



NoVAtions,

Northern Virginia Intergroup of
Overeaters Anonymous

FROM THE EDITOR

What are the gifts of sponsorship? I have had two sponsors so far in OA; both wonderful people who share their experience, strength, and hope selflessly and provide me with invaluable insight and (pardon the expression) food for thought in working my daily program and abstinence. What would I do without these people? I would be aimless and clueless, still living in the disease. My sponsors keep me moving forward, keep me accountable and understood. They are my light at the end of the tunnel of my addiction and disease.

And what am I to them? They are kind enough to tell me that I help them as much as they help me, and I can see how that may be true. I experience the rewards of sponsorship in little ways when someone in a meeting tells me that my share affected them; that my experience, strength, and hope made a difference. Together we can recover.

Kate I. (Co-Editor)

FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR

I want to share something exciting with you...this program works!

In January, a new meeting began in Fredericksburg. Some of us were not yet abstinent but had a sincere desire and were already doing service. Now we have 7 regulars; two have just gotten abstinent for the first time and two more are abstinent after struggling for months. What are we doing? We have returned to the basics I learned when I came to OA in 1985. We use a simple meeting format; members start with a set food plan; we are very supportive of each other, texting the whole group every day; and we're working the steps from the AA Big Book. I guess you could say that we 'went retro' and it's working!

I sponsor the way I was sponsored because I know it works. It worked for me, my sponsor, her sponsor, and Rozann. It works for the people I sponsor if they work it. We establish a food plan, identify trigger foods, and work the Steps. It's very important to get relief from emotional issues. My sponsor has 5 years more abstinence than I do, and has been my sponsor for about 30 years. I'm sure I couldn't stay abstinent on my own, but we can all be abstinent when we help each other.

Peggy B.
Interim IG Chair

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVA

NoVAtions Deadline, June 5 **Next Intergroup (IG) Meeting**

June 16

10 AM – 12 Noon

Hope Lutheran Church,
Annandale, VA

REGION 7

Gateway to Serenity Retreat

June 1-3

St. Raphaela Retreat Center
616 Coopertown Road
Haverford, PA 19041

Grace: 610-495-2173 /

Grace.Gordon@aig.com

Cathe S. 610-352-9919 /

cmsrfs98@verizon.net

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

Keep an eye out! The Saturday Early Birds meeting will be hosting a **sponsorship seminar** in September. We will have it on a Sunday and all are welcome. Details coming soon...

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

FOR TODAY ON SPONSORSHIP

It is in our faults and our failings, not in our virtues, that we touch one another and find sympathy.

Jerome K. Jerome

In my search for a cure for my illness, I encountered many fine doctors and others who were sincerely interested in helping me. And they did help: I lost weight. But when I regained the weight, I could only see my former helpers as superior beings with no discernible human failings to compare to mine.

In OA, my would-be helpers were, by their own admission, overeaters. In unmistakable terms, they described the compulsion, the fat, the shame, the despair—and the spiritual recovery. My own recovery began that day.

Today I know that I must give to another compulsive overeater in the same way that others gave to me: by first revealing my own failings.

For today: In sponsoring and twelfth-step work, I remember to talk about some of the defects I still have, as well as those that have been removed. A sponsor with no apparent faults needs help.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

"Life is going to be fantastic now," I said to myself.

By the grace of God and this program I had lost 100 pounds and was thinner than I had ever been. More than that, my bad temper—and the need to pick fights—had been lifted. The first few years of my marriage were rough, and I set out to make my amends. I was beginning to like myself so much that I could even believe my wife really loved me.

When the disease blows like a hurricane, it is difficult to have a positive sense of one's sexuality. With recovery, I began to experience a new sense of self-worth, along with an improved body image. We talked about having children, and we even chose names. Yes, my wife and I were on easy street, I felt.

Then one night I discovered that she was seeing another man. All I could think was, "How could she do that? I'm thin!"

It was strange that my temper did not flare up. I told her I realized what a poor husband I had been in the past, and what a royal pain in the neck to live with. Hearing this, my wife began to cry. She asked me to forgive her. I did—something I could not have done before this program.

When I learned that my wife had resumed the relationship with the other man, it was more of a shock than the first time. I couldn't believe it. This had never happened when I weighed 250 pounds. Now, she was telling me she no longer wanted to live with me.

All my old tapes began playing at full volume: "You see, you thought you could recover and be a good person. You thought you were sexy, a good husband, and spiritual. You fat fool. You have always been a repulsive failure. You have always been a dishonest person. Of course she is leaving you. If you were her you would do the same thing. Who are you to believe that some power is going to restore you to sanity? You have always been a worthless hunk of junk, and OA doesn't change the bottom line."



THE FOUNDATIONS OF OA

STEP OF THE (6TH) MONTH / ITS PRINCIPLE

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character (*Willingness*).

TRADITION OF THE MONTH / ITS PRINCIPLE

An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose (*Solidarity*).

CONCEPT OF THE MONTH / ITS PRINCIPLE

The World Service Business Conference has entrusted the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the administration of Overeaters Anonymous (*Responsibility*).

OA CRYPTOGRAM

QOFKQFHQ TDHMH NCU
VUQQDIU -- KFN NCU
OUHQFK.

And here is your hint:

M = Y

Soon the tapes went into the usual finish: "What's the use? I tried the best I could to work all three sides of this program, and I've failed. It's only a matter of time before I gain all the weight back and more, so why not start binging now? It doesn't make a damn bit of difference."

But then the strangest thing happened. A man called and said he was hurting and needed this program. He didn't want a woman sponsor. Would I help him?

I wanted to say, "Look, I'm just about ready to kill myself, so maybe I'm not your best choice."

But what came out was, "Sure, when can we meet?"

God knew what I needed.

We started talking about the disease, and we shared for many hours. Then a miracle happened. In working with this newcomer and sharing my program I was, as the Big Book promises, "amazingly lifted up and set on [my] feet. It is a design for living that works in rough going." My new friend needed help and I was able to give it. In this way I was pulled outside myself, and I knew that life was going to be fine—even if it was not going all my way.

The Big Book touches on just such a situation: "Let no alcoholic say he cannot recover unless he has his family back. This just isn't so. In some cases the wife will never come back...Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God."

Whenever the old tapes start to play, I have found that working with others is a sure way to get back on the road to sanity. I had always thought a divorce would be the end of the world. Thanks to this Fellowship, it has been a new beginning.

February 1981 (From Lifelines)

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

We all know what DUI stands for, but what do WUI, RUI, and BUI stand for? This is when we work, have relationships, and harm our bodies under the influence of compulsive food behavior. Society knows and has a way to treat DUIs before and after they occur. But what is the equivalent in our area of addiction?

How many of us have been guilty of WUIs? How far did that get us for the day/week/year, or even our entire career? Were we able to respond appropriately to requests from coworkers and our boss while WUI? Were we earning our paycheck by giving stellar—or even just adequate—work?

And after work—how did that go? Were we able to let the stress of the job go, so that we could enjoy friends and family? Or did we need to refuel using our compulsive food behavior? Were we ever present for our loved ones?

How did those RUIs work for us? Was there any emotional stability? Was the relationship a true partnership or did our RUIs lead to dishonesty or codependency?

And then there's the BUI, which is not only its own hell, but makes WUIs and RUIs even worse. When we go to the doctor and get on the scale, we are shocked that it has come to this. We are diagnosed with fatty liver

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.

NEXT NOVATIONS TOPIC

"Freedom From..."—Articles due June 5th.

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.

They say you need
newcomers to tell you
where you came from, old-
timers to tell you where
you could go, and a
sponsor to tell you where
you are at.

Just for today

disease, diabetes, pancreatitis, heart disease. How can relationships and work *not* suffer when our poor bodies are struggling so?

Just like DUIs, WUIs, RUIs, and BUIs have serious consequences. The wake up calls when we receive a poor performance review at work; when our partner confronts us about our food behavior or quits the relationship entirely; or when our physical health has deteriorated so severely that the phrase "quality of life" is a sick joke.

How can we fight against what seems like overwhelming odds? By practicing LUI—we live under the [OA] influence. LUI by coming to meetings and hearing messages of experience, strength, and hope. LUI by getting a sponsor and working the 12 Steps. LUI by reading The Big Book and other OA literature. LUI by reaching out to your fellows to help them; amazingly, this will also help you! LUI by finding a Higher Power, whatever that is for you, and calling on your HP when nothing else seems to help. You will find that LUI is the best thing you will ever do, and every aspect of your life—work, relationships, and body—will be better than ever before.

Lois C / Kate I

IG COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE

In our April OA NoVA IG meeting, the group discussed improved communications for our meeting members. Of particular concern are the meetings that do not have an IG representative, so members may be unaware of the resources that are available to help in the road to recovery. In an effort to improve matters, the IG has approved the following:

OA NOVA WEBSITE REDESIGN

A committee has been formed to evaluate our website (<http://oanova.org/>) and redesign it to more effectively communicate information and to be smart phone/tablet compatible. If you are

interested in serving on the committee or in submitting thoughts on the website redesign, please contact Kate I. at k8atoanovations@gmail.com.

INTERGROUP BOARD

Interim Chair: Peggy B.
Vice Chair: Open
Treasurer: Rhodessa B.
Secretary: Open

MEETING EMAILS

Meetings wanting to receive periodic information from IG, including minutes and announcements of regional events, should provide an email to secretary@oanova.org. It is suggested that your meeting create an organizational email (free from Yahoo, Hotmail, or Gmail) that your meeting's secretary could access so that communications will survive member turnover.

FYI

IG CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, SECRETARY 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** and **Secretary**. 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 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.



Cryptogram solution: Sponsors carry the message – not the person.