

NOVATIONS



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

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

NOVA

Next IG Meeting: Feb 16, 10 am - 12 pm. Hope Lutheran Church, Annandale, VA.

Feb NoVAations: Submit by Feb 5; Theme: "Using the OA Tools"

"Back to Basics: Exploring the Big Book of AA." Sat, Jan 26, 1 - 3pm. St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston, VA.

"Unity Day." Sun, Feb 24, 1:30 - 3:30 pm. City of Fairfax Regional Library, Mtg Rm B, 10360 North St, Fairfax, VA. Suggested Donation: \$5.00.

REGION 7

Step Ashore . . . Journey to Recovery: Apr 12, 5pm to Apr 14, 12 pm. Holiday Inn Oceanside, 2101 Atlantic Ave, VA Beach, VA
Email: retreat@oatidewater.org.

Catch a Wave of Recovery: Nov 1-3. Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD.
Contact: Terri or Amy
vice_chair@oaregion7.org,
conventionchair@oaregion7.org.

From The Chair

Dear Fellow Members of OA,

Just imagine! Now I am Chair of your Intergroup (IG) how exciting! And intimidating! I have big shoes to fill, following others who have done this over the years. I'm not really sure what I've gotten myself into, but I hope that I can do something positive in this position.

I am glad to have Juliet C. as the new Vice Chair and Kate I. continuing as Secretary, along with Carrie W. as our new webmaster and John K. as interim Treasurer. Thanks to the new people, and to our outgoing Chair Maria G and webmaster Deb C, and others who help IG – *NoVAations* editor Cecilia W., Alice McD., Joan H. and Karen H., to name a few. We are still looking for a more permanent Treasurer for IG for 2019, so let me know if you are interested. (My email is below.)

So what will we do in 2019? My hope is that we will help OA in Northern Virginia with some of the challenges we face. My own view — and I would love to hear yours — is that we have challenges around helping newcomers, getting abstinent, sponsorship, and relapse. I think this is typical of OA elsewhere as well. As a region, we are not alone!

I hope Intergroup can contribute to addressing these challenges. Intergroup should continue to do the basics — put out the meeting list (*Where & When*), put out our newsletter (*NoVAations*), maintain a good website (www.oanova.org), put on some weekend workshops, and attend our Region 7 Assemblies in the spring and fall. But we might also do some new things. We haven't had a retreat in our area for a long time, so that is a possibility. We are thinking about producing some local literature (following OA's guidelines in doing so). We might update the website. We might have other ideas. We might ask for your input on what we do.

If you are excited about OA and want to help — or if you are bored and looking for something new to do — or if you are feeling isolated and want some new

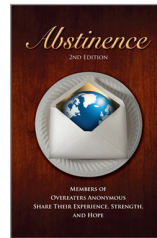
connections — help us out. You can come to Intergroup meetings (see info on page 1) ... *OR* you can help by doing something *outside* Intergroup. Writing, outreach, committees, one-time efforts — there are a variety of things you can do. Email me, and we can figure something out.

Wishing you health, happiness and continued recovery in 2019,

Rachel B. chair@oanova.org

From The Editor

This month's NoVAations theme is "Abstinence Stories." For more on this theme, check out the book *Abstinence* at the OA bookstore (<https://bookstore.oa.org>) or at the Tuesday, 7 a.m. NoVA Arlington Sunrise meeting that focuses on abstinence.



Cecilia W. novations@oanova.org

Say Yes To Abstinence

I've been in program three years. One day at a time, for the last three months, I've been gaining the gift of abstinence. I've lost 24 pounds (11 kg). I like to think that instead of saying no to extra food, I'm saying yes to God's gift of abstinence. What a difference that focus makes! When I serve myself healthy-sized portions of food with the nutrients my body needs, I'm feeding my body, soul, and spirit. When I eat more than my body needs, I harm myself—body, soul, and spirit. I gain clarity of mind to work the Twelve Steps and get on with my life. This disease tells me I'm denying myself something tasty and soothing. What a lie! Sure it will taste good, but as soon as I stop eating, discomfort, guilt, and distance from my Higher Power follow. I will have said no to God's gift of abstinence. So what do I gain when I say yes to abstinence? I gain clarity of mind to work the Twelve Steps and get on with my life. I can face the problems that sent me to food for comfort, and change what I can and accept the rest. I'm learning to accept that I'll often feel like I'm saying no to the "good things" others enjoy. Feelings aren't facts, though. When I feel that way, I have tools I can pick up to work through my feelings. I can reach out to someone else; write about my feelings; tell God about my feelings; and work my recovery by choosing abstinence, one day at a time. I'd rather say yes to abstinence! — Savannah, Georgia USA

Anonymous, Overeaters. *Abstinence, Second Edition: Members of Overeaters Anonymous Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope* (Kindle Locations 419-434). Overeaters Anonymous. Kindle Edition. (Kindle Locations).

Cryptogram

NYMFLSJSOJ RNXJM FDJ DJNZF WZEQ HESTJZ.

And here is your hint: S = N

THE OA PRECEPTS

Step 2 and Its Principle

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Hope)

Tradition 2 and Its Principle

For our group purpose, there is one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. (Trust)

Concept 2 and Its Principle

The OA groups have delegated to World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority, and effective conscience of OA as a whole. (Conscience)

Second Step Prayer

Heavenly Father, I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity. I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought and addictive behavior from me this day. Heal my spirit & restore in me a clear mind.

ABSTINENCE

Together we can climb those Twelve Steps to recovery, abstaining from compulsive eating one day at a time.



OA RESOURCES

NOVATIONS - NoVA's NEWSLETTER

Pick up a paper copy of NoVAations at a NoVA OA Meeting or sign up at oanova.org, for an electronic version and remember to confirm your address when you receive the first email.

LIFELINE



Did you know that ... Only about 8% of OA members subscribe to *Lifeline*? And...*Lifeline* is losing money. WSO is encouraging OA members to subscribe to *Lifeline*, so that it remains available for the many OA members that find it invaluable. **And so that it can help you.**

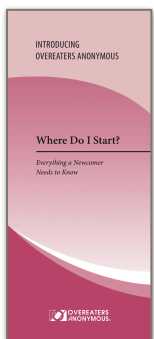
Subscribe to either the print *Lifeline* or *e-Lifeline*: <https://oa.org/members/lifeline-magazine/subscribe/>

NEWCOMER'S PAMPHLET (UPDATED)

Greet newcomers and help them get started with OA's welcome pamphlet, packed with key information about OA's Twelve Step Program. Find answers to:

- What is compulsive eating?
- Can OA help me if I am bulimic or anorexic?
- Is OA a religious society?
- What is the Twelve Step recovery program?

Purchase at: <http://bookstore.oa.org/>



Coming Clean

After almost seven years in OA, I was in denial about working a “clean” recovery program. At first my weighing and measuring were never sloppy, but eventually I ignored cups and scales, thinking I could “eye-ball” the right amounts. Eating out became an excuse to overeat, bend rules, and ignore others. This gradual plunge into non-abstinence felt like quicksand. I thought I could get myself back on track.

I shuddered when the meeting leader asked for a moment of silence to pray for those suffering from compulsive eating in and out of the rooms. I thought, “That’s me. I’m still hurting from this stinking disease that snuck up and grabbed me because I wouldn’t face it.” Oh, I used OA tools: meetings, calls to my sponsor, the Steps, sponsoring, service at meeting and intergroup levels, literature—all to convince myself and others I was working it.

Sometimes that inner voice urged me to come clean and tell my sponsor I had been lying about my food. I almost never weighed and measured it. I looked at some of my lowest-weight pictures to see the difference between my weight then and now. I tried to delude myself into believing my food was still abstinent despite my behavior. I understood the phrase “half-measures avail us nothing” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., p. 59).

The last month I prayed for strength and courage to come clean with my food. God answered. A friend who had left the rooms years ago donated a box of OA literature. I had every book except the one on relapse, and I could relate to many of the stories. A few weeks later, my sponsor was leading my regular Saturday morning meeting. She passed out literature quotes and asked members to share, saying HP often gives us what we need in such a random process. I remember thinking, “Yeah, right! Miracles used to happen in the early days too.” My snippet read, “Denial of the truth leads to destruction. Only an honest admission to ourselves of the reality of our condition can save us from our destructive eating” (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 6). “Oh, my God! It’s a set up,” I thought.

I mumbled a few words on the topic, not knowing what honest sharing to say. All day I went over what had happened. If this wasn’t a sign, I didn’t know what was. The next day I left on my sponsor’s answering machine a message that seemed like a blessing because now she could call to let me go. I was so relieved, ashamed, and humiliated when she called; it didn’t matter anymore. She guided me with love in doing the next right thing day by day. I met with my sponsor to talk about what had happened and to go over Step 1 after “coming clean.”

She shared that a recent TV program had reminded her of my situation. A character on the show was trapped under a car in the middle of a desert. Death from lack of food or water would follow if the person didn’t escape. Despite the extreme pain, it became necessary for survival and freedom for the character to break an arm. Denying my “eating” kept me trapped.

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

Chair: Rachel B.
 Vice Chair: Juliet C.
 Interim Treasurer: John K.
 Secretary: Kate I.



MEN'S CORNER

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

Becoming honest was painful and humiliating. I want to live, so I had to come clean. I've been abstinent for almost two months, with my HP's help. Each day is easier, but I know none of us has this thing "licked." My disease is waiting and watching, but I cannot live in denial if I want any chance of maintaining abstinence. It feels so much better to have clean food. — Anonymous

Anonymous, *Overeaters. Abstinence, Second Edition: Members of Overeaters Anonymous Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope* (Kindle Locations 961-990). Overeaters Anonymous. Kindle Edition.

A Few Thoughts On The OA Tool Of Service...

I have been thinking a lot these days about the tool of "service." I don't normally think of service as a tool to do regularly, perhaps daily; I think of it as something I do occasionally. But I recently checked the Tools of Recovery pamphlet and there it is: Service. So if I work my program using all the tools regularly, perhaps daily, I realized that I have to rethink this a bit.

So I have been wondering: Why do I give service? What kind of service do I give? How do we grow in giving service? How does service help our recoveries? These are not simple questions. Each is deserving of its own conversation.

The first question is the easiest to answer: I give service because I am part of a community that I care about. I care about the people in it, I care about OA in this area, and I care about OA more broadly. I want to engage, and interact, and help — in other words, to give service to — this community.

So then, what do I do? There is, of course, the visible service of meeting or Intergroup positions. I have done some of these, and want to try something new. But there is also less visible service. I have been talking a bit to fellows about what are other acts of service. Here are some examples people have mentioned: calling other OA members just to talk is service, not just self-care; writing for NoVations; arriving early to set out chairs and greet others; subscribing to Lifeline; helping announce upcoming events; attending events.

Perhaps these acts of service are as important as the more visible ones. Maybe doing all of these things reflects our caring for each other and helps keep our community warm, despite our differences. Maybe I could do a bit more!

Anonymous

NoVAations Needs YOU!



Submit articles, event announcements, original poetry, art, and suggestions, *signed or anonymous* to novations@oanova.org or NoVA IG, PO Box 1992, Annandale, VA 22003. No telling whose life you may help transform by this kind act of service. Refer to the events calendar in OANova.org for future monthly themes. Your editor is here to help you polish your work, as needed. Let's keep the NoVAations article bank full!

Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder. **Cryptogram Solution**