

Spring 2013

SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Puerto Rico
South America
Central America
Caribbean Islands

Abstinence—the Product of Service

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I have been “in” program for close to 25 years; attending meetings weekly, talking to my sponsor pretty much daily, but not truly obtaining an abstinence that was lasting nor “spiritually based”.

I had wonderful sponsoring, but the “take what you like and leave the rest” was my mantra and I picked and chose what my program was going to be for me.

After years of struggling, and many years of “giving up” my major binge foods, I was continuing to gain weight. What else did I need to do? What other sacrifices did I need to make? Wasn’t what I was doing enough?

The answer to all of these questions came from my Sponsor: “where is God in your program? What are you turning over? What Service are you working? Have you even thought of working the 12 Steps?”

This got me to thinking about how long it had been since I worked the Steps – really worked the Steps. Everything that I had tried showed limited success. My

Sponsor and I began working through the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions workbook. I began a methodical reading of OA literature and really trying to connect with a Higher Power.

As I worked the Steps, I began to readjust my food plan. All those “leave the rest” items, I began to reincorporate into my life. My program focused on my character defects. I prayed for the willingness to turn my defects over to my HP - this continues to be an interesting “work-in-progress”.

Once I completed my Step work, I really examined the Big Book and incorporated specific passages into my morning readings. As I worked Step 10 on a daily basis, I began to realize how much I needed to share my message of recovery.

I began to Sponsor various people, but I found I was getting more out of the sharing than I could have ever imagined. Like the books tell us, working with other Compulsive Overeaters has

(continued on p. 3)

Greater Memphis Area Intergroup Presents:

GAS Up in Memphis

(at the Crossroads of Recovery)

Soar 8 Recovery Convention and Business Assembly



Friday - Sunday
March 15 - 17 2013

Service in the Year of Abstinence Awareness: Recovery—Pass It On!

Why do I do service?

In the AA Big Book, Dr Bob gives four very good reasons why I should do service. Here are his words from “Dr Bob’s Nightmare” [Page 181]:

1. Sense of Duty
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little piece of insurance for my self against a possible slip.

Those are all very good reasons, not to mention the fact that my sponsor STRONGLY suggests service and she has 2 very wonderful things that I want: long term abstinence and a deep, loving, relationship with a higher power.

I can give you 2 more reasons why I do service:

5. Because in doing so I begin to learn how to practice “these principles” [the principles of the steps] in all my affairs. Want to practice humility instead of self-centeredness? Want to learn how to have the courage to get out of your comfort zone, make mistakes and experience the helpfulness and love you get from others doing the very same thing? Do Service!

6. It keeps me connected to the OA Program and the Fellowship. I have a disease of isolation - after all, I used to be more comfortable with food than with people! The more I do service the more connected I am to a group of wonderful people



who are committed to abstinence. The more points of connection I have, the stronger my abstinence.

The great thing about doing service is that the Big Book tells me I am “uniquely qualified” to do it!! And so are you! You can help another compulsive overeater when noone else can. How can we resist that?

Service transforms me and it will transform you too! If you are looking for a way to get involved in service please call me or any other SOAR 8 Board Member or Committee Chair— our contact information is in the Service Directory portion of the Assembly Agendas on our Region 8 website, www.oaregion8.org!

Trust God, Clean House, Help Others,
Gloria L.
Region 8 Chair
chair@oaregion8.org

Abstinence—The Product of Service continued from front page

solidified my program more than I could ever have imagined. My next move was to start offering Service at the Group and Intergroup Level. To my amazement, Service has provided me enjoyment, challenges and an opportunity to meet other compulsive eaters who have been a blessing to me.

It is now 19 months since I developed this new program of abstinence and a very grateful 66-pound weight loss. I no longer work my program by myself; I now choose to work it with all of you who “understand”.

Marilyn T

“As I worked Step 10 on a daily basis, I began to realize how much I needed to share my message of recovery.”



Not By Thunderbolts

When I came into the rooms in 2006, desperate and 150 lbs. overweight, I thought I was going to get a new diet. What I found instead was not a diet, but a newfound spiritual awakening that gave me all the physical and emotional recovery I could have ever dreamed about.

So there I sat in a classroom of a local church; thinking of myself more as an agnostic or “secular humanist” than anything else. I saw posters that referred to spiritual awakening, God, and Step prayers. What did these have to do with losing weight?

However, I was sure that I was, indeed, powerless over food. I had proved that hundreds of times in more than 50 years of struggling with my obesity -- using diets, cognitive psychology, behavior modification, pills and hypnosis. Nothing worked, and now, at 66, I couldn't even diet past breakfast. I was really ready to accept that only a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I knew I couldn't do it on my own.

But what was that power? Certainly, the God of my youth wasn't going to work. That God resided in heaven - ruled the stars and galaxies; was ready to punish me if I didn't obey every rule. It didn't occur to me that God could be a loving, forgiving God, ready to help me even in the decisions about what I ate and how I managed my life.

Then, I read in Step 2 that I could

simply redefine, for myself, what I wanted God to be and do in my life. Could this really be true? Why not? I had often held that it wasn't God who created man in His image, but it was man who had created God in his. So I really did not have to think of God as a man-like creature somewhere in the clouds with only two ears, two hands, and one mouth with which to speak. Instead, I could think of Him/Her/It, as a spirit that resides in all of nature, within me, and within all mankind.

I read in *For Today*, on page 146, “To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle. Every cubic inch of space is a miracle. -- Walt Whitman.” So, I figured, if that's true, then God must exist in every hour of the night and day and in every cubic inch of space. He exists in my unconscious mind and in my heart. He communicates with me not by a thunderous voice or thunderbolts from heaven but by that still small voice within me – those magical “ah-ha” moments of clarity and inspiration. All I needed to do was ask, listen, and follow His will as I understand His will.

So I asked, prayed, listened, and I worked the steps. I not only lost that 150 lbs, but I also gained a peace and serenity in my life that has transformed me into the spiritual being I am today.

Sander B.
Vice Chair, Region 8

“I not only lost that 150 lbs., but I also gained a peace and serenity in my life...”



Upcoming Events

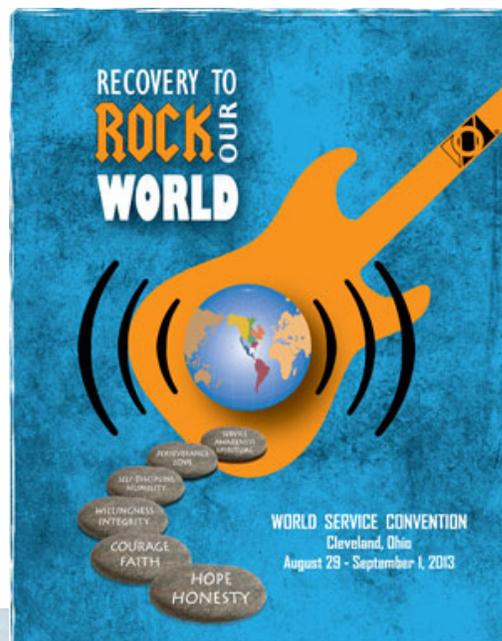
- *Mar. 15-17, 2013—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Memphis, TN*
- *April 29-May 4, 2013—WSBC, Albuquerque, NM*
- *Jul. 12-14, 2013—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Boca Raton, FL*
- *Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2013—World Service Convention, Cleveland, OH*
- *Nov. 15-17, 2013—SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, Jacksonville, FL*

WORLD SERVICE CONVENTION REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Visit the World Service Convention page at oa.org for details and to complete registration for the hotel and for the event.

Tentative Schedule includes:

- 36 Meditation sessions
- 36 OA Meetings
- Over 22 Hours of Workshops
- General Sessions on Friday night and Sunday morning
- Saturday Night Dinner Banquet with Entertainment & Dancing
- Access to an International Lounge and a Virtual Meetings Lounge



Skyline and Main Street Bridge Jacksonville, Florida

The North Florida Intergroup is hosting the November 15-17, 2013 Region 8 Business Assembly & Recovery Convention.

Our hotel is The Royal Plaza, located on the St. Johns River in downtown Jacksonville, Florida, for the reasonable rate of \$99. For details on how to register on-line or by mail, go to www.oanfi.org.

Twelve Tips for a Successful Meeting



Cleaning up our side of the street...

- 1) Atmosphere:
Offer unconditional support, love and acceptance; talk to newcomers.
- 2) Structure:
Begin and end the meeting on time; adhere to traditional format.
- 3) Focus:
Honestly and consistently share experience, strength and hope.
- 4) Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions:
Practice the Steps and Traditions; show commitment to the Program.
- 5) Sponsors:
Have them available and willing to help others.
- 6) Abstinent members:
Show commitment to abstinence and physical recovery; qualify when sharing; show enthusiasm for Program.
- 7) Program spoken here:
Focus on Program basics and solutions; practice principles before personalities; don't allow cross talk.
- 8) Literature:
Use and display only Conference-approved literature.
- 9) Service:
Show enthusiasm, encouragement and support.
- 10) Rotation of service:
Have reliable, responsible and committed members in service positions; honor abstinence requirements; hold regular group conscience meetings.
- 11) Service above the group level:
Promote participation at intergroup and other service body activities.
- 12) Fellowship:
Come early and stay late; reach out to members between meetings; socialize with members outside the meeting.

Reprinted from O.A. *Lifeline* Magazine, March 2000

Helpful Analogy

The 12 Steps are steep and hard to climb, but made easier by remembering there are handrails—
God and the A.A. Fellowship.

The 12 Steps
are one big
amend to
ourselves
and God.

*A.S.A.P.—
Always Say a
Prayer*

Laughter is the Best Medicine

A fellow told his drinking buddy that he loved the idea of joining Alcoholics Anonymous. I thought the alcoholics part meant they drank, and the anonymous part meant that they didn't tell anyone about it.

A Farewell Message

I cannot believe that my three years serving as your trustee is coming to a close. Memphis will be my final assembly and convention in this service position. What a rich and rewarding time it has been for me. About four years ago, my term as Region Chair was winding down and I felt this little nudge from my Higher Power to consider running for trustee. Knowing it was a lot of work and travel, I prayed and finally decided to talk to my husband about it. I hardly had the words out of my mouth and he said, "Go for it."

"But wait", I replied. "You don't know what all is involved with this job." His response was, "It doesn't matter. I like who you are when you do service."

What a testimony for service. So I submitted my application, Region 8 ratified it and I was elected at the World Service Business Conference in 2010. Even though I ran unopposed, I was nervous, standing there in front of hundreds of abstinent delegates. But you know the rest of the story; they liked me!

I could have sought a second term but my husband and I travel in a motor home. We would really like to head west, which will take me out of region 8 for at least a year. That means I am not qualified, according to the bylaws of OA, Inc. So now you have a wonderful candidate in Linda H. who I'm sure will make a fantastic liaison between World Service and Region 8.

This has been an amazing ride. I've served with two different chairs and saw amazing growth in our region. The most exciting thing for me is our new alliances with South America, having our first international convention in Medellin in 2011. The memories I have of carrying the message in Medellin and Bogota Colombia, Caracas and San Cristobal Venezuela, Manuel Antonio and San Jose, Costa Rica will always stay dear to my heart.

This past summer was amazing too, as I traveled through Georgia, North and South Carolina in our RV, and did workshops and retreats along the way. Hot topics included abstinence, strong meetings, traditions and the tools. What a way to spend my last year!

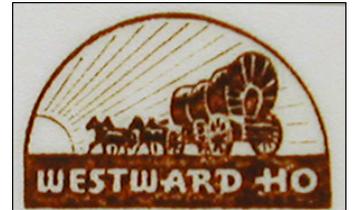
As you know, 2013 is the Year of Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous and I'm proud to say that Region 8 has been the trend-setter here. But what a great time for us all to keep that as our priority and help one another to get and stay abstinent through strong sponsoring, studying the steps and traditions and carrying the message in our meetings.

I would ask you to read my report for the Memphis assembly, as it contains a lot of important information, and I don't want to waste your time by writing it again here. I just want to thank you all for the privilege of serving this amazing region. Don't be surprised to see me in the future. We'll be traveling for a few years, but my home and true love is SOAR 8!

Blessings,

Gerri H.

Trustee - Region 8



**"I like who you
are when you do
service."**

Serenity Prayer Pocket Reminder

100 % lead-free pewter

Made in the USA

1.25" diameter

front



back

A Region 8 Fund-Raiser

Available NOW!!!

\$4.00 each

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Voting Board Members

Chair—Gloria L.
Vice Chair—Sander B.
Secretary—Janet T.
Treasurer—Patti S.

Non-Voting Board Members

Trustee—Gerri H.

Committee Chairs

Bylaws/Electronic Documents—Ellen F.
Intergroup Outreach (IGOR) - Pat L.
Public Information/Public Outreach (PI/PO) - Lonna C.
Technology/Website—Burt T.
Twelfth Step Within—Linda H.
Unity with Diversity—Katherine G.
Ways and Means—Kat M.