

Intergroup Scoop

November, 2003

Volume 12 Issue 11

Calendar of Coming Events

November 28, 2003, & last Friday of EVERY month.

Newcomer's Meeting, 7:30—8:00 p.m.

Contact: Deanna (503) 452-4090

Speakers' Meeting, 8:00—9:30 p.m.

Contact: Deanna (503) 452-4090

**Easter Seals Building
5757 SW Macadam, Portland**

Oregon Intergroup Meeting

Tuesday, November 11, 2003 & the 2nd Tuesday of EVERY month

Literature Sales from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Easter Seals Society Building,
5757 SW Macadam, Portland**

IDEA Day workshop

Saturday, November 22, 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

**Community Unitarian Universalist Church
619 W. Albany St, Kennewick, Washington
Questions: call MerleAnn (503)281-8947**

Coming in 2004:

Workshops on the Steps:

January 10 (Saturday): Steps 1, 2, & 3

February 7 (Saturday): Steps 4 thru 9

March 6 (Saturday): Steps 10, 11 & 12

9 a.m.-1 p.m. at

**St. Charles Catholic Church
5310 NE 42nd Ave., Portland**

Contact: MerleAnn (503)281-8947

*Your event could be listed here! Contact Scoop Editor,
MerleAnn. (see contact information on page 2).*

MEET YOUR BOARD

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Co-Chairperson: OPEN

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Position 6: OPEN

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Public Information & Professional:
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Literature
Georgia (503) 625-7569

12th Step Within: OPEN

Lifeline:
Alice B (503)647-0906

Young People: Amy B. (360) 281-4640

Network: Carol C. (360) 737-9934

Serenity Retreat: Kathy (503) 640-2545

Speaker's Meeting
OPEN

INTERGROUP SCOOP
 Monthly newsletter published by Oregon
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 PO Box 2429, Portland, OR 97208

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Thanksgiving Day
 The following three Thursday meetings have
 confirmed their Thanksgiving Day status:

Happening: 7 p.m. , Meridian United Church
 of Christ, Wilsonville

Not Happening: 7 p.m. United Church of
 Christ, Forest Grove

7 p.m., St. Charles Catholic
 Church, Portland

MEETING FORMAT CHANGE

The 7:00 p.m. Thursday night Big Book
 meeting at St. Charles Catholic Church (5310
 NE 42nd Ave.) is now an OA retreat tape
 meeting. Contact Nancy B. (503)774-2050

Looking for a speaker for your meeting?

A list of folk available to speak at meetings is
 available at intergroup. Questions? Contact
 Vee (503) 282-6935

Again, I am grateful for the fine submissions for
 this issue. Next month will focus on Step 12 and
 Service. Write a piece and give a little bit of
 yourself to all of us.

A great big hug and special thanks to ANNE T.
 who has been helping with editing, layout, and the
 back page quote. You are a godsend.

The absolute deadline for items for the December
 issue is Tuesday, November 11. Earlier
 submissions are preferred.

MerleAnn, Editor

31 years (11,500 days) and 250 pounds

Hi, I'm Bob W. I've been in OA for 31 years. It has helped me keep off 250 pounds.

In OA, I was introduced to a program for living. I started to change. I had to admit that, without help, I was (and am) powerless over food, and I GRADUALLY came to believe that a power greater than myself—both inside of me and outside—could restore me to a right response to life. So, I was willing to follow the suggestions. Over time, using the suggestions of the program, I was placed in a position of neutrality. The compulsion to overeat (and drink) has been removed **on a daily basis, depending on my spiritual condition**. I now don't fight against compulsive eating and drug and alcohol use. The inner war has ended. A personal truce has been put in place. Ah. I experience peace.

Sometimes my prayer is simple: "I don't know what I need. If I could fix me, I would. My best thinking brought me to my present experience. I need help! Higher Power, I don't know WHAT I need. But, whatever it is, can you bring it to me in a GENTLE WAY, because I have always beaten the heck out of me. P.S. Thanks!" After 31 years, I can tell that my life HAS been guided against my best efforts to kill myself in numerous ways. I am very grateful. Sometimes answers come from people, books, magazine articles, TV shows. Suddenly, an aha—an insight or understanding or healing comes and it precipitates the sought-after change.

My concept of a God or Higher Power has changed during the 31 years that I have been in the program. I have experienced step-by-step guidance. My prayer: "I'm open to receiving guidance from various spiritual sources—HELP!"

I have suffered so intensely as I witnessed so much anguish in my family and the world. This led me to cry out and ask for an explanation. **For me, God had not lived up to His or Her job description: Everyone told me what God would do, when and where God would do it, and how God would do it—but for me, things were still a mess and so was I!** An answer came to me. I learned to look within to cultivate health and long-term well-being. Page 55 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* says, "We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He [She, It] may be found."

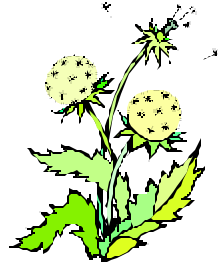
In OA, one of the wonderful things I discovered was the practice of daily spiritual quiet time and reflection—step 11. The program provided suggestions for achieving a deep personal and spiritual transformation. So, **no matter what condition my condition was in**, I took time for daily prayer and meditation, a practice that I still maintain. I spend from 20 minutes to 1.5 hours/day. I pray for others and myself, read inspirational materials, and take time to be quiet—to meditate—to be open to *the still, small voice within myself*. I set my motivation for the day: May I not hurt any body, help everyone as much as possible, and be kind to me and everyone else. I developed this daily pattern so that—always, first thing each day—no matter what, I spend the time. I have done this for 31 years. This one choice, to cultivate my spiritual dimension, has been the most valuable choice I have ever made.

I came to understand how I *create* many of my own problems, and how to transform my experience by thinking and acting in new ways. I became able to understand and apply the *Serenity Prayer*: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

In OA, I have learned to become my own "personal lifestyle trainer" or a "gardener" for my mind and life.

It seems that all of life is learning about how to use the power of choice responsibly. **In gardening**, if the conditions are right, what I plant is what I get. If I plant a tomato seed, I get a tomato. If I plant a dandelion seed, I get a dandelion. **In life**, if I plant seeds of well-being and nurture them, over time, I get well-being. If I plant seeds of dis-ease, over time, I get disease.

Whatever I cultivate, **over time**, is what I get. If I'm overweight, I can look at the seeds I have been planting with my choices. Do I want to make any changes? What new seeds do I want to plant? And just like in gardening, I can uproot the plants that I don't want to keep. Being my own "personal trainer", I figure out a plan that works for me.



My life is my garden. I choose to cultivate health.



Prepare the soil, trim and weed.
Water, fertilize, provide "TLC".....practice, perseverance, patience.....over time, your life changes.



Use the right tools.



Experience the garden of health.

I notice my choices and my motivation (seeds) → Thoughts → Actions → Results (effects).
In practicing OA's 12 steps, I learn to guide myself towards choices that are more effective.

**Thought by thought,
Word by word,
Choice by choice,
Action by action,**



I lift myself to a new level of living! Ya-a-ay!

WORD HODGEPODGE

Unscramble these 6 hodgepodges, one letter to each line or square, to form 6 common words. Then arrange the boxed letters to answer the question.

IFTAH

__ € __

MORUH

__ € € _

EVERICS

€ _ _ _ _ _

RSPOONS

_ € _ _ _ _ €

GETMEIN

_ € _ _ _ _ _

TEENSYIR

€ _ _ _ _ _

What happens before we are halfway through? (It's amazing!)

The _ _ _ _ _

Answers on Page 9

12th Step Within Corner: To the still suffering compulsive eater

1. KEEP COMING BACK!
2. Nobody's perfect all the time. It's not humanly possible.
3. O.A. needs YOU!
4. You are worth being a part of this fellowship.
5. Every day is a clean slate—a fresh start!
6. Let us love you until you can love yourself!
7. Get a sponsor. Together we recover. The sponsor needs the sponsee just as much as the sponsee needs the sponsor. We all teach each other!

The disease is looking for excuses to keep us isolated. What will you do today to work your program? It works if we work it!

Anonymous, Portland

Higher Power has a great idea. I don't need to make the perfect decision. H. P. just wants me to feel confident in making decisions, to feel sane. *For Today* gave me this nugget and many others. Thanks, once more for O. A.

MKB, Portland

AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE P.

Question: What got you to come to OA?

Answer: I was in Alanon and I had the sense that people were experiencing freedom and I wanted that freedom and a connection with a loving higher power. I knew that as long as I was holding onto the food I would not know the joy of having that freedom and relationship with a loving higher power. I was also getting frightened that I was slipping further into the quagmire of my disease and that I wouldn't survive.

When I came in to OA and people said "three meals a day with life in between," I knew I was going to have to let go and trust that I would survive. I felt strongly that the decision to be abstinent was my first great act of surrender—of trusting in something larger than myself.

Question: Did you come into OA more for that loving power or because of the distress the food was causing?

Answer: I had gotten tired of feeling sick and tired and I knew what kept me a prisoner was my obsession with food. I knew I was spiritually insane and that a higher power was the answer. Although the first year was hard and the act of leaping or abandoning myself was terrifying, it was exciting because I felt there was hope.

I really believed that I could be restored to sanity. I think that means being restored to our connection with our higher power. We were all connected at one time. For me it has been an interesting process of going back to believing what I believed when I was three years old: that there is a loving presence around us, that miracles can happen, and that all things are possible. So I guess I love the Eleventh Step for a couple of reasons: 1. That sense of connectedness (conscious contact) is so wonderful. 2. That I get to put my gluttony to good work. I always want more and wanting more conscious contact is a good thing. 3. And that praying only for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry that out is such a relief—I don't have to know what to do, I just need to ask for guidance.

The hardest part of the step for me is getting out of the way. I get caught in a lot of good ideas about how I should live my life. My job is to ask to know God's will, then listen, and then learn not to negate it when it comes. It takes a lot of courage for me to do God's will when it doesn't seem logical. I have to trust and try the way that isn't part of my plan.

Question: Do you both pray and meditate?

Answer: Yes. Prayer came easier for me than meditation. Asking for God's will came easier than slowing down and listening for the answers. I feel safer when I am busy and slowing my mind down has been a hard task.

Question: How has this ability grown for you?

Answer: It has been a process that has come over time. It was incredibly important for me to continue to be willing. There were times when it was almost impossible for me to sit quietly. Over time the willingness to listen has increased.

I think the universe loves acts of willingness. Every little thing I do differently is rewarded. It doesn't have to be big bold acts. If I am willing to sit down with a journal in the morning or if I am willing to take a break from work, walk outside, take a breath, and slow myself down, I feel better. What matters is the willingness to try. If I can experience even a crumb of God's will or an instant of feeling that connection then I know I can build on it—that there is more available to me.

Question: How do you perceive of having conscious contact with your higher power?

Answer: I have a sense that all is well, that I am safe, and that I am surrounded by love—a sense of connectedness. I had a concept of peace when I came to OA but not of serenity. Peace meant an absence of conflict. Now serenity for me is a sense that all is well—in every fiber of my body.

Question: How has your life changed since doing the will of your higher power has become your goal?

Answer: It was the nature of my disease to control, to manipulate, to steal, to cheat, to sneak. Thank goodness I no longer do those things.

When I came in I couldn't make a distinction between God's will and my will. Now I have a much clearer sense when I am being self-willed. I don't know how I know that distinction. I am willing to take more risks in my life, which takes strength and courage. I often replace the eleventh step word, "power", with strength and courage. It means going places where I have never been spiritually, mentally, and physically and the only way I am willing to do that is by knowing I have a loving higher power. I have more courage to be who I am and let people know who I am.

When I came into program, I wanted big results fast. Now I am so clear that it is a life-long process and a lifestyle. It is just going to get deeper. I have let go of wanting to get to the end so I can do and have what I want. Now I realize that it is not about getting what I want. It is about being of service and living a spiritual life. And yet, initially, my idea of a spiritual life was going off by myself and communing with nature. Now I know that a spiritual life for me is being in community with people. It is not so much about me getting things but about me giving of myself. When I first realized that I wasn't going to get to run away, I cried. I thought I wanted to be alone. I was hoping I was meant to be a spiritual hermit, but I am not.

Question: How do you do the Eleventh Step?

Answer: I take time each day to intentionally pray and meditate. Between those "formal" times, I try to stay aware and connected to my higher power. I've heard someone call it "continual prayer". Over the years, my methods of prayer and meditation have changed. I don't think it matters so much HOW you do it, just that you DO it—a little bit at a time until you WANT to do it. As I continue to work the steps and attempt to live by the principles of the program, my conscious contact continues to grow. It seems a natural evolution.

Editor's Note: Julie is a recovering anorexic and bulimic with 16 years of abstinence. Her disease consisted of bingeing, purging, starving and compulsive exercising.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Meditation

I wish I would have started sooner. As soon as I started meditating, I began to get a sense of a higher power. Before that, I could never feel anything akin to a spiritual presence. When I meditate, the world gets larger. My eyes take in more, my ears hear more, my senses become hypersensitive. Outside of my five senses, I feel like I sense a presence, as if my heart becomes sensitive.

I become right-sized. The world around me becomes enormous, and I understand the very small space I take up in it. My feelings become simply feelings, losing their sense of urgency. I lose my sense of fear. There is no past or future in meditation, and perhaps that's why during those moments, life feels manageable. My pulse slows down. The energy of my body settles into my belly, and my mind ceases racing. Deep inside I realize how fruitless it is to think so hard. I loosen up.

In meditation, I breathe in my resentments and fears and own them, and I breathe them out and let go of those feelings. I imagine myself breathing out a cool white light of peace and forgiveness. In meditation, I can watch how my mind works, and realize

it is just thinking. That's my mind's job. But that doesn't make my thoughts right or true. The thoughts come and go, and I recognize I have a choice as to which thoughts I entertain and believe as true.

I want to make more time for meditation every day. It reshapes my values. The errands I thought I had to get done, the shirt I wanted to buy, the relationship I needed to fix, the person I needed to save, the thing I needed to clean, the class I wanted to get into...the "things" in life that seem so important lose their urgency in meditation. I see the value in simply listening to another human being. Or watching the breeze stir the trees in my backyard. It helps me enjoy the experience of being ALIVE; something I was never grateful for in the past. Now I can find value in the simple experience of breathing, and being a human on the planet. At the same time, I feel like I'm taking my life less seriously, and that is enabling me to enjoy it even more.

I hope to never take life for granted again. Valuing the miracle of existence also helps me stay abstinent. Valuing myself and my life makes it easier to respect my body. And when my thoughts become something I don't fear anymore, I have less reason to push them down with excess food.

Anonymous
Portland

Attention OA Meeting Treasurers and Secretaries!

To help support OA's vital services, the 60\30\10 contribution plan is suggested to meet basic needs.



Here's how: After regular group expenses are met (rent, literature, prudent reserve, etc.) the remaining amount could be distributed as follows:

- 60% to Oregon Intergroup of OA (OIG)
- 30% to World Service Office of OA (WSO)
- 10% to Region One of OA

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 Colbert, WA 99005


 World Service of OA
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 Rio Rancho, NM
 87174-4020


OIG of OA Income and Expenses for September, 2003

Income	\$1,012.70	Expenses:	\$1,579.55
Net Income	<\$566.85>		

The following groups donated in September:

- 7 AM In the Solution
- Group #003706652
- HOW Footprints, #36473
- Unity Monday Noon
- Seaview
- Saturday, #34275
- Salem Thursday evening
- University Park Wednesday

THANK YOU!

 ★ Word Hodgepodge Answers: ★
 ★ FAITH ★
 ★ HUMOR ★
 ★ SERVICE ★
 ★ SPONSOR ★
 ★ MEETING ★
 ★ SERENITY ★
 ★ What happens before we are ★
 ★ halfway through? ★
 ★ The Promises ★

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Ovreatr@technet. nm. org

World Service www. oa. org

You can check our local area OA information, schedules, events, etc. and find helpful links by using the Oregon Intergroup Web Page.

CHECK IT OUT!!

**“There is more to life
than increasing its speed.”**

Mahatma

Gandhi