

Novation

OA NORTHERN VIRGINIA OUTREACH INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

October, 2001

20 cents

HOPE

When I greeted the year 2001 and the 21st Century, I was moving into a new chapter in my life called retirement as on Dec. 29th I had retired from my full time job. On this first day of the new year, I looked in the mirror and asked myself, "who are you?" I am no longer my job and my business card is obsolete. My response was, "I don't know, I have this whole year before me to find out who I am to become." As I saw my reflection in the mirror, I saw a hopeful person looking back at me. So, my word for the year 2001 is hope. The word hope became my OA mantra and the focus of my daily prayer and meditation.

Retirement gives me permission to sprout my wings, try new things, take an early morning walk with my dog, attend early-bird and daytime O/A meetings, a day-off midweek, shopping midday when others are at work, leisurely lunches and afternoon naps.

Hone gives me something to look forward to each day. To believe and trust there is enough food, time and money and my retirement will be full of wonderful surprises and many things to do.

A dear friend reminded me I could now take my crown off and place it neatly on the throne and courageously walk away from the power and the glory. The good news is I've got my freedom at last. I am becoming the person I wanted to be all these years who now works part-time in a job I enjoy and takes midweek one day trips throughout the area.

As I enter another month in the year, my resolve begins to wane and I become obsessed with food as it begins to call my name. Being a compulsive overeater, I turned to O/A daytime meetings for support fitting the Dunn Loring 10:00 a.m. meetings into my schedule interspersed between part-time work, daily appointments and other activities. These meetings are a great boost to my program. There are daily discussion meetings on abstinence, acceptance and the 12 steps of OA. There are also writing and Big Book meetings. There are

more program people to meet including young moms with their O/A babies and the wee tykes who are growing up in the program. I've met retirees who show me how to prosper and have fun in retirement. Through the topics discussed by those who share their experience, strength and hope gives me another perspective on life and lots of food for thought

Some days there were many people at the meetings and other days there were few. I went to one meeting after an ice storm where there were only two of us at the meeting. As they say, it only takes two to have a meeting. I believe H. P. was there among us as we joined hands and encouraged each other to keep coming back.

These meetings are a daily reminder that I am not alone and this program works, it really does! And by the grace of God, my abstinence returned after 5/6 year relapse. Thank you God! I hone and pray my abstinence and O/A program of recovery continues one day at a time.

Thank you God for being a voice inside and outside these rooms that gives me hope as I continue my journey in recovery. Thank you all who do service to keep these meetings open. Thank you all who attend these meetings and for helping me to stay abstinent today and the joy each day brings in retirement.

Barbara J.



SURRENDER!

That's the final concession the losing side makes in order find peace, and it's what I pray for everyday in OA.

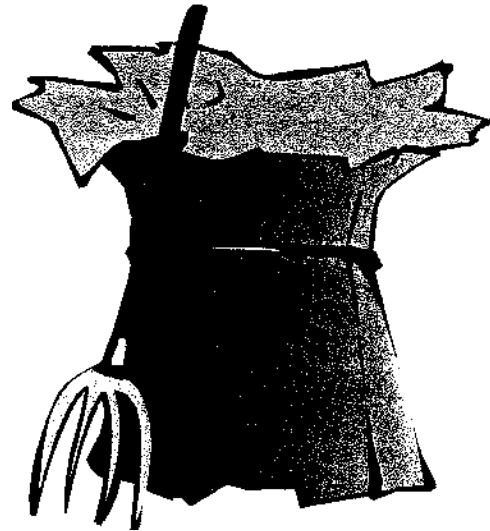
I am powerless over compulsive eating. Entering the Alexandria Men's Meeting on December 31, 2000 at 5' 11-1/2" and 227 lbs., I was not at my heaviest weight ever. But, it was clear that given a little time and no change in my eating, surpassing it was certain. I knew for years that my problem was progressive, but I tried to "tough it out" with a series of compromises (eating/exercise deals) that would somehow magically result in reaching a truce with food. It never worked. So far, surrender has!

For me, surrender is being accountable daily to my sponsor for what I eat. It keeps me out of my head and takes the power away from food. Now there are choices, and a committee of one isn't in charge! Surrendering control over what, when, and how much I eat puts food in a sane context. My sponsor has me on a 3-0-1: 3 (meals/day) 0 (in-between) and 1 (day at a time) abstinence plan for now, and so far 11 pounds have melted off. No deprivation, weird concoctions, or exercise plan has ever been easier - or felt as good.

Beyond the weight, I am beginning to recognize and understand how food affects me. With HP's help, I have begun to recognize that for me, hunger is usually fear or pride making a run at my sanity.

As I've heard in other rooms, "the road narrows." I can consider stricter abstinence with less anxiety, because (so far) surrender has worked. I am grateful to OA, my sponsor, the Sunday Men's Meeting in Alexandria, and most of all, HP for these gifts.

Michael F.



Maintaining Sanity on Vacation: Reflections on Step 2

Step 2 has been working in my life for some time now. I am sometimes tempted to attribute my newfound serenity solely to medication. It's true that since I started taking an anti-anxiety drug I am calmer, less jumpy, and my moods are less up and down. I am grateful for modern medicine's ability to treat some of my physical problems.

But, for me, medication without the program is not and cannot be a permanent solution. I was thinking about the other reasons for my improved serenity recently, when I was taking my 2 1/2 year old son for a walk one morning. Actually, he was taking me for a walk. I was letting him wander in his own direction and basically keeping an eye on him. I'm staying at my parents this week, on a two-week vacation that involves visiting my parents in Connecticut and then my brother in Maine. Sometimes in the past, when on vacation, I've felt nervous and jumpy. My discomfort with not having "enough to do" (i.e. not being involved in compulsive over activity) led me to feel nervous and jumpy, which, of course, led me back into the food as a way of dealing with those feelings of discomfort. This vacation, I've chosen to do things a bit differently. While I can't follow my exact routine that I do at home, I've tried to duplicate the positive parts of it as much as possible. For example, I call my sponsor every morning and email my food in the morning as well. That starts out my day on a note of sanity.

Then, I take a bath. That may sound like a small accomplishment, but those with young children will realize that taking a bath is a major accomplishment, especially in the morning! If I don't do it then, the day goes on and I feel grumpy and out of sorts. I need to take that time for myself to bathe and get dressed so I can face the rest of the day with my "happy face" on. I also try to walk every day, at least half an hour. At home, I usually do it at the end of my working day on the computer, because I'm all crunchy after sitting all day. On vacation, I find I sometimes -have to move it to the morning, otherwise it gets pushed aside by other things. Walking helps me to feel good about myself.

Another thing I haven't dropped on this vacation is my meditation. For some reason, while on vacation I tend to go on vacation from the Program as well. Since my disease never takes a vacation, that usually turns out to be a bad idea! So this time, I've kept my meditation time in the evening. I let my mind float and try to locate the areas where I feel any discomfort. Since I first began meditating, I've realized that I'm becoming more in touch with my feelings as well as the intuitive part of myself. Quite often, during the day, I feel some sort of unidentified discomfort. It kind of floats around my chest, sometimes in my head or my stomach, but usually my chest. I don't know why I'm feeling uncomfortable. When I sit to mediate, the discomfort floats to the surface and I'm often able to identify it. For example, maybe I feel I ate too much at a meal. I might have spoken sharply to someone. I may have told a lie or made a statement I'm not comfortable with. Once I've identified the feeling, often it simply goes away. But until I identify and deal with it, it seems to sit there waiting to be noticed. In that way my unidentified feelings are often like my young son - they just want to be acknowledged and then they're satisfied!

So part of my being restored to sanity is my increasing ability to follow a healthy routine consistently and to feel more comfortable with "free" time. For example, this morning we were supposed to leave for Maine and were stopped by an ice storm. I was irritated at the weather, of course, and annoyed that "my plans" were disrupted by something I have no control over. I didn't know what to do with myself this morning. Then, it came to me that this was perhaps a good opportunity to write on Step 2. That, for me, is being restored to sanity, that I can take "free" time and fill it up with something positive, like writing, meetings, Program calls, etc., rather than filling myself up with Doritos and ice cream, or going on a baking spree. Food has been one of my major means of relaxation. Food combined with reading

was my ideal. Lying in front of a fire with a good book and a "bad" snack was heavenly. Now, I am sitting near a wood stove that is throwing out that deliciously solid heat that only comes from a real wood fire, writing this. Next to me is a glass of sparkling water, which is also delicious. I don't feel the need for any other kind of snack. Very fortunately, writing and eating is a lot harder than reading and eating, since you don't need to put down your book to eat, but you do need to stop typing!

Food is another major-area where I am being slowly restored to sanity. Several times in the past month I have won the battle over eating a sweet thing in the evening (ice cream, cake). In the past, as soon as the idea entered my head to eat something, it was a sure shot that I would eat it. But a few times (not always) I have been able to pause and say, "is this really what I want/need?" And the answer has been, "no." I've been able to make a better food choice (hot skim milk instead of a hot fudge sundae, for example). That to me is miraculous, that I have been given that moment of detachment before diving in and the ability to listen more closely to that part of myself that does NOT want to compulsively overeat.

I always like to say that when I came into OA I wasn't "that heavy" not like "some people" who are "really overweight." But I've lost 25 pounds already, and according to the weight charts (those damn things!) I could lose up to 37 more and still not be underweight. Take those two together and by some estimates I was as much as 60 pounds overweight. That's a lot of weight on a five-foot frame. And who knows where it would have stopped? I like to talk about my "top weight" now that I am below it, but how do I know where my "top weight" would be if I didn't join OA?

I am so grateful to this Program. I am really coming to believe that if I take the steps and follow the program, if I grow emotionally and spiritually, I will come to a point where I no longer desire excess food. Before OA, I could imagine not eating (dieting). Sometimes I could go beyond imagining and actually diet for a short time. What I could not imagine is not WANTING to eat more than I needed. I could not imagine being in a place where enough FELT like enough. Thanks to this program, I am beginning to get tiny glimpses of that feeling, beginning to slowly be restored to sanity -ONE DAY AT A TIME. Thank you God and thank you OA!

Laura Jean

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELLSPRING is...

A weekend of recovery
Walking in the woods
Workshops in the cabins
A marathon by the fire

Overeaters Anonymous:
Journey to Inner Peace
November 23-25, 2001

Come join us for a peaceful and enriching weekend retreat. The Wellspring Retreat Center is located in nearby Germantown, MD and about 30 minutes from the Washington Beltway, north on I270. The center offers comfortable accommodations in modern wooden cabins that are surrounded by beautiful grounds and woods. We will occupy the entire facility and prepare our own meals. Each retreat guest will be assigned at least one meal set-up cook or clean-up task.

The cost is only \$90 and includes two nights lodging, five nutritional meals, and all the workshops.

For more information call: Alice S. (301) 595-1025, Kim B. (301) 625-5639 or Rosemary (301) 953 1582. Deadline for reservations is November 10, 2001.

For information and a registration form, check the DC/MD Intergroup web site: www.aa-dcmetro.org

THANKSGIVING MARATHON

The 7 a.m. Arlington Sunrise meeting is again sponsoring its annual Thanksgiving Marathon Meeting. They will begin with their regular meeting at 7:00 a.m. and then starting at 8:00 a.m. they will continue with one step per hour. Step 12 will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 22, 2001

St. Charles Catholic Church 3304 Washington Blvd.
(corner of Fairfax Drive and Kirkwood Roadupstairs
room-enter from parking lot.)

Region 7 Convention 2001: A Recovery Odyssey

Dunes Manor Hotel
Ocean City, Maryland
November 2-4, 2001

For more information call Jewel H. at 202-889-7556
or Debbie H. at 502-267-9730.

Registration forms are available on the DC/
Maryland Intergroup website:

www.aa-dcmetro.org

Note: Hotel Arrangements are full, but day-trippers
are welcome. Call for more information.

I.D.E.A. DAY International Day for Experiencing Abstinence

Join with OAers around the world to celebrate
abstinence.

Sponsored by the DC/MD Intergroup this afternoon
event might be a wonderful way to jump-start your
program.

When: Saturday, Nov. 17th 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Where: Greenbelt Baptist Church
Greenbelt, MD

For more information call:

Connie R. (301) 449-5758
Sanci M. (301) 656-5811
Rosemary T. (301) 953-1580

New Meeting Location

The Sunday Morning 9:00 a.m. Men's Meeting has
a new, temporary location at Alexandria Hospital.
Most meetings will be in the Health Education
Center, alternating between Room 1 and Room 3.
This is at the north end of the hospital complex. For
information call Rob at 202-686-2824.

INTERGROUP NEWS

Elections:

Intergroup elections are taking place on Saturday, October 20th. Watch the back page of the November *Novation* for results.

Service Opportunities:

Intergroup has two service positions to fill, Webmaster and Hotline Coordinator. If you are interested or know someone that is, please contact any one of the officers listed on the back page.

Intergroup meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to noon at 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!



Holidays: Food, Friends, Family

For some of us the challenge of being abstinent during the holidays is compounded by the increased involvement with our families-sometimes a deadly combination. As we have come into the rooms we have come to see the role that our families have played in our addictions. Sadly, we also come face to face with those family members who share our addiction. This can prove to be unsettling.

Two things have worked for me. First, I try to be as open about my addiction as I can-sometimes they can't handle it, but I try. Second, if I'm in another location, I make sure that I connect with other OA members, either by attending a meeting or two or by calling OA friends-this means planning, taking phone numbers with me and checking to see who will be available. But that takes planning-one of the keys to OA success. Holidays don't have to be a terror. They can remind us of love given and received and above all else, gratitude and thanksgiving to our Higher Power.

Anonymous

...FROM THIS CORNER

This October issue is a "pot luck" issue. It includes articles that never made it in previous issues, either because of late arrival or space limitations. They are too valuable not to share, so I've included them here. I hope they enrich your program as they have mine.

I'm still looking for meetings to sponsor a coming issue. Please consider this service at your next group conscience. Simply identify a point of contact that will contact me at: 703-578-1999 or dickdorr@aol.com

With elections taking place this week, I want to thank all of those people whose names appear on the back page of this and every issue. Their service makes our Intergroup activities possible-after all, our sole purpose is rooted in our Tradition Five-to carry the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

Speaking of service, I want to repeat a challenge for volunteers willing to be of service via the Internet. If Northern Virginia is the Silicon Valley of the East, surely we should be able to pull together a list of 10 or 12 people willing to be contacted by email. Please send me your name and email address to: dickdorr@aol.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: MEN'S RETREAT

The 9:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Men's Meeting will again sponsor their Men's Retreat. Dates are April 19-21, 2002 at Bellarmine Retreat Center, Blue Ridge, PA, just 70 miles north of Washington. Watch for a flyer at a meeting near you.

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

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	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
Ricky O.	201-440-7604	10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

*anytime in an emergency

Support O A 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	Debbie L.	703-921-1287
1st Vice-Chair	Michelle S.	703-751-3553
2nd Vice-Chair (Acting)	Dick D.	703-578-1999
3rd Vice-Chair		
Secretary	Jan	703-339-7773
Treasurer	Joan H.	703-527-6592
Literature	Kristin	703-578-3485
OA Hotline Contact		
Webmaster		
Novation Editor	Dick D.	703-578-1999
Where & When	Rob H.	202-686-2824
Editor		
OA WSO Delegates	Paul B.	703-765-1465
	Betsy R.	703-724-4002
	Jan	703-339-7773
Region 7 Reps	Betsy R.	703-724-4002
	Toby	703-528-9563
	Jan	703-339-7773

NOVA Outreach Web Site: www.oanova.org

World Service Web Site:

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.