

# NoVAations



Northern Virginia (NoVA) Intergroup (IG) of Overeaters Anonymous (OA)

## CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### NOVA

Next IG Meeting: Apr 20, 10 am - 12 pm. Hope Lutheran Church, 4604 Ravensworth Rd., Annandale, VA.

May NoVAations Theme: "Experiencing the OA Promises." Submit by Apr 9.

"Twelve-Stepping a Problem." Friday, Mar 22, 8-9 pm (instead of the regular meeting). Westover Baptist Church, 1125 Patrick Henry Dr., Arlington, VA.

"Preventing Relapse." Apr 13, 2 - 4 pm. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10260 North St., Fairfax, VA.

"Body Image Workshop." May 18, 2 - 4 pm. Details next month.

### REGION 7

2019 Spring Assembly. Apr 5 to Apr 7. The Clarion Inn, Frederick, MD. Refer to <http://oaregion7.org/events/2019-region-7-spring-assembly/>

## From The Chair

Dear Fellow OAs,

The *NoVAations* theme this month is "sharing fellowship." Great idea! But what does it mean? My image is sitting with a couple of people, talking, sometimes seriously, sometimes shooting the breeze. The key thing is people, feeling good, being with other people. So maybe it is just that simple. But maybe not. It is not always so easy to feel relaxed and connected with others when we have this disease. For many of us, this is a disease of feeling out of place and of isolation.

Putting it another way, sharing fellowship is spending time with others in this program, as we are. This can be in person, on the phone, or just knowing they are there. It is enjoying the warmth of being with others that share my disease, and it is also just letting go of this whole disease thing and enjoying the warmth of being with another person, period.

We come together in meetings, and we can also join in the meeting after the meeting, or before the meeting. Sharing coffee or a meal, going for a walk, inviting someone to join you in something; all these are actions that deepen our connections and help us come alive as people. We can soak up the "being with" of life, rather than the "being separate and alone."

It helps if we don't worry about "am I good enough?" or "are they good enough?" We have to trust a little. One of my favorite lines is, "I'm just another bozo on the bus." Or "we're all mad." Or "we're all in this together." Those lines make it easier for me to relax. I don't have to be something I'm not; I can just be me, as I am.

And I can reach out to tell someone else to say, "I like you." I don't have to use actual words. I can smile, or look at them, or call them, or greet them with their name. I can listen to them, and let them know I hear. I can invite them to join me. I can accept them as they are. When I do this, I think, we all feel a little more at home.

Rachel B., NoVA IG Chair, [chair@oanova.org](mailto:chair@oanova.org)

## Fellowship

Looking up "fellowship" in an unabridged dictionary produced a long list of definitions. Most of them were a variation of the first two:

1. The companionship of persons on equal and friendly terms
2. Being together, sharing mutual interest, or common experience

Mutual, equal, companionship, friendly, common experience - all these terms certainly define Overeaters Anonymous. When I first came in, I had no idea that there were others who had the same relationship with food that I did. My recovery and appreciation of the deadliness of this disease could only have come from a fellowship. Each time I go to a meeting I am surrounded by people who know what an unhealthy relationship to food means. We have a "mutual interest" and "common experience." We meet on "equal and friendly terms."

Because we are all equals at meetings that sense of terminal uniqueness is lifted. Sharing our disease, struggles, experience, strength, and hope forms a bond that can be forged nowhere else. I meet people that I would never have met anywhere else. They come from different cultural, religious, educational and professional backgrounds. Yet, in Overeaters Anonymous, all those differences melt away in the desire and need to find recovery from compulsive eating.

This is a "we" program. I can not do this on my own. For me, the meetings are where I learned about the steps, found a sponsor, and learned I had a disease. I also learned that remission of this disease only happens when I use a Higher Power. This is where I found people I can cry with, laugh with and share the road to recovery.

Thank you, God, for guiding me to the fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous.

k.v., N. VA

## Fellowship: OA's Secret Power Tool

We always talk about OA being a fellowship. I think we are missing something stating it just that way. Fellowship, in my experience, is a power tool or bedrock to maintaining freedom from compulsive overeating. We can do together what we cannot do it alone.

As I enter my 30th year in OA having been abstinent approximately 25 of those years (in a few spans up to 14 years continuously) I've been reflecting over what has worked for me as well as what I've observed in others. I believe it is our connections to each other, which supports abstinence, as much if not more than anything else in OA. This is not to diminish the importance of OA's 12 steps, 12 traditions, nine tools which have helped me, but to add to it.

When I say fellowship, I mean more than attending meetings and having a sponsor. It also includes getting to a meeting early, staying later for "the meeting after the meeting," and making phone calls between meetings. But here is the real secret. Get to know each other beyond the above. Take walks, meet for coffee, grow friendships based on our shared common bond to live a life free of food addiction.

### THE OA PRECEPTS

#### Step 4 and Its Principle

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Courage)

#### Tradition 4 and Its Principle

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

#### Concept 4 and Its Principle

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

### CALENDAR CONT'D - REGION 7

"Step Ashore . . . Journey to Recovery." Apr 12, 5 pm to Apr 14, 12 pm. Holiday Inn Oceanside, Virginia Beach, VA. Email: [retreat@oatidewater.org](mailto:retreat@oatidewater.org).

"Diamond State Retreat - The Three Legged Stool." May 3, 7 pm to May 5, 12 pm. Plim Plaza Hotel, Ocean City, MD. Call: 410-658-2791.

### OTHER REGION 7 INTERGROUPS

"Spring Clean Your Recovery." Mar 23, 1 - 4pm. Trinity United Methodist Church, 705 W. Patrick St., Frederick, MD. Call: 301-845-8849.

"The Difference Between Abstinence and a Plan of Eating." Mar 30, 9 am - 12 pm. Christ Lutheran Church, 2011 Brandon Ave SW, Roanoke, VA. Email: [avia1982@gmail.com](mailto:avia1982@gmail.com).

**OA RESOURCES**

**NoVAtions - NoVA's NEWSLETTER**

Pick up a paper copy of *NoVAtions* at a NoVA OA Meeting or sign up at [oanova.org](http://oanova.org), for an electronic version and remember to confirm your address when you receive the first email.

**LIFELINE**

Subscribe to either the print *Lifeline* or *e-Lifeline*: <https://oa.org/members/lifeline-magazine/subscribe/>

**NOVATIONS NEEDS YOU!**

Consider sharing your experience, strength, and hope through *NoVAtions*, while using up to three OA Tools: writing, service, and literature. Submit articles, event announcements, original poetry, art, and suggestions, *signed or anonymous* to [novations@oanova.org](mailto:novations@oanova.org) or NoVA IG, PO Box 1992, Annandale, VA 22003. Refer to the events calendar in [OANova.org](http://OANova.org) for future monthly themes. Your editor is here to help you polish your work, as needed. Let's keep the *NoVAtions* article bank full!

**Men of OA**

Men of OA – You're not alone!  
 Are you the only man in your meeting? Do you have trouble freely sharing in meetings of mostly women?

**OAMen.org**

- Men's Face-to-face Meeting Schedule
- Men's Phone and Online Meeting Information
- OA Men Email Discussion Groups
- OA Men Phone Outreach List

**Cryptogram**

CYFUCNUO AU FUC MUCCUO.

And here is your hint:

Y = O.

Some of my closest friends have come from OA. When you think about it why shouldn't they? These are the people who I've been most honest and vulnerable with. We know each other's, truths, fragilities, joys, and sorrows and give each other love and acceptance.

Compulsive overeating our literature calls a "disease of isolation." Fellowship can provide a healing cure. Fellowship offers a chance for emotional intimacy: seeing each other for who we are in our whole truth with full compassion of what our lives and journeys have been.

The main reason I turn to food is I am hurting on the inside and food is my drug of choice. Fellowship offers a much better choice. The combination of compassionate listenership with possible shared experience strength and hope on how to deal with life makes it much easier to not medicate with food.

Our literature talks extensively about using God or a Higher Power to be the key to abstinence. For years I tried to do that and have learned that is not my path. The words Christ, God, Higher Power, and Spirituality have little meaning for me, and I surely don't find them helpful with my treatment for food addiction.

OA is adapted from AA which came out of the Oxford Group, a Christian fellowship. This led to AA literature linking recovery to having a Spiritual Awakening where Christ (or other God/Higher Power) would be the anchor of your life and the road to Sobriety or Abstinence. In my case not being religious or spiritual, it made it very difficult to work the program as it is written.

I now know that fellowship is my key ingredient to recovery. The many OA fellows who I get to know and share their experience, strength, and hope are a power much greater than me. I sometimes substitute GP, the Group Power, for HP, when I read the literature. The idea of having to believe in a supernatural force or religious deity as key to abstinence didn't help my recovery and perhaps hindered it.

I have come to believe that fellowship with the people of OA combined with the collective wisdom in OA's 12 steps, traditions and tools are what keeps me abstinent. I am grateful for the power tool of fellowship: the secret I wish I knew when I started.

Alan S.

**The Power of Sharing Fellowship**

These days I am really feeling the power of OA fellowship, mostly because I am missing it! Commitments in my life have made it necessary for me to cut down my face-to-face OA meetings from 3 or 4 a week to once on the weekend. I still listen to phone meetings and podcasts every day after my morning meditation. I'm very grateful for the advances in communication that make this possible, but still – it's different. I'm not seeing the bright smiles on your faces, being able to read by your expressions how you are reacting to what I am saying (or what you mean by what you are saying), and I really miss the warm hugs!

How much of the power of fellowship is communicated by means other than the voice? It turns out, so much. The wealth of sympathy in a friend's expression as they listen to me share, the joy in his smile when he talks about recovery, the

**OA NOVA AND INTERGROUP**

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 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.

**INTERGROUP BOARD - 2019**

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Rachel B.</b>
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	<b>Juliet C.</b>
<b>Interim Treasurer:</b>	<b>John K.</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Kate I.</b>



**Disclaimer**

The opinions expressed in NoVAations are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect OA as a whole.

warmth of her hand on mine when I am sharing something painful, or the gentle gesture of passing a tissue when I am overwhelmed with emotion – these are things that only a live meeting can do for me. I don't mean to negate the remote meetings at all, because I have learned so much from mine. They are their own blessing, but when I am really struggling, I have to go to the rooms. There is nothing else that can bring me the same level of peace. I literally heave a sigh of relief when I hear Our Invitation to You read in the circle. I hold tight to the hands next to me during the Serenity Prayer. You all have saved me, meeting by meeting.

Until I can return to my regular meetings, I will continue to use the remote meetings and thank my Higher Power for the people there, but I look forward to resuming my hand-in-hand fellowship soon!

Kate I.

**NoVA Shout Outs for Unity Day (2/24/19)**

Unity Day was a wonderful experience. It was well organized and offered a variety opportunities to reflect, to share, and to be in an uplifting space with others seeking recovery. The theme of unity was explored through individual, small group, and large group activities which included: brief shares by 2 OA members; contributing our ideas about what helps others feel welcome in a meeting; reflecting and then sharing with our table mates times, in program and in outside life, when we felt apart and when we felt welcome; using colored markers and words to complete a recovery map; and joining together in reciting the OA prayer at the closing of the meeting. I'm very glad I went, and glad others were there. Together we recover.

Ruth M.

This two-hour event was the most productive meeting I have attended since I began OA, only a little over 90 days ago. It literally included finding my way along the "Road to Recovery" map while avoiding the pitfalls. The Crayolas brought out the inner child in me. I had such a sense of relief when I avoided "Relapse Ridge." I would like to see these meetings at the library on Sunday afternoons become a regular event.

Edward W.

I rarely have missed attending any Unity Day events in the last 19 years. One important benefit I receive is getting to see and share with OA friends who do not go to the same weekly meetings that I attend. It's great fellowship and helps remind me OA is so much more than our local group. There are great opportunities to hear speakers I otherwise wouldn't know and grow in recovery with them. This year was no exception; thanks for putting together a very nice Unity Day event.

Gail V.B., Herndon

**World Service Organization**

WSBC – World Service Business Conference. May 6 - May 11. Albuquerque, NM.

Cryptogram Solution : Together we get better.