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A Step Ahead

Third Quarter 2018

Volume 22, Number 3

WSBC 2018: Six Days of Group Conscience

More than 180 delegates from around the world gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico USA for OA's 57th annual World Service Business Conference this April 23–28. Seventeen countries were represented: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, England, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, USA, and Venezuela.

Workshops and discussions this year focused on the theme "Growing OA Recovery Worldwide" and included five supporting workshops: "Combining the Strengths of Virtual and Face-to-Face Meetings," "Building a Foundation of Strong Abstinence and Sponsorship," "Building Healthy Service Bodies," "Sharing 'Carrying the Message' Successes and Challenges," and "The Glue That Holds Us Together: Service, Traditions, and Concepts."

Delegates also participated in this year's interactive Forum titled "Recovery Roadmap: Growing Recovery
(Continued on p. 4)



Virtual Region to Become a Reality

— Dora P., Virtual Region Trustee

One vote taken at World Service Business Conference 2018 was particularly special for members whose recovery is tied to virtual OA meetings. A new region was approved: the Virtual Region! The dream of a virtual region is coming true, and soon our virtual meetings will have the same opportunities that face-to-face meetings have, including tying in to our Seventh Tradition contributions and having our chair join the Region Chairs Committee to work and learn alongside them and give service to OA.

WSBC delegates also approved reclassifying virtual service boards as virtual intergroups, just as land-based groups can form an intergroup. (OA virtual groups are growing as a whole, with more than five hundred meetings and nine virtual intergroups as of May 2018.) The name "virtual service board" was problematic for countries with national or language service boards, and this new designation better describes how these virtual service bodies fit in the OA service structure, so this is a good change for OA worldwide.

In another important vote at WSBC, delegates passed Bylaw Amendment Proposal One, which now allows virtual groups to actively participate with a voice and a vote in national and language service board assemblies,

even if these virtual groups are affiliated with virtual intergroups and the new Virtual Region. Further, virtual groups can choose to affiliate with either virtual or newly named "land-based" (i.e., face-to-face) intergroups. This important change strengthens the group conscience in non-English-speaking areas primarily served by national or language service boards. Lots of hands in the Reference Subcommittee meetings helped refine this motion and all members deserve thanks for their service.

In recent years, OA virtual services has had progressive opportunities to be integrated into the OA service structure. In 2014, email loops were recognized, and the virtual meeting category has grown since then to necessitate a brand-new registration category: non-real-time meetings. In 2016, WSBC delegates approved the Virtual Services Conference Committee, which in 2017 launched oavirtualservices.org and a quarterly newsletter to share ideas, support OA members who attend virtual meetings, and help carry the message of recovery. After years of intense work, I am so excited for our new Virtual Region to be fully realized in 2019!

Virtual OA service bodies need and want to work together with land-based service bodies to carry the message of recovery—we are one OA!

DATEMINDER

August 18–19, 2018
Sponsorship Day

A Message from Our Chair

— Cyndy L., Chair of the Board, Region Four Trustee

This year's WSBC theme, "Growing OA Recovery Worldwide," was a favorite of mine. I love the concept of growing because it easily translates into the work I do to maintain my gardens. Spring is the time for renewal, and I spent time cleaning up the flower beds, removing old leaves, and pruning back the winter kill so the plants will grow stronger and healthier.

When I think about my experience in OA, I can also see how it is sometimes necessary to look at what was planted in the past and what needs to be done to prepare for the future. For my personal growth, I work the Steps and look for things that need to be changed. For my service to OA, I need to be willing to reach out in new ways and give more energy to supporting my group, my intergroup, my region, and WSBC.

The same holds true for OA as a Fellowship, so the Board of Trustees and two ad hoc committees are taking a big-picture look at what OA has planted and what needs to be changed to ensure our Seventh Tradition of self-support grows stronger and healthier. As a board, we are responsible for serving the entire Fellowship and still-suffering compulsive eaters worldwide.

But there is also a need for members like you to open yourselves to change and look at ways you can support the whole: What can you do to invite someone to a meeting? What can your group do differently to make newcomers feel welcome? What can your intergroup do to support the groups in your area and help OA members grow through service beyond the group level? If you have a national and language service board, how can it more closely support its groups and intergroups? How might

"There is a need for members like you to open yourselves to change and look at ways you can support the whole: What can you do?"

participation at the region and world service levels serve your local area?

Are you isolated in recovery or an active part of the whole?

I like to say that giving service expands my spiritual life. Instead

of feeling "above or below other people on some imagined ladder of worth," I am put in touch with my true place: "on equal footing with our fellow beings and in harmony with God" (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*, p. 52).

I am called to humility, the spiritual Principle of Step Seven, when giving service. Lessons like these

are open to anyone who gives service, and I'm certain that everyone who gives service to our Fellowship can relate. And the same is true

when we practice the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous; we learn to work in harmony with those who share our love of OA.

Looking for new ways to keep our organization growing stronger and healthier is our big-picture challenge. I trust that our collective Higher Power will lead us in the direction of efficient and effective ways of carrying the message of OA to the still-suffering who are looking for a solution. I ask each of you to take inventory of what you are doing to share what you have found in the rooms of OA. That is how we will "Grow OA Recovery Worldwide," with one new member at a time.



OA Welcomes Anyone Who Has Used or is Considering Weight-Loss Surgery

At WSBC 2018, delegates voted to adopt a new policy statement to make it clear that OA welcomes anyone who has had weight-loss surgery or is considering it: "In keeping with Tradition Ten, Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on bariatric (weight-loss) surgery. In the spirit of Tradition Three, Overeaters Anonymous welcomes anyone with a desire to stop eating compulsively, including those who have had the surgery or are contemplating it."

Now OA Has a Spanish Language Service Board!

— Alejandra S., Chair of the Spanish Language Service Board

It got formed! The Spanish Language Service Board is now a service body to help all Spanish speaking groups and intergroups.

We are members of countries with groups that meet in Spanish, including Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, USA, Chile, and others. We have joined to serve our needs and answer our questions. We have joined to:

- Translate and share our literature and documents more efficiently. We have translated 80–90 percent of OA literature.

(Continued on p. 3)

I look forward to these next eleven months in anticipation of the work that will continue. In love and service.

¡Ahora OA Tien una Junta de Servicios del Idioma Español!

— Alejandra S., Chair of the Spanish Language Service Board

¡Se formó! La Junta de Servicios del Idioma Español es ahora un cuerpo de servicio para ayudar a los grupos e intergrupos de habla hispana.

Somos miembros de países con grupos que se reúnen en Español incluyendo a España, México, Costa Rica, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, EU, Chile y otros. Nos hemos unido para resolver nuestras necesidades y preguntas. Nos hemos unido para:

- Traducir y compartir nuestra literatura y documentos de manera más eficiente.

(Continúa en la página 3)

A Message from Our Treasurer

— Bonnie L., General Service Trustee, Treasurer

My name is Bonnie, and I am a recovering compulsive overeater. At WSO 2018, I was elected for another three-year term as General Service Trustee, then elected by the Board of Trustees for one more year as your treasurer. I am thankful for the trust bestowed upon me.

Annual Appeal Letter

I am excited about our first-ever Annual Appeal Letter, which has been sent to all groups. This is to be read aloud at three consecutive meetings while members circulate an envelope or basket separate from the normal Seventh Tradition. This separate contribution, which should include your group's registration number, will go directly to our General Fund via the World Service Office.

Group and Service Body Registration Numbers

On the topic of contributions, the WSO receives as many as 150 checks every week. It is very important that these checks have *both* the group registration number and the service body registration number written on them. This important information is used to assign the contributions properly to your group, intergroup, service board, or region. If you don't know your registration number, go to oa.org/

[find-a-meeting](#) to look up your group's details. That may take you five minutes or so, but multiply that time by 150. That's a lot of time—more than a full workday—that our WSO staff could be spending on more productive work. If you need help finding your number, your region chair or region trustee can also help.

service body proper credit, so please help us out. I'm repeating this request, which was also made in January, because we really do need your help with this.

Another convenient way to send group and service body contributions is through oa.org/contribute. Sending contributions online also helps reduce staff time spent processing paper checks.

Automatic Recurring Contributions

One of my goals this year is to increase both awareness of and participation in our ARC (Automatic Recurring Contributions) plan. I encourage everyone to spread awareness among your groups and service bodies. At oa.org/contribute, simply click the first checkbox, which says "Make this a recurring gift." Today, we have about 270 monthly and quarterly recurring contributors, but this number pales in comparison to the number of members in our 580 virtual groups.

Please consider making an ARC if you are not already doing so. Automatic Recurring Contributions are a Seventh Tradition option for all OA members, not just those in virtual groups.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support! Together we can do what we could never do alone.

"Today we have 270 recurring contributors, but this number pales in comparison to the number of members in our 580 virtual groups."

WSO staff time is very valuable, so the staff no longer traces the source of contributions that do not include registration numbers. What that means is more contributions are being listed as individual contributions rather than being properly assigned to your group or service body. We would like to give your group and

(Spanish Language Service Board continued)

- Host workshops that help our members, groups, and intergroups.
- Offer help to members, groups, and intergroups.
- Offer sponsorship if someone needs it.

Also, since the World Service Office no longer prints literature in Spanish, we can help your group maintain its Spanish literature stock! We will also make a website with more information and documents in Spanish, including [A Step Ahead](#), [Professional Community Courier](#), OA guidelines, and more.

If your group or intergroup would like to affiliate with the Spanish Language Service Board, simply choose a representative and an alternate to attend our monthly meetings through Skype. The representative and alternate should contact Alejandra S. via WhatsApp at +506 83177443 and include his or her mobile phone number, group or intergroup registration number, and location.

Together we can do what we could never do alone!

(Junta de Servicios del Idioma Español continuado)

Hemos traducido un 80-90 por ciento de la literatura de OA.

- Hacer talleres que ayuden a nuestros miembros, grupos e intergrupos.
- Ofrecer ayuda a nuestros miembros, grupos e intergrupos.
- Ofrecer apadrinamiento si alguien lo necesita.

Además, como la Oficina de Servicios Mundiales ya no va a imprimir la literatura en español, ¡podemos ayudar a los grupos a mantener sus existencias de literatura! Pronto estaremos haciendo una página web con más información y documentos en Español, como la revista Un Paso Adelante, el Boletín para las Comunidades Profesionales, las Guías de OA y más.

Si a su intergrupo le interesa asociarse con la Junta de Servicios del Idioma Español, todo lo que necesitan es elegir a un representante y un alterno que puedan venir a nuestras reuniones mensuales por Skype. El representante y el alterno pueden comunicarse con Alejandra S. vía WhatsApp al número +506 83177443 e incluir su número telefónico, correo electrónico, su número de grupo o intergrupo registrados y localización.

Juntos estamos logrando lo que nunca pudimos hacer solos!



Rotation of Service Brings New Mix of Trustees, Officers, and Committee Chairs

Delegates to World Service Business Conference 2018 were tasked with the important job of electing three region trustees and two general service trustees. Together, all nominees brought a breadth of service and recovery to the trustee election, and we thank all the nominees for their willingness to serve the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous.

When the final votes for trustee elections were tallied, the results were:

- Pat O., Region One (two-year term)
- Neva S., Region Three (three-year term)
- Dora P., Virtual Region (three-year term)
- Judy H., General Service (three-year term)
- Bonnie L., General Service (reelected, three-year term)

The Board of Trustees also appointed trustees to the following positions:

- Beth B., Region Six (until May 2019)
- Bob E., Region Nine (until May 2019)

Following WSBC, the Board of Trustees elected its officers for 2018–2019. They are:

- Cyndy L., Chair
- Karen B., First Vice Chair
- Lawrie C., Second Vice Chair
- Bonnie L., Treasurer

In addition, members of the Board of Trustees each accepted assignments to chair board committees as follows:

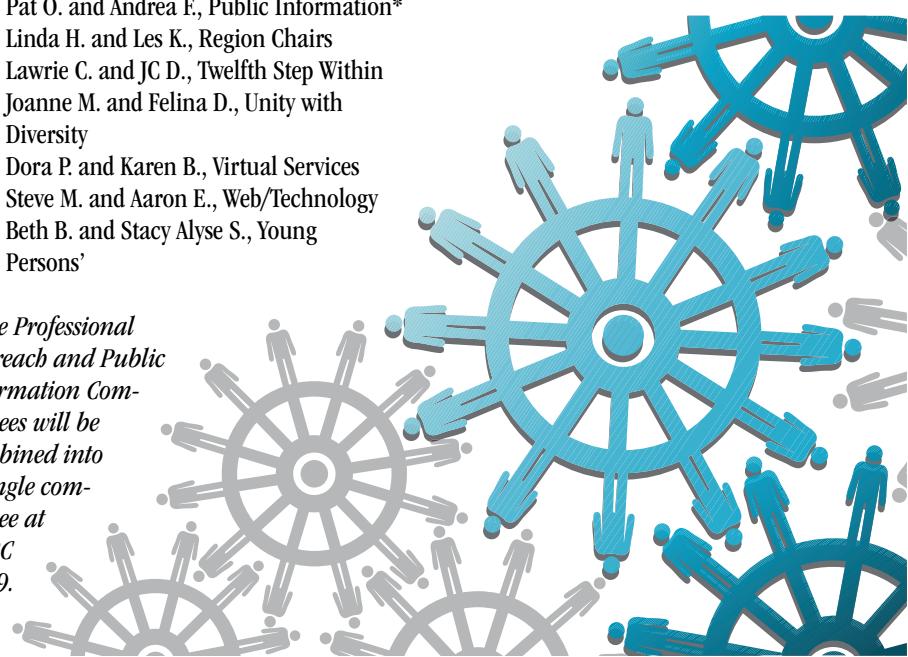
- Judy H., Board-Approved Literature
- Lawrie C., BRM Review
- Hanna S., Conference Planning
- Linda H., Convention 2020
- Bonnie L., Delegate Support Fund
- Linda J., Internal Information
- Letitia M., International Publications/Translations
- Ron P., Literature Review
- Pat O., Professional/Public Awareness
- Karen B., Strategic Planning
- Dora P., Virtual Services
- Steve M., Website Review
- Karen B., Ad Hoc BOT Composition
- Steve M., Ad Hoc Welcome to OA

Conference committees convened and delegates serving in each committee elected a delegate cochair for their committee. Each delegate cochair is partnered with a member of the board. Conference committee cochairs for 2018–2019 are:

- Neva S. and Margie G., Bylaws
- Ron P. and Sue B., Conference-Approved Literature
- Pat O. and Sue B., Professional Outreach*

- Pat O. and Andrea F., Public Information*
- Linda H. and Les K., Region Chairs
- Lawrie C. and JC D., Twelfth Step Within
- Joanne M. and Felina D., Unity with Diversity
- Dora P. and Karen B., Virtual Services
- Steve M. and Aaron E., Web/Technology
- Beth B. and Stacy Alyse S., Young Persons'

** The Professional Outreach and Public Information Committees will be combined into a single committee at WSBC 2019.*



(WSBC: Six Days continued)

“Worldwide.” The Forum focused on identifying the detours and roadblocks that limit recovery and how the program and Tools can be used to overcome them.

Motions and Amendments

During WSBC’s fourteen hours of business meetings, spread out over five sessions, delegates adopted the following motions:

- Grant Conference approval to the revised pamphlet *To the Family of the Compulsive Eater*
- Implement a revised policy on creating service centers to adhere to OA policies and the use of OA-approved literature
- Rescind a policy to provide proposal forms on oa.org (housekeeping)
- Establish an ad hoc committee to review OA’s website and data systems and research options for improvements
- Implement a new OA policy statement on bariatric surgery
- Change Fellowship-wide OA event days to make them more inclusive (See p. 6 of this issue for new event dates.)
- Require all groups and service bodies to provide at least one email address when registering with the WSO
- Revise policy on using “compulsive overeater” and “compulsive eater” interchangeably to allow for more appropriate use based on topic and context
- Rescind the Board of Trustees’ sixty-day absence policy (housekeeping)

- Revise the WSBC appeals process
- Revise policy on service bodies to adhere to OA policies and the use of OA-approved literature
- Revise the definition of open and closed groups to include newcomers
- Amend *Article VII – Regions* to create a new Virtual Region
- Amend *Article XI – Conference Committees* to disband the Finance Committee
- Amend *Article VI – Intergroups* to create virtual intergroups
- Amend *Article V – Overeaters Anonymous Groups* to allow groups to affiliate with only one intergroup or service board but also participate with other service bodies
- Amend *Article VIII – Service Boards* to discontinue virtual service boards
- Amend *Article VII – Regions* to allow language service boards to affiliate or not affiliate with an OA region

For information on Conference voting results, read the 2018 Wrap-Up Report. Look for it at oa.org/documents under “World Service Business Conference: Frequently Used Documents.”

Read in-depth about these motions and other WSBC discussions in the WSBC 2018 Final Conference Report, which will be posted on oa.org’s [WSBC page](http://oa.org/documents) in late August. Delegates and service bodies will be notified of the report’s posting via email. In addition, a list of delegate names and their contact information will be emailed directly to delegates.

What's New from WSO

PDF Download: Brown Book Forewords and Appendices

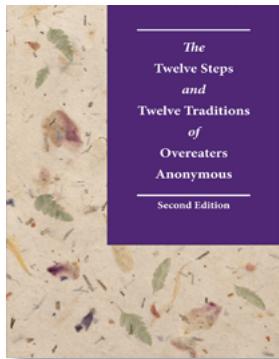
Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition Forewords and Appendices were written by behavioral, medical, and spiritual professionals who are familiar with OA's benefits. The Forewords and Appendices can be a valuable tool for professional outreach, public information, and other ways of carrying the message. Find a [PDF download of the Forewords and Appendices](#) at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Literature."

"Amazing Recovery: Passport to Unity" Workshop

Enliven your next meeting or event and "experience the unity we all depend on for continued recovery." Participants in this interactive two-hour workshop become OA "travelers" on a journey of sharing and reflection activities designed to find commonalities in others' different experiences. Workshop materials include a [leader's guide](#), a [slideshow presentation](#), and printable "passports" and [stickers](#); find them at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Workshops and Skits."

Large-Print Twelve and Twelve, Second Edition

Read our keystone book in large print by ordering your very own [large-print edition of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#).



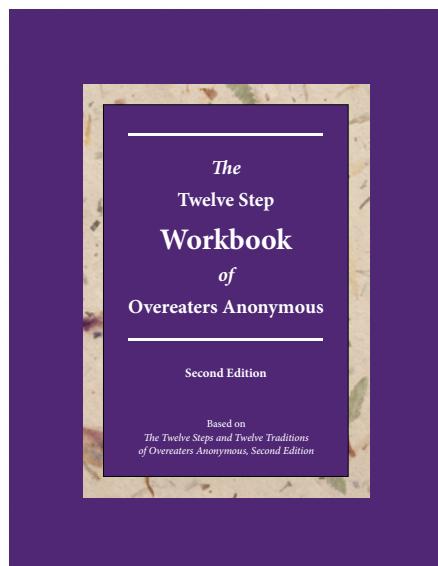
The large-print version is available solely through [amazon.com](#). Find it at www.amzn.to/2KRgXs7 and be sure to choose the "Paperback \$18.50" version. (8.5 x 11 inches, 192 pages.)

Add Fun and Fellowship to Your Group

"Fellowship keeps us in the rooms and connects us," so a Twelfth Step Within subcommittee surveyed OA members worldwide to explore barriers to fun and fellowship and find solutions. The result is a PDF download full of helpful information and suggestions. Look for the [Fun and Fellowship](#) link at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Twelfth Step Within."

Twelve Step Workbook, Second Edition

It's here! The new *Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition* is available in [print](#) and as a "type and save" [interactive PDF](#). The second edition *Workbook* has updated Fourth Step inventory questions and page references and is designed to accompany the new *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*.



Find both the print and PDF editions of the *Workbook* at [bookstore oa.org](#) (#992).

OA Translations Workshop

Translating OA literature saves lives, and every day, translation projects undertaken by OA members support OA's strategic plan to grow recovery worldwide. Our new slideshow presentation spells out all the OA resources and suggestions available to help make local translation efforts successful. Find the "OA Translations Workshop" [PDF](#) and [PPSX](#) versions at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Translations."

Translated OA Literature Chart Updated

New entries have been added to the [Translated OA Literature Chart](#), an XLSX format list of existing translations of OA literature, curated by the International Publications and Translations Committee. OA members now carry the message in twenty-eight languages! More translations are becoming available as our Fellowship grows worldwide, so review the list at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Translations" and check back for future updates.

New Task Force: What's Working/Make It Viral

Something new at WSBC this year was a short online survey aimed to determine what makes a meeting strong. Asked to think of a meeting they attend regularly that feels strong to them, 123 responding delegates cited four top traits:

- Abstinent members
- A focus on recovery using the Twelve Steps
- Traditions followed
- Available sponsors

The online survey was supported by a sharing and listening session, which generated more details from participants about traits, activities, and specific formats that contribute to strong meetings. Individual responses included:

- Awarding meetings that complete the [Strong Meeting Checklist](#) a locally produced "Strong Meetinghood Certificate" from their intergroup (and inviting all meeting members to sign it)
- Following up with newcomers in a tightly structured way that includes having a designated caller, resulting in a 50-percent retention of newcomers
- Encouraging fellowship or one-on-one interaction before or after the meeting through taking walks, going to movies, or other social activities
- Giving [Newcomer Welcome Coins](#) and recognition for attending six different meetings
- Using structured meeting formats that include a repeating pattern, such as the Step or Tradition of the month, speakers on specific topics, or a cycle of reading the first 164 pages of the [Big Book](#)
- Filling and rotating service positions
- Finding a better location for meetings with dwindling attendance
- Using speakers who meet abstinence requirements
- Using OA-approved literature such as the [Big Book](#) and [The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition](#)
- Designating leaders to be responsible for helping members keep shares focused and on topic

The Strategic Planning Committee's "What's Working/Make it Viral" Task Force will continue to look at factors that contribute to making meetings strong; they will also plan next steps for surveying the Fellowship. If you would like to add your opinion, take the survey! Find it at www.surveymonkey.com/r/YL6ZRM9. Thank you for your service!

Fellowship-Wide Event Dates Changed

At World Service Business Conference 2018, delegates voted to change OA celebration dates and times to be more inclusive of all members of our Fellowship:

- OA's Birthday will be celebrated every third weekend of January. Next year's OA Birthday is January 19–20, 2019.
- Unity Day will be celebrated alternately on the last Saturday of February in even years and the last Sunday in February in odd years. Plus, Unity Day will now be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. local time (previously Pacific Standard Time). The next Unity Day celebration is at 11:30 a.m. local time on Sunday, February 24, 2019.

- Sponsorship Day will be celebrated every third weekend of August. This year's Sponsorship Day is August 18–19, 2018.
- International Day Experiencing Abstinence (IDEA) will be celebrated every third weekend of November. This year's celebration is November 17–18, 2018.

The date to celebrate Twelfth Step Within Day has not changed. It will continue to be celebrated on December 12, and this year's celebration is Wednesday, December 12, 2018.

Save these dates! You can find them (and details of other OA events) by going to oa.org/site-map and clicking "Events."

Check Out Event Calendar at OA.org

Is your local OA event on the Event Calendar at oa.org? If not, submit your event details online, and we'll post them! Go to oa.org/site-map and click "Event Calendar Submission."

All event submissions must include start and end times, and OA cannot publish members' last names, including those in email addresses. All submissions to [Event Calendar](#) are reviewed by World Service Office staff for clarity and adherence to OA's Twelve Traditions before appearing on oa.org.

Check out some events happening in the months ahead! See Event Calendar at oa.org for more information.

July

14 Glendora, California USA: "Sponsorship Workshop" hosted by the San Gabriel Valley Inland Empire Intergroup
28 Oakland, California USA: "In All Our Affairs" summer Principles workshop hosted by Overeaters Anonymous of the East Bay



August

4 Glendora, California USA: "The Solitary Journey: A Workshop on the Journey Within" hosted by the San Gabriel Valley Inland Empire Intergroup
10 Oceanside, California USA: 31st Annual Men's Stag Retreat hosted by the Southern California Men's Sunday Meeting
10 Santa Cruz, California USA: "Change, Grieving, and Growing Up" Beach Retreat hosted by the Southern Alameda County Intergroup
18–19 Worldwide: "Sponsorship Day" — Let's show appreciation for our sponsors.

September

8 Glendora, California USA: "Mind Games Workshop: Finding Peace and Serenity in Your Body Image" hosted by the San Gabriel Valley Inland Empire Intergroup
14 Issaquah, Washington USA: "Big Book Weekend Workshop" hosted by the Greater Seattle Intergroup
21 Clive, Iowa USA: "State of Iowa Convention: Twelve Freedoms of Recovery" hosted by Central Iowa Intergroup and Northwest Iowa Intergroup
21 Fort Michell, Alabama USA: "Stories of Recovery—23rd annual Weekend Retreat" hosted by the Roswell, Georgia OA Group
21 Oceanside, California USA: "175th Serenity Retreat Weekend" hosted by the San Diego County Intergroup

Apply for Professional Exhibits Funds

The Professional Exhibits Fund has US\$10,700 available to help your service body participate in a trade conference or a convention for professionals who may refer patients and clients to OA. Take a look at the [application](#) to see what expenses OA funds can help cover. Applications are reviewed monthly, so talk to your service body about local opportunities and apply! Find the application at oa.org/documents under "Public Information Suggestions."

Translation Fund Applications due October 1

Money is available to help translate OA literature into other languages. More literature in a given language means more meetings and a growing Fellowship, and that means more recovery. Help OA grow in your native language. To apply for funds, complete the [Translation Assistance Fund application](#) and send it to the WSO. You can download the Application from the [Literature Translations page](#). (Go to oa.org/site-map and click "Literature Translations.") To receive funds, recipients will need to create a PayPal account.

To learn more about OA's translation policies, see [Translation Guidelines for OA Literature](#) on the Groups/Service Bodies "Guidelines" page.

To make a designated contribution to help carry our message worldwide, visit oa.org/contribute and select "Translation Fund" in the designation menu.

New Service Bodies

Congratulations and welcome to our newest OA service bodies registered with the World Service Office:

Intergruppo Liguria

Genoa, Italy

Registered May 14, 2018

Virtual Region Office

São Paulo, Brazil

Registered June 5, 2018

WSO News Bulletin Email Now Translatable into Forty-Nine Languages

When you sign up to receive the *WSO News Bulletin* on the [OA website](#) (click the “News Bulletin Signup” button at the bottom of the page and complete the pop-up box), you join 77,000 other OA members and advocates who receive monthly OA news updates from the World Service Office. Now, at the end of every emailed *Bulletin* you’ll see a new translation link that will automatically translate our news into any of forty-nine languages. A “translate this email” link at the very top of the email will let you automatically skip down to the language links at the very bottom.

Spread the word and then sign up to read the *WSO News Bulletin* in your language!



Send Us Your Stories! *The next deadline for Lifeline is . . .*

July 15

International Day Experiencing Abstinence and Twelfth Step Within Day IDEA is November 17–18 and Twelfth Step Within Day is December 12. Write about attending a celebration of either day or reflect on what either day means to you.

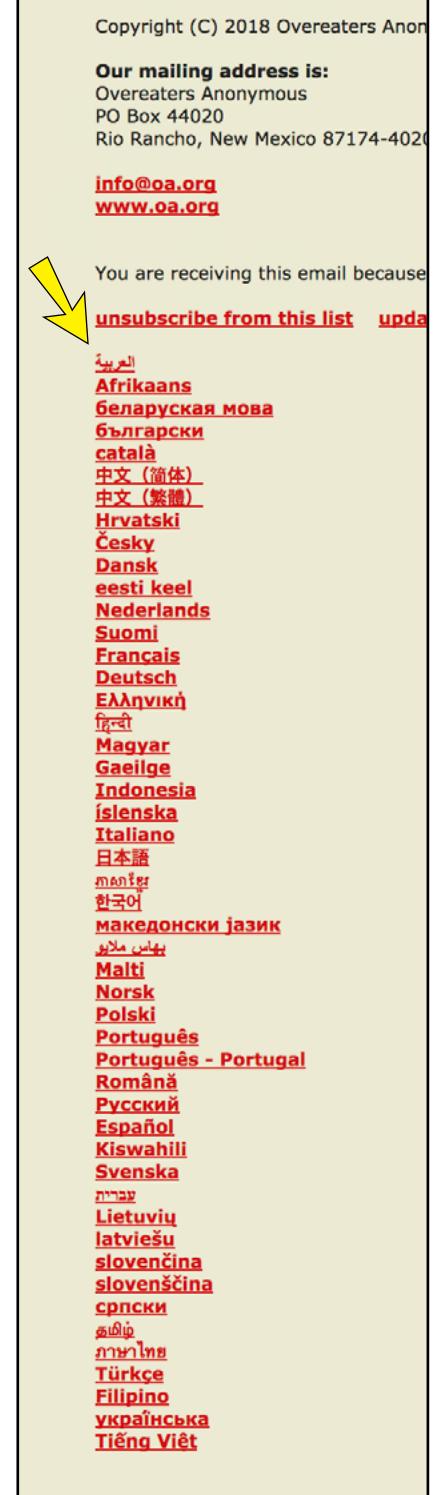
Staying Abstinent Through the Holidays How have you stayed abstinent through the holidays? What tip, strategy, prayer, or Tool has helped you the most?

Gratitude and Blessings: Giving Thanks How do you give service to the Fellowship? To the still-suffering compulsive overeater? How do you carry the message outside OA? Which came first for you, service or abstinence?

September 15

Find the topics for stories due September 15 and later in the new 2019 *Lifeline* Topics flyer in this issue of *A Step Ahead*.

Send your stories to info@oa.org with subject “Lifeline.”



OA EVENT DAY

Sponsorship Day

Saturday & Sunday, August 18-19, 2018

Plan your Sponsorship Day event to celebrate the role of sponsorship in individual recovery.

Ask-It Basket

Q. I attended an OA meeting, and after the meeting ended, the leader told about a Facebook group to keep in touch with each other. Is this according to Traditions? Should OA be affiliated with Facebook?

A. I like to ask a different question. Why wouldn't this be according to OA Traditions? The main concern I would have is anonymity. I know that Facebook has the ability to create secret groups that require an invitation to join. WhatsApp has the same sort of thing (I am a member of a WhatsApp private group). When it's properly set up, only members of the secret Facebook group know who the other members are. As a result, public anonymity is preserved, and I believe our Traditions are met.

Regarding your second question, "Should OA be affiliated with Facebook?" I again ask a different question. Are we affiliating by having a Facebook page? I believe the answer is no. We don't affiliate with churches when we hold our meetings in their rooms; we don't affiliate with newspapers when we place meeting announcements on their calendars; and OA pages on Facebook are not affiliation. These things all seem equivalent to me. We are using a service available to the public. Using that service is not affiliation.

I've shared my thoughts with you on these matters. These views represent my own interpretation of our OA Traditions based on my experience in OA and what I read in our literature. I encourage you to discuss these matters with your local OA members too.

Q. We were wondering: what's the official OA policy for using MeetUp.com to promote meetings? We wouldn't allow RSVPs, we would basically just use it to announce meetings.

A. Are you wanting to use MeetUp.com to advertise local meetings? I think this is a great idea! It appears no different than using a church bulletin or any other advertising media. Instead of RSVPs, you could add contact information: your intergroup phone number or even a member's first name and phone number, just as it's listed on the OA meeting page. There are many new, innovative virtual methods our members are discovering and bringing to our attention. This looks like a legitimate way to advertise your meetings. Your membership is anonymous, but the Fellowship is not.

Q. My home group is interested in doing a little more to welcome newcomers. We have the packets and we welcome them verbally—heartily. We are looking for ways to possibly have a pre-meeting meeting for newcomers or bring them to a different room simultaneous to the meeting for more of an intro to the program. I am looking for suggestions on ways to do this, and I figure there are several variations on the theme. Any suggestions or pointers from you would be much appreciated.

A. The first thought that comes to mind is to use the suggested [Newcomer Meeting Guidelines](#) posted on [oa.org/documents](#) under "Meeting Formats." This gives the newcomer a structure and an idea of what's going on. (I know that sometimes longtimers like to use a shortened version of this format.) For a newcomer, this format provides information. We start with Our Invitation to You, then go on to read the Steps, the Traditions, and sometimes the OA Concept for that month. It includes an explanation of abstinence and a list of the Tools, and mentions sponsors, literature, and our Seventh Tradition. I know from my experience, when I first started in OA twenty-seven years ago, that this format or some variation of it was used at the newcomer meeting. Hearing this every week, and working with a sponsor, helped me gain a better understanding of the program and learn the Steps and Traditions.

There is a meeting in my intergroup that lasts an hour and a half, so at the end newcomers can ask questions. This suggested format is used at that meeting.

When I started in New York, each OA meeting took two hours. There were many more people in the meetings, and halfway through there was a break for fellowship and talking to newcomers. Designated people would welcome them and answer questions. It's also important to have designated members call the newcomer during the week after the meeting. When I was a newcomer, it was a welcomed gesture.

Having a separate room to introduce newcomers to your meeting is a good plan. You can

create a welcoming atmosphere and give them your experience, strength, and hope.

From my experience, having a meeting listed as a Newcomer Meeting, having a "newcomer" greeter, and using the suggested format works just as well.

As you know or have heard, "The newcomer is the most important person in the room." I believe giving newcomers that extra love and attention will bring them back.

I know I felt wanted and understood, so I kept coming back.

Secretaries: Update Your Meeting Info at OA.org

The WSO wants to hear from you! Update your group's meeting details and secretary contact information by going to [Edit a Meeting](#) at [oa.org](#). The WSO uses the information you provide to keep Find a Meeting current so that members in recovery and still-suffering compulsive eaters can locate a meeting in their area.



WSBC 2019 Important Dates and Deadlines

July 2018

Delegate Support Fund application posted to [oa.org](#)

August 2018

Final Conference Report (WSBC 2018) available on OA website for delegates and service bodies

August 27, 2018

First Conference e-Documents posted to OA website

November 1, 2018

Delegate Support Fund applications received by the World Service Office

Send your Traditions or OA business questions to info@oa.org and get a response from members of the OA Board of Trustees. Read more Q & A at [oa.org/documents](#) under "Ask-It Basket and Archive."

2019 LIFELINE TOPICS

The WSO staff creates *Lifeline* from OA members' letters. Monthly topics are suggestions. You may write about any subject important to your recovery from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Send your letters to:

Lifeline
PO Box 44020
Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020

or email myoung@oa.org.

DEPARTMENTS:

- Ask-It Basket: Read trustee responses to questions from OA members.
- Bits and Bites: Send in your short inspirational quotes and bits of recovery wisdom.
- Stepping Out, Living Traditions, Service and Recovery, and The Spiritual Path: Share about the month's Step or Tradition or send a story about service or connecting with your HP.
- Newcomers Corner: Newcomers, share your OA experiences and concerns.
- Share It (letters to the editor) runs only if sufficient material is available.

FEATURES:

See next page for *Lifeline* monthly topics and deadlines.

OTHER MATERIALS:

Lifeline accepts letters, artwork, and photos (no faces, please) for publication. Credit lines and rights to submitted work apply equally to articles, artwork, and photos. The WSO does not return submitted materials. *Lifeline* may edit articles and crop photos. *Lifeline* promotes "unity with diversity" regarding the race, nationality, gender, age, physical challenges, and sexuality of its writers.

Submit articles at least three and a half months prior to the first day of the month of publication. Deadlines appear in parentheses next to topics. Indicate the topic and month for which you are submitting the article. Typed letters sent by email, mail, or fax are preferred. Letters must contain the author's name and address, even if the author wishes to remain anonymous in print.



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Try Writing

— Donna R., Urbana, Illinois USA

At sharing time in OA meetings, I sometimes read thoughts I have written down. Sharing thoughts and speaking out loud what I have written helps my recovery.

Other members used to say, "You should submit that to *Lifeline*." But I thought, "If what I write is rejected, I'll feel rejected" or "What if it isn't good enough?" My fear of submitting to *Lifeline* was really all about me because I was still living in my disease. I was missing the point, which was, "Wow, that really helped me—I bet others could be helped by it too!"

After a few years, I finally realized what others meant by saying I should submit to *Lifeline*, so I sent in my first item. It was published in April 2015. Shortly after that, I submitted another and then forgot about it. Today I opened a letter that said my second submission would appear in the March 2016 issue of *Lifeline*.

I'm telling this story to encourage you to take ten or fifteen minutes to write down your thoughts about something that means a lot to you. We walk in each other's shoes. Others can be helped by what we honestly, willingly—with HP's help—are able to say.

Today, I understand that submitting to *Lifeline* is not about me. It's about throwing an emotional rope to others. It's about sharing over isolation. By writing what we think and sharing what we write, we speak out loud, just as we do in meetings. After I took the first step, the next seemed easier. I think it could be that way for you too if you will try writing to *Lifeline*.



Subscribe to *Lifeline* in Print, Online, or Both!

2019 LIFELINE TOPICS

JANUARY » Due: 9/15/18

How OA Changed My Life

Describe your life before and after being in OA, including your physical state. How is life better in recovery?

FEBRUARY » Due: 10/15/18

Unity Day

Unity Day is Sunday, February 24, 2019, at 11:30 a.m. How has unity in OA or Tradition One boosted your recovery? How does placing principles before personalities support OA unity?

Why I Belong in OA

"No matter what form our disease takes, anyone having a problem with food can find help in Overeaters Anonymous" (*Twelve and Twelve, Second Edition*, p. 1). How did you know OA was for you? What have you found here that you couldn't find anywhere else?

Finding and Keeping Abstinence

OA's definition of abstinence unites us, but finding abstinence is a personal journey. What has been your journey? What Step, Tradition, or Tool had the biggest impact? How has your plan of eating or action plan evolved over time?

MARCH » Due: 11/15/18

Making Meetings Strong

What makes your meeting strong? The Traditions? The meeting format? The readings? The recovery? What changes made your meeting better? Did your group reach out for help or use a resource from oa.org? Has allowing the mention of specific foods in meetings helped or hurt? Share your meeting's successes.

Recovery in the Workplace

Threefold recovery in OA also brings benefits to the workplace. Share what has changed for you—from struggle to success (and/or serenity)—as a result of your OA recovery. What did you learn about handling gossip, stress, keeping your side of the street clean, or other aspect of work? How has recovery helped make your working life manageable?

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition

How has the new *Second Edition* of our keystone book refreshed and refocused your program? What gems are you finding again or for the first time? Send your comments to mark the one-year anniversary of its publication!

APRIL » Due: 12/15/18

The Twelve Steps of OA

Share the experience, strength, and hope you've found in OA's Twelve Steps. You can write in-depth about working one or more Steps or about taking them all. Was one particular Step a challenge? Was there a key to taking one of the Steps? Did you rely on Step Principles? Did you find insight in OA literature? How did having a sponsor make a difference? What Step work did you find most helpful?

Overcoming Isolation; Reaching Out for Help and Hope

Talk about a time when you had to overcome isolation or program burnout—how did you find your way into the rooms? Did you call an OA member or answer a call? Did you meditate or pray? Did you join a virtual meeting? How did it feel to come back? What happened after your return?

MAY/JUNE » Due: 1/15/19

Our Primary Purpose

How have you carried your message of recovery to newcomers and those still suffering? What is your approach to explain OA to non-OA members? What has been your local OA's experience with public information? How have you taken responsibility to extend the heart and hand of OA? Share your success with Step Twelve and Tradition Five.

The Seventh Tradition Cycle

What does self-support through our own contributions mean to you and your recovery? What does it mean when you contribute to and benefit from your group, intergroup, and world services? How are you doing your part, including for virtual groups? For ideas, see the *Seventh Tradition Cycle* and the *Seventh Tradition of OA* pamphlet at oa.org/documents under "Group Treasurer Materials."

JULY » Due: 3/15/19

Generally Speaking

Write on any topic you find meaningful.

AUGUST » Due: 4/15/19

Sponsorship Day

Sponsorship Day will be celebrated August 17–18, 2019. How has being or having a sponsor made a difference in your recovery? How did you find the right sponsor? How has sponsorship helped with honesty in your program? What are your sponsor's words of wisdom?

It's All in the Footwork

How have you worked a strong program? Did you make any practical discoveries that took your recovery to a new level? To what lengths did you go to reach a recovery goal? Break it down—what does doing the footwork mean for you?

SEPTEMBER » Due: 5/15/19

Maintaining Abstinence Through Illness

Your OA fellows have asked for stories about maintaining abstinence when illness, whether long- or short-term, is a threat. Give service and hope by sharing your story about staying abstinent during illness, HALT, or a similar challenge.

Saving Grace: Help from a Higher Power

How has your Higher Power made its presence known in your life? Was a prayer answered in an unexpected or amusing way? What miracles have happened that lead you to believe a Power greater than yourself is available to bring you to your personal recovery?

OCTOBER » Due: 6/15/19

The Tools of Recovery

How have you used the Tools to work the Twelve Steps? What rewards have you found in using the Tools?

The Joys of Retreats and Workshops

Tell us about attending your favorite OA retreat or workshop! What made you go? What was it like—were there tears, laughter, discoveries? What did it provide that was different from a meeting? Describe how the *Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide* or another workshop, skit, or activity worked for you.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER » Due: 7/15/19

International Day Experiencing Abstinence and Twelfth Step Within Day

Help us celebrate IDEA this November 16–17 and Twelfth Step Within Day on December 12 by sharing your story about one of these important OA events or how abstinence or Twelfth Step Within service has made a difference for you.

Breaking Out of Relapse

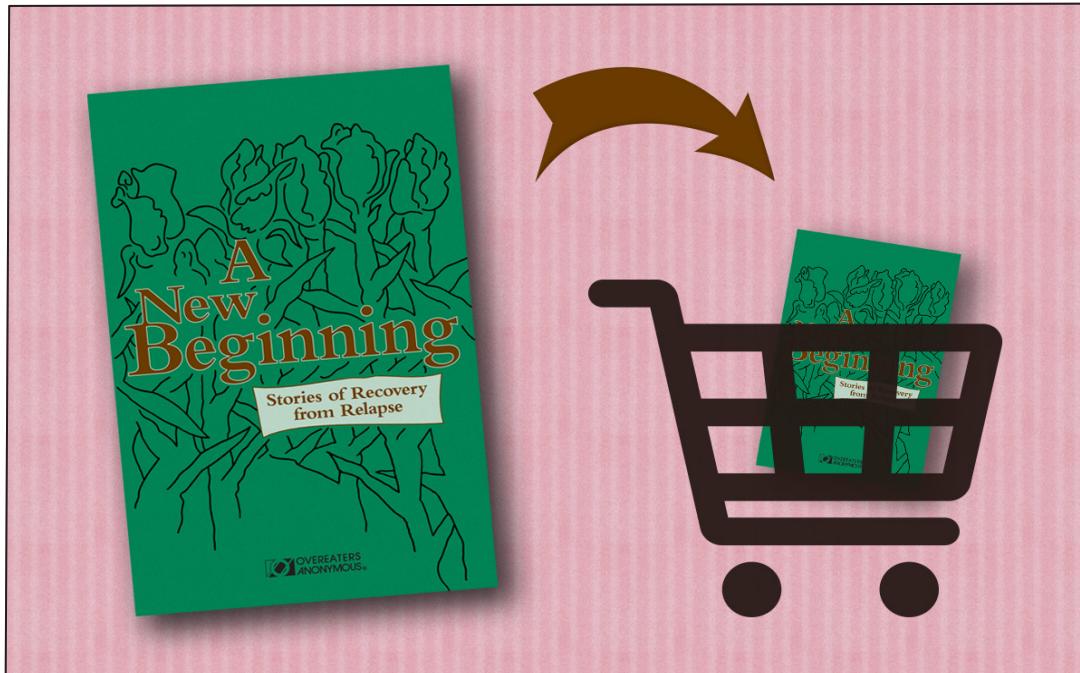
Give hope and Twelfth Step Within service to OA members in relapse by writing about your relapse and recovery. How did your relapse happen? How did you find your way back to recovery? How did literature or resources on oa.org help?

Surrender and Serenity

Surrender is the key to OA recovery, and serenity is the benefit. How did you surrender to a Power greater than yourself? Have you surrendered more than once? How has willingness played a role? How has surrender and willingness helped you choose recovery and self-care? How did you find serenity, and how has it appeared in your life?

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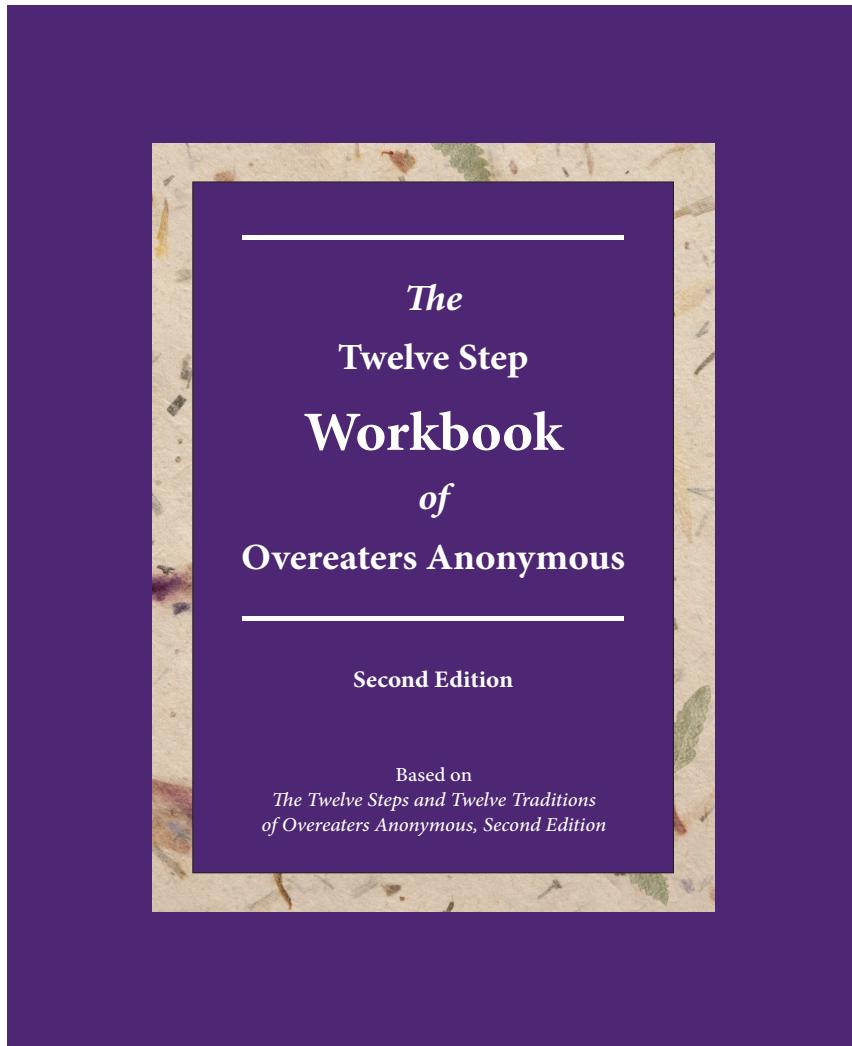
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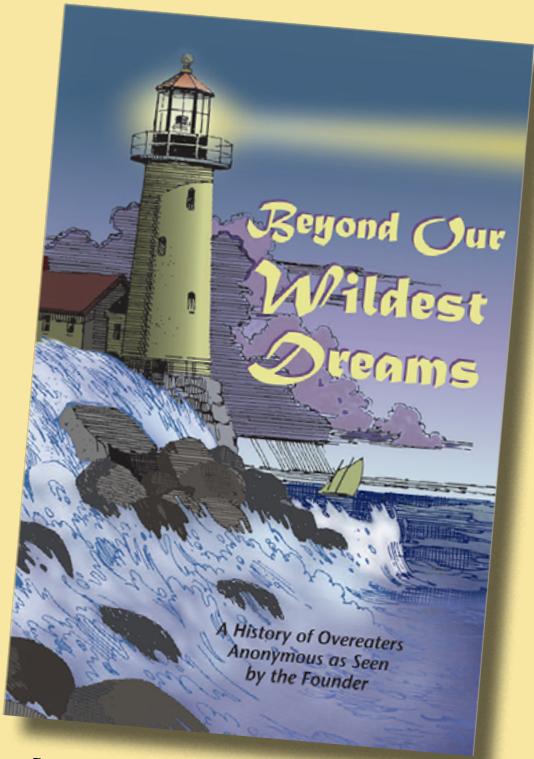
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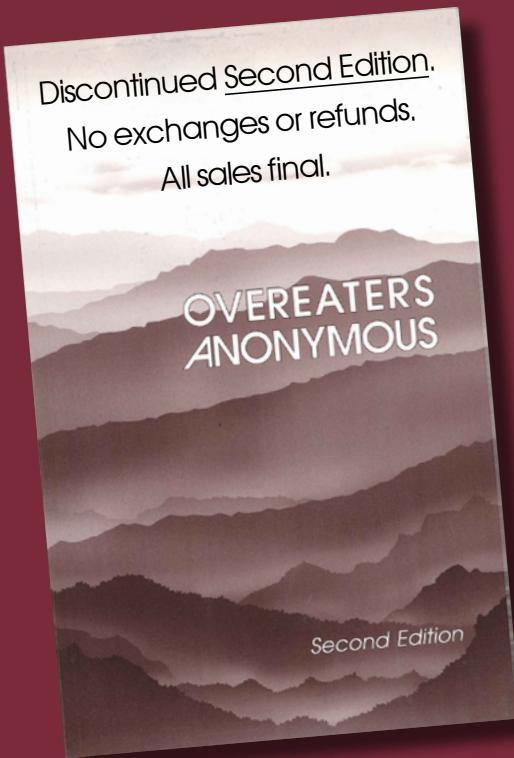
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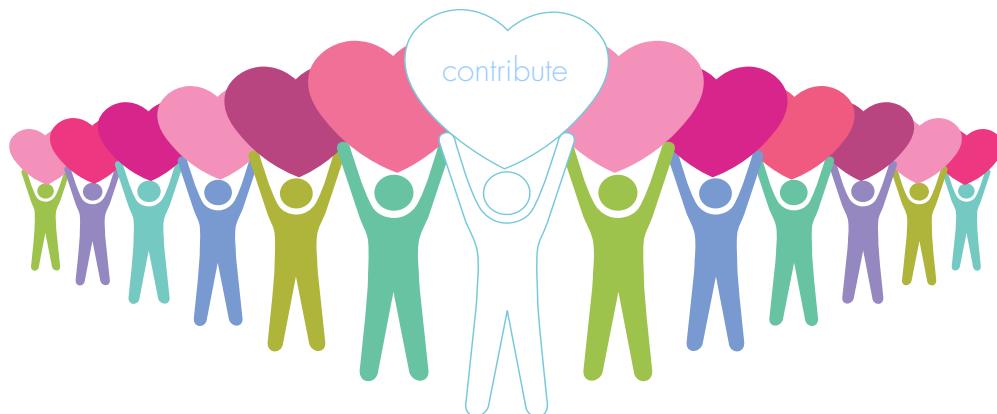
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