



# MESSENGER

The Bi-Annual Newsletter of Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous

Fall 2006

## *Recovery, Service and Change*

Hi, my name is Karin and I am a compulsive overeater. I have been in the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous for 17 years now and God willing I will celebrate 15 years of abstinence on Sept 13, 2006. I am so grateful for this program that has saved my life and taught me a new way to live. When I came into the fellowship I was a fearful, depressed, and angry person who weighed over 200 lbs and could not stop eating. I just wanted to lose weight, not have a spiritual awakening. I had no idea how much I would gain by being a member of this fellowship and working the 12 Steps. In Sept of 1991, I surrendered completely to the fact that I am powerless over food, that I am not a normal eater and that I have a disease. I also accepted the spiritual solution and started working the Steps as outlined in the Big Book with a sponsor.

I was at an OA retreat recently where the leader emphasized the Step 10 promises in her talk. (Big Book pg 84-85). By the time we have reached Step 10 the Big Book tells us that "sanity will have returned". We will not fight food anymore. "If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame... We have been placed in a position of neutrality-safe and protected...The problem has been removed." I feel these are the real promises of the program. But there is a warning. We react this way so long as we keep in "fit spiritual condition". As an old timer, I have had a tendency to want to rest on my laurels and take a break. Life can be busy and sometimes I just don't want to go to another meeting or do step-related writing. Eventually this becomes a problem because I am not cured of compulsive overeating, and the food will call me again. I am just as much a compulsive overeater today as I was when I first came here. The truth is that I want the freedom and sanity promised in the Steps, so I have to be willing to go to any lengths. Today I am willing to use the tools to work the Steps. It's not always easy but it always works if I work it.

Service has always been a big part of my recovery. It tells me in the Big Book that we can't keep what we have if we don't give it away. I like to do service. I enjoy working with others; it enhances my program. There are many opportunities to do service in OA. When you're involved in service, it keeps OA in the forefront of your activities. I've been coming to region for years now, but I certainly never thought that I would be the R6 Chair. I was appointed Chair in May when Margaret Ann became our Trustee. I will serve as Chair until the fall assembly, at which time I have decided to actually run for the position. I also served as Chair in an interim capacity

in 2003 when Dexter became the trustee. I am both excited and a little anxious about doing service at this level. Sometimes I wonder "what I have gotten myself into?" It can be overwhelming at times because there is always a lot to learn, but I don't have to do it alone. This is a "we" program. Help is available. It sure is an opportunity for growth. When I get over my feelings that I am not good enough and get out of my own way, I can trust my Higher Power and trust that I can do this, and that I am good enough. I have enjoyed working with the R6 Board over the last few years and I would recommend it to anyone.

Life has been busy for me lately, with lots of changes. I got married in May and spent 3 weeks in Europe. I even attended an OA meeting in Heidelberg, Germany on my honeymoon. My ex-husband got married last weekend and my oldest child is preparing to leave home for university. My parents are both ill so it is a difficult time. Life happens, both good and bad, but I don't have to eat over it.

As R6 Chair I have chaired a teleconference call with the board in June and dealt with region business by email, lots of emails. I will attend the Region Chair's Committee/BOT meeting in Albuquerque, NM in August, and then I will see you all at the R6 Assembly on Sept 16. Why don't we all celebrate our recovery by getting involved in service in some form or other!

Have a good summer. See you in Albany.  
Thank you for this opportunity to serve.

*Karin R., Region 6 Chair*  
613-828-4413 / [chair@oaregion6.org](mailto:chair@oaregion6.org)

**Miracle in the Mountains**

**CATSKILL, NY**

**OCTOBER 27-29, 2006**

*Liberty and Recovery*

*For All*

More information at [www.OAregion6.org](http://www.OAregion6.org)  
and see page 11

**REGION 6 CONTACTS**

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**Please mail R6 contributions to:**

Sid B., R6 Treasurer  
P.O. Box 869  
Salem, Massachusetts 01970  
Please make checks payable to: **Region 6 OA**

The following information allows us to properly acknowledge your group's contribution:

- WSO Group Number
- Meeting Name
- Meeting Day & Time

Your canceled check is your receipt. Your intergroup will receive an acknowledgment at either the next R6 Assembly or mailed with the next issue of The Messenger to your intergroup. Please ask your groups to be as generous as possible. Thank you for your support, service and contributions.

**THE MESSENGER is the publication of Region 6 Assembly of Overeaters Anonymous**  
7 Porter Park  
Cambridge, MA 02140-2107

**WHAT IS REGION 6?**

Region 6 consists of Overeaters Anonymous meetings and intergroups from the following geographical locations: New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Central and Eastern Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The purpose of Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous is:

- To further the OA program in accordance with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA;
- To maintain a communications center for Region 6. Specifically excluded is the endorsement of any outside enterprise as outlined in Tradition Six;
- To provide a forum for the selection of Regional and General Service Trustee nominees;
- To provide unity of groups and organization of Intergroups within Region 6;
- To host Region 6 Marathons and Conventions as deemed necessary by Region 6;
- To work for OA as a whole within the Region or Committees appointed by World Service..

**The next Region 6 Assemblies are scheduled for:**  
**September 16, 2006**  
**April 14, 2007**

**at the Quality Inn, Albany, NY located Route 9W, just south of Exit 23 on the NY State Thruway.**

**THE MESSENGER STAFF**

The Messenger is produced through the efforts of the members of the Region 6 Newsletter Committee. We are:

- Steve M. ----- Chair
- Neil R. ----- Editor
- Pat F. ----- French Canadian Coordinator
- Gaston L. ----- French Translation Coordinator
- Anne O. ----- Proofreader
- Mary M.. ----- Proofreader
- Jeffrey A. ----- Committee Member
- Judy R. ----- Committee Member

**Editorial Policy**

The Messenger is the bi-annual newsletter of Region Six of Overeaters Anonymous. The deadline for copy is the July 1 for the Fall Edition and January 1 for the Spring Edition. Material cannot be returned nor can payment be made. All submissions to the editor must be signed and when published, will appear with first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Names will be withheld upon request. The Messenger reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity. Other OA groups may reprint without permission. We ask that you cite the writer and The Messenger as your source. Courtesy copies of reprinted articles are appreciated. The opinions expressed are those of the writer, not those of Region 6 or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and correspondence to The Messenger via e-mail to: [Newsletter@OAreion6.org](mailto:Newsletter@OAreion6.org) or via US Postal Service in care of the Region Six Coordinator at the address designated above.

## Trustee's Message

Welcome to the Fall 2006 R6 Messenger. In my very first Messenger article as Region 6 Trustee, I want to thank you deeply, truly, madly: just as I was promised, serving my fellowship as Trustee is a tremendous privilege and rewarding beyond description. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

So, writing as trustee rather than as chairman, I elected to reflect on the issues that have come up most in my talks with you over the last few months. No doubt, the biggest concern (Surprise!!) is group autonomy; specifically, what is and isn't okay in a group's format. In Region 6, we have two particular kinds of meetings that cause the most concern: the "90 day" and the "Big Book Step Study" formats.

The "90 day" format emphasizes physical recovery as the crucial leg of the "three-legged stool", and requests that members have at least 90 days of continuous abstinence to share during open discussion (this differs from a 90 day "requirement" for those to qualify or lead an OA meeting).

The "Big Book Step Study" (BBSS) format, based upon an AA meeting format originated in Hyannis, Mass. some 20 years ago, is part of a very structured way of working the 12 Steps out of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In many BBSS meetings, only members who have worked the 12 Steps according to this structure are permitted to share.

The Fourth Tradition states: "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole." That means a group can be independent, self-governing, and able to make decisions (and act on them) as a free and independent agent. No other group, intergroup, region or World Service can dictate how you run your meeting.

Of course, the Fourth Tradition is just one of twelve, and a group that decides it can do exactly as it wishes, claiming the right of autonomy, should also make sure it is mindful of the other eleven. Are group decisions enhancing OA unity? Are leaders trusted servants, not governors? Would someone coming to the meeting believe there were requirements for OA membership other than a desire to stop eating compulsively? The questions for groups following each of the Traditions in OA's "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" provide such guidelines.

In the case of the "90 day" and "BBSS" formats, the sticking point for many members is the restrictions on sharing. These group formats highlight the benefit of hearing the sharing by members with a particular kind of recovery experience, and ask that those who do not yet have that experience to respect the group's right of autonomy, and simply listen. But isn't this contrary to the spirit of Tradition Three – "the only requirement for OA membership"?

We are told that OA groups who do not practice the Traditions will usually falter eventually. Yet, the truth is that the "90 day" and "BBSS" formats show absolutely no sign of faltering after several years. Is it possible that there are some benefits that we ought to consider?

AA's cofounder, Bill Wilson, wrote in *AA Comes of Age* (p.105) that Tradition Four means "alcoholics ... could disagree

with any or all of AA's principles and still call themselves an AA group... If they were able to improve on our methods, then in all probability we would adopt what they discovered for general use everywhere."

Still, OA is not AA – we have some issues that a sober alcoholic doesn't face (i.e., we gotta eat food). Controversies over food plans, and what does and doesn't constitute abstinence have created terrible disunity in OA. Some groups, in their practice of autonomy, decided that they could dictate to members what foods and eating practices were permissible in order to be considered abstinent. This practice was found to be very disruptive, and greatly affected OA as a whole in the following ways:

- (1) Newcomers became confused or other misunderstandings developed as to what OA's suggested practices were.
- (2) Health professionals stopped referring patients in the belief that all OA meetings practiced extremely rigid diets.

Ultimately, OA felt it important to amend its bylaws to include the following language to address this situation.

### ARTICLE V – OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS GROUPS

#### Section 1 – Definition

a) These points shall define an Overeaters Anonymous group:

1) As a group, they meet to practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

2) All who have the desire to stop eating compulsively are welcome in the group.

3) *No member is required to practice any actions in order to remain a member or to have a voice (share at a meeting).* (emphasis added)

4) As a group they have no affiliation other than Overeaters Anonymous.

Each group, when it registers with the World Service Office, affirms its willingness to govern itself according to this definition. The practice of group autonomy does not extend to a decision to pick and choose among these items.

Is it possible to retain the benefits we've found in these, and other meeting formats, while practicing unity and acceptance of all OA members as equal? I think it is. I know that many "90 day" meetings have long since dropped the "requirement" of 90 days to share, instead making it a suggestion, and it is practiced as such – the suggestion as part of the format reinforces the group's collective decision to focus on the experience of members who live a commitment to physical abstinence. The BBSS meeting I attend has open sharing in its format.

Harking back to the quote from Bill Wilson, I'd like to quote from an excellent article by one of our trustees on the topic of group autonomy.

"Do we live by this belief in OA? ... If a group were to find a way that worked better than what we are doing, would we embrace this new way, knowing it may help someone? Or do we

[Continued on page 7]

## Members' Thoughts on Tradition 4

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

### FOURTH TRADITION

The 4th Tradition of OA speaks about autonomy, but on the condition of not hurting OA as a whole. With this tradition, I learn to be responsible to other members of my group. In everyday life, I can drive with my car from point A to point B by whatever road I choose. I must, however, respect the stop signs, the traffic lights, the pedestrians, etc. With the 4th Tradition, we have leeway to conduct our meetings based upon respect for the Steps and the Traditions.

There are dangers in deciding too fast that our group is autonomous. That's why we strive for an informed group conscience...taking the time to get the information before deciding.

Our spiritual approach and the food plan are two intimate issues. Each one of us has a personal spirituality. The 3rd Tradition says that the only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. Some years ago a member only stayed for two meetings. It was obvious that he was of a different religious belief. Religion was too strong in our closing prayers, and he chose not to come back.

— Estelle  
Region 6

### A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE FOURTH TRADITION

When I think of OA as a whole, it starts with the groups and intergroups nearest to me. This principle/tradition makes me think twice when I want to be “insular,” or think that “my group is better than another group or intergroup”. Some years ago, we “seceded” from the intergroup that we belonged to, which was really quite a distance away, so it was a good thing. But our city has a long history of rivalry with the one where the original intergroup was and is. The rivalry seemed to carry into our way of thinking as an intergroup. Several years later we started holding certain activities together and participating in certain tasks that were helpful to both intergroups. It pleases me to see today that we feel closer and more unified.

Through my 24 years in OA, I have lived in three different countries and gone to all kinds of meetings. I have seen how OA is expressed culturally in many different and sometimes surprising ways. However, I always found the same spirit wherever I went; the love and acceptance that are real OA trademarks have always been there and never, not once, have I felt alienated in those meetings. This is a consequence of this wonderful Tradition.

For the good of OA as a whole and for the good of the newcomer, I think it is really important to keep the specifics of religion absent from the meetings as well as the polemics about food plans (my food plan is better than yours, etc.). I'm in contact with people of different cultures and religions and it is very

obvious to me that our illness does not respect any culture or faith. Therefore, keeping the OA meetings as neutral as possible allows newcomers to feel welcome and at home in OA. In that way, we can concentrate better on what we are doing at the meetings: passing on the message of how we recover by way of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA.

The 4th Tradition helps me also because as an egocentric individual, I want MY way to dominate in the activities that I might organize for my group or intergroup. For the good of the whole, for the good of OA, I must “tame” myself and take into consideration the others in the things that I do.

— Anonymous

## Miracle in the Mountains

CATSKILL, NY  
OCTOBER 27-29, 2006

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For All*

More information at [www.OAregion6.org](http://www.OAregion6.org)  
and see page 11

### SYMPTOMS OF INNER PEACE

Be on the lookout for symptoms of inner peace! The hearts of a great many people have already been exposed to Inner Peace, and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has been, up to now, a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world!

Some signs and symptoms of inner peace:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people and in interpreting their actions.
- A loss of interest in conflict
- A loss of the ability to worry. (A very serious symptom)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling (also very serious)
- An increasing tendency to let things happen, rather than to make them happen.

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## Members' Thoughts on Tradition 4

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

[Continued from page 4]

- An increased susceptibility to love extended by others, and the uncontrollable urge to extend it...

Group autonomy has said again and again, our members are responsible for keeping our group free from outside influence. My home group is called "The New Friendship Group of Overeaters Anonymous." I love my home group, as it sets the pattern for my decision to accept help from those who have gone before me. They were willing to share how it worked for them, and I am ever so grateful. They set me on the path to recovery by encouraging me to read and study OA literature. I had spent my life looking for answers, and these OA folks gave me literature with the answers in it. I was ready to do anything to get out of this hopeless way of life with food.

There were times when people brought in books from other areas and the long-timers were not afraid to speak up to remind them it was against the traditions. My home group had an attitude of acceptance that made me part of the love and understanding that is still given in the room 30 years later. What a gift! I learned and studied the Steps and found a way out of the pain. I learned that the Steps and not the people will set me free from my own prison.

I learned that we grow together, and together we protect our groups. I remember the first time I asked a member to take a book off the table that was not OA approved literature. She thanked me for letting her know that we all need to take responsibility to protect our rooms and to supply only the OA message. I am encouraged, knowing that the OA rooms will be there for all who want the recovery and the 12 Step way of life.

*In Loving Service*

— *Suzu OA*

*"4th tradition"*

### OUR WISE TRADITIONS

I love the wisdom behind these traditions. No wonder 12-step programs work for such a wide variety of folks. The protection and care of the traditions assures all of us a fair chance at recovery.

Regarding Tradition 4, I really appreciate how carefully guarded our autonomy is. I've been at a business meeting when someone with years of experience had to gently guide those of us who were newer when we were heading into murky water. The traditions help us stay clear and focused.

One Tradition 4 experience that I feel strongly about (in opposition) is the issue of "suggesting" that newcomers shouldn't share for the first 90 days. I learn from every single newcomer who is brave enough to share.

Whether the value I get from their sharing is a reminder of the pain of still being in the food, or the enormous excitement that someone new shares when they first feel at home in the meetings or when they first become peacefully abstinent, I gain so much from their wisdom and energy. To silence the newcomer is to

squelch the very energy that keeps the meetings alive and fresh for all of us.

I also really loved the portion of the explanation about how a group that is out of bounds with the traditions isn't just "dropped". That is such a great example of the deep wisdom at the basis of program: the groups can learn to be more in alignment with the core traditions, whether from guidance from the governing bodies or from trial and error.

I love the diversity of our meetings, each has its own flavor due to the ability to tailor it to suit various needs as long as it follows the basis foundation: the Traditions. I know that I really look forward to the different meetings I frequent partly because I really enjoy the variety of formats and materials we read from. It would be too boring for me if every meeting had to be exactly the same.

— *Mary*

### AUTONOMY IN MY PERSONAL LIFE (AND THE 4TH TRADITION)

I often say that the Steps help me in my personal recovery and the Traditions help me in my relationships.

Individualistic and self-centered I used to focus only on myself, on my needs and my desires. Actually, the world revolved around me and I became aggressive whenever it didn't do as I wished.

With the OA way of life, I have learned to live with others, to not be apprehensive about showing my feelings and allowing myself to be known by other OA members, by my spouse and by my acquaintances. From a self-centered point of view, I am now going into an altruistic one. My personal recovery is now dependent on unity whereas before my way of life was individualistic. To be more unselfish and sociable is to be more autonomous. I don't need to please everybody to feel loved. My need to control, out of fear that things won't be as I anticipated, has lessened. OA gives me the potential to be free and autonomous. However, my freedom is limited by the consequences that my choices and decisions may have on others.

Whether with my employer, my co workers, my spouse or my children, thanks to OA I can now make compromises, and altruistically consider their needs and the impacts that my decisions may have on them. And the best part of all is that, instead of feeling victimized or curtailed in my freedom, I find this to be an expression of my love for them.

Thank you OA for this freedom of being.

— *Gaston L.*

*Outremangeur compulsif*

*Intergroupe OA Français de Montréal*

## ***Members' Thoughts on Tradition 4***

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

### **THE BALANCED APPLICATION OF TRADITION 4 THROUGHOUT OA**

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

When I came to OA, I initially focused on the Steps. Considerable time passed before I involved myself in service and looked at the Traditions, and even more time before I considered the application of the Traditions to my recovery.

Members suggested I go to meetings, get a sponsor, work the Steps, give up the food, get a food plan, find a God of my understanding, try and help others, and much more. They emphasized I didn't have to do any of this, but if I wanted to get well, I would be wise to do certain things. In other words, I was autonomous within OA, free to do whatever I liked, make whatever mistakes I liked, but I might want to consider the wisdom in doing what others had done. In time I came to understand my responsibility to behave like a person in recovery and carry the message to others; compulsive eaters and others would judge Overeaters Anonymous by how members conducted themselves and how they reflected the program in action.

A healthy OA group, like a healthy OA member, is one that knows it has the freedom to do whatever it likes. Yet, the group understands its very survival depends on following certain principles, making an effort to study and apply these principles, and being a living example of them in all its affairs. And a healthy longtime member, like a well-established group, knows that sometimes we need to go out there and learn from life's experiences. We must be there for those compulsive eaters who come stumbling back after faltering along the way. The long-timer also understands that while we do our research, OA will not collapse, be it at the individual or group level.

At every service level, the key to Tradition Four is autonomy with responsibility — and patience.

In May, delegates at the 2006 World Service Business Conference will discuss the meaning of Tradition Four. They will hear perspectives on how far autonomy should go and what really affects other groups or OA as a whole. Some of us would say Tradition Four leaves groups able to do pretty much whatever they like, learning whatever they need to learn in the process. Others would say that much of what we do can have wide impact, and we should be very careful in doing anything without consulting the wider Fellowship. The rest of us believe everything in between.

At the group level, what might affect other groups or OA as a whole? Perhaps very little!

Some possibilities are:

- When we are doing PI work or working with institutions, we need to consult other groups.
- If we are setting up a meeting, we probably should make sure we don't have it on a night that will clash with a nearby group.
- When it comes to setting up a telephone line or distributing a local-meetings list, we may want to work with other groups to avoid duplication of service.

But regarding all else, what if we were to ask, "Does this action greatly affect OA as a whole?" (The words of the long form of Tradition Four). As mentioned, autonomy does bring responsibility. We must learn about the Traditions and speak up when we see them being broken. We must always ask, "Will our action hurt anyone? Are we helping the Fellowship as a whole?" But having asked those questions, perhaps we will learn more through tolerance (even of those we believe are breaking Traditions), through open-mindedness, and above all, through accepting that there is more than one way to work the program.

AA's cofounder, Bill Wilson, wrote in *AA Comes of Age* (p. 105) that Tradition Four means "alcoholics could try for sobriety in any way they liked. They could disagree with any or all of A.A.'s principles and still call themselves an A.A. group ... If ... they found something better than A.A., or if they were able to improve on our methods, then in all probability we would adopt what they discovered for general use everywhere".

Do we live by this belief in OA? Are we willing to allow groups to disagree with all of our principles and still call themselves an OA group? If a group were to find a way that worked better than what we are doing, would we embrace this new way, knowing it may help someone? Or do we in OA micromanage and over-regulate, as some suggest? Have we lost sight of the fundamental faith that AA's early members had, that such liberty would have little risk because our disease itself would ensure that we would conform, or perish. Are we willing to look and see if some of those "mistakes" might even be right, be something we could learn from? Are we ready to welcome, even encourage, new ideas and ways of working the program, knowing they may benefit some; and if they don't, they will not last? Are we ready to believe the Fellowship is strong enough to take the risk?

— *Member of the Board of Trustees*



## Members' Thoughts on Tradition 4

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

### THE 4TH TRADITION AND MY RECOVERY

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups and OA as a whole”.

In the beginning, I did not understand the real sense of this Tradition, except the direct and explicit reference to autonomy, that is, to each group's freedom. Reading the text again, and taking the time to understand the profound meaning of these words of wisdom, I finally realized that each group can enjoy its autonomy as long as this does not harm other groups or OA as a whole. In other words, the group's autonomy stops right where another group's autonomy starts as well as the autonomy of OA as a whole.

That's why we need to include the reading of the 12 Steps of OA in the meeting format used by the group. Without the Steps, there is no OA group, there is no 12-Steps OA recovery program... The group's autonomy must not endanger OA's unity, between the groups as well as OA as a whole.

And so, do the 4th Tradition and my recovery go hand in hand? Yes of course, because the discipline that the 4th Tradition suggests, in my group's relations with other OA groups as well as inside my own group, is also useful to the practice of my program, that is the 12-Step OA program. In this case also, my personal liberty, this cherished autonomy, goes as far as the liberty of other members allows. I learn to live autonomously, abiding by the decisions of my group's conscience, when for example the group has set a time limit for the shares. My autonomy must not deprive other members from their sharing time because I would like to freely express myself for all the time that I deem necessary.

My autonomy does not prevent me from accepting the important definitions presented in OA, for example the abstinence definition. For sure I have the right to my own opinions and I certainly can limit myself to them in my private life. I must then

ask myself, in all honesty, the degree of my commitment to living the OA program.

In short, what's good for my group and for OA as a whole can guide me in the practice of my program and can help me thus to surrender to my Higher Power my pride, my self-importance, my egocentricity and my other shortcomings that make my daily life so painful.

I am grateful to OA, and also to the fellowships that have, ever since AA, maintained and passed on these Traditions, guarantee of OA's survival and, above all, a precious help for any member who is ready to do anything to become and remain abstinent.

— *Anonymous*



*From the 2006-2007 OA PI Planner*

### Trustee's Message [Continued from Page 3]

in OA micromanage and over regulate, as some suggest? Have we lost sight of the fundamental faith that AA's early members had, that such liberty would have little risk because our disease itself would ensure that we would conform, or perish. Are we willing to look and see if some of those "mistakes" might even be right, be something we could learn from? ... Are we willing to believe the Fellowship is strong enough to take the risk?"

I'm willing to believe. I'm also willing to speak up if I think an action does not live up to the spirit of our Traditions. Well, I ought to... it's part of my job description. I'm also willing to do it with love, tolerance and unity. After all, that's how we do things around here.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve this Fellowship to the best of my ability. If you'd like copies of the articles on autonomy that were distributed at this year's WSBC, please let me know; and, of course, my phone line/DSL is always open to anyone.

*In OA love and service,  
Margaret Ann B.  
Region 6 Trustee  
trustee@oaregion6.org  
617 868 9355*

## Miracle in the Mountains

CATSKILL, NY  
OCTOBER 27-29, 2006

*Liberty and Recovery  
For All*

More information at [www.OAregion6.org](http://www.OAregion6.org)  
and see page 11

## Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

### BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Chair - Jeff S (Metro NYC IG) - 7 members present

Motions will be developed to separate committee procedures from R6 Bylaws, and to incorporate them into a new document entitled "Committee Procedures Manual". Committees will be asked to review and supply their individual procedures.

### CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Chair- Barbara B. (Cape Cod IG)-13 members present

Net proceeds for NH 2005 R6 Convention = \$23,130. 700+ people registered

2006 Convention (Catskill, NY) - 100 people registered / Committee volunteers needed.

Future conventions:

1. There is no current host Intergroup for 2007 R6 Convention.
2. Ocean & Bay (RI), South Coastal (MA) and Montreal English intergroups have expressed interest in submitting proposals to host the 2008 & 2009 conventions.

Motions:

1. Requested a budget override of \$1000 to be presented to New Hampshire IG, in the spirit of April 2005 policy change to share convention profits with the host IG. (Motion adopted)
2. Create a reserve for 2006-2007 fiscal year from surplus funds accumulated as of 8/31/06. (Motion adopted)

Goals/Action Items - Fall Assembly 2006:

1. Four motions will be presented to revise committee policies & procedures.
2. The "Convention Planning 101 Manual" will be ready for review by the Committee.

2. Review the IG Handbook.
3. Mail R6 Assembly info to all IGs & unaffiliated groups not present at Spring Assembly
4. Develop a flyer to solicit an IG interested in managing the "quilt project."
5. Intergroups will be asked to prepare a patch for the quilt.
6. Themes will be suggested for the quilt, which will be raffled off at the 2007 R6 Convention. In the absence of a R6 Convention in 2007, the 2007 World Service Convention Committee will be asked permission to raffle the R6 Quilt off in Philadelphia.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair - Sheela K. (Metro NYC IG)- 8 members present

Budget for the fiscal year 2006-2007 was reviewed and agreed upon. Proposed motions:

1. \$200 for Convention Committee
2. \$400 for Newsletter
3. \$300 for pin fund raiser.

Action Items - Fall Assembly 2006:

Investigate means of accepting donations and payments on line. (Sid & Ray (Metro NYC IG)

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Chair - Steve M. (Metro West IG)-8 members present, 7 Intergroups were represented / 4 new members

Discussion:

1. Purpose of the committee
2. Newsletter Production Prior goals/successes
3. Ways to improve (save \$) on the coming issue
  - Make the business section easier reading for non-attendees at the Assembly.
  - Electronic distribution of the newsletter (benefits designated downloader).
  - Do not to send English-version Messenger to French-speaking groups.
  - Suggested writing topics (Tradition 4, and first-time impressions of R6 Assembly)

Service positions for coming issue:

- Editor-Neil (Mass Bay IG)
- Proofreader-Anne (Mid Hudson IG), Mary (Western MA IG)
- Production and Layout-Steve (Metro West IG)
- Translation, production and distribution of the French issue of the newsletter- Gaston (Intergroupe OA Francais de Montreal) and Pat F. (Intergroupe OA de Quebec).

Action Items - Fall Assembly 2006:

1. Continue using the new layout-Steve and Anne
2. Increase content from French-speaking groups
3. Make the Messenger easier to read
4. Promote events

→Where are YOU spending the weekend?←

(of October 27-29, 2006)

[www.OAregion6.org](http://www.OAregion6.org)

and see page 11

### IGOR (INTERGROUP/OUTREACH) COMMITTEE

Chair - Lyn H.(Green Mt North IG)-

Discussion:

1. Assembly Scholarship applications
2. IG Handbook
3. Mailing to intergroups and unaffiliated groups
4. The quilt project.

Goals/Action Items - Fall Assembly 2006:

1. Review Scholarship applications for R6 assembly in a timely manner.

[Continued on page 9]



## Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

[Continued from page 8]

### Long-Term (2-3 yr) Goals:

1. Reduce paper distribution/cost of Messenger by 50%.
  - a) Assist IG's inclined to opt out of ground mailing.
  - b) Offer e-subscriptions to all groups and members.
2. Increase readership of Messenger by 50%.
  - a) Offer e-subscriptions
  - b) Select a focus for each edition (Young People, Anorexia, Bulimia).
3. Create unified look for R6 website and newsletter (Branding / Visual Appeal).
4. Create French-language "mirror site" of website (This technology is available now).

### PUBLIC INFORMATION / HIPM COMMITTEE

Chair - Natalie

Discussion:

PI Blitz Proposals:

1. NYC Metro IG - A 6-week campaign in "AM New York" A free daily newspaper, primarily distributed in the NYC subway system.
2. NYS Capital District IG - Posters/billboards to increase members coming to meetings.
3. South Coastal Mass IG-Target "Living Well"-an inserted separate section going in multiple newspapers.
4. PI night, health fairs.
5. Compiling e-mail list for EAP (Employee Assistance Program).
6. Putting cards about OA in cookbooks in libraries,
7. Get information CD to professional speaker-to young people, Body Image Week.

Decisions Made:

Approved PI Blitz Proposals for: (1) NYC Metro IG (2) NYS Capital District-Approved (3) South Coastal Mass IG

Motions: (1) Carry over unused PI Blitz funds to next Assembly within calendar year. (2) Amend Policy & Procedures.

PI Blitz Proposals: An IG Board Officer will sign off on any IG Blitz proposal before submission.

### TWELVE-STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE

Chair - Roberta L.

- Reviewed January initiative - Recovery From Relapse workshops
  - Positive results.
- Encourage meetings to have 1 week-per-month devoted to "Recovery From Relapse" (Format available within The 12th Step Within Handbook).
- Made a goal to ask each intergroup to host a sponsorship-oriented workshop
- Telephone outreach suggestions:
  - 12th day of the month - Call people we haven't seen, or those we know to be still suffering.
  - Take "We Care" list of names, divide them up & have group

members make reach out calls.

– Suggest each intergroup have 12th Step Within Committee.

Action Items: Send packet to IG's with (1) "Guide For Sponsors" packet & a cover letter (2) Info on our 4 initiatives (3) Include Jan. 2006 Lifeline or Appendix F (Planning A Sponsorship Workshop) (or both).

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

Chair - Danielle T. - 5 members attended

Discussion:

- Finalize a list of suggestions for R6 Intergroups to induce more young people to come to OA.
- Examples might include:
  - Make meetings transportation-friendly
  - Publicize OA meetings at youth-oriented locations (i.e. colleges, coffee shops, etc).
  - Public information night with youth focus / Speakers between 8-25 years old).
- Follow up with IGs via e-mail and/or phone to track effectiveness of suggestions.

Goals /Action Items - Fall Assembly:

- Finalize list of suggestions to IGs to attract young people to OA by June 2006.

Long-Term Goals:

- By 2009, have two or three 18-25 year-old OA members represented at the R6 Assembly

### Summary of Elections, Motions and Votes

Region 6 Assembly – April 8, 2006

Note: Motions coming out of committees are summarized in Committee Reports. Since the full minutes of our Region 6 Assembly are distributed to all Intergroups and are available on [OAreion6.org](http://OAreion6.org), the summary in The Messenger is intended to be brief and as readable as possible.

### DATES VOTED ON FOR 2007 REGION ASSEMBLIES:

- Spring - April 14, 2007
- Fall - Sept 29, 2007

### NEW REGION BOARD POSITION CREATED

Website & Publications Coordinator will oversee and serve in an advisory capacity in the publication/distribution of the region newsletter (The Messenger), and the smooth functioning of the Region 6 Website.

### FINANCIAL:

- \$200 will be given to the Convention Committee
- \$400 will be allocated to the Newsletter to supplement additional printing costs
- \$300 will be allocated as a deposit for a Region 6 Pin Fund-Raiser
- Motion to raise mileage reimbursement from 25 to 37 cents/mile (Defeated)

## TRADITION DISCUSSION

### Outgoing Region Trustee Dexter J. presented on Tradition Four

#### Highlights:

- Groups can violate Tradition 4 when they suggest that “their” way is “OA’s” way.
- Groups acting in manners contrary to OA literature cause confusion - this might affect OA as a whole by creating uncertainty as to OA’s suggested guidelines.
- If repeated references to one’s HP (Jesus, Allah, etc) causes concern in your group, bring OA literature about this situation to a business meeting and discuss it further. If the problem persists, consult your area Intergroup.
- Dexter felt our goal is to educate our groups that rigid rules may alienate newcomers. He cited the AA book, “AA Comes of Age” - This can be life of death. Let’s keep it simple.
- It was brought up that a skit in the 12 Step Within Handbook makes reference to AWOL’s (Closed step study groups). Is this OK? Yes, because some literature is Board approved, and not OA Conference approved.
- How about when people change the words in the 12 Steps (making them gender neutral)? Dexter said it’s a copyright issue, not a Tradition issue, and that when we fail to accept the 12 Steps/Traditions as they are, group unity/serenity can be affected. He summarized it when he said, “I don’t know where to draw the line in terms of being a cop”.
- Someone cited OA’s Policy Statement that “no member shall be prohibited from leading, sharing, or speaking at a meeting due to choice of a particular food plan.”



*From the 2006-2007 OA PI Planner*

### MORNING WORKSHOP “Convention Planning 101”

The Spring Region Assembly heard a wonderful presentation on how a Region Convention happens.

From the initial proposal and conceptual stages, to the painstaking and formative planning process, through the final exhilarating weeks of mayhem that culminate in a fantastic weekend celebration of recovery, we received a step-by-step road map tour gala event, which also happens to be the region’s most significant form of fund-raising throughout the year.

Barbara B. (Cape Cod IG) the R6 2006 Convention Committee Chair conducted a slide presentation entitled “Convention Planning 101”. Each delegate was virtually walked through the process of submitting a bid, securing a facility for the event, dealing with food, decorations, registration, raffles, entertainment, workshop topics, keynote speaker development, and all of the many details that go into a successful event of this magnitude.

As daunting as it seemed, it was clear -- it has been done before, and others will help us do it again.

Following the presentation, Barbara and Gloria P. (N. Shore IG), former Co-Chair of the Danvers 2000 Convention, took time to answer many questions about the logistics and preparations that insure smooth running operations, and offered suggestions on how to avoid the typical snags that inevitably arise.

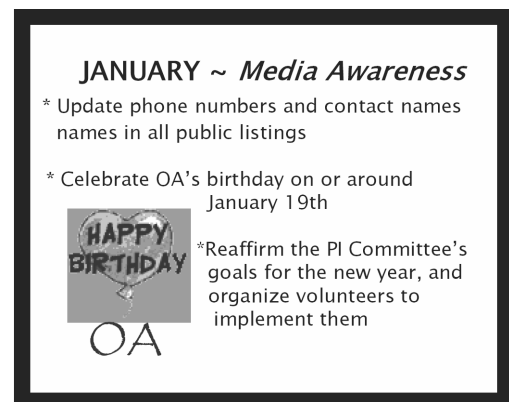
It was the hope of the Convention Committee to produce a formal region 6 convention manual to assist all future potential sponsoring intergroups in their efforts to properly prepare, inform & align their area resources before considering the undertaking of this very important service project.

Barbara also emphasized the importance of maintaining one’s own recovery throughout the process.

Personal recovery will assure that despite the accompanying sense of urgency, a convention can bring area intergroups together, with many manageable tasks that require inter-dependency and teamwork.

A Region Convention is typically a two-year process, and when two years are being planned concurrently, only the present year’s event can fund-raise and receive promotional support at the regional level. They never compete with one another. Distribution of Registration Fliers, formal promotions and sale of raffles for the “next year’s” event begin in earnest during the convention itself.

If you think that your area would be up to the task of sponsoring a Region Convention, contact the Region 6 Board and they will be glad to assist you in taking your commitment to the next level.



*From the 2006-2007 OA PI Planner*

## A MIRACLE IS HAPPENING HERE

Are you looking to take your recovery to another level? Struggling and looking for a weekend immersed in program to get back on track? Are you new and trying to get started on the recovery process with a bang? Then join us for a weekend of strength, hope, and recovery, filled with inspirational speakers, workshops, sharing, support, fellowship and fun at the annual Region 6 Convention.

Each year our region extends its loving hand to all compulsive overeaters at our annual OA Region 6 Convention. This year the convention will be hosted by Nassau Intergroup of Long Island, NY and will be held at the Friar Tuck Resort and Convention Center, in Catskill, NY (exit 21 on the New York Thruway) October 27-29, 2006. This year's theme is "Miracle in the Mountains, Liberty and Recovery for All." The theme Freedom and Recovery is loosely based on the term "Liberty and Justice for All." We who have known the hell of compulsive overeating have a choice: to opt for the freedom of recovery from the oppressive bonds of our compulsion or to face the inexorable death of food addiction.

At the convention you will be surrounded by old and new friends as well as inspirational workshops on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and such topics as relapse/recovery, abstinence, and more. Speakers from all over the region will share their strength, hope and experience with all who want to recover from this relentless disease. Highlights include Friday night's Grand Opening and keynote speaker, followed by the one and only Region 6 Talent Show. There will be workshops and marathons all weekend long with a break for the Saturday night banquet followed by a keynote speaker. Don't forget to bring your dancing shoes, for the ball will immediately follow the keynote speaker and banquet. Dress up is optional but what better time to put on your "Sunday best" and go dancing!

Service is slimming and what better time and place to give service than at the convention. We need lots of huggers, greeters, workshop leaders, and people to work at the hospitality, fund-raising, literature and registration tables. Be sure to sign up to do service when you send in your registration for the convention.

Join us in scenic Catskill, NY! Enjoy the beautiful scenery and spend a weekend surrounded by fellowship and recovery. Remember to send in your convention registration by Aug. 15, 2006 to take advantage of the early bird discount on the registration fee. Registration forms should be available at most meetings or you can go to [www.nassauoa.org](http://www.nassauoa.org), or you can contact Ron K. at 516-997-5503 or Roberta L. at 516-569-3482.

Join us in New York for the "Miracle in the Mountains."

## MORE REGION 6 EVENTS

**Event:** Back to Basics Workshops

**Date:** Saturday, September 23, 2006  
2:00pm to 5:00pm

**Location:** Hollis Congregational Church  
Monument Square  
Hollis, NH

**Sponsored by:** New Hampshire Intergroup

**Contacts:** Howard 603-886-1928 (directions)  
Pam 603-424-6349 (program)

**Event:** Relationship and Recovery Workshop

**Date:** Saturday, October 7, 2006

**Location:** St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
Parish House - (handicap accessible)  
354 Main Street, Hopkinton, NH 03229

**Sponsored by:** New Hampshire Intergroup

**Contact:** Diane L. 603-746-3173

**Event:** 4th Annual "There is a Solution: a Weekend Walk Through the Steps"

**Date:** Friday, October 13 - Sunday, October 15, 2006

**Location:** Marie Joseph Center Biddeford Pool, Maine,

**Sponsored by:** Southern Maine Intergroup

**Contact:** Pat (207-236-4101)

**Event:** Celebrating the Holidays Abstinently

**Date:** Sunday, October 15, 2006  
1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

**Location:** Redeemer Lutheran Church  
90 Route 32 South, New Paltz, NY

**Sponsored by:** Mid-Hudson Intergroup

**Contact:** Donna (845) 233-4045 or [Events@midhudsonoa.org](mailto:Events@midhudsonoa.org)

**Event:** Congrès annuel (Annual convention)

**Date:** octobre (October 21-22)  
Samedi (Saturday) 9:00 am to 10:00 pm  
Dimanche (Sunday) 9:00 am to 04:00 pm

**Location:** 7400 Boulevard St-Laurent, Montréal, Québec,  
Canada

**Sponsored by:** OA Français de Montréal

**Contacts:** Gaston: 514-253-8243 [reunions@outremangeurs.org](mailto:reunions@outremangeurs.org)