

MONARCH MONTHLY

DECEMBER 2003/JANUARY 2004

Three Rivers Intergroup
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Abstinence Versus Plan of Eating

A plan of eating is just one tool of OA. No tool should become an end in itself. Too much emphasis on a food plan can lead to a diet mentality. Step Three makes the point that OA does not give us diets. Weight loss is not our only goal, and we accept that even a perfect body would not make us happy.

Abstinence and a plan of eating are often confused. It is my understanding that everyone has his or her own food plan, and abstinence is defined as abstaining from eating compulsively.

For me, a plan of eating is invaluable. My first sponsor had me call my food in to her every day for the first 30 days. We worked the first three Steps during that time. After I completed this, I no longer had to report my food. That was two years ago, and I have not reported my food since.

My food plan has changed, but my abstinence has not. My plan supports my abstinence, it keeps me from obsessing about food because I know what and when I am going to eat. I don't have to think about it. The plan helps me eat three nutritious, balanced meals in a day. Between meals, life happens as God wills it for me. My Higher Power gives me a food plan to support my abstinence and to aid me with one of my character defects-perfectionism. I don't do it perfectly and yet it continues to work because of my God-given willingness to keep working it.

*Anonymous, Carson California
Adapted from Lifeline, December, 1998*



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**THREE RIVERS INTERGROUP
MONARCH MONTHLY
P.O. BOX 10823
FORT WAYNE, IN 46854-0823**

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS THREE RIVERS INTERGROUP MINUTES
October 27, 2003

OFFICERS PRESENT

Chairperson: Kevin G.
Vice Chair: Absent
Secretary: Mimi
Region Reps: Kevin and Marilyn

GROUPS REPRESENTED

Monday:	Fort Wayne	Park Center	7:30 p.m.
Tuesday:	Goshen	Oaklawn Hospital	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday:	Fort Wayne	St. John's Lutheran Church	6:30 p.m.
Thursday:	New Haven	New Horizons Fellowship Church	10:00 a.m.
Saturday:	Goshen	Trinity Lutheran Church	2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes were read and approved

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report was given and a correction was made concerning the beginning balance. It should read \$3369.78. The remainder of the report was correct

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TELEPHONE

Donna 1, Kevin 2, Deb 2

NEWSLETTER

Nothing new. The printer did not print the newsletter in booklet form this month. This was the printer's fault.

PUBLICITY

Nothing . We gave meeting information to United Way.

LITERATURE

We are waiting for "Newcomer" packets. A motion was made, properly seconded and passed to order a case of the new "Big Books".

OLD BUSINESS

Hoosier Day of Recovery will be hosted by Northwest Indiana Intergroup. They had their bid in ahead of ours.

BY-LAWS

We read through all the by-laws and made the necessary changes. A motion was made, properly seconded and passed to accept the changes. We should have the changes ready in January.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections are in November. We need nominations for Region Representative and Alternate Region Representative. Kevin will run for Vice Chairman. We need people to run for Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,
Mimi W.
Secretary

OA Checking Account Report November 20, 2003	
Balance as of 10/20/03	\$3235.43
Checks:	
Michigan Message Center	\$17.45
Shaefer's Anserphone	\$55.00
Marcia Stocking – Newsletter Printing	\$60.42
AA – for Big Book	\$100.00
Michigan Message Center	<u>\$17.45</u>
Subtotal	-\$250.32
Deposits:	
Monday Fort Wayne	\$ 8.50
Sunday South Bend	\$150.00
Subtotal	+\$158.50
Balance as of November 20, 2003	\$3,143.61
Respectfully submitted, Debra L., treasurer	
Literature Inventory – November 20, 2003	
Balance from 9/16/03	\$1545.52
Purchase of Big Books	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
	\$1645.22
Respectfully submitted, Debra M., Treasurer	

CALENDAR	CALENDAR
<p>Thanksgiving Day Holiday Marathon Turning Point Intergroup November 27, 2003 10:00 am – 2:00 p.m. Swedish Covenant Hospital Anderson Pavilion 2751 W. Winona, Chicago, Il. One block south of Foster at California</p>	<p>Winter SNI Marathon December 6, 2003 Suburban North Intergroup Buffalo Grove, IL Phone 847-346-0000 for details</p> <p>Winter Holiday Marathon Turning Point Intergroup December 25, 2003 10:00 am – 2:00 p.m. Swedish Covenant Hospital Anderson Pavilion 2751 W. Winona, Chicago, Il. One block south of Foster at California</p>

All of the above can be found at:
www.region5oa.org. Select Upcoming Events.

Ensuring an Abstinent Holiday

1. Focus on the true meaning of the holiday or event rather than the food orgy that sometimes accompanies it.
2. Don't set yourself up to feel bad because of unrealistic expectations of what the holiday will bring. Sometimes we're with family, sometimes with friends, sometimes we are alone. Face the reality of the situation beforehand. For example, if a family occasion almost always turns unpleasant, plan not to be a part of the unpleasantness. If you're going to be alone, face that you may face sadness. Plan to deal with it, without excess food.
3. Build up your recovery bank account before and during the holidays by attending lots of meetings, working extra hard on your Twelve Steps and using all the tools, especially service. Keep in contact with your sponsor. The disease doesn't take holidays, nor should our recovery.
4. Keep your OA phone numbers with you at all times. Use them.
5. Know the limits of your recovery. When in doubt, avoid persons, places and things that have in the past triggered overeating. The party is not worth it. Choose not to attend if you feel it may be a major problem. Remember that abstinence, one day at a time, has to be the highest priority in your life. Without it all other things suffer.
6. From the perspective of food, treat the holiday like any other day. Our disease never takes a holiday.
7. Plan something special for yourself when other people are eating sugary desserts that you choose not to include in your food plan. Special teas, hot water and lemon, fruit, anything that's a little special treat for you.
8. Whether a holiday gathering or ordinary party, choose to focus on the people rather than the food. Pick out people and engage them in "real" conversation. If they don't want to play, go to the next one. People like to talk about themselves. Ask them about themselves, their life, their work, and really listen.
9. Try to connect with people at the holiday table. Make food a secondary thing.
10. Set an extra place beside you at the table (in your mind or for real for your Higher Power).
11. Remember Step Two. It says that with the help of a Higher Power, we can be restored to sane eating behavior. Call on your Higher Power. HP can keep you sane, one day at a time, one meal at a time.
12. During the holidays, get out of yourself by giving service, any service, whether it's to program, to needy individuals or to the community. Do something that may be a little hard for you, but that you know you will feel good about later. Give yourself something to respect yourself for.
13. Plan! Plan! Plan! Be proactive toward the holidays and the meals. Don't just lay back and hope for the best. Rehearse in your mind over and over exactly what you will do,

particularly what, where and when you will eat. Pray just before sitting down to the meal

14. Just before sitting down to eat, or just before being served, go to a private room somewhere in the house or restaurant, call your sponsor and commit what you are about to eat, as well as what you will choose to eat. It makes no difference whether you get your sponsor or an answering machine. It's your commitment.
15. If you're visiting others for a holiday dinner, it's up to you to know what is being served and whether it is something that you choose to eat. Call the host. Plan accordingly. People understand others' food limitations. Even people without our disease have foods they don't eat for one reason or another. Volunteer to bring something that's good for you. The host thinks you're gracious, and you're taking care of yourself.
16. Remember that you are responsible for what you eat. It's easy when sitting with family to slip into old, childish roles where you feel you must eat whatever you are given. It's not true. We are adults and responsible for our own choices. It's up to us to take care of ourselves. It's up to us to set whatever boundaries we need to set with our families.
17. Gratitude, gratitude, gratitude. There is nothing as good for staying abstinent, particularly during the holiday season, as focusing on the many things we have, rather than what we don't have. Do gratitude lists frequently.

18. How about writing a little card/note to each person who will be at the holiday dinner table telling them why you're grateful to know them? Leave it at their dinner place. The focus will quickly get to the real meaning of the holiday rather than on the food.
19. For many of us, the most dangerous period for our abstinence is after we have successfully gone through a difficult occasion. The insanity of our disease subconsciously tells us to reward ourselves with food because we did so well yesterday. Or, we suffer some kind of letdown about the occasion. It didn't meet our expectations. Some of us feel an emptiness after holidays that in the past we have tried to fill with food. For these reasons, plan to go to meetings the next day after the holiday.
20. A holiday is not a crisis. Holidays come every year. They are simply calendar times set aside to honor certain things. We deal with the holidays just like we deal with the rest of the days in the year. You can do it. Relax and work your program the way you know how.

Adapted from The Butterfly – Extra Edition Fall 2002





Conflict of Wills

It doesn't seem to matter which food plan I've chosen. If my head is in the right place (feeling grateful to God and willing to be of service), then I have the willingness and the ability to abstain from "more."

OA has given me a "food conscience." I know when the signs of my disease are resurfacing – eating too fast, standing while eating, not weighing and measuring at home, not reading labels, eating out a lot and using that as my excuse to overeat. These behaviors signal my "food conscience" to work my program harder.

I overeat when I'm in conflict between my will and God's will. My will wants easy, quick solutions to problems. I want people in agreement with me and nothing to "break down" and need repair. I'm smiling as I write this because I realize how immature I would have

remained if God had not given me lessons from which to grow.

I used to hear "turn your obstacles into opportunities," and I knew I must learn to deal with life's problems without using food. What I turn to in these moments of turmoil is my God. Today, I choose not to make food my Higher Power. I simply take some action (after praying for guidance and then let go and let God. I don't eat compulsively, and I go to meetings. If I live my life according to this program's Twelve Steps, I will be restored to a saner, healthier eating pattern and body. I'm a compulsive overeater recovering one day at a time.

C.D., Bronx, New York

From Lifeline, December, 1998



Looking For Answers

The most miserable person imaginable is the one with a belly full of binge foods and a head full of OA. Being in OA for over 20 years, I find myself miserable from time to time. Why? I ask myself, "Why do I still look for the answers with food? Why do I sometimes believe that binge food is the easiest, softest way out of a problem?" when I start asking these questions, I must determine what I want – food and pain, or recovery? Most of the time, recovery is the answer for me.

Sometimes I think that food is still the answer. Am I happy when I feel the pain? No. Am I happy when I eat in the pain? No. I am more in pain, twice over. Food is not the answer; that is the old, broken record in my head telling me to eat.

I need to stay abstinent so I can work through a situation and continue going forward with my program and my life. This is about me and my life- the life that my Higher Power has given to me to use the way He wishes me to use it, not the way I want to use it. My HP wants me to be happy.

I am happy that today I have a choice. I can choose to eat and be miserable twice over, or I can choose not to overeat, hurt for awhile and grow closer to my Higher Power and my OA family. Today I choose to remain abstinent.

Thank you, OA family, for your help, your love and your words "Keep coming back."

B.W., Parma, Ohio

From Lifeline, December, 1998



	REFERENCE	
Fort Wayne Ans. Service (260) 460-4958	Fort Wayne area e-mail address threerivers@region5oa.org	OA Web Site www.overeatersanonymous.org
South Bend Ans. Svc (260)2396526	Goshen/Elkhart area e-mail address oshen@region 5oa.org	Three Rivers (Region 5) Web Site www.region5oa.org
Goshen/Elkhart Ans .Svc (574)293-8671	South Bend area e-mail address southbend@region5oa.org	Region 5 e-mail address email@region5oa.org
Region 5 Office (800)589-6262 PO Box 516 Kouts, IN 46347- 0516 AA Web Site ww.aa.org	OA World Service Office (505)891-2664 PO Box 44020 Rio Rancho, NM 87144 Big Book Index Web Site www.recovery.org/aa/bbindex/	Three Rivers Intergroup (260)460-4958 P.O. Box 10823 Fort Wayne, IN 46854-0823 Big Book Web Site www.recovery.org/aa/bigbook/ww/index.html