



NoVAtions,

Northern Virginia Intergroup of
Overeaters Anonymous

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVA

NoVAtions Deadline, April 10

Intergroup Meeting

April 21
10 AM – 12 Noon
Hope Lutheran Church,
Annandale, VA

REGION 7

Into the Looking Glass

May 4-6
Plim Plaza Hotel, 2nd &
Boardwalk, Ocean City, MD
Speakers, workshops, fellowship!
For info/contacts, see
<http://oaregion7.org/calendar/>

Region 7 Convention: Recovery – It's a Shore Thing!

Nov 2-4
Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600
Coastal Hwy, Ocean City, MD
Call Terri 410-450-9100 or Mike
732-939-2472

OTHER EVENTS

Unity Through the Traditions

Telephone Meeting
When: 3rd Sunday of Every
Month at 3 PM to 4 PM EST
712-775-7035, Participant Code
530554#
Sponsored by Region 8.

**The opinions expressed in
NoVAtions are those of the
individual contributors and do not
necessarily reflect the views of
Overeaters Anonymous.**

FROM THE EDITOR

Ironically, as I write this I am starting all over again with my abstinence. How can I share experience, strength, and hope with you? Today I can only share the last, because despite my stumbling, I am still coming to meetings, and because of you all I still have hope.

Those of you who know me can always tell when I am struggling because I am *quiet* in the meeting (LOL), but it is not just because I am trying to be invisible. Much to my surprise, it's most often because I am trying to *learn*. And I do learn something in every meeting from you, even if it's nothing more than the fact that I am not alone in struggling with this disease and that victory is possible.

My abstinence depends on my honesty and, even more importantly (and obviously more difficult for me), on my willingness to reach out for help when the cravings hit. I need to remember that, for me, abstinence is not just a matter of the physical, but of emotional and spiritual health, as well. If I don't keep all three in balance, I will most certainly fail. But, as I have learned in the rooms, I am not a failure just because I fail. And so I still have hope.

- Kate I. (Co-Editor)

FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR

My dear fellow OA members,

When members return from relapse, I listen to what they say; I want to know what took them out so that if I ever find myself struggling with the same conditions, the alarm bells will go off in my head, and I can take action to protect myself from relapse, obsession, compulsion, weight-gain, and self-loathing. Bless their hearts for making it back and for telling us what happened. I don't know how many times I have been saved from disaster by remembering what they said:

"I'll just have one.
No one will know.
I deserve a treat.
Everyone else is eating it, I can too.
It will make me feel better.
It's a sin to waste food.
Those steps won't work for me.
I can handle it now.
It will satisfy the craving.

I'll start again on Monday.

I'll show Him.

Aw, screw it all!

You can email me or text me if you want to comment on any of these 12 alarm bells; maybe you can add another one. My email and cell numbers are below. If I get some comments, I'll mention them next month. I'm keeping this short so that we will have more room in the newsletter for the wealth of contributions our hard-working editors got this month.

Peggy B.

Interim Chair NOVA

310 626-5646

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THE THREE "LEGS" OF ABSTINENCE

According to OA literature, abstinence is "the action of refraining from compulsive overeating and compulsive food behaviors while working toward or maintaining a healthy body weight." But to me, it's so much more. The sentence that follows really sums up what for me gets to the heart of abstinence; I am freed to experience spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery when I am abstinent.

In the spiritual realm, I can hear God speaking to me in the depths of my heart when I am abstinent. Otherwise, the only voice that breaks through a food fog is mine. And my voice is the one that keeps me selfish, prideful, and angry at the world – I am unaware of the lessons that God would have me learn that day. In the food, the binge planning voice takes over, commanding me to place the next food fix at the forefront of my day. It leads me to make every decision based on how it will get me alone with food with no other demands on my time or attention. A strong abstinence allows me to see others' needs and to place myself in their shoes so that when I am near them, I am truly listening. I am looking into their eyes, giving them 100% of my attention and respect. This allows me to give them the love that God has abundantly given to me, to be a light in their day. I can hear God's will for my life - part of this has been finally knowing and accepting God's love. This has made me a better person, not only for the sake of the God that I love, but for others.

In the emotional realm, a strong abstinence helps me to better deal with stress. I no longer adjust my opinions to meet others' expectations. I feel free to be who God has specially created me to be. When others interrupt or criticize, I am a bit calmer. When I am abstinent, I am working on interactions with others with the help of a sponsor or another fellow. This helps me to learn how to deal with my emotions. I've learned in abstinence that feeling a particular emotion is not right or wrong. But how I choose to react to them may be positive or negative.

OA CRYPTOGRAM

YQNSBHQ JH UCO S
YQFIJYQWQUO

And here is your hint:

H = S

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SPIRITUAL HEALING ARE THE TWELVE STEPS

STEP OF THE MONTH- STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH

Courage

TRADITION OF THE MONTH

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

CONCEPT OF THE MONTH

The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.

12 Steps Simplified

1	I am not Power.
2	Power does exist.
3	I will rely on Power, not self.
4	I cause most of my problems.
5	I falsely claim power and try.
6	I will stop claiming and trying.
7	Power please guide me.
8	I will stop controlling others.
9	I will show more forgiveness.
10	I'll do good more & bad less.
11	I pray to be under God's will.
12	I will confess and share this.

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NOVATIONS BIZ

Want to save paper and still get all the benefits of reading *NoVA*tions? Register to receive the electronic version of *NoVA*tions in your email. Sign up at oanova.org, and remember to confirm your address when you receive the first email.

THANKS TO EVERYONE!

Thanks to everyone who submitted articles this month – we actually could not include all the great works we received! Cecilia and I are very grateful. If you don't see your contribution in this edition, rest assured it will appear in the next few issues. Please keep them coming! We'll be very excited to have a "reserve" to draw on in future months.

NEXT NOVATIONS TOPIC

"Service – What You Give, What You Get" – Articles due April 10th.

SUBMITTING TO NOVATIONS

Have something to say but think you can't write? That's what your editors are here for. Submit your thoughts and we'll work with you to polish your valuable contribution. Feel free to submit an article on the monthly topic or whatever you feel moved to share. *Submissions can be anonymous if desired.* Events announcements, original poetry, and art also welcome! Email submissions or suggestions to novations@oanova.org or, if you prefer, mail it to NoVA IG, P.O. Box 1992, Annandale, VA 22003.

In the physical realm, I have experienced recovery, but more importantly, have gained some acceptance of my body and shape. My priority is now a strong, nourished, flexible, and healthy body rather than a perfect body fit for a magazine cover after some Photoshopping. Physically I feel better when I am eating moderately and following my food plan. Gone are the days when my stomach felt bloated, my digestive system took days to heal, and my neck ached (yes, I've had binges so bad my neck ached). I am treating my body right, and it is thanking me daily for the care that I take.

I'm so grateful to God, to the program, and to my fellows for the time that I have spent experiencing strong abstinence. Here's to tomorrow - another abstinent day.

Mary M.

ABSTINENCE DEPENDS ON EATING MINDFULLY

About a year ago I added another aspect of the 10th step (daily/spot check inventory) to my program. It is an inventory of my abstinence with relationship to my food that day. Despite keeping off about 150 pounds for 25 years, I still have an abnormal relationship with food. Even though I have worked the steps and tools pretty tenaciously for most of this time, it does not rid me of certain aspects of my relationship to eating and food.

The starting place is to be clear about what abstinence means to me. In my case, first it is three meals a day with one afternoon snack and one after dinner (that I can have with dinner as well). Next, I categorize food as "green" (safe for me), "yellow" (I need to be careful as it might be a problem), and "red" (clearly a problem for me). Thirdly, I monitor volume and how I eat. For certain foods I weigh and measure and have volume guidelines, and others (salad/veggies) I don't. That being said, I have to be careful to be honest about my food choices. If I'm eating from the salad bar, is my unlimited volume raw vegetables and lettuce, or have cheese, nuts, bacon, or croutons found their way on the plate in "generous" amounts and will these eventually lead to trouble? By daily reflection and "as needed" discussion with other OA members, I work to keep my abstinence honest. This disease is quite sneaky. When I first joined OA I can recall rationalizing my way into considering an onion ring a vegetable; after all, it does have onion in it, I told myself! Of course the onion is really a delivery vehicle for bread and fat.

The last aspect of my daily abstinence inventory is how I eat. If I am eating fast and shoveling food down, that is not a good sign. I often eat while feeding my dog - if I finish my plate before her, one of us has a problem! I aspire to eat mindfully where I eat at moderate pace, taste and enjoy my food, and am aware of my eating.

Beyond the food, two other ways I inventory my abstinence is by weighing myself once a week and being conscious of how my clothes fit. Clearly scales and clothing sizes don't lie and can help me see if I am in denial about my food.

The reason I am in OA is to not compulsively overeat (i.e., eat abstinely), and reviewing that daily has been incredibly helpful in supporting my abstinence.

Alan S.

ABSTINENCE IS SIMPLE

"Recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program."

- *A Commitment to Abstinence*, p. 1

Abstinence, to me, is very simple. It is refraining from compulsive overeating and continuing to work my program. Compulsive overeating is when I wander around my kitchen shoveling food into my mouth unthinkingly. Compulsiveness is when I am not reading, writing, calling, and using the other tools. Compulsiveness is when I do not use the Steps or talk to my Higher Power.

Abstinence is eating balanced meals, using the OA tools, practicing the Steps and Traditions, sponsoring and doing other service. I can binge on veggies, so I do not have a food list that determines my abstinence: eating compulsively – feeding feelings, bingeing, stuffing my face. Recovery is three-fold – physical, spiritual, and emotional. If I only count the physical (adhering to a food plan), I miss out on two important parts of recovery.

- *Voices of Recovery*

FYI

IG CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR NEEDED

We are thankful to Peggy B. for stepping in to serve as interim IG Board Chair, but the **position is still open**, as is that of Vice Chair. If you meet the qualifications (working the twelve steps, traditions, and concepts for a year; at least 6 months of continuous current abstinence; abstinence during tenure; and regular membership of an affiliated group), please consider this area of service. See our bylaws (Article IV, Sections 2 & 3, at <http://oanova.org/erewhon-intergroup-policies-and-bylaws.html>) and the Operations Manual (Board Officers, pages 8 & 9, <http://oanova.org/oa-nova-intergroup-procedures-manual.html>) for a more complete position description and contact us at chair@oanova.org if you would like more information or to submit a nomination.

OA NOVA & IG

OA NoVA is a vibrant fellowship with more than 45 weekly OA meetings that span Alexandria, Arlington, Annandale, Ashburn, Bristow, Burke, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Leesburg, Manassas, McLean, Purcellville, Reston, Springfield, Vienna, and Warrenton, Virginia.

The OA NoVA Intergroup (IG) serves and represents the above member groups and carries the message of recovery to those with the problem of eating compulsively, by fostering the practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service.

YOUR OA NOVA INTERGROUP TRUSTED SERVANTS



Interim Chair: Peggy B.

Vice Chair: Open

Treasurer: Rhodessa B.

Secretary: John K.

Next Intergroup Meeting:

Saturday, April 21
10 a.m. - 12 noon
Hope Lutheran Church
4604 Ravensworth Road,
Annandale, VA.

Cryptogram solution: Relapse is not a requirement.