

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

July 2015

HOPE

“Welcome back. Welcome home!”

~*Welcome Back pamphlet*

These last four words of the *Welcome Back* pamphlet helped saved my life.

Consumed by mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual pain, I returned to OA after a sixteen-year relapse. I thought only death would release me from this pain. Thoughts of suicide grew with the progressing, never-ceasing pain.

Even though I never told my husband about these thoughts, he worried about me and urged me to find help. I said I wanted to try Overeaters Anonymous again; if it had not developed into a “diet-and-calories club,” I knew I would find help there. He said he didn’t care where I went, that he only wanted his wife back. It was 1987, and the meeting I went to was a Big Book study meeting.

That meeting opened the door of hope. As I read the *Welcome Back* pamphlet, I touched the words “Welcome back, Welcome home” and cried.

~*Voices of Recovery, page 179.*

Saying Good-bye

We are sad to tell you that our long-time OA friend Marie C. passed away on Friday, June 26. She was in Cannon Beach for an art show, enjoying the day with an OA friend, when she apparently suffered a heart attack.

Marie will be remembered for her beautiful watercolors, hand-dyed scarves, collage, and haiku. She was generous with her artistic spirit, and led the poetry in recovery workshop at convention, as well as collaging opportunities at retreats and OA special events. She shared prints of her watercolor and recovery-related haiku with OA friends.

Welcome Home

Have you ever wished you could lose ten pounds, twenty, forty, or a hundred or more? Have you ever wished that once you got it off you could keep it off? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you sometimes felt out of step with the world, like a homeless orphan without a place where you really belong? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wished your family would get to work or school so that you could get busy eating? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever awakened first thing in the morning and felt happy because you remembered that your favorite goodie was waiting for you in the fridge or in the cupboard? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever looked up at the stars and wondered what an insignificant person like you was doing in the world anyway? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever cooked, bought or baked for your family and then eaten everything yourself so that you wouldn’t have to share? We know you in OA because we *are* you. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to hide in the house, without going to work, without getting cleaned up or even getting dressed,

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Upcoming Events

July 18, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

July 31-August 2. Serenity Retreat. Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. Scholarships available. Email serenityretreat@oregon-aa.org, or call Vee at 449-6005.

August 1, Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

August 15, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

September 18-20, Region 1 Convention: The Journey is the Destination, Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center, Bend, OR. <https://sites.google.com/site/region12015convention/home>

Carrying the Message: What a Concept!

Hi, I am a compulsive overeater. I have been in OA for 26 years, abstinent for almost 3 years and have lost about 200 pounds.

In the beginning, Bill W. turned away from the bar and made a phone call to carry the message of recovery to Dr Bob. And one person to another, one service to another, OA eventually came into being. We now have our own Steps, Traditions and Concepts of OA Service. Our preamble asks us to "carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer." Step Twelve says we "tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Tradition Five states "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers." And our Concepts guide us in how to do it.

The message we carry is simple: there is a proven, workable way to recover through the 12 Steps of OA. It is said at every meeting in the preamble, and our meetings are guided by the Traditions. How we carry it is through service which is guided by the Concepts. I remember sitting in an intergroup meeting reading in the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts of OA Service" and something clicked: it was talking about me! Not just "Them" - as in The Board of Trustees, (by the way - there is no "Them" in OA, only "We" and "Us.") It was telling me to butt out of someone else's job. To let them do it their way and not do it for them. Even if they were not

doing it "right!" Translated - *my* way. I realized there might just be something to this pamphlet and I started reading it in earnest.

So I took the liberty of making the concepts a little easier to swallow - if you will forgive the pun.

- Bring God into everything I do - I can say a Prayer at *any* time, (Concept 1, 2)
- Make sure I know what I am doing and I am clear in what I need, (Concept 3, 9)
- I have a voice - Make sure everyone else does too, (Concept 4, 1)
- It is not only okay to make a mistake, it is expected, (Concept 5, 3)
- Try not to do too much, (Concept 6, 7)
- Ask for help when I need it, (Concept 8, 11)
- Do NOT do something I asked someone else to do, (Concept 10, 3)
- Trust the process. Don't judge the judging, (Concept 12)
- Do NOT think "You're all that!", (Concept 12)

This isn't only for my Service work, this helps me in my everyday existence. Even in just setting up my plan of eating and my action plan for the day. As with all of Program, it is all about relationships. I hope you find it as helpful as I do.

~ Western Mass, USA

Young People's Phone List

Oregon Intergroup is assembling a contact list for young people in OA. If you came into program at age 30 or younger and would like to offer your experience, strength and hope to a young person in our program, please send your contact information to youngpeople@oregon-oa.org. Include your name, phone number, email address and the age you were when you came into OA. WSO defines a young person as someone who is 30 years or younger. If you came into program when you were older than 30 years old and would also like to be a resource to the younger members of our fellowship, you are also welcome to add your name to the young people's phone list.

Got CDs?

Our Intergroup CD library needs your help! A lot of our CDs have been checked out for a long time. We all need a chance to hear the experience, strength and hope found in our CD library.

If you have a CD from our library, please return it so others can strengthen their recovery. You can return a CD by either giving it to your IG Rep or mailing it to the PO Box on the front of the CD package.

Thanks so much for your help. For questions, contact Marie at 503-351-0917.

CONVENTION SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Oregon Intergroup has 3 scholarships available, \$60 each, for the convention in Bend, September 18th - 20th 2015. Anyone who belongs to a group listed on our meeting directory is eligible to apply. A drawing will be held August 1st to pick the 3 winners.

To request a scholarship, send your full name and an email or phone number to OIG-Scholarship, PO Box 2429, Portland, OR 97208; or send an email to treas@oregon-oa.org with a subject line of "Scholarship request". Requests must be received by August 1st in order to be in the drawing. Everyone who applies will be contacted as quickly as possible after the drawing. Individual groups are encouraged to consider giving scholarships also.

Talking to HP

When I had lost all faith in myself, the OA program, the world, and even God, I kept on talking with my HP. I kept on talking because I didn't want to lose the life I had earned and been given in program. This continual talking has worked from the beginning of my program, so even when I believe my HP does not exist, I continue talking to him.

I spoke to HP when I got up in the morning and fell in love with the way the sunlight illuminated the room, or when I saw the various birds dancing and fighting in the air with a grace that no man-made machine could possess. I saw the miracle of life in a patch of brilliantly colored flowers and thanked my HP. And when I was alone at night and believed I had no one to talk to, could not lift a pen or a book, and felt the black clouds of despair beginning to choke me, I shut my eyes and poured forth a string of heartfelt pleas to HP: Please don't let me fall back into that black pit of compulsive bingeing and purging. I prayed for the strength to believe, even as I admitted my disbelief, and kept chanting inside my head, "I believe in the one who believes in me." I prayed until the pain and fear and craving left me.

As I progressed in program, I began to talk to HP as if He were my constant companion, thinking the best of me, supporting me, and telling me the painful truth in the most loving and constructive way for my growth and healing. HP spoke to me when I had a car accident on the way to a meeting (he kept me abstinent). HP spoke to me when I had two painful relationship breakups (he kept me abstinent). HP spoke to me when banks of black clouds smothered me with aching depression (he kept me abstinent).

I realize now that HP was always speaking to me, but I couldn't hear him until I began speaking with all my heart and willingness, even if the amount of willingness could not fill a thimble at that moment. However, as the promises of the program began coming true, along with the inevitable problems of daily living, I became too busy to speak to HP. Then I couldn't hear him until more pain drove me to more meetings and more sessions with him. And guess what! the burdens of life were easier to manage.

I don't follow this program perfectly. I don't have all the answers. I still have defects of character and pain in my life, but I also have a joy and contentment that were never open to me in my obsession. As long as I keep talking to my HP in whatever manner and with as much faith as possible, asking only for the strength to do his will for me, one day at a time I will hear him.

~New York, *Seeking the Spiritual Path*, page 84-85.

REGION ONE CONVENTION PACKAGE RAFFLE

For \$5.00 per entry, you may win: Full Convention registration, including the Saturday Night Banquet, and two nights lodging at the Riverhouse Hotel in Bend. Raffle ticket entries must be received by July 15 for this drawing.

Details are available on the Region 1 website at <http://www.oaregion1.org/2015-convention-package-raffle.html>

Calling All Meetings: Is Your Voice Being Heard?

Do you want to strengthen OA in your area and throughout Oregon? Make sure your voice is heard in full force by sending an Intergroup Rep to your monthly Oregon Intergroup meeting. Give your members an opportunity to serve and help all of us benefit from a strong and diverse OA organization. Oregon Intergroup meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Girls Scouts building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219.

Everything you do is based on the choices you make. It's not your parents, your past relationships, your job, the economy, the weather, an argument or your age that is to blame. You and only you are responsible for every decision and choice you make.

Period. ~ Dr. Wayne Dyer

Sharing Thanks

Thank God I compulsively purchased all the OA literature seven years ago after I returned to OA following a painful three-year relapse. I've been disheartened about OA lately, constantly comparing it to my "old" meetings and finding the new meetings wanting. I moved from Boston to a little town where food-plan meetings are all the rage and step meetings are scarce.

Early this morning I was melancholy and missing my old, more spiritual meetings. I picked up my *Lifeline Sampler* and read "Visit to a Small Meeting." It's a beautiful story, full of gratitude and abstinence, about a member who is a one-person meeting. It made me realize I should be grateful for my situation. There are step meetings without food requirements in this area, attended by people with my kind of spiritual life.

I still miss my old meetings. I miss that glorious joyous feeling that comes from sharing and hearing others share their practice of the twelve steps. Yet I am confident that feeling will return.

I'm grateful to everyone who ever shared at an OA meeting. Your quest for abstinence and serenity have taught me to live life without compulsive overeating. I have just celebrated seven years of abstinence. Together we did what I couldn't do alone.

~Tewksbury, MA, *Abstinence*, p 93, edited for space

Welcome Home *(Continued from front page)*

without seeing anyone or letting anyone see you?
Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever hidden food under the bed, under the pillow, in the drawer, in the bathroom, in the wastebasket, the cupboard, the clothes hamper, the closet or the car so that you could eat without anyone seeing you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever been angry, resentful, defiant — against God, your mate, your doctor, your mother, your father, your friends, your children, the salesperson in the store whose look spoke a thousand words as you tried on clothes — because *they* were thin, because they wanted *you* to be thin, and because you were forced to diet to please them or shut them up or make them eat their words and their looks? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever sobbed out your misery in the dark night because no one loved or understood you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever felt that God (if God existed at all) made the biggest mistake when God created you? Can you see that this is where such feelings get turned around? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to get on a bus and just keep going, without ever once looking back? Did you *do* it? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever thought the whole world was a mess and if they would just think and act like you, the world would be a lot better off? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever thought that OA people must be a bit nuts? That *they* might be compulsive overeaters, but *you* just have a weight problem which you can take care of beginning tomorrow; they might be one bite from insane eating, but you are just a little or a lot overweight? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever told anyone who would listen how great you are, how talented, how intelligent, how

powerful — all the time knowing they would never believe it, because *you* didn't believe it? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever lost all of your weight and found that you were thin-unhappy instead of fat-unhappy? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever worn a mask or hundreds of masks because you were sure that if you shared the person you really were no one could ever love or accept you? We accept you in OA. May we offer you a home?

Overeaters Anonymous extends to all of you the gift of acceptance. No matter who you are, where you come from or where you are heading, you are welcome here! No matter what you have done or failed to do, what you have felt or haven't felt, where you have slept, or with whom, who you have loved or hated — you may be sure of acceptance. We accept you as you are, not as you would be if you could melt yourself and mold yourself and shape yourself into what other people think you should be. Only you can decide what you want to be.

But we will help you work for the goals you set, and when you are successful we will rejoice with you; and when you slip, we will tell you that we are not failures just because we sometimes fail, and we'll hold out our arms, in love, and stand beside you as you pull yourself back up and walk on again to where you are heading! You never have to cry alone again, unless you choose to.

Sometimes we fail to be all that we should be, and sometimes we aren't there to give you all you need from us. Accept our imperfection too. Love us in return and help us in our sometimes-falling failing. That's what we are in OA — imperfect, but trying. Let's rejoice together in our effort and in the assurance that we can have a home, if you want one.

Welcome to OA; welcome home!

~Lifeline Sampler, pages 173-174.

Why Should I be a Sponsor?

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

~Big Book Of AA, page 89.

The views expressed in this newsletter are of the person who wrote them and do not represent OA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest. Oregon Intergroup serves meetings from Longview to Tillamook, Salem to Portland, Silverton to Hood River, and includes Vancouver and the surrounding area. Find us online at oregon-aa.org or call (971) 317-6343.