



MESSENGER

The Bi-Annual Newsletter of Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous

Spring 2006

Service ignites "the spark within"

How did you find out about Overeaters Anonymous?

When you found out about it, did you think it was someplace for you?

Did you go?

Did you keep coming?

If you're reading this, in all likelihood, you are an OA member, so you heard, you came, you've stayed.

I think my first exposure to OA was finding the pamphlet, "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite," at my doctor's office. I remember seeing that generic clip-art man pondering something on the cover of the plain green pamphlet. I remember reading the cautions against the distorted thinking that leads to eating and I remember recognizing myself in the pamphlet. I identified completely. I remember reading the Twelve Steps, seeing the Third Step, and shutting down completely. God was not going to have anything to do with my weight loss.

My second exposure was when visiting my AA sponsor's house; she had a copy of the Lifeline Sampler, and I leafed through it, once again identifying with the words compulsive eaters used to describe their experiences. By that time, I no longer had any trouble with the idea of God in the Third, or any other Step; alcohol had beaten me into a state of reasonableness. That was in the summer of 1989, and sometime around then, I attended an OA meeting, but I wasn't ready for the solution – though I knew I had the problem.

BEFORE YOU TAKE THAT FIRST BITE... DO SERVICE

I didn't keep coming until February 1990; by then I had gained 40 or 50 pounds in my eight months of sobriety and recognized that I wasn't really sober if I continued bingeing the way I was. I kept coming and in November was given the gift of abstinence; from my top weight of 215 I reached 139 pounds by the R6 Convention in Waterville Valley, NH in 1991. I now maintain a weight more like 145, but I've been restored to threefold health, with every reason to expect to live a long and healthy life.

When I came to OA in 1990, there was some buzz in the culture about how fat Americans were, but it hadn't yet emerged as a public health crisis. Today, weight-related health problems are leading killers and they're starting to erode our health and happiness at ever-earlier ages. It's a public health crisis and it's spreading worldwide.

Have you ever felt frustrated that we in OA don't do more to get our message out? I have. And yet, don't we do a lot? When you think about what your intergroup, or group, or region, should be doing, do you ever feel inadequate, or guilty? Or do you feel

resentful at some people who never seem willing to take on service? I have.

So, what should we be doing? And are we doing all we can? Interesting questions. Can they be answered? I'm not even sure they need to be.

Carrying the message to the still suffering compulsive eater is our primary purpose. There are a lot of different ways to do that. Public service announcements tell people where to find an OA meeting. A booth at a health fair informs professionals. Other ways include talking to a co-worker, raising your hand to be a greeter, continuing to sponsor a chronic relapser, starting a new meeting.

Are some of these actions easier for you than others? Probably. The great thing in OA is that, just as everyone is free to find the food plan that works for her or him to maintain a healthy abstinence, we are all free to carry the message in our own way. Sometimes one-on-one, sometimes through mass distribution, on a committee. It can take a lot more courage just to say to a friend or relative, "Do you think you might have a problem with food?" than to stuff and mail a thousand notices. Which is more important?

There is a phrase in Hebrew, "tikkun olam," often translated as "repairing" or "healing the world." It is spoken of as a duty of all, one that cannot be refused, and also one that cannot be completed. It is both service to society and service to God by liberating the spark within. We know that we do service not just to heal others, but to heal ourselves.

I don't think my OA recovery hangs upon that pamphlet I found in my doctor's office...but I actually tear up with gratitude when I think of the OA member who put it there. Maybe the intergroup HIPM committee had taken that on as a project; maybe a group did it; maybe one member had taken it on as her private practice whenever she went to her doctor. I just glanced at it and put it back, and who knows who looked at it before or after me, if they recognized themselves in it, if they came, if they stayed?

Can we take on this responsibility to extend the hand and heart of OA with joy, without feeling that it's just not enough? Can the fact that our disease is on the march and that the need for our solution is more critical than ever give us energy to act? And can we each be one of many, knowing that we aren't the solution for everyone? Giving freely in this manner can really make service a way to liberate our spark within.

– Margaret Ann B., Region 6 Chair

REGION 6 CONTACTS

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Out-of-State only: (877) 317-2111
e-mail : Markgse@adelphia.net

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:
April 8, 2006
September 16, 2006
at the Quality Inn, Albany, NY located Route 9W, just
south of Exit 23 on the NY State Thruway.**

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 or via US Postal Service in care of the Region Six Coordinator at the address designated above.

THE MESSENGER STAFF

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

- Steve M. ----- Chair
- Gil P. ----- Editor
- Pat F. ----- French Canadian Coordinator
- Gaston L. ----- French Translation Coordinator
- Howard B. ----- Committee Member
- Donna H. ----- Committee Member
- Jacqueline ----- Committee Member
- Jennifer ----- Committee Member

Trustee's Message

Dear Fellow Region 6 OA members,

Recently, at supper, my wife and I had finished our main course. I started on my fruit for dessert when I asked what she would have. When she replied, "Ice cream.", I asked, "When did you get ice cream?" She said, "It's been in the freezer since the holidays." I had no memory of it yet I was the one who bought it (I do most of the grocery shopping) and I am in the freezer several times a week for my own foods. The ice cream just went off my radar screen. In sharing this miracle of inattention to my principal binge food at my OA meeting, I recalled that, before entering OA, I was keenly aware of every single calorie in my house. Now, I am living the Promises given on pages 83 and 84 of the Big Book through the grace of my higher power (HP). I have come to know a "new freedom" from food which had been my master. I believe you too can enjoy this freedom if you do what I did: I got a sponsor, worked OA's 12 Steps through which I found my higher power, and continued to do the Steps daily.

I'm Dexter and I am a compulsive overeater. At my latest visit to the doctor I was 101 pounds less than when my abstinence began almost 14 years ago on March 22, 1992, through the grace of my HP. This article is the last that I am writing for the Messenger in my role as your region trustee. It has been a privilege to be able to share my program with you in these articles since I took office as region chair in 2000. Thank you for providing me the OA community I found on March 10, 1992.

As my trustee term comes to a close, I am grateful for the spiritual growth which my service has brought me. I have a deeper appreciation for the role of the Traditions in all aspects of my life. I have come to understand that the Steps are what I do, but the Traditions are how I do them. Not only do the Traditions guide me in my relations with others in OA groups and service bodies, they guide me in my role as a sponsor and sponsee. In these latter relationships, the Traditions help me to understand what it means to be honest, open and willing on a one-to-one basis. Honesty tells me that I need to share that I am on a continuous path of dealing with my character defects on a daily basis "practicing these principles in all my affairs". I must not present myself as a finished product for someone else to copy for I will never be finished practicing the Steps. Openness tells me that I must accept that my sponsor or sponsee will have their own path defined by their own HP, that they have a different genetic structure which defines unique biological needs which may or may not be relevant to my plan of eating. They also have a unique emotional and spiritual heritage which is relevant to their own search for their higher power. Willingness (and the 12th Step and 12th Tradition) tells me that I must be willing to work with sponsees whether or not they are abstinent as long

as they truly have a desire to stop eating compulsively (the 3rd Tradition). I must be willing to hear the truth of my sponsor's words when they resonate within me but also be willing to do the inventory work to learn my own truth when those words do not relate.

What is the most important thing I can say in my last sharing with the wider R6 community? The most important fact of my life in recovery is that I must maintain my connection with my HP on a daily basis. For me, the most important thing I do each day is to pray and meditate to maintain my spiritual fitness. When I do so, I live in the 9th and 10th Step promises as found on pages 83 and 84 of the Big Book. Meditation has become the bedrock of my program; it is where I clear my mind so I may better hear the voice of my HP. The Big Book tells me repeatedly that I must not depend on others, I must depend on my HP. For instance, in the bottom paragraph of page 24, I am told that when I have arrived at the binge and diet stage, I have "...probably placed ..." myself "... beyond human aid, ..." On page 98, I am told that I, "...simply do not stop drinking (eating compulsively) so long as we (I) place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God." On page 99, I am told to, "Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God." So the most important thing I can say is that I have found a "Happy, Joyous and Free" life through surrender to my HP which I found through OA's 12 Steps. I believe you, too, can find, establish and maintain your connection with your HP which will sustain your own recovery if you do OA's 12 Steps.

– Dexter J., Region 6 Trustee
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Region 6 is Making a Quilt!

Each Intergroup will create a patch and the final quilt will be proudly displayed at the Convention and then raffled off to a lucky winner! Proceeds will be used by Region 6 to sustain our primary purpose of carrying the message. We're looking for the Intergroup who's interested in doing service by managing this project. You don't have to be a quilter. We have instructions!

Interested?

Call Lyn H. 802-999-8340 or lynhof@gmail.com

Members' Thoughts on Tradition 3

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

FROM GROUSING TO GRATEFUL

I came into OA undisciplined, defiant and confused. I was welcomed unconditionally and encouraged to consider whether an OA meeting benefited more from people sharing recovery, or from someone like me (in tough shape) unburdening myself in front of the group (rather than sharing one on one with my sponsor and others).

At that point, I craved attention and validation more than I desired to learn the value of appropriate boundaries and limits.

I was lovingly supported – guided to sit up front (intensive care, they called it), soak it all up and get some abstinence under my belt before sharing my opinions (rather than my experience).

I have almost 10 years of abstinence now and thank God every day for putting people in my life who taught me how to show compassion and firmness when dealing with active addiction.

– *Neil R.*

A-B-C'S OF MEMBERSHIP

How to become a group member:

- a) You are a member of OA if you say so.
- b) The only requirement for OA membership is your desire to stop eating compulsively.
- c) No one can judge you or the desire in your heart.
- d) To join a group you simply attend its meetings.

– *Anonymous*

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT...

I am and will always be grateful that nobody ever turned me away during my 30 years in OA.

I've been in, out, and around these rooms. I've been up and down the scale in my weight, and when I finally received the blessed gift of desperation and became willing to go to any length, God directed me into a very structured and disciplined program of recovery.

Nobody forced me or pushed me; they only suggested a way to follow the discipline that was foreign to me. I wanted what I saw: the glow of recovery, the sincere caring, their commitment, and the suggestion of a food plan that was working for many over a long period of time.

Thank you God that there is room for many ways to work this program and that I was loved and accepted in these rooms until the miracle happened. By the grace of God I now have four years of abstinence and am working a program of recovery one day at a time

– *Janet H.*

A "DESIRE" TO STOP...

I feel safe going to OA meetings because I am not judged by my weight loss. Since I qualify by having a desire to stop eating compulsively, I have a right to attend and share at the meetings.

Before recovery, I was very hard on myself and know that if by a certain date I was not at a perfect weight, I would have left OA. Tradition Three says I can stay as long as I have the desire to stop eating compulsively. And since no one knows how I really feel, just by me saying it, I qualify. Thank you OA for bringing God into my life.

– *Marlene, Central Ontario IG*

STAYING FOR SANITY

Tradition Three keeps me coming back even though I have not experienced physical recovery.

"Why do you keep going if you haven't lost the weight?" someone asked me. The answer is simple: I still have the desire to stop eating compulsively. I may have come for the vanity, but I stay for the sanity OA and my Higher Power have given me. I couldn't be more grateful.

– *Anonymous*

TEARING DOWN WALLS

In my area, there were strong rules/guidelines regarding who could speak at meetings or who could qualify based on plan of eating. I remember when someone heard me share at a meeting and immediately after asked me to qualify at her meeting. Knowing their requirements I informed her I ate flour and asked her if she would be comfortable with me qualifying? She hastily said "No, that wouldn't work."

Another member standing nearby encouraged her to reconsider, feeling I would have a good recovery story to share. The member still said, "No." I felt bad at that time and had to pray.

Since then, our groups have come a long way in accepting all plans of eating. We use Tradition Three as our guiding OA principle. We know that all compulsive overeaters are welcome in OA, regardless of their issues.

– *Laura N.*

SENSE OF BELONGING

Tradition Three has given me such a feeling of being included, something I lacked all my life before joining OA. Now I belong to a group that makes me feel always welcome. That is a great gift from OA and my Higher Power.

I am grateful for Tradition Three because I can welcome newcomers and relate this wonderful tradition to them and let them know how included they are.

– *Judy, Newton MA, MetroWest IG*

A DIVINE TRADITION

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively."

Thank God!

– *Eileen C.*

WELCOME IN ALL STATES

Tradition Three reminds me that I can go to any meeting and be accepted no matter how empty or how full the hole in my soul is.

At times I am empty and I go to meetings to fill my soul with recovery. At times my spiritual hole is full to overflowing with enthusiasm and I can share my hope with others. No matter what I can go in to an OA room to get or give a profound Spiritual Experience.

Thank you, OA, for my life.

– *Sue S., WMI*

[More OA Members' Writing, Pages 5, 6, 7 and 11]

Member's Thoughts on Tradition 3

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

A DESIRE TO STOP NONSTOP EATING

I remember, more than five years ago, when I came into OA. A friend of mine had dared to tell me about her problem of compulsive overeating and had shown me her precious book, *For Today*. I was at that time completely disgusted with my nonstop eating. I had gained a great deal of weight and, after a few years in the hell of compulsive overeating, I really needed to have something happen that would help me solve this problem.

I had been eating at all hours -- in fact, all the time. I would put the kids to bed earlier than I used to, so I could go eat. I wanted to be by myself in front of the fridge and the pantry. I did not want to see my friends any more and I isolated to eat. I simply felt I was fat. I did not love myself at all.

But deep down in my heart, I had the desire to stop overeating compulsively (as it states in the Third Tradition), although I didn't really know how to do it.

That was when my friend told me that there was a fellowship called *Overeaters Anonymous* and that the meetings were held in cities throughout Quebec. Some time after, I decided to go to my first OA meeting.

I found people with whom I could talk freely about my food problems. They listened to me and helped me to progress and become a better person. I learned to eat to live instead of living to eat. The desire to take action was stronger and stronger.

Now, I did not have the desire to lose weight "at any price," but rather the desire to stop eating compulsively in order to achieve physical, mental and spiritual health, which would allow me to be more balanced, one day at a time.

Thank you, OA program. I have a lot of gratitude because I have received so much more than a beautiful weight loss of 22 kilos (about 48 lbs). Additionally I have gained the following benefits:

More and more I have confidence in myself;

I feel really comfortable with myself;

I am surrounded by people I love and who love me;

I now know that, with a Higher Power in my heart, anything is possible.

For everyone else (struggling with this disease), I wish for peace in your heart and the desire to stop overeating compulsively.

– *Diane V., Intergroupe OA Français de Montréal*

BACK WHERE HE BELONGS

I relapsed about seven years ago and then about five years ago I dropped out of OA. But, although I felt like I was way off the mark, I was still eating three meals a day and rarely ate between meals. Sometimes, however, those meals were enormous.

The biggest reason I dropped out was my spirituality left and I got so frustrated not having any faith. I wasn't any less frustrated not going to meetings; I just didn't face it three times a week.

Eventually, with help from my physician and dietitian, I started eating better. Then I started walking more regularly. I got stricter with myself and grumbled to my psychiatrist about how hard it was, and she said, "Call me every day and tell what you eat and how much you walk. If you get my voice mail, I'll call back as soon as I can." So for two weeks she was my sponsor; then she went on vacation.

My brother, whose program experience was through what I told him, said, "Why don't you go back to OA?"

I did and made immediate contact with my Higher Power and got a sponsor right away. That was four years ago.

– *Bob P.*

STEPS TO FREEDOM

I kept coming back to OA because there was nowhere else to go and because I wanted to have what Step 10 promises: I will recoil from compulsive eating like recoiling from a hot flame. There is no other "weight loss" program that can offer such a promise.

Later, I found out that my problem wasn't food but living, and until I was willing to deal with my living problems I was not able to deal with my eating problems.

Once I became "willing" to put the food down and work the Steps and continue to do them, I found that most of the time I have been repulsed by poor food choices and when I am not I find that I have a whole bunch of tools to help me get through such situations.

– *Marilyn F., N.B. Canada*

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

On the very first night I came to OA, I started my journey and became abstinent. Over the months, now adding up, there have always been moments of insanity where my abstinence is challenged but my desire not to eat compulsively keeps me coming back. And on those days of peace and sure-footedness, I am grateful; again my desire to remain abstinent, not to eat compulsively, keeps me coming back.

I have had many challenges and many opportunities to use excuses to rationalize why I don't need, don't want or can't go to my meeting, do service, or be a part of OA. How do I let go of these reasons or excuses? I remember how I was like "in the food" -- the person I was -- and I remember my desire to remain abstinent. And I keep coming back because it does work if I work it; also because I get a lot of love and support, which I want to give back.

– *Ileana T., Ottawa, ON*

→Where are YOU spending the weekend?←

(of October 27-29, 2006)

www.OAregion6.org

and see page 11

[More OA Members' Writing, Pages 6, 7 and 11]

Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

Chair: Louise Y.

- Issues discussed:

Ideas about running a young people's meeting and getting the word out to professionals from each committee member.

Identifying literature for teens.

How to link to a young people's website on the Internet.

- Decision made:

To summarize all members' ideas about running a young people's meeting and get the word out to professionals, and contacting OA World Service about a possible Young People's website for next Assembly.

- Goals/actions which will be completed by the next Assembly:

1. Prepare a letter to each intergroup about young people from information gathered during previous six months; the letter would include information about outreach and OA literature for young people.
2. Develop a speakers list of people willing to talk to young people.
3. Continue discussing idea of starting a website.

- Assignments and deadlines:

Arlene - Gather ideas on ways to start a Young People's meeting, how to do outreach and to whom.

Paul -- Research literature suggested for teen meetings.

Eileen -- Contact Webmaster to see how we could create a link.

Lisa F., Secretary.

1. Goal: Spread the message to young people about OA.

Actions to be taken:

-- Develop list of OA members to speak to children or their advocates. Due date: April 2006; follow-up by June 2006. Person responsible: Louise Y. (dpierce3@marine.or.com).

-- Acquaint each intergroup with OA Young People's literature (15 questions, Billy's Story, Suggested Format, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions for Young People). Due date: April 2006, follow-up by June 2006. Person responsible: Arlene and each group member.

-- Send letter to intergroups re: contacting schools, pediatricians, children's therapists, nutritionists, etc.; get money for mailing (ask Sid for \$200 not \$100 in budget). Committee will draft letter with attachments and send out by June 2006 to Intergroups. Person responsible: Paul.

2. Goal: Create a link on every OA website for Young People.

Actions to be taken:

-- Create and send intergroup letter, noting that we are developing a Young People's link to be included on their website. Also draft a letter to be placed on the World Service website. Due date: September 2006. Person responsible: Eileen.

-- Develop Young People's link on intergroup websites. Due date: September 2006. Responsible: Committee to discuss at April 2006 Assembly.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Chair: Lee R.

Issues discussed:

The status of 2005 convention, the proposal for 2006 convention by Nassau Intergroup and the strategic plan goals and actions.

- Decisions made:

-- To accept proposal of Nassau IG to host 2006 convention at Friar Tuck Resort and Convention Center in Catskills, N.Y. and appoint a subcommittee to develop a plan to target areas and intergroups to host future conventions.

-- To delete the action plan to investigate the feasibility of retreats and marathons as R6 events. We do not see this within the responsibility of Convention Committee and believe the board should appoint an ad hoc committee.

- Goals/actions which will be completed by next Assembly:

1. Region 6, 2006 Convention final report.
2. Pray for intergroups to come forward with proposals for 2007 and beyond.

- Assignments and deadlines:

-- Subcommittee to report to next Assembly meeting the result of its review of ways to target intergroups to host conventions.

-- New officers: Barbara B. (Cape Cod IG), chair; Marilyn C.

(Montreal English IG), vice chair; Marlene C. (Central Ontario IG), secretary.

GAIN FROM PAIN

At the point that I recognized I was in full-blown relapse, I knew that meetings were the only places I should go to get better; I never left OA. By sharing the pain of trying to abstain again, I was able to help others not to slip. Because of Tradition Three, I am now into my 2nd year of abstinence.

– *Anonymous*

PI/HIPM COMMITTEE

Acting Chair: Mary S.

Issues discussed:

-- Report of blitz campaigns by Cape Cod, Queens, Bronx, South Coastal and Metro intergroups.

-- Report on addiction symposium.

-- Motion to carry PI blitz fund.

-- Report on open/closed meetings in Ocean and Bay, Western N.Y., Central Mass. and Quebec City intergroups.

- Decisions made:

-- Mary S. to put together a Professional packet for Spring Assembly to present to R6 board.

-- Mary to e-mail R6 board about the Professional packet so it can be done at next Assembly.

Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

[PI/HIPM COMMITTEE continued]

-- Motion: to carry over unused funds.

- Goals/actions which will be completed by the next Assembly:
 1. Professional packet ready to distribute.
 2. Find out cost to change bylaws and make motion to have the unused funds from PI Blitz carried over from one Assembly to the next.
- Assignments and deadlines:
 - Mary – Send board the e-mail from Dexter on Professional IG
 - Find out cost of amending bylaws – to have funds for the PI Blitz carried over from one Assembly to the next.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Louise Y.

- Issues discussed:
 - Review and approval of the financial audit.
 - Various issues facing intergroup finance people.
 - Policy and procedures for committee.
- Decisions made:
 - Sheela K. to chair committee for 2006.
 - To develop a policy and procedure statement for manual (see below).
 - To assist in finding Region 6 treasurer for 2007, 2008.
 - To make fund-raising easier, consider the physical size of item and associated costs of shipment etc.
- Goals/actions which will be completed by the next Assembly:
 1. Rhea will forward fund-raising information to committee.
 2. Chair Louise will send member list to Rhea.
 3. Sid is working on pin fund-raiser.
- Policy:
 - At Spring Assembly, review proposed budget for coming year. (Treasurer will present to Assembly.)
 - At Fall Assembly, witness and approve the financial audit.
 - Propose fund-raisers.
 - Provide forum for Region 6 delegates to discuss financial issues.
- Procedure:
 - Review and make recommendations for budget for coming year.

MEETING "REQUIREMENTS"

When I first heard Tradition Three 18-½ years ago, it reminded me of a line from a poem that read, roughly, "Home is the place that, when you go there, they have to take you in."

That quote describes OA to me. No one in program has ever said that I didn't belong, that I was "too this" or "too little that." They simply told me, "Welcome to OA. Welcome home."

I never expect to leave home. I'm a lifer!

– Gil P.

INTERGROUP OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chair: Lynn

- Issues discussed:
 - Obtaining e-mails and addresses of all intergroups.
 - Creating outreach flyer for non-attending "outgroups".
 - Contacting non-attending intergroups re attending upcoming Assemblies.
 - Plan to encourage every intergroup to send at least one representative to Region 6 Assembly.
- Decisions made:
 - Committee to go ahead with intergroup quilt project and to form a subcommittee for gathering of information on project (see below).
 - Re production and raffling of quilt: Scott will work on list of intergroups and contact information; Scott and Lynn (assisted by Mark) make flyer for non attending intergroups; Scott will handle mailing to non-attending intergroups.
- Goals/actions which will be completed by the next Assembly:
 - Scott and Lynn will complete outreach mailing.
 - Scott will compile contact list.
 - Mort will contact Newsletter committee and Webmaster re quilt project.
 - Ileana will obtain and give information on quilting.
- Assignments and deadlines:
 - Mailing to intergroups.
 - Information about quilting project. Due date: End of November 2005.
 - Gathering of all quilting information. Due date: Spring 2006.
- Election of officers:
 - Lynn, chair; Mort, vice chair; Ileana, secretary.

TWELFTH STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE

Chairs: Mary Rose D. (Outgoing) Roberta L. (Incoming)

- Issues discussed:
 - Relapse! Need to support recovery from relapse.
 - Recommendation to generate speaker lists at intergroup level.
 - Give it Away: Generating more sponsors.
- Decisions made:
 - January 2006, Region 6: Recovery from relapse month. "Recovery Weather or Not!"

Goals/actions which will be completed by the next Assembly:

1. R6 TSW committee will send welcome back packets to each intergroup, recommending their distribution.
2. Each intergroup will sponsor a Recovery from Relapse (RFR) Workshop in January 2006 and report back how it went. (Multiple intergroups may work together.)

Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

[TWELFTH STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE continued]

3. Each group will have one RFR meeting in January 2006.

Assignments and deadlines:

- Flyer: Due date : Oct. 8, '05, Person responsible: Bonnie, (CT IG).
- Cover letter: Due date: Oct. 8, '05. Person responsible: Charlene (North Shore IG).
- Purchase welcome back packets and possibly a card. Due date: Oct. 8 '05. Responsible: Nassau IG.
- E-mail to TSW group. Due date: Oct. 18, '05, Person responsible: Roberta.
- Receive feedback from TSW group. Due date, Oct. 18, '05. Person responsible: Roberta.
- Feedback letter. Due date: late December. Person responsible Raffaella, Staten Island IG.
- Distribution at R6 Convention. Due date: Oct. 20, '05 Responsible person Carol.
- Sponsorship Initiative: April.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Chair: Laura E. N.

- Issues discussed:
 - Two proposed motions and the steps necessary to implement them.
 - The Webmaster/Communications Coordinator, R6 board positions to be created by the board. Amending the bylaws to provide for such position.
- Decisions made:
 - Continuing to bring Region 6 bylaws into compliance with the World Service bylaws.
 - Zazu to formulate a motion for committee members to review before next Assembly. Once reviewed, the motion is to be presented at the Spring Assembly.
 - Margaret Ann to e-mail the Webmaster/Communications Coordinator position duties and responsibilities to Diana G. for review and formulation of language about the position for the bylaws.
 - Diana G. to review Policies 14, 34 and 38 of R6 bylaws and propose a consolidated policy for committee members to review. This process is to be completed by Oct. 24, 2005.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Chair: Steve M.

- Issues discussed:
 - Review of R6 Policies 34 (website) and 37 (newsletter).
 - Ways to make The Messenger more interesting for members while still meeting the policy goals.
 - Consideration to combining Policies 34 and 37 into a single R6 Communications policy.
 - Review of progress against current goals. (All goals on track or accomplished.)
 - Methods to condense and better focus committee reports.
 - Assignment of responsibilities for the next issue of The Messenger.

- Decisions made:
 - To ask committees to use the Committee Summary Report as a tool to condense reports (Done at Assembly via Karin.)
 - To submit a motion for the Spring 2006 Assembly to create a Communications committee and the corresponding policy, eliminating Policies 34 and 37. (Howard B., New Hampshire IG to draft and circulate this motion.)
 - To reorganize The Messenger to stories of recovery first and place Region 6 Assembly reports and other business more toward the back. (Reorganization plan still meets the policy requirements but we believe it will make The Messenger more attractive to readers.)
- Goals/Actions which will be completed by next Assembly:
 1. The Fall 2005 French edition of The Messenger will be our trial "new layout" issue, featuring recovery stories in the front with catchier headlines and business placed toward the back.
 2. A motion to replace Policies 34 and 37 with a new Communications policy will be presented.
 3. Spring Messenger will build on the experience of the French Fall 2005 edition.
 4. Committee reports will be tightly edited, if needed.
 5. A point will continue to be made to include content that comes from our French speaking groups.
 6. Promote events in The Messenger, as feasible.

I think I'll go to Albany
for
Region 6 Assembly
Saturday, April 8, 2006
(see page 2 for information)

Why?

Because Service ignites
my "spark within" !

Summary of Elections, Motions and Votes

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

ELECTIONS -- CHAIR, SECRETARY, COORDINATOR

Margaret Ann proposed that since there were only single unopposed candidates they could be elected by voice vote if there was no objection. The proposal required a simple majority. There were no objections.

Karen R., Vice Chair, ran the election.

Chair -- Margaret Ann B was presented for chair. She addressed the audience explaining that, if elected trustee for Region 6, a position for which she would also be running, and, if affirmed by the Assembly, she would accept the trustee position and Karin R. would take over as chair. Margaret Ann was elected by unanimity.

Secretary -- Laura N. was elected by unanimity after presenting herself to the Assembly.

Region coordinator -- Mark Glazer was elected by unanimity.

Affirmation of Region 6 candidate -- Margaret Ann, who was presented by Karin R, was affirmed by unanimity after answering several questions.

WSBC Bylaws committee members nomination and election -- Neil R (Mass Bay IG) and Zazu G (Southwestern Connecticut IG) were elected; the alternates are Howard B (New Hampshire IG) and Bonnie (Connecticut IG).

this motion to provide a greater span of time between the WS convention in Philadelphia in 2007 and our regional convention. It was amended to "an exception may be made relative to the date in those years when a WS convention is held in or near Region 6." Motion # 2 was adopted as amended.

Miracle in the Mountains

CATSKILL, NY
OCTOBER 27-29, 2006

*Liberty and Recovery
For All*

More information at www.OAregion6.org
and see page 11

Motion # 3 -- Neil R presented this motion aimed at modifying current qualifications for election to an R6 board position to insure that the greatest number of qualified applicants are eligible. The motion was amended, adding "or" after new subsection 4 and restoring and renumbering old subsection 4 to subsection 5, deleting the word "must" from the beginning of the subsection. Motion # 3 was adopted as amended.

Motion # 4 -- Zazu G. moved to amend Region Bylaws Article VI, to bring R6A bylaws into conformity with OA, Inc., bylaws as required by WSBC 2005. Motion # 4 was adopted by two-thirds vote.

Motion # 5 -- In the motion submitted by Mary S., the P.I./H.I.P.M. committee moved that the \$3,000 budgeted for the Fall 2005 Assembly be carried over to be used for approved P.I. blitzes at the Spring 2006 Assembly. Motion # 5 was adopted.

Motion # 6 -- In the motion submitted by Lee R, chair of the Convention committee, the Convention committee moved that Nassau IG host the R6 convention at the Friar Tuck Resort & Convention Center in Catskill, NY on the weekend of October 27-29, 2006 under the name, "Miracle in the Mountains -- Liberty and Recovery for All." Motion # 6 was adopted.

Region 6 is Making a Quilt!

Each Intergroup will create a patch and the final quilt will be proudly displayed at the Convention and then raffled off to a lucky winner! Proceeds will be used by Region 6 to sustain our primary purpose of carrying the message. We're looking for the Intergroup who's interested in doing service by managing this project. You don't have to be a quilter. We have instructions!

Interested?

Call Lyn H. 802-999-8340 or lynhof@gmail.com

AMENDMENTS AND POLICIES.

Motion # 1 -- It was moved to add this motion to the Policy and Procedure manual to improve communication between Region 6 and intergroups and increase participation at Region 6 Assemblies. It was amended. Motion # 1 passed with amendments.

Motion # 2 -- Lee R, chair of R6 Convention committee, submitted

→Where are YOU spending the weekend?←

(of October 27-29, 2006)

www.OAregion6.org

and see page 11

Summary of OA Handbook Workshop

Region 6 Assembly – September 24, 2005

Following is a summary of the discussions in the seven breakout groups during the OA Handbook Workshop.

- * Sponsors could suggest to their sponsees to do service at intergroup level, explain what Region/WS does. Reading pamphlets lets people know what each position entails.
- * Group inventories are useful to help groups carry OA's message more clearly.
- * Visitors should not vote at steering committee meetings; only regularly attending abstaining members ought to vote.
- * Rotation of service positions is very important.
- * It's important to read and discuss the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service at group and intergroup meetings.
- * Each group needs to appoint or elect a downloader.
- * The section in the handbook on "coffee therapy" raised difference of opinion, with some delegates noting their groups don't serve coffee at meetings because it can be unhelpful for some.

The groups also discussed the biggest problems members face in their groups and intergroups and ways to solve difficulties, as well as observations regarding usefulness of the handbook, as follows:

- * People who come to meetings and talk about what happened during their week rather than talking about recovery -- experience, strength and hope. Traditions 5 and 12 give answers: "principles before personalities," no cross talk. The person could talk to her/his sponsor about it: "Share your mess with your sponsor, share the message at the meeting." Suggest at the end of the meeting: "If you have a pressing issue that wasn't addressed, see someone after the meeting."
- * Voting at business meetings that is not being properly handled because there is not a core understanding of how to run such a meeting. Suggestions: Use Robert's Rules of Order; bring booklet regarding Robert's Rules to meeting; give out OA Handbook to new meetings. As a preventive measure, devote one meeting per month to studying the tradition of that month. Read the tradition and discuss our experience, strength and hope regarding the tradition.
- * Opinions of the handbook's contents. It helps the individual to fit into the whole of OA. It helps members to work within the group by offering guidelines. The service index at the back of the pamphlet is highly impressive. A workshop on the handbook for "Unity" day would be quite helpful. The handbook is OA-approved by WSBC and it encourages groups to be autonomous using this handbook. All intergroup reps should have this pamphlet. Several suggestions to make it better include: adding a section on fundraising and information on OA work via chat sites and online and telephone meetings. The question of whether there should be a cyber-region was raised.
- * Difficulty within an intergroup in dealing with individual groups' varying views on abstinence requirements. Different groups have abstinence requirements for certain positions (especially for secretary and treasurer) and for regular membership in the group. Discussed group autonomy. Requirement for membership is a desire to refrain

(from compulsive eating). One intergroup is trying to decide whether to list 90-day meetings.

- * Suggestions, rather than hard and fast rules and bylaws, leading to confusion as to how OA works. The handbook can be useful to newcomers as well as for those trying to start a new meeting. The section in the handbook, "Getting started in a small community," on page 3, is felt to be a good template for any meeting. The section about "insurance requirements for groups" was also found useful as well as the section on how to reach a group conscience (pages 22-24). One suggestion is to invite speakers who do service at the intergroup, region and world service levels to speak at meetings. The treasurer should be someone who has been around the program for a while. The designated downloader for the group is important as it helps people who don't have Internet access. Several pieces of OA literature are available online, including A Step Ahead and Courier.
- * Getting members involved in service, finding available sponsors, getting members to rotate service positions, how to help out the moms who have children and need to take them to meetings and retaining newcomers. Suggestions: A member can serve as a sponsor for a while (temporary sponsor); others can provide transportation to people who need it, make a list and explain positions that are available at intergroup level, and get volunteers to call newcomers. The meetings before and after the meetings are important. Play areas for children can be provided. One intergroup organizes 5-hour workshops on the OA Handbook twice a year for group representatives. This group thinks it's important that the Handbook's title says "for Members, Groups and Intergroups." The handbook should be considered "OA 101" for sponsees and handed out to new intergroup reps. Including concepts of service is very helpful. Groups may want to consider tabling a discussion where the resulting vote is very close in order to gather and present further information. Including 7th Tradition suggestions and descriptions of WSO and Region representatives is very useful.

- * Lack of widespread distribution of handbook. Each group/secretary should get a copy of the Handbook. At intergroup meetings, orientation could be given about it as part of a group inventory. It also could be put onto a CD. Suggestions regarding the handbook to bring back to meetings: Use it as a topic of a literature meeting; utilize it for a clearer understanding of service positions; use it to educate sponsees about OA; review it at intergroup; put it on literature table. Delegates expressed different points of view on whether it's healthy to hear in meetings about slips or whether it's more important to let people say what they need to say. It was said that you cannot give away what you don't have and it was suggested always to bring discussion in meetings back to the steps.

Don't Miss OA's Next World Service Convention!

August 30–September 2, 2007

Loews Philadelphia Hotel- Philadelphia, PA

"Ring in Recovery: Declare Your Freedom from Compulsive Eating"

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, 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: Spring into Action

Date: Saturday, March 25, 2006
9:30 am. to 3:30 pm.
Registration begins at 9:00

Location: St. Luke's Lutheran Church
1830 Route 12 at Clark Street
Gales Ferry, CT

Sponsored by: Southeastern Connecticut Intergroup

Contacts: Kathy W. (860) 536-4058 / kathyw91@aol.com
Ruth (860) 448-1495 / cedarwind@comcast.net

Event: Spring Sanity Retreat 2006

Date: Friday March 31 - Sunday, April 2

Location: MIRAMAR RETREAT CENTER
121 Parks St, Duxbury MA

Sponsored by: South Coastal MA Intergroup

Contact: Mark 781 834-4447 / markgse@hotmail.com

Event: Sponsorship Workshop

Date: Saturday, April 1st 8am - 12pm

Location: St. David's Episcopal Church
Jamar Drive, Dewitt, NY

Sponsored by: Tuesday night "Abstinence Meeting" of Overeaters Anonymous

Contact: Renee M. (315) 698-7844/rmarchak@yahoo.com

Event: Spring Into Recovery OA Spring Retreat 2006

Date: Friday, April 21 - Sunday, April 23, 2006

Location: Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, NY

Sponsored by: Western New York IG

Contact: Janet M. (716)634-6761 / shortred55@hotmail.com
Michelle F. (716)832-2172

Event: Put some Spring into the Steps

Date: Friday, April 21 - Sunday, April 23, 2006

Location: Grotonwood Retreat Center, Groton MA

Sponsored by: MetroWest Intergroup

Contacts: Jen: 617-943-2641(safe message)
Bee: 781-736-7965 (safe message in Bee's mailbox)
retreat@metrowestoa.org