

recovery

DECEMBER 2007



Intergroup Happenings by Josie W.

Brandywine Intergroup has been very busy preparing to spread the message of recovery to those who still suffer. At the October meeting, new co-chairs were appointed to the Public Information and Outreach Committee. With a renewed emphasis on outreach, through health fairs and printed materials, the committee work is well under way. In fact, during the Group Issues and Feedback portion of our meeting, we discussed ways that groups can attract newcomers. Check out the "Carry the Message" page on our website (oa-brandywine.org). There you will find flyers that can be printed off and posted around town with space for including your meeting information and tear-offs with our hotline number and website address.

Three of our members attended the Region 7 Assembly on October 5-7 in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware and reported on the work of the region. One of our members joined the subcommittee for transporting a new display board available for outreach opportunities, while another was elected to the position of corresponding secretary for Region 7. Two of these members will be attending the World Service Business Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico in May. This participation at deeper levels of service helps us all to stay connected to OA as a whole. Our reps bring information to us

as well as bring our concerns and perspectives to the larger fellowship. We are grateful for their service.

Hope you have read this in time to attend the IDEA Day Marathon November 17th at the Grove Methodist Church in West Chester as advertised in last month's newsletter. It was an opportunity to give our recovery a boost, as well as to get to know other recovering and struggling compulsive overeaters who may not attend our regular meetings. With the busy holiday season coming up, it was a good time to reaffirm our commitment to abstinence "no matter what".

Much work is being done behind the scenes to plan potentially two retreats in 2008. The planning for the Silent Retreat, May 30-June 2, is well under way. Look for flyers and registration information in the near future. We will also hear a report at the November Intergroup meeting on a fall Big Book Step Study retreat. By the time you read this, your Intergroup rep should have information. Ask him or her to share it with you.

Please consider getting involved in Intergroup by representing your group, coming to the meeting as a visitor, or volunteering to work on a committee or event. There is much to be done that will benefit our Intergroup, OA as a whole, and most importantly, your own recovery.

Carry the Message by Kathy B-H, Brandywine Intergroup Webservant

New this month to the Brandywine Intergroup Web site is a "Carry the Message" page. From this page, groups and members can download resources helpful for carrying the OA message of recovery and attracting newcomers. To get there, visit <http://www.oa-brandywine.org> and click the "Carry the Message" link in the list on the left-hand side.

Featured first is the "Is food a problem for you?" flyer, which provides space to fill in local meeting details, and offers tear-offs with the Brandywine Intergroup Web address and phone number. Groups may also fill in their own meeting info on the

back side of the tear-off if desired.

The holidays are a critical time for compulsive overeaters who are suffering. Let's paper the public places and workplaces of the Brandywine Intergroup area with this flyer! If just one still-suffering compulsive eater sees the flyer and comes to a meeting for the first time, it'll be worth the effort.

Groups and members with resources for "Carrying the Message" are asked to submit their ideas for sharing on the Web. Contact the Webservant at webservant@oa.brandywine.org to share a resource.

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.*

Holiday Hints by Nancy M.

I've been in OA for several years and whenever a holiday comes up, I see it as just another day to eat my abstinent meals and snacks. Holiday times are usually spent with family and/or friends and it's important for me to focus on the company rather than the meal(s).

I came into OA a few weeks before Thanksgiving, determined to "lick" the disease of compulsive overeating, even though I didn't know I had a disease until I heard step one read in a meeting. I am so grateful for this program. It saved my life—yes, it gave me a wonderful life free from the binging and non-stop eating that I did every waking hour. It is called "grazing" by some and to me, I did feel like a cow—a big, fat cow.

Since the day before I came into program I have followed a food plan free of sugar and flour- my two deadly addictive substances. It wasn't easy and sometimes it's difficult but my abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception. Each abstinent day, for me, makes it easier to have another, and another—sound familiar??? Through working the steps, using the tools (almost all of them) every day and

remembering the 3-legged stool- emotional, spiritual and physical recovery, I have been blessed with a long and healthy recovery. This program is one of progress, not perfection.

All I can suggest is that when you are entertaining or being entertained at a holiday, plan to cook, or purchase, or bring foods along that are in your food plan and may not be available to you. Call ahead if it's at a restaurant or banquet hall. These days it's much easier to eat "out" because people are much more accommodating to our special food needs.

Please plan ahead because those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Also remember to carry phone numbers with you. I'm always happy to hear from other members, and over the holidays it's a little more special. It's also a wonderful way to do service, make the calls and answer them. It's a 2-way street.

Have a wonderful holiday season and remember that you are worthy of respect, love and recovery. (A quote from my loving sponsor.)

Reprinted from November 2006 Recovery newsletter

8 Tips for Getting Through the Holidays (Abstinent!)

1. Focus on the true meaning of the holiday or event rather than the food orgy that sometimes accompanies it.
2. Don't set yourself up to feel bad because of unrealistic expectations of what the holiday will bring. Sometimes we're with family, sometimes with friends, sometimes we are alone. Face the reality of the situation beforehand. For example, if a family occasion almost always turns unpleasant, plan not to be part of the unpleasantness. If you're going to be alone, face that you may face sadness. Plan to deal with it, without excess food.
3. From the perspective of food, treat the holiday like any other day. Our disease never takes a holiday.
4. Set an extra space beside you (in your mind or for real) at the table for your Higher Power.
5. Plan! Plan! Plan! Be proactive toward the holidays and the meals. Don't just lie back and hope for the best. Rehearse in your mind over and over exactly what you will do, particularly what, where and when you will eat. Pray just before sitting down to the meal.
6. Gratitude, gratitude, gratitude. There is nothing as good for staying abstinent—particularly during the holidays—than focusing on the many things we have, rather than what we don't have. Do gratitude lists frequently.
7. For many of us the most dangerous period for our abstinence is after we have successfully gone through a difficult occasion. The insanity of our disease subconsciously or consciously tells us to reward ourselves with food because we did so well yesterday. Or, we suffer some kind of letdown about the occasion. It didn't meet our expectations. Some of us feel an emptiness after holidays that in the past we have tried to fill with food. For these reasons, plan to go to meetings the next day after the holiday.
8. A holiday is not a crisis. Holidays come every year. They are merely calendar times set aside to honor certain things. We deal with the holidays just like we deal with the rest of the days in the year. You can do it. Relax and work your program the way you know how.

Reprinted from December 2001 Promises (Westchester, NY, Intergroup Newsletter)

12 More Tips for Abstinent Holidays (Because You Can Never Have Enough Tips)

1. Line up extra OA activities (meetings, phone calls, service, intergroup).
2. Entertain OA friends, especially newcomers, at home or at a coffee shop.
3. Keep your OA telephone list with you at all times.
4. Find out about holiday meetings or celebrations in local groups.
5. Skip any parties/eating occasions you're nervous about.
6. If there's one you can't skip, take an OA friend or keep literature and a gratitude list handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late (plan an "important date" in advance).
8. Go to special places that are meaningful to you—church, a park, the shore. And don't forget about extra meetings!
9. Don't sit around worrying or brooding; catch up on reading, OA tools, museums, walks, letters.
10. Don't project about holiday temptations; remember "One day at a time."
11. Even if you cannot give material gifts, you can share the gift of your recovery and enjoy the beauty of the holidays.
12. Carry the message. Give joy away, and it will be yours to keep.

Reprinted from November 2005 Recovery newsletter and gratefully borrowed from a 12-step friend and adapted for OA

Halloween Treat

On October 31, five members of BIG did service by offering literature and information at the OA table at the Immaculata University health fair. Many students and staff stopped by, and we were able to provide pamphlets, meeting lists, answers, and cold water thanks to the efforts of Adele, Leslie, Janice M, Kathy B-H, and Marilyn V.

Some people didn't even know that our organization existed and were grateful to hear that they, or someone they knew, could attend a nearby meeting. While we didn't use the newly purchased Region 7 display board because of the limited space, the trifold display with its attention-getting picture and facts, was effective in drawing people to our table.

If you know of a college, hospital, or other organization that is holding a health fair, please notify the public information co-chairs so that we may coordinate the event through the committee, rather than have a meeting take responsibility for it. Also, please consider doing service by helping at a future health fair or similar event.

Public Information Co-chairs
Janice M. 610-544-8821
Marilyn V. 610-565-5679

The Gift Given to Me by OA by Dick C.

Of all the many gifts I have receive since becoming a member of the OA Fellowship, the most significant was the lesson that **I Am Not in Charge**. Before I learned that truth, I was drowning in my attempts to control life and my inabilities to accept life on life's terms.

Mostly I was trying to protect my family from the difficulties that life presented on an ongoing basis. This included both large and small problems. I was doing the footwork but I wasn't willing to accept the results. Because of this, I had no serenity.

An early sponsor had me write out, "there is a God, and I'm not it." I've kept it on my desk where I can see it daily. Because of my little

addict mind, it is easy for me to selectively forget some important facts. All of this is and other way of saying, "Let go and let God."

Years later, another wise sponsor encouraged me to write down troubling issues on a piece of paper and then place the note in a God box. This became another way that I learned to turn over problems to my higher power. Gradually I developed feelings of acceptance and the gratitude.

Reprinted from December 2004 Recovery newsletter

Meeting News by Mike B., Recovery Newsletter Editor

Thursday Conshohocken, United Methodist Church, 6th & Fayette Streets, will still be held on Thanksgiving. However, the time is going to be moved from 10:15 AM to 12 Noon.

Sunday Phoenixville/Spring City is having a special extended focus meeting on *Getting Through the Holidays*. It will be held Sunday, December 2nd, from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at Zion Lutheran Church, 39 Bonnie Brae Road (at Route 724), Spring City (East Pikeland) in Chester County. Call Debbie at 610-983-4007 for directions and additional information.

What I Plan to do to Keep From Being the Biggest Turkey at the Christmas Table

by Mike B.

This Holiday is primarily celebrated by eating which makes it especially dangerous for us compulsive overeaters. The smells and foods served act as a strong magnet for us to break our abstinence. However, have no fear, you can make it through this holiday if you work this program and offer it up to your higher power. Also, I will share what I have been doing the last few years which have helped get me through it abstinent.

First, like most days I will call into my sponsor the night before and give my food. Normally, at home I weigh and measure but when I go out I normally do not. So I will call in my standard breakfast, lunch which will be weighed and measured and for the Holiday dinner I will say, "One plate full, a salad if served with no bread or desert." That is what works for me.

Next, like every day I plan to get up and get on my knees and say the seventh step prayer asking for an abstinent, sober, serene and happy day. Then I will say the seventh step prayer. Then for this holiday I will ask my higher power for the strength to make it through this especially dangerous day so I can be witness to the power strength and success of the OA program.

Then I plan to read my *For Today*. There will be probably be a reading that will strengthen my program and remind me of something I forgot and need to remember. The *For Today* is kept in my car so that I can read it every day before I go into work. If I don't remember it in the morning I will probably see it when I drive to thanksgiving celebration and do it then.

Other things I need to do this day is to remember the Thanksgivings of the past where I ate too much and felt bloated and like I needed to vomit from eating too much. Also, I need to remember the arguments I would get in at the holiday table or afterward and how that is not good for my abstinence. How I need to remember to keep my serenity not be self-righteous and feel I need to be a one man debating force ready to correct the immature and incorrect philosophies of the world.

If I do slip I will not use it as an excuse to blow my abstinence and have an all out binge for the rest of the day. Instead I will put the fork or piece of food down as soon as I recognize it and say a little prayer asking my higher power to help me.

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

NIGHT OWL LIST

Fellow Compulsive Overeaters willing to take your late night calls:

NAME	PHONE	CALL BETWEEN
Christine S.	267-254-4886	9 PM – 12:00 Midnight
Mike B.	610-405-1437	9 PM – 12:00 Midnight
Nicole J.	215-877-3166	9 PM – 12:00 Midnight
Stephanie	610-329-6399 (c) 610-644-7490 (h)	12:00 PM – 3:00 AM
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
Annie B.	610-933-7066	Starting at 5 AM
Donna U.	610-631-7804	5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
Loisa I.	215-796-4323	5:35 AM to 6:45 AM
Mike B.	610-405-1437	6:00 AM – 8:00 AM
Suzanne M.	610-906-2721	6:00 AM – 8:00 AM

BRANDYWINE INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Post Office Box 605, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Website Address:

www.aa-brandywine.org

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