not in the AA Big Book 4th Edition.

OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (Large print) \$17.60

This comprehensive work provides a detailed, moving exploration of how OA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions help members recover and how the Fellowship functions as a whole. Questions after each Tradition are designed to help strengthen your meeting. 240 pages. Soft cover with acetate on front and back for added durability; wire coil binding.

OA 12 and 12 pocket size

WSO will be offering this item in 2004. Once the details become available, you will be able to read it in the newsletter.

How I "Lost" 40 lbs. in Less than 2 Hours

Walking home from a shopping trip, my usually loose jeans felt looser than ever. Naturally, I was quite pleased, and grateful for how quickly my prayers had been answered, how abstinence was finally producing results.

The jeans became so loose that I had to shift around the packages in my arms, in order to keep pulling up my pants. Then, as they got looser, and because I was in public view, I found that I could keep my hand in my raincoat pocket to constantly hold onto the waistband of my jeans while I walked.

I became suspicious.

Finally, on a street where there was little public view, I put down all my parcels and looked at my waistline. The last time I had gone to the bathroom, I hadn't taken off my raincoat. I hadn't looked down while I was fastening my belt and I hadn't put the keeper in the hole.

Funny thing, as soon as I fixed the errant buckle keeper, all that weight suddenly came back!

~Mary Louise L.

Writings

I remember the first Thanksgiving that I came in here. NO WAY was I going to do without all the trimmings.

But it can happen to me – one day at a time – ask for willingness – stay close to my Higher Power – look and expect good – joy and laughter can be mine if I keep my eyes on Him and turn over the hurts from wounded others.

A different attitude – don't dwell or obsess on the hurts and boo boos of every day.

~Mary S.

Wanted for the 2004 Convention

Ways and Means Items: Clothing Exchange – Cup Raffle – Silent Auction – Small Bazaar Items.

Call Cary (618) 465-3308 if you have questions.

Items can be brought to the Convention.

If You're Struggling...

Recently, I have made a commitment to the Sunday Night Recovery from Relapse Meeting at St. Mary's and have found it amazingly helpful in maintaining my abstinence. Every week we do questions out of the Twelfth Step Within Handbook. We read the selected literature and write and then share. It is amazingly helpful to help keep me out of relapse.

The question this Sunday was: **"What does abstinence mean to you?"** I had been talking about it for a couple of weeks with people. This is what I wrote during the meeting, I hope you find it helpful or at least thought provoking.

Abstinence involves so much more than just food. My abstinence is a state of spirituality.

One part of the abstinence I have is an abstinence from self-talk that is shaming. I find that when I don't practice that kind of abstinence, it is only a matter of time before my food compulsion follows.

What is coming so very clear to me lately is that abstinence is not black and white; it is shades of gray. Black is totally bingeing, the worst possible abuse of my body through food. White being the best possible use of food -- small portions, wise food choices, well balanced meals, whatever. There is a continuum and the food I eat today falls somewhere on that line. My job is to make choices that are as close to the white abstinence as possible. At any moment, I can choose to make my food "whiter" or more healthy. Rarely is my food either purely white or purely black but some level of gray.

I don't have to feel bad about the choices I have made already. I cannot go back and do anything about it. Feeling bad about it only makes me want to eat more. Neither

can I obsess on what I will do in the future -- For example, "How can I stay abstinent? Thanksgiving is just around the corner then Christmas." The temptation and old thinking would tell me, "Screw it! I'll just try again in January." That is not the answer or my definition of abstinence today. Part of my abstinence is about staying in the now. In today. In this moment. I can't change what has come before or what lies ahead. But I can choose what this moment holds.

My abstinence also involves a willingness to attend meetings and make phone calls, to read literature, do service (like writing this article for example) and all the rest. Now, in this moment, I am sitting in this meeting and I am abstinent. My head is clear. I am in recovery. And every day I choose to I can be abstinent. Basically, I have been doing this kind of abstinence since the 2001 convention, not perfectly, but to the best of my ability.

Gratefully, the path just keeps on going and the blessings of recovery follow. It is an amazing miracle.

As others shared on their ideas about abstinence I was reminded that abstinence is freedom, not only from compulsive over or under eating but from the obsessive thinking ... freedom from shame. I was reminded that abstinence is living life sanely. When I am abstinent I can relax in my HP's presence.

Someone added that her abstinence involves a lack of unconscious eating and added that that spreads to other areas of life as well. Being conscious to life ... present, if you will. One member of the group said that abstinence is not only freedom from food obsession, but emotional sobriety rather than emotional drunkenness. She said that she knows it works because it has worked before, but you can't do it alone.

It's pretty weird that I didn't remember until others were sharing that my abstinence includes no concentrated sweets or table sugar. It's been 11 years and 2 months (even through a major relapse and 100 weight gain, I never took back sugar), and it is so much a part of me now that I don't even think of it sometimes. That is a miracle.

So if you find that you are struggling and could use a "shot in the arm" you might consider the meeting on the schedule that was made for that very purpose, to help people who haven't been perfect in their program. Recovery from Relapse meets at St. Mary's Hospital on Clayton at 6:30 on Sundays. We would be thrilled to see you. You are not alone. Some of us know about struggling because we have been there. There is hope.

~Cindy H.

Group Of The Month

Every group is different. All have a particular format and strengths.

Would **your group** be willing to share its gifts with the rest of the Bi-State by writing a story for the newsletter? It's a wonderful way for us to enhance our unity and support various groups.

If your group is interested, please contact the newsletter editor via e-mail at

stlouisotoday@hotmail.com

From a Newcomer...

I am a newcomer to OA. I have been in program for about five months. When I first came to OA I was a mess. I was bulimic and couldn't stop binging/purging. I had tried everything. I went to my doctor and got medicine that was supposed to help me stop binging/purging. It didn't. I saw a therapist who insisted that if I wanted to stop binging I could. I used to tell her that spouting wings and flying would be easier. (She didn't like that response.) I was convinced that I was a failure. I thought God was punishing me because he didn't like me.

But now I've been binge/purge free for almost four months and I've been abstinent for almost a month. Also I am starting to break out of my introverted shell and talk to other OA members and do service. I have been to a Super Saturday and I just came back from the retreat. (Both were a lot of fun.) Also I just finished my step five.

When I first came to OA I was convinced that this would not work for me since nothing else had. But this program works! A few weeks ago my sister (who is my best friend) moved to Vienna, Austria. I miss her so much yet I haven't binged. Sometimes I have misunderstandings with my boyfriend, but I haven't eaten over that either. But the biggest miracle happened yesterday when I walked into a store and was immediately surrounded by Halloween candy. I didn't even look at it or pay it any attention. I bought what I wanted (crayons) and didn't even think about Halloween candy. Without OA and my HP I would still be struggling. Thank you.

~Linnet

payback

every single year
for eight tortuous years
the hulk nurse said,
'step up' and 'stand still'
then she called it out loud
echoing through the small space
in front of all my peers
the substantial woman muttered,
'my, you are a big girl'
i wished i could become flat and
slip into the floor air vent
the cool air and enclosed space
would be welcoming
to this sensitive little big girl
instead i had to turn around to
snickering friends
and face who i was with a flushed
face that felt on fire
i think it was her payback, her
revenge
for years of probable torment
received
her lack of compassion affected
me

to this day i hate to step up, stand
still and see my lot
the disappointment overcomes me
the feelings of those eight days
over those eight years haunt me
but still, i torment myself
maybe someday i will learn

i am not a score
i am not a number
i am not a statistic
i am not a sum

i am so much more
i am so much more
i am so much more
i am so much more

~Julie H.

CALLING ALL HAMS!!!!

Entertainment for the convention this year will be a bit different. We are going to be doing only one night of entertainment on Saturday and we are wanting to involve as many people/groups as possible. The commitment would involve an initial planning meeting in January and a dress rehearsal the week before the convention and a rehearsal the day of the performance. All the rest of the rehearsal time will be with individual meetings rehearsing their particular section of the show: each 1 - 2 minutes in length. The sections can be serious or comical, songs, skits, dance numbers, the sky's the limit ... the more variety the better. If you or your group finds this the least bit intriguing give me a call at xxx-xxx-xxxx or Toll free at xxx-xxx-xxx to discuss the possibilities.

~Cindy H.

Entertainment Committee
Chair

Thank You So Much

The contributions to the newsletter have been wonderful and I appreciate your willingness to share your experience, strength, and hope.

~Dawn S., Newsletter Editor

Reflections

Any holiday is a chore for me. I am on the "Martha" end of it, planning and preparing and cooking. Thanksgiving will be my next meal to prepare for our family. I can do it if my HP and husband will help. I will skip dessert and sampling the turkey and sides. A prayer before meal will be said by me, the diva of spirituality.

We have a heart-shaped cookie from Chicago and my husband doesn't want me to throw it away because he may want to eat it sometime. Praise the Lord I haven't munched on it.

My abstinence is stable thanks to HP and my sponsor. She cut her sponsorees from four to two and I made the cut. I am grateful because it took courage to ask her to be my sponsor and she is good for me.

My recovery is none of my business; I just have to be willing.
~Kathy E.

The Feast

Before I came to OA, holidays meant eating and eating some more. Each meal I finished I was thinking about what I was going to have at the next meal. And the Feast goes on!

After I came to OA, I began to appreciate nature more. As I walked, I could see more in depth the marvelous creations of HP. I was not abstinent right away, but I had cut down on my eating.

Today I am abstinent by the grace of God. Feast means something else to me:

- F** – Free from food obsession
- E** – Eating more healthy
- A** – Appreciating my friends' conversation and fellowship
- S** – Seeing what HP has for me
- T** – Trying to live with the hand that life deals me!

I'm thankful for OA; it has changed my life. Where would I be without OA.

~Mary F.

Perspective

i stood at the base of a
TOWERING
MOUNTAIN unable to see its
peak
i felt *minute*

i climbed to the roof of a
commanding skyscraper at
sunset
i felt *undersized*

i laid on the ground looking up to
the *millions of stars* on a
clear night
i felt like *a speck*

i sat at the bottom of a
MAGNIFICENT CANYON
i felt *microscopic*

i looked over the edge of a boat into
the **widest ocean**
i felt *thin*

i stood within a **moving**
crowd of thousands
i felt *insignificant*

i sat under an **IMMENSE OAK**
TREE looking up to the sun through
its branches
i felt *petite*

size, proportions, measurements,
weight ---- no longer significant

boundless, immeasurable,
connected, limitless ---- become
significant

it depends on how i look at things

and where i am
with myself

~Julie H.

Everything received by the newsletter editor has been published. If you submitted an article that has not been published, please resubmit. Articles can be submitted to the office or emailed to stlouisootoday@hotmail.com
Thank you

Service Vacancies

- 3 Trustees
- 2 Region Reps
- 2 World Service Delegates
- Lifeline
- Young People
- Intergroup Secretary

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 newsletter & we'll send you one.

New Meetings

Wednesday, 7:00 pm
First Community Church
14769 N. Illinois Hwy 37
Mt. Vernon, IL

Contact: Mary M (618) 643-2403



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

November 15 – 9 to 1

“Gratitude and Abundance”
I.D.E.A. Day

Webster Groves Christian Church
1320 W. Lockwood

December 6 – 9 to 3:30

“OA is Home for the Holidays”
Immanuel United Methodist
2105 McCausland

January 17

OA Birthday Party
TBA

February 28

Unity Day

(Sponsored by Newcomers Group)
St. Joseph’s Hospital
Kirkwood, MO

March 26-28

OA Convention

April – Date/Time TBA

Edwardsville, IL

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 prior to the 20th of the month for publication in the following month’s newsletter.