

Oregon Intergroup

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-oa.org or call (971) 317-6343.

Virtual Sponsors Wanted

The Virtual Sponsorship Committee is in urgent need of more sponsors. Many people live in areas where OA is new and not well established. Visit the OA Region 1 website at www.oaregion1.org and click on the "Find a Sponsor or Sponsee" link located on the right.

Young People's Phone List

If you came into program at age 30 or younger and can offer support to a young OA member, send contact information (name, phone, email and age you were when entered OA) to youngpeople@oregon-oa.org.

Newsletter Submissions

Practice the tool of writing and tell us your recovery story. Write about your favorite step, tool, slogan, and/or fellowship moment. Have a meeting update, need special support or an announcement? Send all writings/information to: newsletter@oregon-oa.com

Tradition of Anonymity

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.

OPEN INTERGROUP POSITIONS

As you can tell from the list below, **Intergroup needs YOU!** It needs your recovery, your twelfth step-service, and your experience, strength, and hope. Perhaps you have newly come to Overeaters Anonymous and have no clue what Intergroup is all about. Maybe you even think you are not sure you want to be of service...let your curiosity guide you to see if this service might be a good fit for you. We need:

- **VISITORS**
Duties: Show up at Intergroup and join in discussion (or not); does not vote
Qualifications: Desire to be of service and curiosity
- **MEETING REPRESENTATIVES**
Duties: Represents your meeting at Intergroup; bring back materials posted
Qualifications: Selected by group they represent
- **TWELFTH STEP WITHIN**
Duties: Report monthly to Intergroup and upon project completion; Arrange project for December 12th, Twelfth Step Within Day; specific projects (e.g., Affirmations Project)
Qualifications: 90 days abstinence; worked through step 7
- **PUBLIC INFORMATION PUBLIC OUTREACH**
Duties: Issue press releases; coordinates OA poster campaigns; explains OA to those unfamiliar with the program; publicize meetings
Qualifications: 9 months abstinence; worked through step 7
- **WAYS AND MEANS**
Duties: Report monthly to Intergroup, as projects occur; conduct money making projects at OA events; prepare items for said projects; enlist helpers for said projects
Qualifications: 9 months abstinence; worked through step 7
- **MEMBER AT LARGE**
Duties: Assume any board position during temporary absence or until replacement is elected; assist co-chair in contacting groups not represented at Intergroup
Qualifications: 9 months abstinence; worked through step 7; Familiar with 12 traditions; Regular attendance (2 years) at a home group; have/be a sponsor; familiar with Roberts Rules of Order; present for nomination and election

OA Serenity Retreat



A retreat is a place to focus on recovery and spiritual growth: a weekend devoted to fellowship and spiritual renewal. It can enhance your program and reaffirm your commitment to your recovery.

March 16-18, 2018

Twin Rocks

Conference Center

18705 Highway 101 North

Rockaway Beach, OR

Register for this retreat at oregon-oa.org. Look for the "Register for a Serenity Retreat" drop down menu on the home page!



A SERVING OF HOPE

Step One Relief



On May 28, 2017, I attended my first OA meeting. The courage to attend arose when I discovered the pamphlet *Maintaining a Healthy Weight*. I finally admitted I did not like my body or my weight. I realized I could not manage my weight by myself. Most importantly, I realized and admitted

that not liking myself made me have nasty, weird thoughts about myself and my relationships with other people. I needed to ask for help both from a group and from a Power greater than my self-determination and ego.

I started reading about Step One even before I asked a woman to be my sponsor. The more I read, the more I realized I needed to honestly examine why I ate the way I did despite knowing the harmful consequences. The "why" would lead me to know my powerlessness and unmanageability. Working Step One, by reading, writing, talking with my sponsor, and asking my Higher Power to stay close to me, helped me uncover a long list of unhealthy, false beliefs and denial about my compulsive eating.

Becoming aware of these unhealthy beliefs, however, did not change my actions, even though I was now even more uncomfortable with myself. Feelings of shame and guilt and the nasty, jealous thoughts about others continued. Still, as I grew in awareness, I felt only support and understanding from my sponsor and other members of my OA group. Step One, I found, was not an exercise in self punishment. Step One was opening my eyes to acceptance. As

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Voices of Recovery states, "I don't have to beat myself up for being a compulsive overeater any more. I also don't have to waste time trying to 'fix' myself in ways that don't work" and "What a relief to discover that it wasn't just a matter of willpower!"

I felt the relief. In fact, relief, hope, and freedom started for me in Step One. Hope was tangible in the faces and sharing of my sponsor and others at meetings, and I was not alone. Freedom rose from trusting that a Power greater than me would do what I couldn't do for myself.

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Upcoming Events

- **February 2-4**
Annual Winter Retreat sponsored by Greater Seattle Intergroup. Register at www.seattleoa.org/events/
- **February 14**
Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, Girl Scouts Building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland
- **February 24**
UNITY DAY! This day recognizes the strength of the Fellowship worldwide. On the last Saturday in February, at 11:30 am PST, OA members pause to reaffirm the strength inherent in OA's unity.
- **March 16-18**
OA Serenity Retreat at Twin Rocks Conference Center 18705 Highway 101 N Rockaway Beach, OR

\$50 Scholarships available!
Register on our website at Oregon-OA.org

Meetings Needing Support

- Thursday 7:00 pm, Silverton St. Edward's Episcopal Church, 211 W Center Street, Silverton (cross street is Fairview St)
- Wednesday, 7:15, Portland SW St Barnabas Episcopal Church, 2201 SW Vermont St. 97219, Lower level of church building. Church Offices. Red door, Rm 1
Please note: the format for this meeting has changed to a blended format of OA H.O.W. and regular OA

News from World Service

OA E-Books Now Available!

Whether you prefer to read OA-approved literature on electronic devices or from a mix of e-readers and print books, you can now find OA e-books for popular e-readers and apps.



Sponsorship Success Podcast

Sponsoring others is a vital service in OA. WSO's "Sponsorship Success" podcast series can help you prepare for your first sponsee or give you fresh ideas for your existing sponsorship service. Visit oa.org/podcasts.



Traditions Explained Videos

"Take a Walk Down the Traditions" is a series of videos designed to quickly explain each tradition. Find the first six videos at oa.org/podcasts, and stay tuned for more.



Access OA's Lifeline Online at www.oalifeline.org

For \$23, you get one year of access to new Lifeline stories published ten times per year, plus the archive of hundreds of stories published since January 2016



Literature Spotlight



Love audiobooks? You can order the audiobook of the **OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions** at OA's online bookstore at bookstore.oa.org

Principle of Unity

At my Saturday morning meeting we read a tradition the second weekend of every month. Like most members, I used to dread tradition meetings. They were so dull and dry! What in the world do they have to do with *my* recovery? The answer, of course, is that they have *everything* to do with my recovery. Without the traditions, Overeaters Anonymous would not be able to function. And, without OA, I literally wouldn't be here. I don't just mean here today writing this article for our newsletter. I mean alive and well and living my life!

Since it's January, let's take Tradition One, which reads, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OA unity." Similar to every step, every tradition has a principle behind it and the principle behind Tradition One is Unity. At every meeting, I am reminded that we are a diverse people coming together not just because of our shared problem, but because of our shared solution: the 12 Steps of OA!

I count among my friends people whom I have nothing else in common with but our shared disease and a willingness to get better. Upon this strong foundation, life-long friendships have been established and continue to bloom. Why? Because Tradition One teaches me to look for our commonalities when all I see is our differences. It teaches me that I am "part of" instead of "separate from". As a recovering isolationist, I know my life and recovery depend on our diversity and group strength.

So, no, the traditions are not as dry as I once believed. They are a vital part of my personal recovery as well as the foundation for how OA works. Together we truly can do what I most assuredly could never do alone!

— Christina

Unity: An OA Love Poem

I love the spirit within each of you.
I love the endless kindness and understanding.
I love the sharing of our lives together.

Your struggle is my struggle.
I feel your sorrows and joys,
your strengths and weaknesses.
It is the same with me;
we share the same journey.

—Rick E



"Step One Relief" continued....

Before I could surrender to the program, I needed to experience my powerlessness. I needed to own all the ways my life had become unmanageable because of compulsive overeating. Step One allowed me to write my own OA prayer and write and rewrite my own plan of eating. I shared both with my sponsor as I worked the First Step. I continue to use the Tools. My first action plan was "Ways I take care of myself that do not involve food."

I am a newcomer, already feeling welcome and accepted in OA. I am so grateful for phone calls from members who barely knew me, for my willing sponsor, for our literature, for the Step One podcast on oa.org, and for all OA members who have kept this program healthy and growing. I will return the gift I have been so generously given.

— Mary Beth S

The Holidays Are Over aka Sponsor Wisdom

After an excruciating long explanation of why my holiday was nowhere near the Norman Rockwell experience I would have preferred, my sponsor had a brilliant four word comeback: "Tomorrow is just Tuesday." Somehow all that hot air was deflated by those four simple words.

And now another holiday weekend approaches. I will soon be able to say, "Tomorrow's just Tuesday." And just like that the holidays will be only a blip on the screen of my life.

How can I NOT make such a big deal over holidays?

Number one thing I can do is to take the holidays through the first three steps of "Twelve Stepping a Problem." Truly I AM powerless over holidays. The experience will change year

after year and I need to be open to each experience. I certainly need to answer the question what would recovery look like in relation to holidays. And then I need to turn THIS holiday over to the care of my Higher Power.

Another thing I can do is concentrate on what I have rather than what I don't have. Gratitude. My sponsor always tells me gratitude is the antidote for what ails me. That and service. How can I be useful to another is always a question to consider when times seem hard for me.

So I can look forward to a new year with hope, gratitude and service; remembering that tomorrow is just Tuesday.

— Anonymous

Willingness to Work

I was introduced to OA in 1987 following outpatient therapy for binge eating, overeating, and bulimia, so I was already armed with a food plan and an understanding of the First Step when I "jumpstarted" into the program. The miracle of abstinence led to a new spiritual life, and OA saved me from the insanity of my disease. I was a busy wife and mother with a full-time nursing job, and many miracles came true for me, including a 35-pound weight loss.

As years passed, the marriage got rocky, the kids grew, and I settled into doing only what I thought I needed to stay abstinent by depending almost solely on: HP, a spiritual life that became religious, and the Second, Tenth, and Eleventh Steps. "Half measures" haunted me as my precious abstinence was eroded, first by a few slips, then sporadic 'bad' days, and eventually a return to a life of eating binges. Dishonesty, one of my character defects, kept me in denial for two years before I admitted I was in relapse.

Every day of that thirteen-year relapse, I started my day with meditation, prayer, and a resolution to live abstinely. I had some good days, but the spiraling was harder than ever to stop. Following my program was difficult, and my knuckles were usually white.

One big realization finally took hold: As long as I'm fighting myself over the food, I will lose. I was still powerless over food. I couldn't control a 'failure' any more than a cough from bronchitis. That meant no more shaming myself. I just had to move on to what I could do— more program.

I've been abstinent for over two and a half years. I've lost over 50 pounds from my highest weight in relapse, and now I work

all the Steps daily. I check in with my sponsor and email my food, action plans, and Step work. Retired and divorced (and a grandmother), I make more time for meetings and service. I've learned so much:

- If I'm fighting with myself over what I'm eating, then I need to go back to Step One.
- I have to pray to do my HP's will and for the willingness to work program, not just for the willingness to be abstinent.
- Abstinence, like weight loss and serenity, is a gift of grace.
- Relapse was never as bad as life before program, because I had hope, the Tools, and experiences of abstinence.
- If I have time to overeat, then I have time for more meetings and program.

The blessings of a sane and useful life happen when I follow the rules instead of trying to do life and program my own way. Following instructions is no longer a bitter pill. I've seen the light. It took a big chunk of my life, but relapse has given me deep understanding, and fellowship with sufferers and survivors.

Relapse is not inevitable, and it's never an excuse for shame. It is what it is, and like a mistake, is there for the learning. Always for me, there is hope in recovery through OA.

— Janet P