



NOVATION!

NOVA Outreach Intergroup May 2003

Speaking of Tradition Five

"Each group has but one primary purposeto carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers

When I was in the food, I tried all kinds of options. I paid more money than I would like to remember trying to get the weight off and keep it off. Nothing worked for the long term. When I came to OA, I was blessed to see solid recovery and to realize that this program worked. No one was collecting money from me. No one was selling scales or mugs or food. The primary purpose was to offer a spiritual program for those who suffer from my disease. It felt strange at first. I kept waiting for the catch.

At first, I mixed up OA with a support group. I wanted to share my problems. Specifically, the ways in which other people were not going along with my agenda. But I was gently steered towards sharing on our primary purpose, which was recovery.

To me the fifth tradition is tied to the 12th step. By gently steering me towards recovery, I was being taught how to focus on the primary purpose and with that, how to keep it a program of attraction.

Now I try to apply the fifth tradition to my own life. The primary

purpose before all else is to remain abstinent. If I can do that, it is amazing how much better I can interact with the world. I save my problems for my talks with my sponsor. But what is really amazing is that once I became abstinent, I discovered there weren't as many problems with others. Once I cleared my side of the street, the rest of the world was a lot easier to get along with. ☺

--Anonymous

Region VII Spring Assembly 2003 Report I

The first committee meeting I attended was Hospitals, Institutions, Physicians & Military (HIPM). The HIPM book produced by WSO is \$10.00. A "poster kit" can be purchased for \$5.00. The Jersey Shore IG produced a 10-foot wide by 1 high banner that they display at events. Nurses at colleges are a great source for starting meetings there. IGs were encouraged to have a specific focus for each month of the year and have an committee do something connected with that focus. Health food stores are great places to post flyers, etc.

The next committee meeting I attended was Public Information (PI). Lavish displays with lots of words at events health fairs are of little use because you have only 4.3 seconds to grab a person's attention. The DC IG has really been doing a great job in their PI efforts. Make presentations at high school and college health

classes. Adopt a "Buddy" IG that is struggling.

The last committee meeting I attended was Ways & Means. The region has about \$8,000.00 in the prudent reserve (the prudent reserve is set at \$7,500.00 but interest has accrued). The region has about \$22,000.00 in the checking account, having made a little over \$6,000.00 in profit from last fall's convention. Most of the time was spent on whether we had sufficient assets to buy or lease three computers with software and printers for Board members' use them during the year and at assembly and to the convention for use.

I argued against the idea but the group voted to purchase three Dell computers anyway. After a lengthy debate, the committee passed a motion to put on to the Business Meeting's agenda a motion to send \$10,000.00 to WSO.

Faye, Dick and Brett attended other committee meetings to assure that someone from our IG was at all committee meetings.

The Business Meeting involved much changing "this" to "that" and "shall" to "will" and then back again. (These changes in the Policy Manual and By-Laws are quite boring but keep Region VII in order, kind of like the Traditions keep the meetings in order). We actually got to leave early on Sunday morning!

The most contentious item at the Business Meeting turned out to be

sending the money to WSO. After much debate and parliamentary hijinks-remember all 60+ delegates may ask for clarification or raise a point of order, and three people can speak in favor of a motion and three against--the group agreed to about \$6,500.00. (That was \$5,000.00 plus the amount over the prudent reserve--I think.) Debate was quite acrimonious with some people suggesting that those who did not want to stretch themselves, their programs, and Region VII resources, were "still in their disease" and not had the "fear of economic insecurity" leave them. You can imagine the counterargument--we are not in the disease but are simply being prudent. As we have many times in the past, we agreed to look at the books at the fall assembly to see if we could send more then.

And while I grumble about all the parliamentary motions and taking two and one-half days out of my weekend, I still want to thank all of you for trusting me and letting me represent you at Region VII.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul B.

Step of the Month Step 5

"Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

"In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient." (The Big Book, p.72.)

"If we have come to know how wrong thinking and action have hurt us and others, then the need to quit living

by ourselves with those tormenting ghosts of yesterday gets more urgent than ever. We have to talk to somebody about them." (AA 12 and 12, p. 55.)

Once I got "sober" from all the food, I had to face my past in Step 4 - honestly. I had to face my past without dressing it up to make it easier for me to live with. Once I had gone through the process of listing my wrongs and resentments, I had begun the process of rigorous honesty. But how could I hold such things in my mind? I was overwhelmed with sadness at particular actions and anger at myself and others.

My emotions held a tight grip on my soul, destroying my sense of serenity and provoking feelings that made me want to focus on anything else. When I face my past -- and I try for the fifth step as a regular habit -- I feel overwhelmed by compulsions: I want to run out immediately and buy something to eat.

I know that it is necessary to face my past, to hold it in my mind long enough to figure out what it has to do with my compulsion to eat, or my compulsions in general. And each time I face down a mistake I have made, each time my past has come thundering over me, I have found relief in step five.

At least God and one other person now know what I have done. Step five is not an amends, it is a release of steam. It is that moment when we say honestly to the other person, yes, I did this. I was this way,

and this is how life was for those around me.

In my experience, it does not work if I leave it between myself and God. There are too many ways I can fool myself. I can downplay events that were catastrophic. I can make normal slights seem catastrophic. As the 12 and 12 says, when my past is pressing, I need to write out what is bothering me and test my interpretation with my Higher Power and another human being. Nothing else relieves the tension so well. Nothing else saves me from my compulsion to eat which is so likely to override my judgment at any time. --Anonymous

Region VII Report II

I had forgotten what an incredible blessing it is to be a part of region seven and participate in the assembly. The recovery and dedication of so many people with years of abstinence is simply infectious. While there was a great deal of work to be done, there was an equal amount of fun and laughter to be shared. I focused my efforts on three committees-website, 12-step-within, and first tradition.

Website Committee

We started without any committee officers but ended up with me as the chair plus an acting secretary. The original website was constructed and hosted by another member, who has since fallen into relapse -- leading to the site being down for several months.

Neal, the Region VII treasurer and previous webmaster for the DC/MD IG website, helped reclaim the region7.org domain and resurrect the website. He also made recent updates including special events flyers, forms for making contributions to Region VII as well as requesting funds, and contact info for Board members and committee officers, as well as links to other OA sites. After much discussion, we decided to change website hosting companies to one that is more reliable and offers more features. We will also have to reregister the domain by mid-September.

Although I am temporarily performing the webmaster duties, we voted to hire a professional webmaster to work under the supervision of the committee. We defined a basic list of job requirements and announced this in hopes of finding someone in program to take over. Here are the requirements:

- Sample of Work
- Understanding of HTML
- Familiarity and Ownership of Adobe Acrobat (complete program not just the reader)
- Familiarity with FTP
- Familiarity with industry standard HTML editors such as FrontPage, Adobe Publish, or Macromedia
- Access to a Scanner (OCR software would also be a plus)
- Some graphics skills and access to graphics software
- Pluses:
 - Familiarity with scripting languages (java, perl, cgi)

- Familiarity with database management (SQL would be ideal)
 - Anticipated workload would be 5-10 hours per month. Salary would be negotiable but initial budget discussed in committee meeting has a \$500/yr ceiling. This is why we are hoping to find someone in program who would be doing this service for the love of the program as well as for the money.

Our goal is to collect resumes and work samples before the next assembly and narrow down the list of candidates. We may invite the top two or three candidates to the next assembly to make the final decision. Website upkeep is all that will be needed after that.

Other discussion focused on what flyers to post. We decided we might create subdomains for intergroups that cannot afford their own sites to post flyers for special events. For IGs with websites, we would create links to their site rather than posting the flyers on the Region VII site.

The website can accessed at <http://www.oaregion7.org>.

Program Zingers on The Fifth Step
If there's a word for it, it means other people have done it!

The Fifth Step is like composting: it stinks, but it eventually produces beautiful flowers.
We are as sick as the secrets we hoard.

Region VII Report, cont'd
12-Step-Within Committee

This committee is near and dear to my heart as a relapse survivor. The big push for this year is the "Call 5 to Keep'm Alive" campaign on the last Saturday in July (7/26). The goal is for OA'er to call five friends who have stopped coming to meetings or are struggling with relapse inside the program. The calls should focus on letting them know we care about them, are here to support them, and reassure them that they are welcome in the fellowship and not alone. The calls should focus on recovery and not relapse. The group suggested that right after the campaign, intergroups hold a 12-step-within marathon, which could be a part of the conversation for the phone calls. The 12-step-within handbook was suggested as a source of ideas for the marathon.

To stimulate interest, intergroups are encouraged to engage a speaker from another area. The committee voted to offer \$100--to be divided among intergroups requesting the funding, not \$100 for each IG--to help offset the costs of travel. More details of the campaign including flyers can be found on the Region VII website.

Bret

NEW MEETING: TUES & THURS
FAIRFAX SUNRISE

6:45 to 7:45 am at FAIRFAX CIRCLE
BAPTIST CHURCH, 3110 Chichester
Lane, Fairfax 22031. On Route 50
(Arlington Boulevard), one block west of
Cedar Lane. For more Info call
Jim/Amy at 703-204-0181.



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Support NOVA IG. We meet the third Saturday of each month at 10 am at Immanuel Methodist in Annandale, Heritage Drive, near Route 236 & the Beltway. All are welcome.