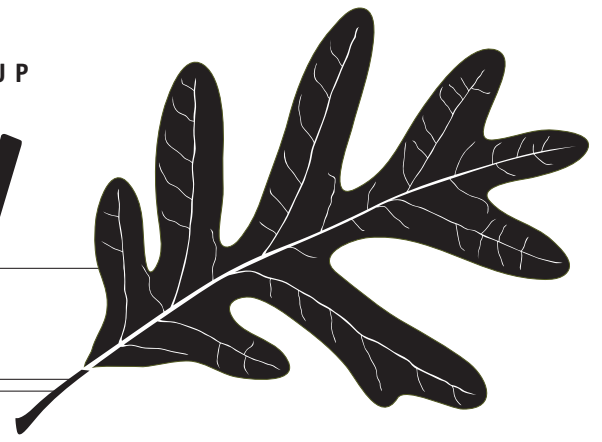


recovery

NOVEMBER 2007



Silent Retreat is a Go by Mike B., Newsletter Editor

The main business discussed at this intergroup meeting was the silent retreat for the spring. Mike filled the attendees in on what he found out from the people down in Texas who currently hold the silent retreats. He also informed that one Brian from the McKinney Care & Share group will host our retreat.

In the group issues and feedback section we discussed how a treasurer should keep records and run the treasury. This is discussed later in the newsletter.

The people attending intergroup also talked about the meeting list. First was the CLOSED notice on some of the meetings. People are confused, they think that it means no one is going to the meeting. In OA closed means the meeting is open only to members of OA. After some back and forth it was decided we should add the definition to the meeting list saying "CLOSED = This meeting is only for people with a desire to stop eating

compulsively." It was also decided that the web site address should be added to the meeting list.

The public information and outreach committee has been busy. They have contacted more libraries. We have a new flier to post on community bulletin boards. You can get it from intergroup meeting or download it from the web site on the "What's New?" page.

The final major topic was the budget. The treasurer analyzed our spending last year and since the beginning of the year and found we could send about \$4,000 to world service. We are not sending any money to Region 7 because, like us, they are flush with funds. After some discussion the intergroup representatives and officers approved sending the money to world service splitting it \$2,000 for the general fund and \$2,000 for our new public information fund.

My Gratitude by Janice M.

First of all **I am grateful I am a compulsive overeater.** I never thought I would say that.

I walked into the OA rooms in May of 1995 desperate, suicidal and 40 lbs overweight. Killing myself with food, cigarettes, and other unhealthy choices. When I heard people sharing that they were grateful to be a compulsive overeater I thought they were goofy. Were they for real? How could anyone be grateful for this disease?

Now I get it.

OA has saved my life. I thank my HP that I have a disease that can be arrested. Not only arrested, but make me a better person as a result of working the steps and following the instructions in our literature.

I never thought I would be able to be abstinent for more than 1 day in a row.

I just kept coming back. Trying what people said worked for them. Believed them when they said there was a miracle out

there for me. Until one day it clicked. I was shown by my HP that He would and could stand between me and the food if I asked. That He was available every second of every day to call on for help. That was on Dec. 26, 1997. He has never failed me!

I am grateful that I have been abstinent through one of the worst years of my life. I am a miracle and a testament that this program works if you work it.

I am grateful for all of the friends I have made in these rooms. I feel sorry now for people who don't need a 12 step program. Where do they go for love and support?

I am grateful to be able to hear the birds, see the sky, smell the flowers, receive a hug, eat healthy food, walk without pain, laugh at myself, and see my HP's hand in my life, hear His voice, feel His nudges and do what He says. I could go on and on.

That's why I am grateful that I am a compulsive overeater.

THE OA PROMISE *I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.*

My Holiday Survival Plan

by Anonymous

Well, here we go again... the orange and black wrappers greeted me along with the back-to-school supplies. In my local Dollar Store, the Christmas decorations were out in September. My mom always told me there are two sides to every story—and in this case, how true it is! The negative side—my “going towards my disease” side—tells me it is going to be a hell of a three months—watching normal eaters partake of “just a couple” little bars. Looking longingly at the plethora of desserts of which I am denied on that special Thursday eating holiday in November. Bypassing the bowl of red and green kisses as they persistently call out my name- “Here I am, old friend, remember me?”

Or there is the positive side—my “going towards life and recovery” side—telling me to be on my guard, be ever wary; while I attended meetings and made phone calls all through the summer months, my disease was working out, feeling stronger and healthier than ever. It is ready to pounce and send me backwards physically, emotionally, and spiritually. To combat this (and it IS all out war) I must look away from my sweet old

friends and move forward to my new friends—meetings, a healthy plan of eating, anonymity, program literature, reading and writing about the 12 steps, and service. These new friends have improved my life a thousand fold. Instead of binging until I am physically sick all through the next three months, I can enjoy the children coming to my door on Halloween, play with my adorable nephew on Thanksgiving, and quietly converse with my adult nieces on Christmas day.

Could I do all these activities while “in the food?” Of course—but I would not remember any of it; I would not be speaking with love and honesty; and I certainly would not be 100% present because of all the food distractions. This holiday season I am choosing life. Will there be extra temptations and denials? Of course. But the fun and excitement of the holiday season and my full participation in all the joys will more than make up for some fleeting seconds of food fun, which is really food pain. Here’s to abstinence all throughout the year!

How I work my program

by Jeff P.

I have been overweight for years. I had ignored advice from my doctor, comments about my weight from family and friends, and even pleas from my wife to loose some weight. I had some medical problems that are caused by being overweight. My feet and ankles would swell if I stood for too long. I would start to breath heavy and my heart would start pounding when walking, not running up one flight of stairs. I developed sleep apnea that was so bad that I was waking up several times a night gasping for air. When I was tested at the sleep clinic, they found that I stopped breathing 53 times in the first hour. I have high blood pressure and the onset of diabetes. So, here I am taking 5 prescriptions a day and I need a machine to help me breath when I sleep. I had become a 53 year old train wreck! O.K., this should have been enough to convince me that I should be changing something in my lifestyle. No way, not this stubborn guy, I would eat what I wanted when I wanted.

Last Christmas the family was together in New England and I found that I could not get down on the floor to play with my grand kids. Nor could I keep up with them outside in the snow. I started thinking of all the times that I couldn’t go on an amusement ride with my kids because I did not fit on the ride and realized I may not be around to see them grow up, if I didn’t loose weight. I had tried many diets over the years with little success so I had no idea what I was going to do.

The first Tuesday in January, after dinner, my wife said she was going to an O.A. meeting. I asked if she minded if I tagged along. Looking back, I now think that my Higher Power was working overtime that evening. I went to that meeting with an open mind and was willing to do whatever they said to loose the weight. They said to keep coming back and gave me a newcomer’s packet. I finally realized that I was a compulsive overeater! At first I went to 2 meetings a week and decided on a food plan of three correctly portioned meals a day with no snacks or junk food. I soon modified the plan to include an apple for the drive home from

work. My commute is about 70 minutes each way and the apple is my way of avoiding fast food stops on the way home. After a short time in the program I was fortunate to have a sponsor find me. I was chatting with a gentleman after a meeting and he asked if I had a sponsor. I said that I did not have a sponsor yet, he said he was available. Again, I believe that my Higher Power was at work to bring this sponsor into my life. My sponsor has helped me through the steps and has helped me with his experience all along the way. I now go to three meetings a week. I find that I look forward to the meetings. I always seem to hear just what I need to hear in the readings or the sharing. I may have already read a piece of literature, but when it is read in a meeting and you listen to others share about it, you get another perspective. I never refuse to do service. Service helps me to stay involved and stay abstinent. By doing service for O.A., I am helping to keep the program alive and well for myself and others who suffer with compulsive overeating. I am a frequent meeting leader, I hold a service position at two meetings, and I am a sponsor. In the morning I read some type of O.A. literature before breakfast. Drive time to work is when I talk to my Higher Power each day. One of the gifts that I have received from this program is a renewed interest in my faith. In the evenings I call my sponsor and receive a call from the person that I sponsor. I usually will make a third call to another O.A. member too. Before bed I answer a question in the twelve step work book or work on an assignment for my sponsor, write about my day in my journal and include a daily list of the things that I am grateful for.

When I started the O.A. program I was wearing size 54” waist, I am now wearing a size 46” waist. I have a long way to go, but it is not all about the weight anymore. It is about living by the 12 steps and 12 traditions to the best of my abilities, one day at a time. I do not always succeed, I am not perfect, but with the help of my Higher Power and O.A. I am getting better. It was the love I have for my grandchildren and my Higher Power that got me to O.A. Once I became abstinent, the clarity has kept me coming back.

One Survival Plan for all Occasions

- Know I am powerless over food
- Know that taking a food plan will set limits at the celebration
- Know that I should use the tools to get help if I am struggling with, "to eat or not to eat"

The big 3 are approaching:

1. Halloween
2. Thanksgiving
3. Christmas, Hanukkah, Quanza and a few others

I consider the last group one and I often attend many of these gatherings during the span of their celebration.

Celebration is the key word here for me. Any good celebration in my life before OA had lots of fabulous food. Special foods, not the everyday fare of the normal week, no, there were lots of sweet, enticing and very visually appealing items and everything about them signaled pleasure and love.

Many of my senses were engaged. The smell, sight, texture to touch was all what dreams were made of in my mind.

Love was overflowing as people were generally happy and lavishing attention on me without having to ask for it which I never did anyway.

I didn't learn how to get what I needed because I was sick with the disease of compulsive overeating which tells me all I need is just that next food item I am craving.

Even the healthy food was special at these celebrations. Everyone delighted in bringing gourmet selections. It was all about eating it, loving it and eating it some more. I didn't bond with the people who were there in any real way except for shallow chatter and didn't know there was any other way.

Today, intellectually I know food is just food. The love, nor the fun, nor the good time is in the food.

However, at celebrations of any kind, sometimes more than others, my disease knows I am vulnerable to those old childish and abnormal connections to food. It really works overtime trying to draw me back into believing that I will find something in those food items that is not really there. I am still a food addict/compulsive overeater.

It has taken many years of practice, winning and failing, to know that I have much more fun and love in my life when I leave the food alone. When I leave the food alone I can be with people and enjoy fellowship, friendship, and love. They feel far better than the sick, bloated, self-hatred on the day after giving in to a food celebration. If I don't get good vibes and a sense of fulfillment from the rest of the gathering, via the people, environment, etc.,

I have no business being there in the first place and should consider it one of the people, places or things I should but on my list of what to avoid.

Yes, I want recovery, yes, I want to be an adult woman in the real world and again this is my survival plan:

- Know I am powerless over food
- Know that taking a food plan will set limits at the celebration
- Know that I should use the tools to get help if I am struggling with, "to eat or not to eat"

Happy Holiday Season,
Veronica

MEETING NEWS

Pat is the new contact person for the **Monday Radnor** meeting. Her number is 610-356-8875.

The time of the **Monday Overbrook Beginners** meeting has changed from 7:15 PM to 7:30 PM.

The **Wednesday Devon** meeting is moving from the Main Line Unitarian Church to Saint David's Episcopal Church down the street starting November 7th at 10 AM.

Monday Collegeville can use support. It is doing better with regular attendees but it needs a few more to make it even stronger for the new members that have been coming into the program through the meeting.

Annual IDEA Day Marathon

International Day Experiencing Abstinence

Saturday, November 17, 2007

9 am until 12 pm

Grove Methodist Church

490 Boot Road, West Chester Pa 19380

Registration begins at 8:30 am

There will be a 7th Tradition collection

Contact Cathe S. 610-352-9919



TEMPORARY SPONSOR LIST

These are fellow Compulsive Overeaters willing to temporarily sponsor you. You can come to their home meeting and meet them or call them.

NAME	PHONE	HOME MEETING
Barbra R.	610-828-7382	Monday 10AM Radnor
Jennifer	484-629-4343	Sunday Phoenixville
Mike B. (Men)	610-405-1437	Monday Colledgeville
Donna U.	610-631-7066	Saturday Green Tree
Annie B.	610-933-7066	Saturday Green Tree
Susan A.	610-889-9726	Mon. AM K. of Prussia
Michelle	610-495-7917	Tuesday Royersford
Suzanne M.	610-906-2721	Friday North Coventry
Pat	610-666-6487	Saturday Green Tree
Jeff	610-409-4986	Saturday Green Tree

My Gratitude List by Dorothy

I have been in OA since December 1999. I was desperate. My weight was 180 plus pounds. Nothing worked for me and I was miserable and hated myself and how I looked.

I remembered OA. I had attended OA in King of Prussia in the early 1970s. It worked a little for me. I was impatient and had a "mental block" regarding the "Higher Power" concept and left. Desperate, I sought out OA in the blue pages of the phone book and found the meeting I now attend.

Today I am grateful to OA for the many new friends I have who share the same problems with food that I have. I do not have to do it alone. I can pick up the phone and reach out to others for support, pick up OA literature and read, or ask my "Higher Power" to remove the thoughts of a particular "trigger food".

No longer do I fear expressing my thoughts or experiences in a meeting of 30 plus "strangers." We are all equal in OA. From my very first meeting I realized I had found a safe haven. I never knew there were so many people who shared my problems with food anorexia, bulimia. Indeed I had found home at last.

Through the sharing at OA meetings, literature, sponsors, the Mini-Marathons, and OA service I have been imperfectly abstinent since January 2000 I also have a 53 pound weight loss due to my food plan.

I am indeed grateful for my "Gad Jar." It has relieved my obsessive thinking and thoughts and opened many new awareness.

Thank you OA for the support I get and for teaching me to be grateful for who I am, for what I have become and what I have.

NIGHT OWL LIST

Fellow Compulsive Overeaters willing to take your late night calls:

NAME	PHONE	CALL BETWEEN
Stephanie	610-329-6399 (c) 610-644-7490 (h)	12:00 PM – 3:00 AM
Mike B.	610-405-1437	9 PM – 12:00 Midnight
Stephanie P.	610-329-6399 (c) 610-644-7490 (h)	Till 3:00 AM

EARLY BIRD LIST

Fellow Compulsive Overeaters willing to take your early morning calls:

NAME	PHONE	CALL BETWEEN
Suzanne M.	610-906-2721	6:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Mike B.	610-405-1437	6:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Annie B.	610-933-7066	Starting at 5 AM
Donna U	610-631-7804	5:00 AM - 7:00 AM

BRANDYWINE INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Post Office Box 605, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Website Address:

www.oa-brandywine.org

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