

# Novation

OA NORTHERN VIRGINIA OUTREACH INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

February, 2002

20 cents



## On Being Two

Abstinence came to live with me for one today. She can only stay today because she has no need of, or belief in, yesterday. She scoffs at tomorrow. Abstinence walks before me into a room, and she has my back. Her luminosity lights my face and eyes with its brilliance. She is as close to God as this human can be, so I try very hard to listen to her whispers as well as her shouts. She can be very quiet and introspective, or she can be as noisy as 76 trombones, AND a big parade.

She brings me wonderful surprises; tiny boxes wrapped in intricate designs and fine tissue paper, big shiny gaudily wrapped packages with flowing ribbons begging to be untied. She once rang my doorbell and when I answered there was a bicycle there, and I could hear her tinkling laughter as she ran away. She gives me flowers and soap and candles, and once she gave me a Mickey Mouse pen. She brought me a whole new body to live in; she gave me right size. She loans me her capacity to love.

She took my illusions and my pain as payment. She took my adipose armor and she sternly reminds me that God is my shield now. She is God's representative but *she is no angel*, she is a signpost pointing the way to the shining path towards God who sent her.

Abstinence is freely mystical, and she will be with anyone who invites her. She will never be monogamous and she would have a giggle fit to even consider staying with only one when abundance is her devotion. Her paradoxes are unboundable.

You will always find her if you, ask. She is very social, and she attends all of life's events; pregnancies, conventions, parties, funerals, marathons, and the like. Her supplies are never limited.

Clarity is Abstinence's daughter and I am allowed

to hold and cherish Clarity as if she were my own. I am enjoying watching her grow, she is walking now but she still loves to crawl up on my lap and I can hold her.

Serenity, Gratitude, Dignity, Freedom, Joy, and Grace all dwell in our home now. When Abstinence and Clarity came to stay several of my constant companions left me. My significant other, Victimhood, abandoned me and sometimes I miss the big Green monster that lurked around our house. Others left too. Terror, Rage, Self Pity, and my lover, Resentment, have all fled the scene. They all live in the neighborhood on the next block over; our backyards touch. I often catch glimpses of them pattering around the house and yard, and sometimes when it is dark in my kitchen I can see into their house. Now that Clarity is here, I can see them in a different light than when they were my permanent housemates.



## From This Corner ....

This issue is sponsored by the 7 O.A./H.O.W. groups in Northern Virginia. Like an earlier issue it was intended to be published last month but through a set of circumstances it never came about. Thanks to all of those who submitted articles. Unfortunately, I can't use them all this issue, but will save them for a future issue.

The March issue will be sponsored by the Sunday Morning Men's Group with the topic of "Men and Prayer." What about your group for April and beyond? Why not bring this project up at your next group conscience and have someone contact the Novation editor. Remember Writing is one of our tools.

Dick D., Editor

## WHAT IS O.A./H.O.W.?

O.A./H.O.W. is a movement within Overeaters Anonymous whose basic principle is that abstinence is the only means to freedom from compulsive eating and the beginning of a spiritual life.

### WHERE AND WHY DID H.O.W. BEGIN?

O.A./H.O.W. began in Phoenix in 1981 as a means of reviving "O.A. VICTORIOUS." Its meeting format is taken from Rozanne's book, *I Put My Hand In Yours*, centers around the concept of service. Many of the questions used in H.O.W. sponsoring stem from O.A. Plus and Westminster groups. The outline of service came from the O.A. Suffolk County, New York, Sponsor's Guide.  
THE O.A./H.O.W. CONCEPT

The Overeaters Anonymous H.O.W. Concept meeting has been formed to offer the compulsive eater, who accepts the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as a program of recovery, a disciplined and structured approach. The O.A./H.O.W. group is formed in the belief that our disease is absolute and therefore only absolute acceptance of the O.A. program will offer any sustained abstinence to those of us whose compulsion has reached a critical level.

Therefore, the O.A./H.O.W. plan of eating, steps, traditions, and tools of recovery are not suggested; rather, we accept them as requirements for our recovery.

Our meetings are dedicated to the concept of remaining Honest, Open-minded, and Willing to listen. This is the H.O.W. of the program. We pray that the collective group conscience and love that these ideals offer us will promote a strong sense of security that will enable us to experience a new unity and wholeness with all those around us. And that the H.O.W. ideal will help us to progress in our program of recovery on a daily basis.

To be certain, much of our strength is found in the structure of meetings and in the daily adherence to the program as it is written in our literature.

H.O.W. meetings firmly understand that after our recovery has begun through abstinence and the taking of the first three steps, our further surrender to the additional steps of recovery offers us a promise of happiness, contentment, and achievement in all areas of our lives.

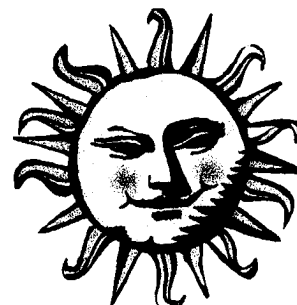
We ensure our continued and sustained abstinence

from compulsive eating by being forever aware that God is doing for us what we have never been able to do for ourselves.

May God, as each of us understands Him, open our minds and our hearts to the love, which is manifest in this room, Amen.

Those of us who work the O.A./H.O.W. Program use the following guidelines for abstinence.

1. We do not write our own food plan. We use a food plan given to us by a nutritionist, dietician, or doctor. We discuss it with our sponsor. We do not pick one that allows any of our binge foods. If some food on our plan becomes a problem, we avoid it. We do not skip meals, switch meals, or combine meals. We do not deviate or manipulate our food plan in any way. If we need to change our committed food during the day, we call a sponsor.
2. We weigh and measure all our portions so that there is no guesswork. We do not measure by eye. We use a measuring cup, spoon, and a scale.
3. We weigh ourselves once a month until we reach goal weight and once a week on maintenance.
4. Unless advised otherwise by our doctor, we take a multi-vitamin and drink 64 ounces of water a day.
5. We do not drink alcohol.
6. We do not use foods containing sugar, except if sugar is **listed fifth** or beyond on the ingredients label.
7. Above all, we do not vacillate or water down the disciplined nature of the H.O.W. Program. It is not the extra string bean that counts; it is the decision to take it.





### Need a Meeting? Pick a day!

Did you know that there are 52 O.A. meetings each week in Northern Virginia? There are as few as four on Sunday and as many as eleven on Wednesday. We offer everything from a men's (only) meeting, to a meeting that focuses on those people who have lost (or who need to lose) 100 pounds or more. Meetings start as early as 6:30 am, or as late as 8:00 pm. We are blessed with literature meetings, meditation meetings, writing meetings, step meetings, and workbook study meetings. Some groups meet Monday-Friday and others are there to offer acceptance, the eleventh step, or back to basics. We read from the *Alcoholics Anonymous*, referred to as the Big Book, *Lifeline*, the AA 12&12, the O.A. 12&12, For Today, and the O.A. *Abstinence Book*. We have meetings for those in relapse, the hopeful, the beginners/newcomers, the early bird, and the serious stepper. Come join us!

Here is a list of the seven O.A./H.O.W. Meetings in Northern Virginia each week:

**Monday, 7-9 pm, H.O.W. Steps and Traditions**

St George's Episcopal Church, Rhodes room, 915 N. Oakland Street, Arlington We read from the O.A. Twelve and Twelve or the Big Book. We have no speaker. This is a literature meeting.

**Monday, 7-9 pm, Manassas Faith, Hope, and Charity H.O.W.**

Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas This is a Step Meeting meeting.

**Wednesday, 7-9 pm, Wednesday Night Annandale H.O.W.**

Annandale High School, Library, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale This is a speaker meeting.

**Wednesday, 7-9 pm, Wednesday Night Alexandria H.O.W.**

Fairlington Presbyterian Church, 2"d floor, 3846 King Street, Alexandria This is a speaker meeting.

**Friday, 7-9 pm, Arlington H.O.W. Step**

St George's Episcopal Church, room 114, 915 N. Oakland Street, Arlington We read the step of the month from the O.A. Twelve and Twelve or the AA Twelve and Twelve. We also have a speaker on the third Friday of the month.

**Saturday, 9:30-11:30 am, Alexandria H.O.W.**

Fairlington United Methodist Church, Room 308, 3900 King Street, Alexandria This is a speaker meeting.

**Saturday, 10 am-Noon, Fairlington H.O.W.**

Fairlington Presbyterian Church, 2"d floor, 3846 King Street, Alexandria This is a speaker meeting.

Those wishing more information on the H.O.W. concept are invited to a H.O.W. Newcomers Meeting each Saturday from 9:00-9:30 am at Fairlington United Methodist Church, Room 308. Come, ask questions, and then stay for the meeting! All are welcome!

## The Seven Tools of O.A. / H.O.W.

At O.A./H.O.W. meetings we ask seven sponsors to read a tool and share on how they use the tool in their program of recovery. Following are seven personal opinions on the tools of recovery. The opinions expressed here are those of individual O.A./H.O.W. members and do not represent that of O.A. as a whole.

### Abstinence / A Plan of Eating

Each food addict working the O.A./H.O.W. concept relies daily on a plan of eating. Our "food plans" are given to us by the doctor/nutritionist of our choice, and therefore food plans vary from member to member. Indeed, no two plans are exactly alike! Variations usually depend on age, activity level, or individual food allergies. But some commonalities do exist. In general, caloric levels vary and are determined by a health professional. The idea behind the food plan is to ensure healthy intake on a longterm, sustainable basis. The issue of "weight" is not a primary priority. Rather, we seek "health." We in O.A./H.O.W. do not restrict or "diet." Nor do we eat to excess of what our bodies need to function properly. Also, no food groups are "forbidden" or eliminated in O.A./H.O.W. food plans, unless a member has a specific food allergy or trigger. Thus, most food plans are a healthy mixture of starches, vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy products, and fats. We do, however, choose to abstain from alcohol and sugar (unless it is listed fifth or beyond on the ingredient label). A healthy, sustainable food plan is key to success in working the other six tools, and, most important, the twelve steps and traditions of O.A.. While the food plan alone is not enough to sustain long-term recovery, it enables us to become clear, present, and physically able to work our twelve steps and twelve traditions to the best of our ability, without the distraction of either excessive or inadequate food intake.

### Meetings

O.A./H.O.W. meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive eaters who come together to share their experience, strength, and hope. Currently, the Northern Virginia area is blessed to have seven fully operational O.A./H.O.W. meetings! All O.A./H.O.W. meetings begin with a series of readings that explain the H.O.W. concept (20 minutes), followed by readings explaining the seven tools of H.O.W. accompanied by positive words from individual members working the tools (30-40 minutes). Next are announcements (5-10 minutes), and thereafter, the leader shares his or her experience, strength, and hope (10 minutes). Most O.A./H.O.W. W. meetings share the same structure up to this point, but thereafter, format varies from

meeting to meeting. Some host a speaker (20 minutes), followed by sharing (30 minutes), while others do a close reading of O.A.'s 12 Steps and Traditions (20 minutes), followed by sharing (30 minutes). Most O.A./H.O.W. meetings are two hours in duration. Members working the O.A./H.O.W. concept attend meetings at their leisure. We have no "requirements" in this regard. Also, anyone may attend an O.A./H.O.W. meeting, and anyone who wishes to do so may share during pitch time. O.A./ H.O.W. meetings are designed primarily to help the food addict accept responsibility for his/her recovery and to learn to live a sane and useful life. This food addict has seen members who keep coming back (no matter what) recover their physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial health; reconcile with family members; embark on new and meaningful careers, whether births and deaths abstinely, and, perhaps best of all, learn to think of another before him/herself. Meetings are daily miracles.

### Phone calls

The telephone is my favorite tool in O.A.! In O.A./ H.O.W. we are asked to make at least four calls a day - one to our sponsor and three more to other O.A. members. By calling other members we are given a chance to talk program one on one with another food addicted person. Before O.A. many of us had spent months or years in isolation. We did not talk about our problems and did not realize that we were not alone in our suffering, our insecurity, or pain. Many times the phone has been the only thing that stood between me and my next compulsive bite. While I was in Traditional O.A., I did not receive one call from another member. Now that I am in O.A./H.O.W. I talk to someone every day. The more calls I make the more I receive. Since joining H.O.W. I have yet to come home and not have at least one message on my answering machine from another compulsive overeater. While on the phone I have dealt with the depths of despair, the passing of a family member, the joys of pregnancy, the stress of a new job, a new love, a new home and the giddiness of spring fever. I have cried, laughed, and listened with you and for you. The telephone is my lifeline to hope, healing, and a fuller life.

### Sponsorship

I met my first O.A. sponsor at the Alexandria Friendship meeting on Wednesday night. I had heard that I should look for a sponsor who has something that I want. This woman had an available time slot and that was enough for me! I had never had a sponsor before, and had no idea what I wanted other than someone who was willing to work with me. I have since changed sponsors

and now have an O.A./H.O.W. sponsor. My O.A./H.O.W. sponsor has at least 30 days of back-to-back abstinence and for the first 70 days I worked with her I did daily assignments that prepared me to take the first three steps. In O.A./H.O.W. if you lose your abstinence while working on these first three steps you must return back to the first assignment and the first step and begin again. After completing all 70 questions and with at least 70 days of back-to-back abstinence, I was ready to become a sponsor. H.O.W. sponsorship is taken very seriously and there is a structured approach to becoming a sponsor. Traditional O.A. did not offer me the in depth study of the steps and traditions that H.O. W. did. Thank God I had a sponsor to walk with me through each step. Today, I call my sponsor each morning at a pre-determined time, turn over my food for the day, and give her my daily writing assignment. We then talk about what is happening in my life. My sponsor gives me 15 minutes each day to talk about my program of recovery and the highs and lows that I am experiencing. That's over 91 hours of service each year that she gives to one person. H.O.W. sponsors are truly blessed people who are committed to recovery! Thank you to each person who has sponsored me (temporarily or permanently) in O.A./H.O.W..

### **Anonymity**

Anonymity is a tool as well as appearing in two traditions. In O.A./H.O.W. we do not share with other members the names of those people we are sponsoring or who our own sponsor is. We respect the anonymity of our fellows. When I first came into O. A./H.O.W. I learned that I couldn't talk about other people. This seemed impossible! If I didn't talk about other people's successes, experiences, or struggles, then what would I talk about? Surprisingly, I discovered that the subject I was qualified to talk about was me - how I felt, what I thought, what I was doing, and where I went. I had to recognize and appreciate the life that I had, the feelings that I felt and not live in other people's lives.

Thanks to the anonymity in O.A./H.O.W. I have learned to share some of the gut wrenching stuff that had kept me in the food for many years. I share the more personal, private things with a smaller group of fellows. This feels safer for me. And when I learn that I am not alone, or the only one who has ever experienced these feelings, then I may share it with a larger group. I now believe that there is nothing that I have done in my past that hasn't been done by someone before me.

Anonymity is the part of the program that allows me to share where I am, what I have done, and what I am thinking without being afraid that this information will be shared with anyone outside of the room. What we hear in meetings, what we see in meetings, when we leave a meeting, it stays there!

### **Service**

Our greatest service is abstinence. We give service by attending meetings, helping to set up chairs, making and receiving phone calls, and listening to other compulsive overeaters with an open heart and mind. Although many of us come into the rooms looking to help ourselves, we are also helping others. Simply being present at a meeting and identifying ourselves as compulsive overeaters helps us to remember that we are not alone with this condition. At times we may be called upon to help our group or O.A. as a whole. We create service positions within our groups such as meeting leader, treasurer, timekeeper, literature person, or set-up person. We also have opportunities to represent our home group at the intergroup level, Regional Seven, or at World Service. Your level of service and commitment to O.A. should be discussed with your sponsor. We need each other. Do what you can, when you can. Just keep coming back!

### **Literature and Writing**

In O.A./H.O.W. we believe that it is important to read program literature every day and write. Many of us use written questions that focus on the literature, steps, traditions, or on various areas of recovery as a guide for our daily assignments. Sometimes the assigned reading is a couple of paragraphs and sometimes it can be 20 pages long. Some days we write lengthy declarations and some days a few sentences is all we need. The idea is to put pen to paper every day and clear our heads of the thoughts that run ramped.

*For Today*, for daily meditation, is a favorite among many O.A./H.O.W. members. For some it is because of the famous authors who can put profound thoughts into a single sentence. For others this book is a blessing for the brief, simple, insight it offers to our disease.

Whether reading the Big Book or O.A.'s *Twelve and Twelve*, we read each day and we write about our disease. Without this tool, it would be difficult to keep our heads clear.

## H.O.W. ABSTINENCE

Those of us who work the O.A./H.O.W. Program use the following guidelines for abstinence.

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2. We weigh and measure all our portions so that there is no guesswork. We do not measure by eye. We use a measuring cup, spoon, and a scale.
3. We weigh ourselves once a month until we reach goal weight and once a week on maintenance.
4. Unless advised otherwise by our doctor, we take a multi-vitamin and drink 64 ounces of water a day.
5. We do not drink alcohol.
6. We do not use foods containing sugar, except if sugar is listed fifth or beyond on the ingredients label.
7. Above all, we do not vacillate or water down the disciplined nature of the H.O.W. Program. It is not the extra string bean that counts; it is the decision to take it.

**Throw Out Those Old W&Ws:** Rob H., our Where & When Editor, points out that there have been many changes over the last few months and asks meeting to throw out back issues of the W&W. There is nothing worse than a new member showing up for a meeting that doesn't exist or that has moved location. Please help in this one.

## H.O.W. - honest open wide loving

I came into O.A./H.O.W. in the late spring of 2001. I won't say it's been easy. It's been very challenging for this addict. Firstly, through the daily reading and writing I had to honestly look at my disease over the course of my life. Then I had to be open-minded enough to call three (well actually 4 if you include my daily sponsor call) total strangers everyday, not to mention go to two-hour meetings with a completely different format than I had ever known. Lastly, I had to have the willingness to rigorously follow a food plan that I wasn't too crazy about, prescribed by my nutritionist. I had to let go of my control (that I never truly had anyway). What I didn't realize was that I was being called to have the willingness to follow a format that would lead me to freedom unlike any that I could imagine. The footwork is demanding yet the rewards are well beyond the demands.

There have been a number of times that I have wanted to quit O.A./H.O.W., if not every other day. Yet I'm so grateful that I didn't and that I listened to God calling me to this spiritual solution. That is where this rigorous footwork has led me... to... a spiritual solution unlike any other. I now have hope for my recovery. I know that it will take time, but I spent a lot of time in the problem, I'm ready to spend the rest of my life in the solution. Praise God for O.A./H.O.W.

## INTERGROUP NEWS

**Thanks!** Special thanks to Barbara J. and all of those who participated in the Candlelight Promises on January 12th. Over 100 people attended and had their lives and their programs enriched.

**Web-site Up:** Our own web site is back up and running. Thanks to Bret S., our new webmaster. Check it out. Just in case you forgot it is:  
**[www.OANOVA.org](http://www.OANOVA.org)**

**Next Intergroup Meeting:** 10:00 to 12:00, Saturday, March 16, 2002. Immanuel United Methodist Church, 7901 Heritage Drive in Annandale. All are welcome to attend and join in the activities. You don't have to be an official Intergroup Representative to attend. Welcome!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UNITY DAY 2002

Personal recovery depends upon OA Unity.

Join in a celebration of OA Unity and the 12 Traditions that ensure it will last!

**When:** Saturday 23 February  
**Time:** 1:00pm - 4:00pm  
**Where:** Auditorium #3  
 Holy Cross Hospital  
 1500 Forest Glen Rd.  
 Silver Spring, MD

At 2:30 we will join fellow OA members around the globe in a worldwide celebration of Unity.

**Directions:** Take Capital Beltway (I-495) to the MD-97 N/GEORGIA AVE exit towards WHEATON. Turn RIGHT onto FOREST GLEN RD (about mile, after exit). Hospital is on your right about 1 mile after turn.

Sponsored jointly by DC/MD and NOVA Intergroups Call either hotline if you have questions.

DC/MD - 301-321-3821  
 NOVA - 703-823-6682



## MEN OF PRINCIPLE

**"Practicing These Principles In All Our Affairs"**

### OA Men's Retreat

Sponsored by  
 The Sunday Morning Men's Meeting  
 Alexandria Hospital, Alexandria VA

April 19-21, 2002

The Bellarmine Retreat Center in  
 Blue Ridge Summit, PA (Near Gettysburg)

Space is limited - first come  
 first served

Contacts: Rob H. 202-686-2824  
 Dan C. 703-433-1360

Cost -only \$90.00  
 (There will be a \$10 charge for Registrations received after 4/1/02)  
 Some scholarships (or partial scholarships) are available - please ask

### Editorial Policy

The opinions expressed in Novation reflect those of the writers and not Northern Virginia Intergroup nor OA as a whole, or the Editor of Novation; nor does the publication of any article imply endorsement. The editor welcomes any and all contributions, and reserves the right to edit all articles. Send articles, letters, announcements, or other contributions to Novation to:

Novation  
 C/O Dick Dorr  
 3716 Valley Drive  
 Alexandria, VA 22302

Or email to [dickdorr@aol.com](mailto:dickdorr@aol.com)

## OA PHONE LIST



We use the phone as a means of contact, to help us through the highs and lows of each day without compulsively eating. The following OA members welcome your calls and are committed to helping the newcomer in any way they can. Go ahead, give someone a call!

### NEWCOMER OUTREACH

Diane L.	703-813-6313	Kelsie	301-428-0562
Kelly	703-815-9775	Maria L.	202-333-8089
Ruth K.	703-206-0559	Janice	703-914-5440
Alan S.	703-370-5505	Dianna	703-425-9480
Betsy F.	703-998-7276	Doree	703-451-7604
Debbie F.	703-799-3282	Cecille	703-658-0873
Sandy B.	703-560-3951	Gail	703-793-4926
Rachel B.	703-532-1824	Gladys	703-968-8476
George J. (h)	703-978-2072	Ginny St.P.	703-998-1463
(w)	202-269-4204	Lynn B.	703-222-3279

### Support Your Intergroup!

Intergroup meetings take place the third Saturday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel United Methodist Church, Annandale, Virginia. Find out more about Intergroup by showing up and serving on a committee or by serving as a representative for one of your meetings! Service is its own reward!

### NIGHT OWLS & EARLY BIRDS

The people listed here are either up late or are early risers-feel free to call them if you need someone to talk to.

Janice	703-914-5440	`til 10 PM*
David K.	703-644-8499	`til 10 PM
George J.	703-978-2072	`til 10 PM

\*anytime in an emergency

**Support OA 60/30/10** - After meeting group expenses-rent, literature, etc. It is suggested that the 7th tradition should be sent 60% to Intergroup, 30% to WSO and 10% to Region 7.

## NOVA INTERGROUP BOARD

Chair	Jan L.	703-339-7773
1st Vice-Chair	Karen S.	703-536-5269
2nd Vice-Chair		
Secretary	Dick D.	703-578-1999
Treasurer	Joan H.	703-527-6592
Literature	Kristin	703-578-3485
OA Hotline Contact	Jessica B.	703-660-8731
Webmaster	Bret S.	703-369-0523
Novation Editor	Dick D.	703-578-1999
Where & When Editor	Rob H.	202-686-2824
OA WSO Delegates	Paul B.	703-765-1465
	Betsy R.	202-548-0957
	Toby	703-528-9563
Region 7 Reps	Betsy R.	202-548-0957
	Toby	703-528-9563
	Jan	703-339-7773
	Dick D.	703-578-1999

NOVA Outreach Web Site: [www.oanova.org](http://www.oanova.org)

DC/MD Web Site: [www.aa-dcmetro.org](http://www.aa-dcmetro.org)

World Service Web Site:

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

Hotline Phone #: **703-823-6682**

### **Welcome!**

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting or accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.