

The Westchester

# Serenity Times

Brought to you by Westchester United Intergroup

## Letter from your editor:

Welcome to the holiday edition of the *Serenity Times*. In this issue, local OA members graciously share their experience, strength and hope on how they maintain and grow their physical, emotional and spiritual recovery through this time of year.



During the holidays, I am extra grateful for the support this program offers. In the past, I viewed the holidays through “binge goggles.” Most of my waking thoughts (and my dreams!) were consumed by how I could eat everything I wanted before the unavoidable return to “good eating” began in January. Since joining OA, I’ve witnessed a shift in my thinking. Instead of obsessing about food, I plan activities that I enjoy and focus on the people I want to spend my vacation with. This thinking, of course, is contingent upon my spiritual condition and if I’m working my program each day. This holiday season, to keep up my spiritual fitness, I’m committed to giving more time to meditation and meetings in order to recharge amidst all of the social activity.

Although I am often tempted to avoid the holidays altogether, I’ve experienced how much spiritual and emotional growth comes when I choose to suit up and show up for friends and family. I wish everyone a sane, peaceful, abstinent holiday!

## Letter from Your Intergroup Chair

Although it’s December when we normally focus on the 12th Step and 12th Tradition at our meetings, it’s also important to remember the 6th Tradition during this holiday season: *An OA group ought never endorse, **finance**, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*

We are all in a spirit of gratitude and giving and our tendency is to want to “give” our meeting space landlord a little gift, too...in the form of a check or something special. However, this actually goes against our Traditions, and diverts us from our primary purpose of carrying OA’s message of recovery to the still-suffering compulsive overeater. Our 7th Tradition collections are to be used for our primary purpose...to carry The Message of Recovery. Let us all keep this in mind as we celebrate this year. Our meetings each pay for use of our meeting spaces, in keeping with Tradition 7...so we have already made our contributions this year to our landlords.

There is nothing in the Traditions, however, that prohibits anyone from making a personal donation privately, should you wish to do so.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 12, Twelfth Step Within Day
- Sun, December 18, 1:30-4:30: Body Image and the Spiritual Principles - @ South Nassau Community Hospital
- Thurs, January 5 Intergroup annual planning meeting
- Sat, January 7th, 8:30am - 10am: Garrison Anniversary
- Jan. 20th-22nd, Fri, Sat, Sun: NYMetro Intergroup Winter Retreat



## **How I \*ENJOY\* my Abstinent Holiday: Members Share Their Experience in Recovery**

### **Are You Willing to Go To Any Lengths?**

Keep the eccentricities of my situation in mind as you read this. I am single with no children. I live alone, and have learned to enjoy my solitude. I have a sister who is constantly on the run, and with whom I don't have a long, recent tradition of spending the holidays. Both parents are deceased. My other family lives a relatively long distance away, and their lives go on without me. That last fact contributed to my choice of actions in how to stay abstinent during the holidays. But I also have made the unusual choice of eating the same foods, avoiding restaurants, and making no exceptions, even when going to another's home, or for the holidays.

It goes without question to say that my abstinence comes first. So when I realized there was no need to change what I eat on holidays, I began by taking my food to meet with relatives on Thanksgiving, or other holidays. My sister and brother-in-law, along with many friends, are very supportive, and there are no issues over my food when we meet. There simply are no questions – this is what Eric eats, we all accept it, and there are other topics of discussion. These are people I like meeting with for their own sake – the food is secondary.

Others have made comments, including "encouragements" to eat something different just once, on this occasion, etc. I have chosen not to interact over food with such individuals. I look at this from a service perspective. There are 365 days in a year, and the holidays are a tiny percentage – if my behaviors trigger discomfort in others, we do not have to meet for the holidays, or ever, for a meal! There are other activities we can do!

I have heard people talk about the embarrassment of eating according to their food plan when socializing. I look at it differently. I see such interactions as opportunities. I have learned that I have some really good relatives and friends, who really want the best for me, who demonstrate my Higher Power at work. Alternatively, such interactions are opportunities for me to love myself – to do what I need to do in order to be happy, joyous, and free. How much freer can I be than making an unpopular choice in the spirit of my own long-term health?

I think I am worth going to such lengths for. I think you are, too.

~ Eric P, Bronx, NY

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### **TRADITIONS CORNER**

**Tradition 12: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."**

From the longform of the A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions:

Twelve—And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.



## How I work the OA tools during the Holidays

### **ACTION PLAN**

I need a holiday abstinence action plan. This holiday season my action plan consists of using the 8 following tools in the days before, during and after each holiday.

### **A PLAN OF EATING**

A committed plan of what I'm going to eat helps relieve my obsession with food. When I turn over what I'm going to eat to a fellow and honestly follow through with my commitment, it strengthens my ability to be honest in other areas of my life.

### **MEETINGS**

When going away for the holidays, I can easily become "too busy" for recovery and forget my own needs. I've found it helpful to plan ahead by writing down meeting times and locations wherever it is that I'm going. It just makes getting there much easier.

### **ANONYMITY**

I keep my eyes on my own plate! I can practice anonymity in a holiday setting by recognizing my own judgment of others (especially around food or alcohol). When this happens I can pause, take a deep breath and quietly ask God to help me practice anonymity. This helps me to apply the same tolerance and love to my family as I would to a room full of OA fellows.

### **SERVICE**

OA service has taught me to show up to parties and ask "How can I help?" When I become of service I'm transported from self-centered fear into what feels like the will of my Higher Power. My fears (whatever they might have been) are usually forgotten and I find myself more interested in conversation than food.

### **SPONSORSHIP**

An OA sponsor who knows me (assets and defects alike!) helps tremendously during the holidays. Being of service as a sponsor helps me to remember that the world doesn't revolve around me. Bookending a meal or an event with a scheduled set of calls (sponsor and sponsees) has been an incredibly supportive to my abstinence.

### **LITERATURE**

OA or AA literature is especially helpful in situations when making a phone call seems difficult or impossible. It's been a good practice for me to read a few sentences of OA literature in the bathroom before a family gathering or dinner. Literature reminds me that there's a whole world of OA members who came before me, and I'm not alone.

### **TELEPHONE**

I like to schedule call times in advance of holidays. I remember one Thanksgiving I scheduled calls every hour of the day with my fellows, sponsees and my sponsor. By the time dinner came I felt hopeful, less obsessed with food, and able to truly be present for conversations at the table.

### **WRITING**

When it comes to spending time with family around the holidays, sometimes all I need to do is write about the fear. When I write my fears out, most often I see that they are irrational. I also use the 4th step resentment inventory format from the AA Big Book.

~ Jess H.



**- God will never give you more than you can handle in one day -**

**Intergroup Trusted Servants**

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Recording Secretary	Megan	<a href="mailto:wuigsecretary@gmail.com">wuigsecretary@gmail.com</a>
World Service Delegates	Mike C, Don C	
Region 6 Reps	Don C, Mike C, Cynthia N	<a href="mailto:wuigR6Reps@gmail.com">wuigR6Reps@gmail.com</a>

**7th Tradition Donation**

We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions declining outside donations

60% WUIG  
 PO Box 125 White Plains, NY 10603  
[info@oawestchester-ny.org](mailto:info@oawestchester-ny.org)  
 Tel: 914.633.2988

30% OA World Service Office  
 PO Box 44020; Rio Rancho, NM 87174  
[info@overeatersanonymous.org](mailto:info@overeatersanonymous.org)  
 Tel: 505.891.2664

10% OA Region 6  
 PO Box 1792  
 Westfield, MA 01086

*For increased security you are encouraged to make online donations to Region 6 via paypal*



**CALL 5 TO STAY ALIVE**

OA 's population is shrinking and our meetings are getting smaller. One way to reach out to the struggling compulsive eater is to make phone calls. Go through the WeCARE Books at your meetings and find names of people you haven't seen in a while; CALL THEM. Let them know that they are in your thoughts and that OA welcomes all, regardless of where they are on their road to recovery. This is a simple way to let fellows know that we're here and we care, and it helps your recovery too. If you are interested in working on the 12th Step Within Committee, contact Diana C.

**WHAT DOES OA DO WITH OUR CONTRIBUTIONS?**

*(adapted from OA's Seventh Tradition pamphlet, pp 6-7, and customized for WUIG)*



**WUIG's 29 Local Groups** • Provide places, supplies and literature for meetings • Support our intergroup (WUIG), Region 6, and WSO.

**Our Intergroup (WUIG)** • Offers local outreach to professional communities, hospitals, schools, and libraries • Holds recovery events •

Runs step studies • Maintains [oahelps.org](http://oahelps.org) • Provides answering service. • Publishes updated meeting lists and newsletter • Sends representatives to region assemblies and delegates to the World Service Business Conference to contribute to the group conscience of OA policies and services

**Region 6** • Holds assemblies and conventions • Supports community and media outreach through scholarships to local IGs • Maintains website and publishes newsletter. • Keeps list of speakers. • Supports officers' expenses. • Maintains reference and media libraries. • Offers support to 38 intergroups and many unaffiliated meetings.

**World Service Office** • Produces and distributes OA-approved literature and media including Lifeline magazine • Maintains [OA.org](http://OA.org) and registers groups. • Offers worldwide meeting information by phone, mail, fax, and email • Sends starter kits for new groups • Reaches out to professionals • Holds annual World Service Business Conferences and World Service Conventions



*The Serenity Times* needs your service. It is written by local members for local members.

Without you there is no *Serenity Times*. Work Step 12 and use the tools of service & writing by writing an article of your choice. We welcome poems, stories, lists, anything!

Send all submissions to  
[wuignewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wuignewsletter@gmail.com)

**ALWAYS REMEMBER:**

**NOTHING TASTES AS GOOD AS ABSTINENCE FEELS**

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