



This edition of the SOAR 8 Newsletter is filled with service and recovery. Our Vice Chair Sander B. and our Trustee Gerri H. have given us articles that both describe the spiritual benefits of service and provide some useful ideas and information. Ellie from Tampa has given us a hope-filled message about the road to acceptance, and particularly the role of the 12th Step Within in our fellowship. Finally, Roberta L., who writes daily reflections on *For Today*, and shares them with friends in the fellowship has given permission to include a few gems of recovery reflections. I hope all of these will give you hope, inspiration, and great ideas!

Strong Service Bodies: How Can the Traditions and Concepts Help?

I joined OA in May of 2006 at 313 lbs., became continuously abstinent by the grace of HP, and began shedding my excess 150 pounds. I have been maintaining that weight loss now for more than four years. However, I realized that if I were to maintain my abstinence and serenity, according to Step 12, I needed to share my recovery with those who still suffer. Tradition 1 tells us, "If we are to continue to live and recover, we must have the continued support of OA groups and the inspiration of our fellow OA members." So, for me, my life depends on the health of my group, other groups, and OA as a whole. Without OA, I know that my future is grim. So it is my responsibility to help ensure the future of OA. But how can I do this on my own? I am powerless over other people, places and things. I am just one person. I have to rely on my HP to ensure the future of OA. But the Serenity Prayer says that I must also find the courage to change the things that I can. So what can I do, personally?

Service work

So I began by volunteering to be Treasurer of my home group. I then served as a speaker at an Intergroup convention in Atlanta, a group rep to my Intergroup, and worked on the planning committee for the regional assembly and convention in Atlanta a year later. I spoke to other local groups, conducted workshops, participated in and conducted retreats, served as an Intergroup Rep to my Region and as a WSBC Delegate for the past three years. I became Intergroup Secretary, then Co-Chair, and, in November of 2011, I became the Vice-Chair of Region 8.

So we get back to the question, "How do we build strong service bodies?" For me, it has meant service work, service work, and more service work. Not to build my own reputation, but to give away what I have been so graciously been given. So I sponsor, speak at meetings and workshops, and, I hope, through my own recovery, to "bear witness to those I would help of His power, His love, and His way of life, (Third Step Prayer.)" So as the 12th Step says, "Those of us who live this program, don't simply carry the message, we **ARE** the message. By bearing witness, an example is set for other recovering OA's. Not only to carry the message of recovery, but the



message of the value and joy of service work.

Service is contagious! If I and others give quality service, and show joy in doing so, it encourages others to step forward as well.

As Intergroup Secretary, I was a bit frustrated at the lack of formal business procedures – it made keeping minutes and record keeping very difficult. So now our regular monthly meetings are conducted according to Roberts Rules, so that, per Concept 4, “The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.” And per Concept 5, “Individuals have the right of appeal and petition in order to ensure that their opinions and personal grievances will be carefully considered.” No more shouting back and forth and cross talk. No more wondering what the motion on the floor is and when we need to bring the issue to a vote.

When I was elected Intergroup Co-Chair, others stepped up and accepted nominations to fill out my unexpired term as Secretary. Soon our new secretary was providing outstanding service as Intergroup Secretary.



When I was asked to fill out the unexpired term of Region Vice-Chair, I had to step down as Intergroup Co-Chair. Immediately, others agreed to accept nominations and a new Co-

Chair was elected that next meeting. The new Co-Chair was then elected and represented the Atlanta Intergroup at the next Region-8 Assembly.

Our Intergroup Treasurer recently rotated out of service and immediately someone stepped up to fill her shoes.

Our convention chair from last year was so motivated that he volunteered as our new Ways-and-Means committee chair. We asked him to come up with ways to raise funds to continue our outreach and other activities. He took to the new position with gusto and began, with Intergroup Con-

science approval, instituting a number of monthly events. The idea was that any OA in the Atlanta area looking for something to do or a place to go on a Saturday night, now can come to our Atlanta office.



Every Saturday Night at the OA Office Is now a “GOOYI” Night! (“Get Out Of Your Isolation”).

1st Saturday = Candlelight Spirituality Meeting

2nd Saturday = GAME NIGHT, CARD EDITION!

3rd Saturday = “The Gathering Place” – a “coffee-house” type experience with live entertainment provided by fellow OA’s! Enjoy the fellowship of communing with OA’s and getting to hear great music! Bring your own appropriate beverage (no alcohol, food, or milkshakes please), relax, and enjoy!

4th Saturday = GAME NIGHT!!! – THE ORIGINAL. Board and other party games and more fun than ever. We give a warning however, “A feeling of joyful exhilaration often accompanies attendance; may cause soreness in the facial and diaphragm muscles because of extreme laughing.”

So what makes a healthy service body or Intergroup?

1. Committed abstinent OA group members willing to share their recovery with others
2. A commitment in our groups to live by the Traditions and Concepts in all of our activities
3. Making sure all have a voice in the decision-making process, through use of Roberts Rules, and the agreement to work toward substantial unanimity in all our decisions.
4. A commitment by all to give “joyful service.”

Sander B.
Central Atlanta Intergroup/
Region 8



"Nothing is so strong as gentleness, and nothing is so gentle as real strength."

Ralph Sockman, *For Today, May 29*

Well, Higher Power, you are constantly putting people and situations in front of me so I can learn new things. As a sponsor, I've had to learn to be gentle while giving support. I've had to learn to be patient, kind, and show respect even when fellows are slippin' and slidin'. Even though they're working their programs in their own way I need to treat others as I would like to be treated. This takes strength and courage; all these things I'm learning, thanks to you, dear Higher Power. Once I put down the food, I'm able to be teachable and I am willing to do thy will. Just show me by working with others. I'm finding that my true strength lies in the fact that I can pause when I want to be sarcastic, or be quiet when I want to lash out at those I love. I guess that 'acceptance' thing keeps creeping in---to show me how to treat others, and how to treat myself, one day at a time.

Treating myself and others gently as we recover,
Roberta L.

Thank you for letting me share



Twelfth-Step-Within "Awareness, Acceptance, Action"

Awareness and acceptance of our compulsive-eating disease will change our lives. The process of understanding that we are not, and can never be, normal eaters takes time to fully absorb. Through the Twelve Steps and our OA program we begin to understand that we react differently from others in how we think about food and how we use food in our lives. We learn that we need to be healed spiritually, emotionally and physically. This awareness that we are compulsive eaters who suffer because of our eating disorder is the beginning of our recovery. It is only

through this awareness that we can proceed to acceptance.

When we are willing to totally accept the fact that we have a disease, we can become willing to reach out for help from other compulsive eaters. We learn about the Twelve Steps, the tools, and the guidance of a sponsor. The acceptance that we are powerless over food enables us to open our hearts and minds and to keep learning and growing in our program. It is in this pressing forward that we can become transformed in our thinking, attitude and actions.

Taking action requires definite choices on our part. If you have been in relapse, remember that each new day brings hope of change. We do not have to look back; growth and change give us a new beginning and can help us live more positively. When we know more, we do more, and we do it better.

The Twelfth-Step-Within program encourages us to keep coming back, never give up hope, return to the Twelve Steps, renew our commitment and use our OA tools. A reading and writing tool entitled "Been Slipping and Sliding?" provides an excellent opportunity to learn why the relapse happened. It helps us grow in our knowledge of ourselves and in the knowledge of the OA program. The OA book, "A New Beginning," contains stories of recovery from relapse. A "Recovery from Relapse" packet and other pamphlets are also designed to return us to strong recovery. If you are in relapse, reach out to others. If you are blessed to be in recovery, reach out to those in relapse by listening to them, encouraging them, and then lovingly share your experience, strength and hope.



The loss of our spiritual relationship with a Power greater than ourselves can create an attitude of self-importance, self-indulgence, fear, guilt and desperation. When relapse has brought us to our knees, it is in this brokenness that the God of our understanding can lift us up, heal us and restore us to a joyful, purpose-filled life free of the bondage of food. This spiritual awakening transforms us and enables us to live life according to God's plan. It is then that the "miracle" can happen within us!

Ellie
Tampa, FL



Thoughts from Our Trustee

Greetings to my fellow compulsive eaters in Region 8! I'm Gerri Helms, an abstinent compulsive eater and your trustee!

Do you ever wonder what a trustee does and how much time it takes to provide service to Region 8 and OA as a whole? I want to share some of my duties with you, and hope that you will prayerfully consider if God might be calling you to be our next trustee. I do not intend to seek a second term, and that means we'll need someone to stand for election at next year's World Service Business Conference (WSBC).

Travel is an integral part of this job. In addition to the three Region 8 assemblies, the Board of Trustees meets four times a year, including WSBC. The trustee also leads workshops, retreats and speaks at conventions when invited. Since we are an international region, a passport is required for travel to South & Central America and the Caribbean Islands. We have been attending assemblies in Columbia, Venezuela and hope to travel to Brazil in the future too. Keeping balance in this area is integral to avoid burn-out.

Of course, once elected, another trustee will serve as your mentor for a year and that really helps to understand your job duties. Any and all

the other 16 trustees will help in whatever way they can.

In addition to being knowledgeable of the steps, traditions, concepts of service, the Region 8 bylaws and P&P, you'll also be the shepherd of the OA, Inc Bylaws, P&P and a rather large trustee board reference manual! Region trustees are also responsible for reviewing Intergroup and Region Bylaws to insure that they are not in conflict with that of OA Inc's bylaws. There are tools which help us to do this work.

If you have not updated your bylaws in the last year, you probably will need to do that. Take a look at the sample bylaws on the OA website <http://www.oa.org/pdfs/SampleBylaws.pdf>. Since the definition of a group and abstinence were amended at the

SOAR 8 NEEDS YOU!

The position of Newsletter Editor for SOAR 8 is currently vacant. You could be the difference in whether or not our region can continue to produce a newsletter.

Experience with Microsoft Publisher is helpful, but not required.

Please contact

bylawschair@oaregion8.org

God does not call the equipped, he equips the called!



last two conferences, your bylaws may not be in harmony with OA Inc's. The sample may help you with any planned revisions. If they are in conflict, you may not be able to send a delegate to a future world service business conference. It will take a few years for this to happen but don't wait until the last minute - start reviewing and revising your bylaws now! Speaking of bylaws, the OA Inc. bylaws underwent several amendments at the last WSBC. They are available on the OA website - http://www.oa.org/pdfs/bylaws_b.pdf.

I hope you check the website frequently, because you can easily see "What's New" right on the home page; here's the most recent list of everything - <http://www.oa.org/category/whats-new/>.

Trustees also serve on and/or chair several committees, both conference and board-appointed. I've served on conference literature, virtual services, international literature, board approved literature and this year will be chair of the World Service Conference committee. I'm really excited about that! I was ill-equipped to serve on some of these but discovered that God doesn't call the equipped - He equips the called.

Then there's lots of reports, so good writing and communication skills are important. I write three reports a year for Region, three newsletter articles and several reports for each of the four BOT meetings. There is also a lot of email from other trustees and the world service office which I am expected to respond to in a timely manner.



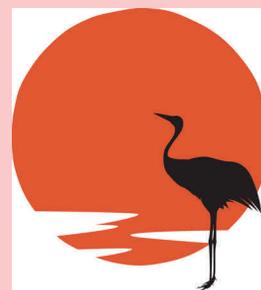
**"Trust the instinct to the end,
though you can render no reason."
Ralph Waldo Emerson, *For Today*, June 10**

The slogan, "It works, if you work it" really applies here. When I trust that my Higher Power will restore me to sanity—Step Two comes alive. When I make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of G-d, as I understand him, Step Three happens!!! Does it make any sense? Logical? I don't know AND I don't care—it's working!!!! I'm abstinent—**WHAT A MIRACLE!!!!** I've never been happier in my whole life!!! I am serene, grateful, enjoying each day, AND accepting life on life's terms. What a gift—I'm blessed and I'm not questioning it—thank you Higher Power and all my fellow OAs who help make it happen.

Trusting my instincts and enjoying the results,

Roberta L

Thank you for letting me share.



So this is just a snapshot of what your trustee does. Some weeks I may put in an hour or two and other weeks could be as many as thirty! Of course, getting ready for meetings and report writing is labor intensive but the joys, benefits and personal growth one experiences from this service is not to be missed. I am surprised that people aren't fighting over one another for the honor and privilege to serve in this manner.

When I complete this term, I will have served nine years at either a region or world level. I have come to see that when we rotate service, great things happen as fresh ideas come from new people's perspective. I have watched the region just grow in ways I'd never have imag-

ined, with the two chairs who've served since I completed my two terms in that position. I have some great ideas but I don't have all the great ideas. I'm sure you have some too.

I believe that I have really grown as a result of serving as a trustee - I discovered that I am a diamond in the rough. The people I work with are both polishing cloths and sandpaper! I've learned to deal with many different personalities and am richer for the experience. So, if you are considering this service, look at the requirements on the trustee application - http://www.oa.org/pdfs/trustee_application.pdf. If you are qualified, consider throwing your name into the ring! And feel free to contact me any time if you have questions.

I've been enjoying my summer touring the southeast in our RV, and conducting some OA workshops along the way. I spoke in Hilton Head and Columbia SC, and at this writing, am scheduled for Greenville, SC, Asheville and Raleigh, NC. Contact me to see if I'm traveling through your area and can do a workshop for you too!



“ . . .I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.”

For Today, July 3

Wow-how powerful!!! The commentator remarked that he or she had a fear of living. I guess I did too. I wasn't comfortable in my own skin and isolated a lot. And of course, I ate.....Well, things are different now---I'm not afraid to enjoy all that life has to offer AND not feel guilty. I have a beautiful life but NEVER appreciated it. I was too busy dealing with anger, resentment and fear. And of course, I was eating my way through the feelings. NOW, I'm enjoying recovery, being abstinent, using the tools, and giving back.....It's a beautiful thing to be Chair of the Intergroup and give service. Thank you my fellow OAs for helping me become the person I was meant to be.

Not being afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, one day at a time.

Roberta L.

Thank you for letting me share



**See you in Miami
July 13-15**

