



# MESSENGER

The Bi-Annual Newsletter of Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous

Spring 2007

## ***Working a Spiritual Program of Recovery***

Hi, my name is Karin and I am a compulsive overeater. I have been a member of this fellowship for 17 years now and celebrated 15 years of abstinence in Sept. 2006. I am so grateful for my recovery from compulsive overeating. I do my best, a day at a time, to live by the 12 Steps as outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. But I sure don't do it alone. I use the tools to work the 12 Steps and I get support from the fellowship. I've certainly learned that this is a "we" program not an "I" program. I can't do any of this alone.

I recently attended a workshop at the R6 Convention in the Catskills on "worldly clamors". It was very interesting and helpful to learn how others in recovery stay abstinent when worldly clamors hit the fan. I have had some worldly clamors in my own life recently. Some suggestions were: to open the tool box of recovery, read the Big Book and seek to improve our conscious contact with God. I believe that is the key, to turn my problems over to God as I understand Him. Certainly there is no problem so bad that I couldn't make worse by eating over it. So I chose to stay abstinent and live in the solution.

I use the tools of recovery to assist me in working the steps. I have a sponsor that I connect with and she guides me through the steps. I appreciate her experience, strength and hope. I have a plan of eating that works for me. I need to have some structure around my food so I have a written plan that I follow. I rely on my Higher Power and ask Him for the gift of abstinence in my daily prayers. God is the solution to all my problems so I spend time in prayer and meditation every day. I go to 2 or 3 meetings a week and I talk to members on the phone. These tools help me to get out of my isolation. I write out step work and read the literature. And I do service. Service gets me out of myself and focused on the solution not the problem.

My challenge is to have some kind of balance in my life. I lead a busy life. I recently got married and we have 5 kids between us and a dog. I work part time at 2 different jobs. Recently I have been spending a lot of time out of town assisting my mom with my dad's estate. My dad passed away in Sept 2006. My mother is not well either. Life has presented some challenges lately and it has been stressful but I am doing my best to keep first things first. No matter how busy I get in my personal life, OA has to come first.

That is the only way I can stay abstinent is to put my time into my program.

I am writing this article at the beginning of January 2007 and thinking about the year ahead. I listen as others make their New Year's resolutions and I am glad that I don't make those any more. I live my life one day at a time. I turn my will and my life over to the care of God and I do my best to trust His will for me. I am not in charge. I was never very good at being in charge anyway. I am grateful to be able to let go and let God. As it says in the Big Book on page 100: "Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstance".

I am grateful to serve as the Region 6 Chair. In November I attended the Region Chairs Committee meeting and the Region 5 Assembly in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I chaired a R6 Board teleconference call in January. The Board will be busy preparing for the next R6 Assembly on April 14th, 2007, in Albany, N Y. We hope to see you there.

— Karin R.H.  
Region 6 Chair  
chair@oaregion6.org  
613-828-4413

## **World Service Convention 2007** **Ring in Recovery:**

Declare Your Freedom from Compulsive Eating

**August 30—September 2**  
**Philadelphia, PA USA**

More information:

[http://www.oa.org/ws\\_convention.html](http://www.oa.org/ws_convention.html)

or call

World Service Office: 1-505-891-2664

**REGION 6 CONTACTS****Please direct R6 correspondence to:**

Helen F., Region 6 Coordinator  
 16 Pine Ave.  
 St. John, New Brunswick E2M-6J8  
 Canada  
 coordinator@oaregion6.org

**Please mail R6 contributions to:**

Zazu G.  
 R6 Treasurer  
 P.O. Box 3073  
 Milford, CT 06460 USA  
 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;
- 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 14, 2007**

**September 29, 2007**

**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@OARegion6.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. -----	Web site and Publications Coordinator
Gaston L. -----	Chair
Elsa P. -----	Editor
Carole H. -----	French Canadian Coordinator
Diana G. -----	Proofreader
Diana P. -----	Proofreader

## ***Trustee's Message***

Our Common Welfare Should Come First - Personal Recovery Depends Upon OA Unity

The First Tradition, really sums up why OA is so special. It seems that all societies, families, groups, clubs, organizations, teams, etc., any place where humans get together, would be better if everyone was mindful of the balance between what's best for all, and what's best for the individual.

When I first became part of the 12 Step recovery community, I was amazed at the new relationships I was forming. With people I had just met, I felt a level of trust and comfort I had never experienced in the "outside" world, even with folks I'd known for years. I also remember hearing certain cautions, some of which are summed up in the 12th Tradition: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

The 12th Tradition, also sums up something special about OA -- the recognition that it is comprised of humans. Early on, I was told that individuals might let me down, but OA never would. I've found this to be true. Our literature makes many references to the importance of refraining from placing other OA members on a pedestal or in positions of "unqualified authority." We have guidelines for sponsor/sponsee relationships as well as for trusted servants to safeguard the fellowship against the fallibility of individuals.

Recently in R6, there had been a vivid reminder of some of our strengths and weaknesses. An intergroup was stunned to learn that its treasurer had reverted thousands of its intergroup dollars for personal use and had further admitted to taking advantage in their role as trusted servant and sponsor. This one intergroup found itself broke and in debt to several creditors, including two retreat centers. At present, it is still unknown how much is owed.

Beyond the financial harm and the turmoil this has created, there is also the terrible wound to the OA community. Trust has been destroyed, anger and resentments inflamed, frustration, fear of what will become of the intergroup. Creditors are making demands and members are questioning OA. Had this occurred in your first few months in program, how might it have affected you? In my earliest, vulnerable days, before I knew that members of OA wanted to help me only to aid their own recovery without asking for anything in return -- an incident like this might have sent me right back to the nearest diet club.

This intergroup will, however, survive. There are people with strong threefold recovery who are working together for the good of OA. But this incident was a wakeup call. It has prompted the R6 board to take a good hard look at its policies

and procedures. We hope that each group and intergroup will do the same.

Among the factors that lead to this situation:

- Lack of Rotation of Service -- a single individual had held leadership positions in this intergroup for a very long time
- Lack of Oversight -- this individual had sole access to the intergroup's funds (as well as post office and email boxes and answering service), and other than making a treasurer's report at intergroup meetings, there was no verification that the intergroup's money was being handled appropriately
- Concentration of Responsibility -- one individual was able to control virtually all the intergroup functions

Does this scenario sound familiar? Does your group or intergroup have the Solitary Service Stalwart whose hand goes up at every opportunity to do service? I've certainly been that person myself. I have been grateful for the Stalwarts who have volunteered to take service positions when no one else, including me, would. There are those jobs -- event planning/chairing, treasurer, webmaster, newsletter editor -- which can seem so daunting. We find ourselves thinking, erroneously, that we are lucky to find anyone who is willing to hang on to those types of service positions, year after year, but?

Rotation of Service is more than just a good idea. It is vital for the meeting as well as the individual. The temptation is to allow the same people to do all the work, all the time. This, however, leads to service burnout. Furthermore, this practice denies other members of OA the opportunity to become get involved and bring in new ideas. Most groups and intergroups have guidelines or bylaws that define terms of service; does yours? Likewise, it's sometimes scary when no one comes forward to take a job when someone's been in it for too long -- especially the more challenging ones. Some of the solutions to this issue that some groups try include having "interim" officers who grow to realize that they like the job. Another option is to allow the unfilled position to remain vacant. It is generally a brief period of time before the vacuum is filled. One may feel as though one is abandoning one's group by "retiring" from a particular service position. When this happens, it is a signal that perhaps you have stayed in that one position too long. Experience shows it is a bad idea for anyone to keep the job when it has become long past its "expiration" date.

Oversight is the everyone's responsibility. This does not imply that we do not trust our trusted servants. A group needs to make a regular practice of reviewing contracts and bank statements, insuring that they jibe with the officers' reports. In

*[ Trustee Message continued on, Page 4]*

[ Trustee Message continued from, Page 3]

R6, the Vice Chair sits on the Finance Committee in order to participate in an annual audit. This relieves the Treasurer bearing the sole responsibility for overseeing R6 finances. However, every member of the R6 Assembly is responsible to act as steward of R6 resources. How? Read the Treasurer's report issued at every assembly and become familiar with the budget approved at each Spring assembly.

Other prudent financial practices include:

- Multiple signatories on bank accounts. This means that more than one person has access to the funds, and is authorized to sign checks. It is also possible to have the bank require more than one signature on checks, or at least on checks over a certain amount.

- Requirements that treasurers bring checking accounts statements to monthly business meetings or intergroup meetings for reconciliation with treasury reports and/or the checkbook register. It should be available for inspection by any of the group's members. Perhaps the group could appoint another officer to verify.

Distribution of Responsibility: Most groups and intergroups have policies against people holding too many service positions; for example, as trustee, I'm not permitted to hold any service position above the group level. (I am treasurer of one of my groups, I have to confess. The treasury is comprised of a composition notebook and a plastic envelope filled with \$1 bills.) This prevents conflicts of interest, service burnout, as well as insuring that multiple people are aware and involved in what's going on. How many times have we heard the complaint, "Well, we never got the assembly packets, the member with the key to the post office box isn't returning phone calls." If a group designates one person to have access to the answering service/hotline, another who receives mail, and yet another who is the email contact/designated downloader, there is a greater chance that important information will get through, and that calls and inquiries will be responded to in a timely fashion.

The OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Intergroups is a priceless guide for healthy meetings. A regular inventory for both groups and intergroups help prevent problems; guidelines for both group conscience and group inventories may be found on the OA website at [www.oa.org/group\\_support.html](http://www.oa.org/group_support.html).

How do we work the 12th Step Within on this situation? How do we, as a region, extend the hand of heart of OA to this intergroup, its groups and members? Though I recognize the frailty and imperfection of humans, I also trust in the unfailing love and compassion of the fellowship as a whole, and am confident that we will all find many ways to support our fellows in the months to come.

Thank you as always for the chance to serve the Fellowship that gave me the 12 Step program and the key to a happy, joyous and free life.

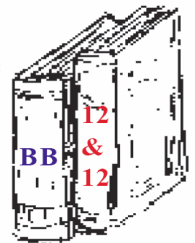
— Margaret Ann B.  
[trustee@oaregion6.org](mailto:trustee@oaregion6.org)

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- Event:** Step 11 - Improving Our Conscious Contact  
**Date:** Friday - Sunday, April 20-22, 2007  
**Location:** Grotonwood Retreat Center Groton, Massachusetts  
**Sponsored by:** Metro West Intergroup - [www.metrowestoa.org](http://www.metrowestoa.org)  
**Contacts:** Bee: 781-736-7965 (safe messages in Bee's mailbox)  
E-mail: [retreat@metrowestoa.org](mailto:retreat@metrowestoa.org)
- Event:** Step Into Recovery OA Day  
**Date:** Saturday, April 28, 2007  
9:30 - 4 (Registration 9:30-10)  
**Location:** St. Marks Lutheran Church  
825 King St W. Kitchener  
Ontario, Canada  
**Sponsored by:** Kitchener-Waterloo OA  
**More Info:** Suggested Donation: \$5  
**Contact:** Anita (519) 568-7655  
**Event:** The Principals and Promises of the program  
Spring Retreat 2007  
**Date:** Friday June 15 - Sunday June 17, 2007  
**Location:** The Warwick Conference Center  
**Sponsored by:** Greater NY Metro Intergroup  
**More Info:** <http://oanyc.org/oanyc/SpringRetreatGenInfo.html>  
**Event:** Tranquility Through The Steps  
**Date:** Friday, June 22 - Sunday, 24 2007  
**Location:** Incarnation Center, Ivoryton, CT  
**Sponsored by:** Southeastern CT Intergroup  
**More Info:** [www.oaregion6.org/special\\_events/SECT\\_Tranquility\(24June07\).pdf](http://www.oaregion6.org/special_events/SECT_Tranquility(24June07).pdf)  
**Contacts:** Carl: 860-859-0091  
Ellen 860-464-7178  
E-mail: [SEC\\_Intergroup@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SEC_Intergroup@sbcglobal.net)

### MAY ~ Literature

- \* Get a copy of the new literature catalogue from WSO and check out new materials
- \* Order Lifeline, tapes and/or literature
- \* Donate OA literature to libraries, hospitals, institutions and/or to professional health care workers



## Members Write on Recovering from Feeling “Outside”

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

### FROM “LESS THAN” TO EMBRACED

Most of my life I have felt “different” and “less than” family, classmates, and coworkers. As a young child in the 1930’s, I was denied the 5 cents for the daily snack most of my classmates had at their school desks. Shopping for “chubby” clothes was shameful by family standards, and I dreaded the changing seasons when this became necessary. By junior high age – grades 7-9 – I learned about dieting and skipping breakfasts. This pattern went on all my life till I came into OA. I was often very hungry but never had a lasting weight loss. I was always the heaviest amongst family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The pain was only anesthetized by my numbing out on my drug of choice, food.

When I came to OA in 1985, I was very ready to do whatever I was told to ease this longstanding pain of being different. The rooms and the loving, accepting people in them assured me it would work – if I worked it. I embraced the program, steps, literature, tools, and all the wonderful new friends who loved me till I could love myself. OA has given me a life, and I’m enjoying every minute.

— *Louise G., Greater Syracuse IG.*

### ALIVE FROM INSIDE OUT

In my head, outside OA I was nothing. I was not worth being seen by other people of society, with nearly 350 pounds on my body and much heavier stuff going on in my mental activity.

In my first meeting, all I knew was that I was feeling better there than anywhere else. It took me 4 months of sitting in the meetings to start understanding what they were saying. The Promises seemed so gentle to me. It seemed that the outside world could finally make sense through them.

With Promise Number 10 becoming true in my life – “Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us” (AA Big Book p. 84) --I’ve been able to stay in the world, inside and outside OA. Step by step I could slowly get a real feeling of being. From the outside, I jumped in a program that brought me inside myself, and I was surprised to find a couple of nice things.

Now, I can easily have real contacts with the outside world. If I keep it simple, it is not scary; and I can feel, see, relate, and even enjoy. I’m alive from inside out.

— *Carole H., Intergroupe OA de Québec*

### ACCEPTANCE IS HER ANSWER

Feeling outside was not what drove me to OA originally. I never realized or wanted to realize how outside I was in my life.

The acceptance I found immediately in OA drove me to look outside for comfort and strength. It gave me the confidence to put myself out for service, for willingness to give up the food, for comfort and acceptance.

— *Donna, Matheson Intergroup*

### WITH FRIENDS IN OA

I came from a family of compulsive overeaters and felt “blessed” to be the bottomless pit who never gained an ounce. The way we all ate felt acceptable. I then entered a profession in the beauty industry. Again, I was surrounded by a variety of insane eating behaviors. It

was not unusual to share stories of what we did to achieve thinness. There seemed to be acceptance of insanity, so for many years, I never felt “outside”. I was with friends who shared my disease. Two years before I came into the OA rooms, I began to purge late at night when my husband and children slept. I had a secret that was safe, but I began to feel I had crossed the point of no return. As my friends and my family joked about binges, I began to sink into a place of darkness and despair. When my 15-year-old daughter shared her own concerns about her closest friends purging, I felt hopeless and ashamed. She was watching both her friends suffer the effects of this disease, and as her mother, I had resorted to the same insane behaviors. I never felt more “outside” or alone in my life. After attending my first OA meeting, I found a place of safety and comfort. I learned my behaviors were a cry for help, a symptom of a disease I had no control over. I discovered I was not alone, and I was able to love and accept myself as a compulsive overeater. The love in the rooms was, and has been the guiding light that has brought me to a place I never knew existed. Today my journey continues with many twists and turns, but I always arrive home at any OA meeting.

*Peace and serenity*

— *Janice S. Suffolk County, NY*

### WELCOMED HOME TO OA

Being overweight from the age of 8 made me feel like an outsider. I couldn’t play on seesaws with normal weight kids. I couldn’t use certain lightweight playground swings. I couldn’t wear normal sized clothing, and there were no shops in my hometown that sold “chubby” sizes.

I came into OA through the back door, so to speak. I had first joined another 12 Step program, and it became clear that I belonged in OA.

A colleague from work “12th-stepped” me into OA. At my first OA meeting there were expressions I did not understand, like “abstinence” and “turn it over.” However, I did understand that I was in the right place and that these people knew what I was against. That was in December 1984, and I’ve been coming back ever since.

The solutions, Tools, Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that have worked for OAs that came before me, now work for me. I love the phrase from “Our Invitation to you”: “Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home.”

Now, it’s up to me to welcome people who are new or newly returning. I often volunteer to serve as a greeter in one of my home meetings. When I have a chance to share, I like to call on someone I don’t know to share next.

I have had inexpensive “personal cards” made with my contact information and the best time to call me. I call newcomers and encourage them to come back to the meeting if it is convenient for them. I must pass on this recovery if I want to keep it.

— *Clara E., NYC*

### WHERE TO GO FOR GOOD HUGS

Before coming into OA, I didn’t relate very well with anyone. I grew up without positive affection from my father. My older brother was his favorite son. My sister, born after me, was his favorite

[ *Members Writing continued on, Page 6* ]

## Members Write on Recovering from Feeling “Outside”

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

[ Members Writing continued from, Page 5 ]

daughter. I could only get noticed when I did something wrong. My younger brother and sister also couldn't please dad. I felt closest to my mother and to my sister who was born the day before my second birthday. I can't seem to get out of myself to form any relationships, even after 20 years of being in and out of OA (mostly in and active).

I can be a friend, but my mother never hugged her kids. At my first OA meeting I was one of four or five newcomers among twenty older timers. Each of us newcomers got a hug from each of the longer timers. Among my OA friends I'm known as “Bob, he gives good hugs.”

— *Bob P. , South Coast Mass. IG*

### STEP 1 WAS HIS KEY

I found acceptance in OA once I accepted myself – that I am a compulsive overeater and belonged. Only then could I truly relate to what others were sharing. Step 1 is key to finding true acceptance.

— *Bruce R.*

### NOT ALONE ANYMORE

In 1985, I went to my first OA meeting, feeling desperate and lost. I didn't feel as though I fit in anywhere. I had been a failure at every weight loss program I tried. I knew I wasn't like other people. They could stop eating when they wanted to. They didn't think about food the way I did. I didn't think there were other people who did the same crazy sick things with food that I did

At the first meeting, I was relieved to hear people talking about buying large bags of their favorite binge foods and eating them in the car before they got home, hiding the wrappers so no one would know. I heard them talk about stealing their children's candy at Halloween or Easter. I heard them talk about eating food from the garbage can. As sick as it all sounded, I knew I was with a safe, understanding group of people who suffered the same way I did. I didn't even know what a compulsive overeater was but today I am grateful to those who welcomed me at my first meeting.

— *Anonymous*

### WELCOMED

I felt welcomed. I felt no pressure to hug. Sometimes I thought God was mentioned too much but I was willing to grow, willing to accept having a sponsor. I trusted others to share with people in general being honest and gentle. I kept coming back, willing to grow out of the box. Thanks OA, HP and 12 & 12, daily.

— *Anonymous*

### OA IS HER MIRACLE

I always felt like an outsider, from the time I was a child. I was afraid and withdrawn, wondering how people could speak so comfortably and easily with one another. I felt as though I'd missed something, that everyone knew something I didn't. It didn't help that I became obese. My isolation increased, sealing me off from the rest of the world. One day someone recommended OA to me. I couldn't control my eating, and I thought I might find at least one other person like me at a meeting. Not even halfway through that first meeting I knew I'd come home. My heart pounded with joy, and I

felt life flowing through my veins. My heart and soul said, “Yes! Yes!” to the qualifier's story because I felt everything she had. That was over 16 years ago. Today OA is my family, my heart, and my soul. I have learned unconditional love and acceptance and I offer them as I received them from the time I first walked into a room. OA gave me life and I thank my Higher Power every morning for this miracle.

— *Andrea, Metro Intergroup*

### LIVING, LOVING, ACCEPTED

I have never felt “a part of”, always “apart from”. I ate to calm my feelings of lack of love and isolation. I ate in isolation, hated myself for being fat and having no friends – a vicious circle. I hated myself for being fat, so I ate to soothe the pain.

When I came to my first meeting, a self-hater and alone, I was greeted with love. The thing that I used as an excuse for being friendless, the thing that I hated most about myself, was the thing that connected me to other OA's. I was loved for what I hated – my inability to control my food. I was not judged negatively for being fat, but loved because many others share the same disease. My self-imposed crisis that I could not avoid and my feelings of being separated, unique, and not fitting in ended with loving, accepting welcomes, and hugs from friends I had not met before.

— *Anonymous*

### SHE KEPT COMING BACK

Over the course of my life, I have lost weight three times. The first time after my child's birth. The second time, in 1964, using a commercial weight loss program. The third time was using OA HOW because of my obesity and another OA member reaching out from another 12 Step program. She had lost 100 lbs. I lost my weight using the Grey Sheet back in 1972. I had lost 92 lbs. in 16 weeks and kept it off for 2 years with “the perfect food plan.” I then relapsed for 20 years. In 1992, I returned to OA and lost 45 lbs over the course of 4 years. I had many relapses: HOW and Grey Sheet not working, binge eating, slips, sponsors drop me or making me feel guilty, doctors' food plans being hard to work because my carbohydrate addiction is so powerful. Now, with medical help, I am working hard, to gain my health back, one day at a time. I am doing service, working with the 12th Step Within Committee and now feel hope and acceptance as I surrender my will and accept my HP's plans for me.

— *Anonymous*

### THE FREEDOM AND SPIRIT OF OA

It was difficult to make that first step to go to a meeting. I knew I just had to do something about my weight, but more than that, I needed to do something about the compulsion to eat, eat, eat unnecessarily. My clothes were getting tighter and tighter.

I was welcomed to a meeting and felt at ease to share my feelings and truly bonded with other OA members. Our group is small – 5 or 6 most of the time – and I am comfortable saying, “I did not do well this week.” That's the freedom and the spirit of OA.

— *Anonymous*

[ Members Writing continued on, Page 7 ]

## Members Write on Recovering from Feeling “Outside”

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

[ Members Writing continued from, Page 6 ]

### FROM SECRET BINGES TO RECOVERY

I came into OA through a treatment center in June 1994. I binged in secret, even at work. I worked alone and lied to everyone, including my wife. At the time, I weighed 471 pounds, could hardly walk, took cabs and buses everywhere. When I came into OA, I found people who had an eating disorder, with or without the weight issues. They treated me like anyone else and took interest in each day of my abstinence. My weight was not an issue with them, as it was with civilians. Even in relapse, OA'ers stuck with me. In July 2002, I went into another treatment center which brought me back from the food.

— *Anonymous*

### NO LONGER LAST IN LINE

My feeling of being outside came from just being fat. Fat had permeated my whole life. Being different from others whom I always felt were better, I thought I owed them something because of my being fat. For example, I let others get ahead of me in line or being “understanding” when I wasn't picked for the basketball team. There was also the issue of being unable to wear those “thin” clothes or styles. I constantly had to watch what I ate and I knew very early on there were certain foods which, if I ate them, I couldn't stop. These were primarily starches, salty or fatty foods, or any combination thereof. I didn't want to go to my first OA meeting, and the only reason I went was to lose weight. I had no idea that what I experienced were symptoms of my disease or even that I had a disease. At my first meeting I related to the food sensitivities of many of the members and their inability to stop their pain of uncontrolled eating and weight gain. I too wanted to stop, then I wanted to be free of the obsession. It is still a growth and learning experience being in this program. My disease is progressive and must be faced fearlessly through support of my sponsor, the Steps and use of the Tools. What has helped me build upon this foundation is the commitment from other members, their examples, and the fact that this is a program of recovery regardless of how far down in my life I have gone or how far up on the scale I have gone.

— *Anonymous*

### NO LONGER ANGRY — GRATEFUL

I was angry at all things and didn't know it – people, pets, my boss, and myself also. My boss even sent me to an Employee Assistance Program to help me to curb my anger. After a few meetings with the people from the Employee Assistance Program he suggested an organization called Overeaters Anonymous. That day, I looked up OA on the Internet. It took me an additional two weeks to make it to my first meeting. I was scared but wanted to change and wanted to know how my anger was related to overeating. My first meeting was an hour and a half long. I listened to the words read to me by the OA members. I cried, knowing I was an overeater and that I was now home. I wanted the love of the members, and they gave it to me unconditionally. I thank my Higher Power for showing the way to recovery.

— *A Grateful Overeater, Jeffrey A*

### A NEW JOIE DE VIVRE

I felt different because I was fat. I isolated in my food addiction, believing the food was my friend. I despised people who had “normal” lives and I isolated a little more each day. I avoided going out with friends, going to family parties, fearing that they would realize that I had gained weight. In this way, I sought to avoid judgments and remarks about my morbid obesity. My isolated living had limited me feeding my illness of compulsive overeating, alternating with repeated diets. I was sinking deeper and deeper into my own world using all my energy only to take care of myself, my family, and my house. Every day was an experience of extreme suffering for me. I felt an emptiness inside which I tried to fill with food. I cursed the whole world and my destiny of being afflicted with the disease of compulsive overeating. My loneliness weighed heavily on me. I did not want anyone around me, and I surrounded myself with fat and food. I did not know that food was making me sick and even killing me. My best friend was to become my worst enemy. I had to get out of the vicious circle of isolation/compulsion at any price.

Today, I can say that was my loneliness that brought me back to OA. I had been in relapse for 10 years, had gained 125 lbs. and wanted to die. In the midst of my distorted perception of reality, I went to an OA meeting, giving myself another opportunity. I started again as a newcomer and I listened once more to the members' suggestions. One evening I heard a woman say, “I mingle with others in order to clarify my thinking.” When I got home, I took a bath, listened to some music and cried and cried all the tears I had inside. I GAVE IN before my first bite.

Today, because I have chosen to take care of myself, I have learned to have friends, to live with others. Finally, I go out, walk on the street, and no longer ashamed of myself. Now, people are a source of support, comfort and inspiration. I have begun to work on the Steps in writing. I have a food plan and abstaining from compulsive eating and from my binge foods. I'm involved in my home group, have my literature, prayer and meditation. I have a sponsor. I don't need to escape anymore because I live in my reality one day at a time. I share with someone else at least once a day either by phone, in a meeting, on the Internet, or over coffee. As I get better, more and more, I want to surround myself with people. I detached from food in order to attach myself to my Higher Power. Now, every day is a source of happiness and abundance. With these new elements in my life, I possess a new joie de vivre, thanks to the beautiful OA way of life. I am maintaining a weight loss of 103 lbs. and my life is full and productive.

— *Guylaine M. Intergroupe OA Français de Montréal*

## Diversity Workshop

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

Steve M. (Website and Publications Coordinator) and Lisa M. from MetroWest Intergroup presented a workshop on diversity within OA. The goals of the workshop were as follows: 1.) Create a desire within Region 6 to discuss diversity in our rooms, 2.) Share some of our own experiences, and 3.) Generate strategies for making OA welcoming to all with a desire to stop eating compulsively.

A slide presentation was used to illustrate the data; it seems that OA is ~87% white, 10% Hispanic, and 3% Black (non-Hispanic), while the overweight+obese population in the U.S. is ~66% White, 15% Hispanic, 13% Black (non-Hispanic), and 6% Other. The lack of Hispanic and Black members accounts for most of the “missing” race diversity in OA. Also, the population of OA is ~85% Female, and 15% Male, while the overweight+obese population in the U.S. is ~47% Female, and 53% Male. OA membership in the US is not a true mirror the diverse obese population of America.

## World Service Convention 2007 Ring in Recovery:

Declare Your Freedom from Compulsive Eating

August 30—September 2  
Philadelphia, PA USA

More information:

[http://www.oa.org/ws\\_convention.html](http://www.oa.org/ws_convention.html)  
or call

World Service Office: 1-505-891-2664

In a breakout session, the Region Representatives were asked to break into groups, and take a minute each to discuss an incident when they felt different. After the break, the groups re-convened to discuss diversity of their OA groups, and whether these groups reflect the wider community. The groups were asked to answer five questions. A range of answers came back:

Q1) What can we do to reach out to the underrepresented?

- Some groups were quite diverse (for example, many in New York City) but many reported little diversity. Diversity included race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual preference and eating disorder.

Q2) How reflective are they of the wider community?

- Generally, the meetings that are truly reflective of the communities they serve are rare, though they do exist.

Q3) What can we do to reach out to the underrepresented?

- Advertise to the underrepresented groups.
- Target specialty organizations.
- Start non-English meetings.
- Make sure things like flyers make it to all communities.
- Reach out via church and college bulletin boards and community newspapers.
- Use PI money when available.

Q4) What are we doing to make all newcomers feel welcome?

- Have greeters at meetings and encourage all members to speak with newcomers first.
- Have newcomer meetings. Have newcomer literature and call newcomers during the week.
- Use meeting time to answer newcomer questions.

Q5) What 3 suggestions can I take back to my groups to expand our membership among the underrepresented ?

- Let newcomers speak first.
- Reach out to ethnic areas in medical/health care.
- Make sure newcomers know how to get to meeting. Offer assistance.
- Make sure OA literature is available.
- Call newcomers.
- Start a meeting in an underrepresented neighborhood.
- Post notices in underrepresented neighborhood.
- Advertise in local papers.



Support your program. Subscribe today!

<http://www.oa.org/subscribe.html>

or

World Service Office  
P.O. Box 44020

Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA



## Committee Reports

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

**Editor's note:** Captured here is selected information from the full committee reports. For the complete committee reports, please visit [www.oaregion6.org](http://www.oaregion6.org) and click on "R6 Assembly Info".

### CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Chair, Barbara B.(Cape Cod IG), e-mail-cbb.cape@verizon.net , 16 members attended.

- 1.Work with Bylaws Committee toward presenting motion at April Assembly (deadline to submit 2/18/07)
- 2.Finalize "Convention Planning Manual". Prepare for distribution; CDs, R6 website.
- 3.Contact Webmaster (Steve) to establish secured area for R6 Convention Committee information.
- 4.Encourage IGs to present proposals for future Conventions (2010 and beyond).

### BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Chair, Bruce R.(Ottawa IG), [trade-mark@rogers.com](mailto:trade-mark@rogers.com)

- 1.Request by Coordinator to give contact info of Committee Chairs to all other Chairs
- 2.Request that all motions involving change to Bylaws, Policy and Procedure Manual be sent to Bylaws Committee for service in drafting, or explanation.
- 3.Draft a motion to change a provision in Bylaws re: R6 Officer requirements

### IGOR COMMITTEE - INTERGROUP OUTREACH

Chair: Bonnie B. (Connecticut IG) [bonniebalis@abcglobal.net](mailto:bonniebalis@abcglobal.net) 7 members attended.

- 1.Decided to create and send invitations to unaffiliated OA groups. Invitations will include contact person's name and/or phone number and e-mail. Scott will create invitations to send to committee members for approval by Nov. 15th. Invitations will be sent out in mid-February for Spring Assembly.
- 2.Unaffiliated groups will each be invited to join an Intergroup or attend Region 6 as a visitor.

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Chair: Steve M.(Metrowest IG) e-mail: [steveoa@misterimpatient.com](mailto:steveoa@misterimpatient.com) 6 members attended.

- 1.Service positions elected: Gaston (Montreal)-Chair; Elsa P. (Saint John, NB)-Editing and layout; Diane (Manchester, NH)-Proofreading; Carole, French-Canadian Coordinator, Diana (NYC) Proofreading, Steve M. mentor from the Board
- 2.Continue using the new layout
- 3.Increase content coming from French speaking groups
- 4.Make The Messenger more user-friendly. We would like feedback from readers.
- 5.Promote events.

### PI/HIPM COMMITTEE

(Public Information/Hospital, Institution, Professional, Military)  
Chair: Natalie (Ocean and Bay IG) [nat1557@yahoo.com](mailto:nat1557@yahoo.com)

- 1.Reviewed motions that were proposed by PI/HIPM Committee
- 2.Update for PI Blitz: NYC IG -ads for AM New York- starting 9/20-9 ads website/phone number. IG members will return calls
- 3.South Coastal IG: 12 calls were received as a result of 2 ads, changing the ad copy
- 4.NYS Capital District IG: received \$500 from IG for 5 benches-ad started beginning of September. Posters also went up
- 5.PI Blitz proposals: \$3000 total. Cape Cod approved for \$1380; Metrowest approved for \$1620 for 6 months

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Co-Chair, Louise Y. (Greater Syracuse IG) [Louise15@adelphia.net](mailto:Louise15@adelphia.net)  
Co-Chair, Ray F. (Greater NY Metro IG) [raelfo1@msn.com](mailto:raelfo1@msn.com) Board Members, Sid B. (Treasurer) and Karin R.(Vice-Chair) present, 6 members attended.

- 1.Louise and Ray were voted in as Co-Chairs; Beth was voted in as Secretary
- 2.Two fundraising items :
  - a) Region 6 pin
  - b) License plate B40A18
- 3.Review of audit with Finance Committee members, Treasurer and Vice-Chair
- 4.Audit accepted.

### TWELFTH STEP WITHIN COMMITTEE

Chair, Marilyn F. (New Brunswick IG) [mfarrell@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:mfarrell@nbnet.nb.ca) 10 members attended

- 1.New Chair, Marilyn F, Co-Chair, Clara E, Secretary, Lisa M.
- 2.Packets will be sent to each IG containing cover letter, Guide For Sponsors pamphlet. January 2006 Lifeline, Appendix F, return envelope, and feedback form.

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

Acting Chairs, Susan C. (Southern Tier IG), + Board Mentor, Laura N Chair, Danielle T., was absent. [danielletabela@yahoo.com](mailto:danielletabela@yahoo.com) 5 members attended.

- 1.Update survey flyer. 50 copies made and handed out to Intergroup Reps at today's Region 6 Assembly (9/16/06).
- 2.Committee will return survey flyer via postal service or e-mail to the IG reps and/or Chairs who are absent today, requesting feedback.

## Summary of Elections, Motions and Votes

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

**Important:** This is a brief summary of the business covered. The full minutes of this Fall 2006 Assembly are available on [www.oaregion6.org](http://www.oaregion6.org). Click on “R6 Assembly Info”.

**ELECTIONS-** (Editor's note: All Board positions except the Coordinator were open. No applications for Treasurer were received so this position was appointed):

**Chair-**Karin R. H.

**Vice Chair-**Mark G (subsequently resigned and Steve M. appointed to fill this and his current elected position).

**Website and Publications Coordinator-** Steve M

**Secretary-** Laura N.

**Treasurer:** Zazu G.

**Coordinator**(appointed due to opening when Mark G was elected Vice Chair): Helen F.

### WSBC BYLAWS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

After a number of very qualified candidates were nominated, the final vote count was Zazu-51 votes, Andrea-44 votes, Lucy-12 votes, Pat C.-8 votes, and Bonnie B.-7 votes. Zazu and Andrea will represent Region 6 on the WSBC Bylaws Committee and Lucy and Pat C. will be alternates.

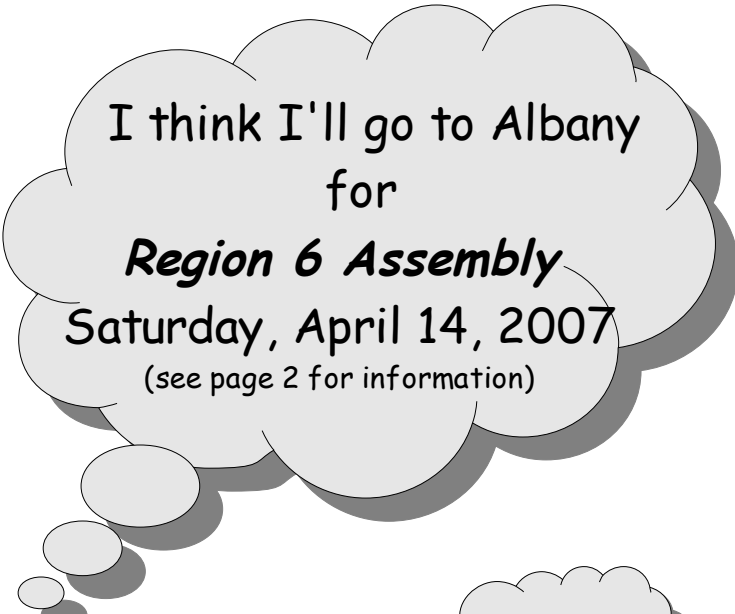
### BYLAW AMENDMENTS/POLICY MOTIONS

**Motions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9** were considered in a consent agenda (they could be considered as a group, rather than individually with little discussion). These procedures are being separated from the policies as part of the Region 6 Bylaws Committee's ongoing work. Once severed, the procedures will be in a separate reference document, and the procedures will be under the control of its respective committee. Motions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9 were unanimously approved.

**Motions 12, 13, and 14** codify actions that already exist; that is, discuss actions regarding the distribution and delivery of nomination forms: that is they all propose the same action. Motions 12, 13 and 14 were unanimously approved in a consent agenda.

**Motion 1** considered a change to the Convention Committee policy and procedure but was referred back to the Bylaws Committee for rework and submission to a later Assembly


**Motion 5** considered a change to the Newsletter Committee procedure. The motion was referred back to the Newsletter Committee for re-worked.



I think I'll go to Albany  
for  
**Region 6 Assembly**  
Saturday, April 14, 2007  
(see page 2 for information)



Why?



Because Service ignites  
my "spark within" !

### OA AS LIFESAVER

After a suicide attempt that didn't work, someone suggested I go to an OA meeting.

My attitude was "I don't need to be with those fat people. I know how to go on a diet." I weighed 385 pounds. In amazement at my first meeting, I sat in awe. I had absolutely found my home, was welcomed, and knew this was going to be it. I was loved to health. I know today I care and love myself and always try to extend my hand and heart to newcomers who enter the rooms

--Laura C. Suffolk IG

[ Elections and Motions continued on, Page11]

## Summary of Elections, Motions and Votes

Region 6 Assembly – September 16, 2006

[ Elections and Motions continued from, Page 10 ]

**Motion 7** deals with modernizing the audit procedure for the Region 6 financial records and was referred back to the Finance Committee for a feasibility review, and additional consideration.

**Motion 10** amends how PI Blitz money is distributed in a given fiscal year. After much discussion and amendment, the motion passed as: “ If the available budgeted funds for PI Blitzes are not used at any Fall Assembly, those funds may be carried over to the next Spring Assembly”. No dissenting votes were recorded.

**Motion 11** as amended by the Assembly, would require all submitted PI Blitz proposals contain the signature the Chair or Treasure of the intergroup presenting the proposal in order to verify that the proposal has been approved by the intergroup. After significant discussion, this was passed by the Assembly on a voice vote.

**Motion 15** would enable Region 6 notices (as mentioned in our Bylaws), to be made by e-mail to Intergroups that elected to receive them this way. Motion 15 passed on a show of hands.

**Motion 16** submitted a motion on behalf of the Convention Committee asked Assembly accept the proposal of South Coastal Mass IG to host the 2008 R6 Convention and the Syracuse IG to host the 2009 Region 6 Convention. Motion 16 was passed by the Assembly unanimously.

### WONDERS OF SERVICE

As the new chair of Intergroup I was asked to write a few words about this new experience. Already I'm overwhelmed. But here goes. Since the December Intergroup meeting I've been asking myself how come I said that I would be the chair of Intergroup. Well it seems HP has a sense of humor. At the time I said yes I would do it but that I didn't drive at night. (I truly do not.)

I thought I'd be safe with that excuse. I had a lapse of memory forgetting that three of our members live quite close to me. They all immediately said they would get me to the meetings. So what choice did I have but to accept? And because I believe “all events happen in God's time,” here I am writing 400 words about my HP (Higher Power) and IG (Intergroup) experience. My name is Virginia and I am the MWI chairwoman for the year 2007. My experience with MetroWest began in 1994, when Georgina Z. completed her terms as intergroup rep. for the Thursday morning meeting I attended. Georgina encouraged us to volunteer to succeed her as rep., to do service for our meeting but especially for ourselves. So I volunteered to be the rep. HP again.

When my term expired. I continued to attend the IG meetings, sometimes as a rep., sometimes as a visitor driving another rep., Ethel “perfectly imperfect abstinence” G. I remember telling another OA friend, Ed S., that I had no interest in doing work at the intergroup level. I really meant

what I said, too. Obviously HP had other plans for me and I kept getting another nudge. I volunteered to be a Region 6 alternate and a Region 6 delegate. The really great things about going to IG and Region meetings are the welcoming smiles and hugs from other delegates. You might ask, what kept me attending the IG meetings? The simple answer is I loved the people who came on a regular basis. I was impressed with the service they did, especially when I wasn't inclined to do any service myself. Every now and then HP would give me a little tweak to do some service at Intergroup and I would. “Thy will not mine be done.”

I began to see how intergroup worked and how it fit into Region 6 and how Region 6 fit into World Service. These were new awarenesses for me. Three years ago I was honored to be a delegate from MWI to the World Service Business Conference in New Mexico. It was an incredible experience, to be there and do committee work with Ed and Prue S. at WSBC. More smiles, more hugs.

This new commitment to intergroup teaches me that I still have a lot to learn, especially about using my computer and accessing the Internet. OK, OK, HP, I'm willing to learn — about cyberspace!! Steve M., our past chairman, current secretary, Webmaster, and PI (Public Information) guru, is so supportive I have no fear of stumbling along till I get the feel for the task at hand.

There's lots of other help, too. Lisa M., past secretary and current corresponding secretary, is wonder woman. Treasurer Julie C. has our finances well in hand. Kristen S., our vice chairwoman, is ready to help plan some innovative events. Jen and Bee are well along with the annual MWI Grotonwoods retreat. Jean E. just completed leading our Recovery from Relapse workshop, and Michael P., wordsmith extraordinaire, edited and put together this Trusted Servant. We look like a pretty cohesive unit. My hopes for this year are to encourage each of our 28 member meetings to designate a rep. and

perhaps an alternate so that all groups will be represented at intergroup meetings.

If this old warhorse, of 18 years in OA, is having fun, I invite you all to join in.

— Virginia P. Ashland

(Reprinted from MetroWest IG Spring 2007 Trusted Servant)

*Always to Extend the Hand and Heart...*

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 1  
NORTH READING MA