

Today

September 2005
Volume 11, Issue 9

Inside this Issue

- 1 Step Nine
14th Annual Fall Retreat
- 2 Letter from the
Board Of Trustees
Tradition Nine
- 3 Invitation to Intergroup
Service Vacancies
- 4 Public Information
Committee Meeting
Men Supporting Men
- 5 Spreading the word about
Overeaters Anonymous
- 6 Contact OA
Upcoming Events

Overeaters Anonymous
St. Louis Bi-State Area
Intergroup
9907-E Gravois Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63123
(314) 638-6070
Subscriptions \$8.00

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

When I first approached Step Nine, I was excited for the chance to fix all the damage I had done while wallowing in my addiction. I had my list from working Step Eight and starting writing out the things I would say to the people on my list.

I found myself struggling with the words. I felt remorse and regret for my hurtful actions but I couldn't quite put my amends into word or action. What was in my way?

I was still holding on to three very large resentments. These resentments were against people who were not on my amends list. I had not hurt these people, but they had hurt me. I was the victim in these situations.

I loved playing the victim! Oh, poor me! Righteous anger and indignation were fun. I thought I had the right to still be hurt and angry. As the victim, I believed I earned the privilege to carry these negative emotions around in my head and heart.

I had long talks with my HP about this. I talked to my sponsor, friends and other OAers (who can all be the voice of my HP). The insightful lesson learned was that as long as I held on to my anger and pain, no matter how righteous, I would not know acceptance.

I gave these three resentments over to my HP and began praying daily for

Today

these three people who had wronged me. It took time but eventually forgiveness and acceptance came. With those in my heart, I was able to begin making the amends I owed to others.

I'm thankful the heaviness of resentment has been taken away. With the new lightness of heart and mind comes the serenity and peace I've longed for.

--Anonymous

14th Annual Fall Retreat

The Fall Retreat will be October 7-9, 2005 at the Revive Us Again Retreat Center at 8350 Hwy 30 in Dittmer, MO. This year's theme is "**Total Surrender, Total Freedom**". Registration forms are available online at the Events page of the Bi-state website at www.stlouisoa.org.

All registration forms must be received by September 27, 2005.

- Check in begins at 4PM Friday
- Friday supper is provided
- Program begins at 7:30PM Friday
- Retreat ends at 11AM Sunday
- All sessions during the weekend are optional, though we think you will enjoy them all
- Soft drinks and water (OASIS) will be provided for a small fee during the weekend.
- Towels are NOT provided so be sure and pack some.
- There will be four (4) people to a room. Please let us know if you have a roommate or mates.

If you are willing to speak (30 Day abstinence requirement) or to give service, or for more information, contact Jana G, 314-972-0871

A Letter from the Board of Trustees of the St. Louis Bi-State Area

Dear Fellow Compulsive Overeaters,

We, the Board of Trustees, need your help to keep the OA intergroup office alive in St. Louis. The office is a vital part of our ability to carry the message to those who still suffer. Think back to how you first heard of OA and found a meeting. Did you locate a meeting on our website, call, get a where and when? Those are just a few of the services that our office provides. Each month, our office has many of the same expenses that you have: rent, heat, phone, insurance, email, and more. There are additional expenses that need to be paid each month too: salaries, office supplies, printing, office equipment maintenance, web page, shipping, etc. These expenses must be paid on a monthly basis in order to continue having an office in St. Louis.

Here is where you come in: each of you is OA. The following are some questions from the *OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions* to consider individually and collectively in a group conscience:

- Do we really contribute all we can to OA’s financial support, or do we just keep throwing a “buck in the basket.”?
- When the basket comes around, do we keep in mind how much we might be spending if we were out bingeing, instead of coming to OA? Do we remember all of the money we spent on weight-loss programs that didn’t work?
- Do we try to contribute something to the group basket, even when we’re afraid of

economic insecurity?

- Does the group consider the treasurer’s job an important one and take care to make sure it is being done in a responsible manner?

We are requesting that group treasurers, whose service we value and appreciate, send in their group donations monthly. If you are a small group with a minimal treasury and are unable to do that, we certainly understand. We applaud you for continuing to keep your meetings active and offering OA to those who still suffer. For those who can, we would appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Our Seventh Tradition states that we are self-supporting. Since service work is part of being self-supporting, we invite all of you to come to intergroup. We need your help and would love to see you.

Sincerely,

Board of Trustees
St. Louis Bi-State Area

Tradition Nine: OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

As I sat in an OA meeting yesterday, I saw Tradition 9 in action. The leader followed a format, made a short business-item announcement, introduced the speaker, called on members to share and guided the meeting to a close. If I had never been to a meeting before, I would conclude that time for the speaker and for sharing recovery is highly valued and respected in OA.

What would that same meeting have been like if we didn’t follow Tradition 9, with its unique perspective on organization and management? I imagine something like this: The leader, past-leader and future leader, secretary and treasurer would be seated at the head table. An agenda would be passed out to all in the audience. After 25 minutes of reports (during which some audience members make verbal and nonverbal judgments about the officer’s “motives”), 25 minutes is designated for what issues need to be addressed by the officers at the next meeting. This leaves about 10 minutes for members of the audience to bring up new business. One person takes up 11 of those minutes to complain about the poorly run meeting.

In my years at OA meetings, I have never attended meetings that look anything like the one of my imagination. But I have participated in meetings that struggle to find a balance between too much or too little organization. When is a meeting organized “enough”?

The answer to that question, and to most questions I have about the steps and traditions, is a spiritual one. Traditions are broken when members forget the spiritual principles that underlie them. If layers of bureaucracy and items best left for service boards and committees interfere with our primary purpose--to carry the message to the compulsive eater who still suffers--meeting formats may need adjusting. If no format is followed, crosstalk is rampant, and no member steps forward to lead or do other service, a meeting may need to become more disciplined. This balance of “organized looseness” is the essence of Tradition 9.

AN INVITATION TO INTERGROUP

The St. Louis Bi-State area currently has 52 active meetings. Not all of these meetings are being represented at our Intergroup. Intergroup is defined as a local collection of affiliated groups which join together to share their strength, hope and experience. Does YOUR group have an Intergroup rep? Are you interested in becoming an Intergroup rep? Have you ever wondered what happens at Intergroup meetings?

All OA members are welcome to attend Intergroup meetings. Each group should be represented at Intergroup. The next St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup meeting will be:

Sunday, October 16, 2005
St. Alexis Hospital
3933 South Broadway
Peterson Hall
 south side of the building
 (down the steps)

This newsletter is just one of the many things Intergroup is responsible for. St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup also maintains and publishes the "Where and When" list of current meetings, answers telephone, mail and e-mail inquiries, helps arrange for speakers for meetings and public information events, stocks literature, arranges social events, and responds to public information requests. Intergroup is responsible to the local groups it serves and for the Bi-State Conference, marathons, Super Saturday, open meetings, ways and means, St. Louis Bi-State printed material and Regions Advisory Committee.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The only gift is a portion of thyself.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

One of the paradoxes of OA is the only way to keep what we have is to give it away. There are many, many ways to give service to others. Here are some opportunities:

◀ BOT Trustees ▶

The Board of Trustees meets every other month. Trustees are elected for 3 year terms and should be selected for judgment, experience through service at Intergroup level, including some knowledge of Region IV and World Service activities, willingness, faithful adherence to the OA program, membership and regular attendance at a local OA group and recovery by arresting the illness of compulsive eating. The BOT duties include guarding the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as they apply to groups and Intergroup, directing the Intergroup office, responsible for Intergroup financial matters and acting as area spokespersons for OA.

◀ Region Reps (DRAC) ▶

DRAC meets every other month. Reps are elected for 3 year terms. Region reps also attend 2 annual Region business meetings and the annual Region Conference held either in Des Moines, IA or Minneapolis, MN.

◀ World Service Delegates ▶

WSO Delegates attend the annual World Service Conference held in May. Each Intergroup is entitled to send one delegate for each ten groups registered with WSO.

One year of current abstinence is required for BOT trustees and World Service Representatives, and six months current abstinence for Region Representatives. There is no abstinence requirement for the following committee chair positions.

◀ Cassette Chair ▶

This person is responsible for publicizing the availability of tapes, maintaining records of loaned tapes and ordering new tapes.

◀ Newsletter Chair ▶

This person is responsible for publishing the monthly newsletter. Duties include: soliciting articles, typing and layout of the newsletter, maintaining files of past newsletters. This position does require having access to a computer.

◀ Outreach Chair ▶

This person is responsible for responding to 12 Step letters, publicizing Intergroup services to outlying areas and coordinating speakers.

◀ Young People Chair ▶

This person is responsible for determining which groups are best suited to needs of young people (members up to age 25), keeping groups informed of WSO and Regional materials applicable to young people, and answering letters from young people.

◀ Twelfth Step Within Chair ▶

This person is responsible for coordinating special events other than the Super Saturdays for members, developing lists of members willing to take phone calls, speak at meetings or willing to be sponsors and providing the lists to Intergroup and the office.

WE NEED YOU!

These are only some of the opportunities available. There are also committees such as Convention, Ways and Means, and Public Information that need volunteers. The Newcomers meetings need speakers to share their experience, strength and hope with people just learning about OA. If you are interested in getting involved in Intergroup, please contact the Bi-State office by phone, fax or email, or talk with any Intergroup representative.

Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.

--AABB p. 77

Public Information Committee Meeting

WE WANT YOU!

Are you interested in carrying the message, working the Twelfth step, and using the tool of service? If so, we look forward to seeing you!

Where?

OA Office, 9907 Gravois Rd. Suite E
Phone: (314) 638-6070

How do I get there?

Call or email Lisa B for directions.
(636) 586-6274 or
labenglish4@aol.com.

When?

September 28th (Wed) at 6:30PM

Why?

We want to help carry the message to the compulsive eater who still suffers.

How?

We will find new and innovative ideas to share OA.

What do I have to do?

Just show up! No previous experience is necessary. Whether you are someone who loves the spotlight or someone who would rather stay out of sight, we need your help. In fact, there are several behind the scene opportunities in Public Information. The possibilities are endless!

Who's invited?

Everyone! It doesn't matter where you are in your program. Some people use service to help them get abstinent, while others use service to help them stay abstinent. Wherever you are, you're welcome.

How much of my time will it take?

The meeting will last around an hour.

The rest?

It's up to you. We need help in various areas. Some service jobs for PI could take just a few minutes, like making a call or sending out a mailing, while others are more involved. You decide how much time you can give. We will do the rest.

In our guidebook, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, in "A Vision for You," it says: "Some day we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination." Let's make sure every compulsive overeater can find Overeaters Anonymous. Let's give them hope. Let's give them a place to call home. Like they say, "You can't keep it, unless you give it away."

For more information, call Lisa B at (636) 586-6274 or email at labenglish4@aol.com.



Men Supporting Men

There have been several requests
For a Men's support contact list.

If you want your name, phone number
and/or email address to be included
on this contact list, please call the OA
office at 314-638-6070
or email
bistateoa1@prodigy.net

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Through the Grace of HP and ALL of You, I have been gifted with the gift of abstinence for today. As a result, I want to share it with others who are still suffering. I don't know anyone in OA who has not had some amount of relief from loneliness, hopelessness, and despair as a result of this program.

On the desperate night I called OA, I didn't remember where I had heard of it. I just kept hearing the words in my mind, "Call Overeaters Anonymous." I did. Reflecting, years later, I wonder if I had seen it in my local newspaper under the calendar section. My group was listed in there; however, I don't remember ever consciously thinking about OA. Regardless, the message made its way to me. Thanks OA! That brings me to a question for groups: "Are we listed in our local paper?"

Since tradition four says, "Each group should be autonomous except in manners affecting other groups or OA as a whole." Please consider taking action or taking this idea to a group conscience.

There are so many of us, compulsive eaters, who still do not know about OA, or who need a reminder. We can use the tool of service and do twelfth step work in about five minutes, the time it takes to mail, fax, or call your local paper with your group information. OA changes lives. We can be part of that by doing this simple outreach.

How? Easy, we are here to help each other. For an ongoing meeting notice, some papers have a special section for community meetings, and it is usually Free (still one of my favorite words!).

Tips for submitting meeting notices:

- Double-check the name of the special events section and the name and title of the person to whom you are supposed to send the notice. Another option is to call the newspaper and ask, "Who would be the best person to send a calendar item regarding a weekly meeting for the *nonprofit* organization Overeaters Anonymous?"
- Send your notice (sample a) and send it with a cover letter (sample b).
- Include important information: name "Overeaters Anonymous"; exact time, date, and location.
- If your notice will be running indefinitely, check the listing periodically – sometimes errors "mysteriously" appear!

Good luck and thank you for your service. Please remember, the following format is just a suggestion. Please email me for newspaper addresses and phone numbers. If you decide to use the cover letter, I can email it to you as well. Lisa at labenglish4@aol.com

Sample newspaper meeting notice

Thursdays

Overeaters Anonymous. Middle Vale High School, 241 Highland Ave., Newtown. Second Floor faculty lounge. 7:00 newcomer meeting. No dues, No fees, No weigh-ins. Everyone welcome. (If desired, include a phone number).

Also, here is a sample meeting notice cover letter if desired.

Dear Editor:

We would appreciate your listing the enclosed Overeaters Anonymous meeting notice in your (calendar of events or name of section) for (date).

This meeting is held weekly at the same time and place. If possible, we'd like you to include this announcement in your column on a regular basis.

Overeaters anonymous is not a diet club, but, following the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous, is a fellowship of individuals who support one another in our recovery from compulsive overeating. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

Please find enclosed a copy of OA's public information flyer *About OA*. You may reach me at (phone number). Please call me if I can provide any other information.

Thank you.

Adapted for *PI Manual*



Contacting OA

Bi-State Phone number:
(314) 638-6070

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

September 24: 9:30am-3pm,
Christ Church United Church of
Christ, 7126 Bruno @ Bellevue
in Maplewood, MO
Sponsored by Group #025,
St. Mary's Sunday morning

October 7-9: OA Retreat,
see article on front page with full
details.

November 19: IDEA DAY
9:30am-12pm, 1pm-3pm
St. Joseph Hospital in Kirkwood
Sponsored by DRAC
Salad Bar \$6.00 with proceeds to
WSO and Region travel

December 10: Holiday Booster
First Unity Church, 4753 Butler Hill
Rd, west of I-55
Sponsored by the New Me Group

January 21: OA's Birthday
DePaul Hospital @ May
Sponsored by group #051

February 25: UNITY DAY under
construction - more details later

To schedule a Super Saturday or other
event, contact Ginnie H at
(636) 723-0658. 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.

Reminder

Where & Whens will be published
monthly. 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

SL 387 - Tuesdays 7:00 PM
Prince Hall Family
Support Center,
Classroom 1
St. Louis, MO