



## Which Comes First — Abstinence...or...Service?

*For a long time I found it difficult to do service in OA.*

The reason was that I had been in program for a long time and still did not have "perfect" abstinence. I had had months of abstinence followed by a bout of eating between meals. Every once and awhile I would eat more than I needed. Sometimes I would eat foods off my food plan. Didn't I have to have perfect abstinence to do service? Or would doing service help me to achieve perfect abstinence?

I asked this of one of the officers of intergroup. I was told that for some service positions I had to be abstinent for a certain number of days, meaning I had to abstain from compulsive overeating to the best of my ability, while working the tools and the steps to the best of my ability, but that it didn't have to be "perfect," because we are not perfect. That answer helped me to put myself "out there" as the fellowship committee chairperson. I hoped that this service, in addition to working the steps and the other tools would help me to achieve abstinence on a consistent basis for a long time (the gift my Higher Power wants to give me, I believe).

These days I do feel I have that gift. It does not come effortlessly. To maintain abstinence, I choose to work at it (using the tools and steps), because it feels so much better to be abstinent. I never want to take the shame back that used to accompany my meals.

Today I thank all the members who inspire me by working their program and sharing it with me - through your service. Thank you for working the program imperfectly until you progressed to a long, consistent abstinence. If you are still struggling, there is hope, just keep coming back and know that you're not alone.

*~ Gratefully yours! Mary P.*

***P.S. I would love to have some help in the fellowship committee. See the "Help Wanted" message on page 8 for more information.***

### Editorial statement

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## INSIDE this issue:

### Traveling Thoughts

Page 3

### World Service Business Conference Report

Page 4

### Quarterly Group Donations

Page 7

### Help Wanted

Page 8

### Mark Your Calendar

Page 8

# Our Primary Purpose is to Carry the Message of Recovery to Those Who Still Suffer!!

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*We read this at every meeting, but what is the practical application of it in our daily walk?*

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It doesn't mean that I stand out on the street corner and pass out flyers, but it does require that I share my recovery whenever the opportunity arises. That means I can't carry an effective message if my own program is lacking.

It means I take responsibility for sharing service tasks such as sponsoring, leading a meeting, carrying the key, ordering literature, staying with newcomers and making phone calls to people in program as we think of them. I take on service positions such as group treasurer or intergroup representative so others in the group know what is going on.

It also means that I do my share in supporting Overeaters Anonymous financially. I give whatever I can afford when the basket is passed and I also support events as they are made available by the Intergroup.

Our Intergroup is blessed to have an office to store literature and to house the phone system. We have an office manager who takes care of the mail and handling of monies. We have dedicated officers in Intergroup who willingly give of themselves and their time. We recently had a member donate "Recovery Mugs" as a means of earning extra money to set up a prudent reserve account for the Intergroup. Individual donations are accepted by MAI. The by-laws allow an individual donation of up to \$5000 per year. At the IG meeting in June, we voted to set up a prudent reserve account so we would always have a reserve of 3 months rent, salary, and telephone. The beginning of this year we were in the "red" 3 months in a row. Only the early registrations for the Convention, kept us afloat. We can't allow that to happen.

The group contributions each year are only enough to support Intergroup for about 6 months. (see group donations on page seven) The rest of the money has had to come from special events and special donations earmarked specifically for MAI.

We will have two major events in 2006, but we need workers. OA tradition encourages us to rotate service positions to give everyone a chance to participate.

We welcome NEW people with NEW ideas and NEW Energy!! Step forward to work on 2006 Convention the 1st weekend in April, or the 2006 Fall Retreat in September 2006.

On a smaller level, could one of the group meetings you attend host a holiday marathon? All the guidelines are available through the Fellowship Chairperson. MAI has reserved the WI Heart Hospital on Bluemound for all the holidays through the end of the year. All you need is a theme, some speakers, and some volunteers to be there to set up and follow some simple guidelines.

***Give service a try and see how it can enhance your recovery program.***

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If you have questions, please call our MAI Fellowship Chairperson: Mary P. at 414-607-9075 / ge@execpc.com or  
Judy W. 414-258-8361 / websterjudy@yahoo.com

*~ In OA love and service, Judy W.  
Milwaukee Area Intergroup Chair*

## Vacation Planning

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### *"Don't go overboard"*

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Going to new OA meetings is part of my vacation adventure. I have always been welcomed wherever I go. The meetings have become the easiest way for me to meet the locals in the area and STAY ABSTINENT! It is an awesome way to feel the instant bond we have as OA members each time I meet a new OA friend in each location. Hearing about recovery from a new friend is always a boost to my program.

It takes research and planning, before I leave, to find an OA meeting while traveling and to fit it into our agenda. I've learned that it is important to call the contact person to confirm the meeting is still in place and get correct directions.

On cruise ships all 12 step program members usually meet together. The meetings are listed in the newsletter as "Friends of Bill W." On my last cruise the ship comedian attended the meetings, and before the first meeting began I shared that it was a big relief to be in a place where people are not going overboard with everything like overeating, gambling, and / or drinking alcohol. He immediately joked, "we don't use the term 'overboard' on this ship!"

*~As printed in "The Butterflyer"  
June 2005 Newsletter of OA Chicago Western Intergroup*

## Coming Back

I've relocated to different states and various size towns and cities in my life. The OA community always helped my transitions by being that stable and familiar fellowship while I was in personal transition. The members might be new to me, the format different from one region to another, yet the spirit and principals of the program were comforting.

A career opportunity offered a chance to move to a smaller town and still remain within "commuting distance" to my weekly routine of meetings. Unforeseen challenges became the obstacle to my planned routine. A year into the recovery commute I found myself becoming resentful that I didn't seem to have time for the healthy life style I once coveted. Planned meals, regular workouts and OA meetings took a back seat to the drive to succeed.

Local OA meetings were scarce and attendance unpredictable in my home town. With the encouragement of a couple of fellow OA members a new meeting was started with the hope that the time and location would attract newcomers. Unfortunately this was not to be, within a year the meeting folded. The recovery commute became burdensome and my

## Taking care of me when traveling

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### *Make room in the suitcase for ...*

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Literature: A meditation and mini Big Book has everything program we need and it's compact!

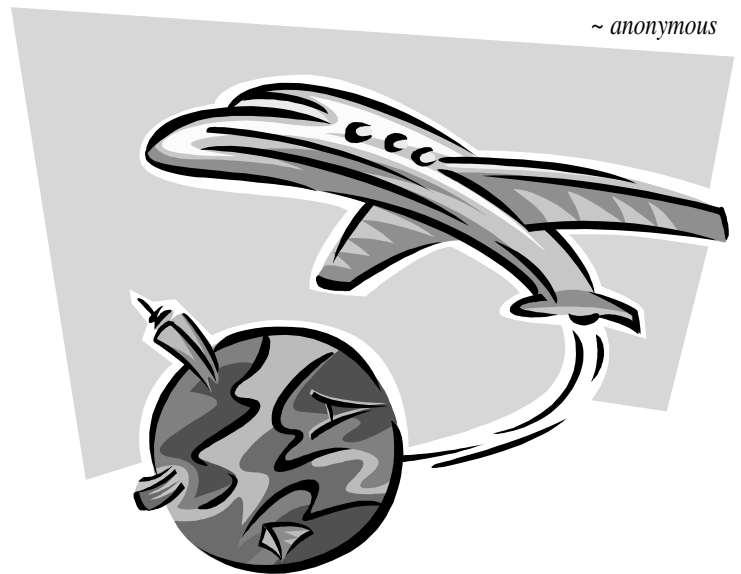
Phone list: I program numbers into my cell phone before I leave. It's important to stay connected.

Oat bran: If I start my day off right, I'm more likely to finish it clean! If there is no microwave available in the room or hotel, I have used the room coffee pot to make hot water, in a few minutes breakfast can be ready.

V8: Easy way to travel with veggies. Sometimes I order a Virgin Bloody Mary while others are ordering appetizer.

Gum: I always have gum!

*~ anonymous*



*continued on Page 5*

# World Service Business Conference (WSBC)

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## *Summary Report of April Conference*

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In April I attended the WSBC as your MAI delegate. The chief objective of the yearly WSBC is to address, debate and vote on agenda items which focus on the business of OA (the policies and bylaws). Our MAI Intergroup, along with other OA Intergroups and Regions, played an important role in determining which items should even be on the agenda. MAI Intergroup members also pitched viewpoints on various items for me to consider in my voting role at convention. So if your meeting does not have an Intergroup Representative, please elect one. WSBC items, and follow-up action during the year, are only a few of the topics the Intergroup tackles on an ongoing basis to help us all in our journey of recovery.

### *A Few of the Agenda Items.*

- Add verbiage to the definition of abstinence: "Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating in a manner that reflects a desire to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight". This item was defeated. Debate was very emotional. The PROS pleaded for more structure, guidelines regarding food and body weight. They want OA to come out of the closet regarding healthy body weight. They also want to keep members in sync with trustees for whom a normal body weight is mandated. Why two standards? There is a germ of truth in this amendment, but the focus and wording are not quite right yet. This is one of the items your Intergroup discussed at the April meeting prior to Convention.
- Allow Telephone Meetings to be registered with OA (along with Internet meetings). This item passed. I heard some great testimonials about these meetings. Both phone and internet meetings provide a life giving venue for those who are house bound or in areas where face to face meetings are not available. Cruise OA.ORG for more info.
- Did you know that the wording of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions are part of OA's Bylaws? One of the items proposed updating the Steps\Traditions and other OA Literature to neutralize the language regarding gender and religion. This item was defeated. Your Intergroup Reps also discussed this item at the April meeting.

**See OA.ORG for a report on all 20 items**

### *Conference Highlights*

Tidbit: The meetings are conducted by Parliamentary Procedures. There are PRO and CON speakers. And, someone actually says "OYEE, OYEE" to call people in before closing the doors prior to a vote!

- The conference was attended by 192 people (delegates and trustees) from all over the world. It was intense, demanding physically and mentally, productive (the business of OA was completed successfully), rewarding on so many levels and a very wonderful experience all around.
- So many people "carried the message". I met many with 15+ years of abstinence and maintaining their weight loss for that time. This by people working all sorts of food plans, all working the 12 Steps. The time, energy and commitment of trustees was amazing. The business of OA is almost like a second job.
- Statistics: Number of OA meetings worldwide is DOWN. Groups decreased 2% in 2004.

*continued on page 5*

- World Service Convention "Ring in Recovery". Philadelphia Aug 29 – Sept 1, 2007.
- A new pamphlet was granted the Conference Seal of Approval: "OA Members Come in All Sizes: Welcome, Whatever Your Problem with Food". The pamphlet focuses on stories addressing anorexia and bulimia written by people with those manifestations of our disease. The experience, strength and hope in most OA literature and at meetings is in the language of compulsive overeaters. The PROS spoke of how much the pamphlet was needed and how it made people with this problem feel more included. There were no CONS. The pamphlet will be available in the fall.
- There is a wonderful piece of literature called "Twelfth Step Within Handbook". It discusses the concept of "Care-frontation". An appendix will be added in the fall: "Planning a Sponsorship Workshop". So, consider getting a copy of the handbook for your meeting to discuss.

I am grateful to have had this opportunity for service. Consider your group's voice in our MAI Intergroup – it is an important service for us all.

*Kathy W. - MAI Treasurer and WSO Delegate*

*continued from page 3*

## **Coming Back**

attitude toward OA stunk. I decided to turn to another twelve step program for local regular meetings. The welcome and acceptance were warm, so a new meeting routine was established.

I had hopes that OA marathons and various workshops could still help me feel connected in spite of my attitude since the meeting folded. With the collapse of my healthy life style my weight increased and my attitude toward food grew lax. I ate what I wanted and responded to carvings as I pleased. When I saw old acquaintances at marathons I felt uncomfortable. Trying to hide a weight gain of any size is nearly impossible. Whether real or imagined I thought some people looked at me with a judging attitude.

Occasionally guilt would plague me as physical problems nagged me. Clothes were tight and I grew more frustrated with myself. Spiritual and emotional recovery without physical recovery wasn't working for me. Attendance at OA marathons and workshops wasn't enough, reading OA literature didn't break through the *denial* that food took on an importance that was abnormal. I prayed for a way back to regular OA meetings.

How my higher power works is beyond my understanding sometimes. The career opportunity folded, another job with a long commute didn't work out. More prayer, temporary jobs, weight gain and frank discussions with my current twelve step sponsor led me to be as open to what ever my higher power had in store for me.

A new job did materialize with a commute to the city where my old OA recovery community was. Within a month of starting the job I headed to a meeting I frequented in the past. Worries plagued me: would anyone judge me, would I know anyone? Safe to say my self centeredness was in overdrive. As could be expected, some people were glad to see me, some didn't know me, a couple of people could have cared less.

As time has past I've been to other meetings and seen more familiar faces. I still worried how I would be received and was reminded that what I think others think, real or imagined doesn't matter. What is important is to keep coming back, work the program for physical, spiritual and emotional recovery.

*Magi W*

## My friend asked...

### *How do I discern God's will in my life*

First I had to come to believe, and that only came, for me, with lots of "acting as if" in the beginning. I am a person who goes to a lot of meetings, and I came to believe that my higher power (God) opened me up enough (just a little bit in the beginning) to get to meetings and to listen to and hear what others had to say, and after a time, I began to understand that this is the way God was communicating with me, since I wasn't quite ready for prayer and meditation at first. Of course, that's why Prayer and Meditation are in the 11th step and not one of the first steps.

The first 3 steps began to open me up to the possibility that there was some kind of a higher power who really did care for me. Once I could accept and embrace that concept, and realize that it was not just a gruff and judging higher power, but a loving and accepting higher power, I was more able to be loving and accepting of the messages I was hearing. It was through the shared hope, strength and experience of others in the program that I began hearing God's will for me. It was not easy, at first, because my brain was programmed to hear my old tapes. Yet little by little the message came

through, and it's clearer and more apparent all the time.

I have had to be very disciplined about this part of my program (as I have been with the other two legs of the program, physical and emotional healing). My spiritual healing is the slowest to come, yet the most satisfying and most significant in many ways. When I am clear - abstinent physically and emotionally - it's much easier for me to "hear" what God has to say to me. And conversely, when I am in "fit spiritual condition," then the emotional and physical parts of my program are early effortless.

The discipline has taken many forms, daily writing, daily meditation upon arising and before bed, prayer groups, prayer sponsors, guided meditation tapes, spiritual music, daily readings, retreats, and books. I wanted this part of my program to blossom, I could tell from the Big Book and from hearing others speak about "spiritual awakening" that it was something I wanted very much.

If I am working step 10 on a daily basis, cleaning up anything questionable from each day, then God's will for me is evident.

~ Terri



## Welcome Back Packs

12th Step Within Committee has put together "Welcome Back Packs" for members returning to OA or in relapse.

Each pack has various pieces of OA approved literature, and are available at the MAI office.

## Milwaukee Area Group Donations

*April through June 2005*

Group #	Group Name	Donations
325	Beloit Thurs 7:30pm	\$.00
2058	Brown Deer St Catherine's Fri 9:30 a.m.	\$.65.00
2063	Wis Heart Hospital Mon 7:30 p.m.	\$.20.00
2410	Racine Mon 7:00 p.m.	\$.00
3478	West Bend St James Thurs 7:00pm	\$.00
3631	New Berlin Wed 9:30 a.m.	\$.207.00
4055	Brookfield Calvary United Sat 9:30 a.m.	\$.100.30
5175	West Allis Sun 7:00 p.m.	\$.64.70
1741	West Allis St Peter's Thurs 7:00pm	\$.30.00
15418	Oconomowoc Mon 9:00am	\$.00
17672	So. Milw Sat 9:00 a.m.	\$.00
20992	Unity Meditation Wed 6:30 a.m.	\$.245.00
21024	Menomonee Falls Tue 10:00 a.m.	\$.135.00
22299	Elkhorn Mon 7:00pm	\$.60.00
24667	Oconomowoc Fri 9:00 a.m.	\$.100.00
25991	Unity Church Fri 6:30am	\$.00
26051	Wauwatosa KISS Tue 7 p.m.	\$.19.88
26164	Manor Park Thurs 9:30 a.m.	\$.75.00
28485	Kenosha Thurs 12:00pm	\$.00
30176	Christ Church Mon 7:00 p.m.	\$.295.00
32326	West Allis Mon 5:30 p.m.	\$.214.50
32465	Martin Luther Thurs 5:30 p.m.	\$.50.00
32466	St Mike's Sat 9:30 a.m.	\$.222.88
35116	St Mike's Sun 6:30 p.m.	\$.00
36200	Thiensville Wed 6:30 p.m.	\$.21.00
36962	St Mike's Tue 12:00pm	\$.00
38390	Martin Luther Sat 7:30 a.m.	\$.410.11
38716	St. Stephen's Wed 4:00pm	\$.00
39445	Spirit Life Tue 6:30 p.m.	\$.00
40013	Divine Word Sun 5:00 p.m.	\$.00
40772	Pewaukee Tue 7:00 p.m.	\$.53.00
41203	Lake Park Wed 6:30 p.m.	\$.00
45723	Racine Thurs 6:30pm	\$.00
46721	Delavan Fri 8:45am	\$.50.00
46852	St Mike's Thurs 6:30pm	\$.65.35
47407	Oconomowoc Tue 6:00pm	\$.60.00
48502	Fond du Lac Mon 5:00pm	\$.00
48802	Lake Geneva Wed 7:00pm	\$.36.00
<b>Total Donations</b>		<b>\$.2,599.72</b>

## MAI-Intergroup

*Your 2005 MAI Service Board Members*

Chair	Judy W.	414-258-8361
Vice Chair	Elizabeth	414-967-5050
Secretary	Lisa E.	414-445-3795
Treasurer	Kathy W.	414-964-1419

### June YTD MAI Financial Report

Income:	\$1436.89
Expenses:	\$2476.75
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	<b>\$3377.36</b>
Prior Year Balance:	\$3597.37

### Office Location and Hours:

Location: 7441 W. Greenfield Ave., Suite 12  
Milwaukee, WI. 53214  
Phone: (414) 259-0640  
Hours: Mon. 2pm - 7pm / Thurs. 8am - 1pm

**OFFICE CLOSED on July 18 & 21 and August 22 & 25.**

### MAI Meetings Schedule

Monday, August 15th at 7:00-8:30pm  
Monday, September 19th at 7:00-8:30pm  
Rogers Hospital, 11101 West Lincoln Ave., West Allis

*Go on-line to find anything you need to know  
about OA at [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org)*

### September / October *Out of the Cocoon*

Articles requested by 9/1/05 and sent to:  
Cocoon Editor  
c/o OA Office  
7441 West Greenfield Ave, Suite 12, West Allis, WI 53214  
[cocooneditor@excite.com](mailto:cocooneditor@excite.com)

# Milwaukee Area OA Calendar of Events

## Recovery Fest

August 27, 2005 ~ Open OA Meeting 2-3pm

Unity Church in Wauwatosa  
1717 North 73rd Street

Other 12-step meetings through-out the day (11am-9pm).  
contact Marsha (414-483-7889)

## Labor Day Marathon

This is an OPEN event - friends & family welcome!

September 5th. 9:00am-5pm

WISCONSIN HEART HOSPITAL

10000 W. Bluemound Road.  
(Across from the Milwaukee County Zoo Entrance.)  
Sponsored by MAI. **Host Group needed.**

### Marathons also being held in by

Madison Area Intergroup and  
Turning Point Intergroup of Chicago

## Help Wanted!

*If you enjoy planning get-togethers and  
holiday events for friends and family  
MAI - OA could use your help!*

**We are in need of  
NEW Ideas. NEW People. NEW Energy!**

Event opportunities are endless!  
Bingo night? Bowling? Picnic?

**We are in need of  
Groups to host Fall and Holiday events**

Labor Day, September 5th.  
Idea Day, Saturday November 19th.  
Thanksgiving Marathon, November 24th  
Christmas... New Years...

If you're interested in meeting new people and  
want to experience the rewards of working more  
service into your program, YOU are qualified!

Please call Mary P. at 414-607-9075

## OA Retreat *(limited spaces)*

### Big Book Comes Alive

Retreat hosted by Madison Area Intergroup

October 14-16, 2005

Madison Area Intergroup has arranged for an experienced  
presenter of OA Big Book studies to come to Wisconsin.  
Here they are, the precise instruction for  
recovery from compulsive overeating.

### **Oconomowoc, WI**

Redemptorist Retreat Center, 1800 North Timber Trail Ln.  
262-567-6900

TIME: Friday (Registration at 5pm) to Sunday  
CONTACT: Leslie P.608-838-2274 or leslie63@tds.net

Registration deadline is October 1,2005.  
\$165 per person includes 2 night stay and 5 meals.

## ~ Save the Dates ~

MAI Sponsored Events 2006

**Spring Convention ~ March 31-April 2, 2006**

at the Radison Milwaukee Airport Hotel

**Fall Retreat ~ September 22-24, 2006**

at the Siena Center in Racine.

## ~ Meeting News ~

**NOW CLOSED**

**WEDNESDAY Night 6:30pm**

**Lake Park Lutheran on Stowell**