

A World Without Members' Willing To Do Service

A member considers what would happen if no one were willing to give OA service.

Yesterday my 17-year old granddaughter, Elizabeth, called me, asking if we could talk about some problems she was having. Of course my mind jumped from one catastrophe to the next (in sheer nanoseconds), as I tried to guess what the problems might be. She had always been a good kid. She did well in school, made friends easily, didn't have too many physical problems, other than the normal childhood ills most kids get. She was on track to attend a nice, highly ranked, liberal arts col-

lege, which she hoped would aid her admission into medical school.

Having been retired for a number of years now, I told her to stop over in the morning. After coming in through the garage, she dropped her purse and keys on the sofa in the living room, she gave me a big hug and kiss, and we headed

that she can't finish it even if she changes her mind. And sometimes at school after lunch, she'll go into one of the ladies room stalls, and it sounds like she's throwing up. She only does this when she doesn't think anyone else is in there. I only know this because one day I just happened in by accident, and

she didn't know I was there. Another thing I noticed happened one night when she was sleeping over. Mom had made my favorite dessert -- you know the one where mayonnaise is the secret ingredient, the one you gave mom the recipe for, the recipe that came



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Personal stories express the experience of the individual member and not necessarily of OA as a whole. Other OA groups are welcome to reprint without permission; please credit Greater Pittsburgh Intergroup.

for the kitchen where she plopped into her favorite chair at the table. I poured myself another cup of coffee; she asked for green tea. While I prepared the kettle to boil the water, I asked how she was doing.

"Granny, I'm doing well but I'm not sure what to do about a friend of mine," she commented.

"Why, what's going on?" I inquired.

She continued, "It's Alene. Sometimes when we go out for a meal, she'll order a regular meal, and then she pours half her pop over the other half of her sandwich to destroy it, so

from Grampap's grannie?" I nodded my head, indicating I knew the family recipe she was talking about.

She went on, "Well, by morning the whole thing was gone! I didn't see her do it, but apparently she just kept going into the kitchen until, slice by slice, the whole thing disappeared. Then she acted real odd the next morning. She had trouble waking up and then was real groggy. I just don't know what to do about it! Granny? What do you think?"

"Sounds like Alene might have a problem with food," I remarked.

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"What do you mean, a 'problem' with food?" she quizzed as she wrinkled her forehead indicating confusion. "How can anyone have a problem with food? Isn't that a natural process? We get hungry, we eat, life goes on." "Well sometimes wires get crossed in our brains, and natural processes break down. It's complicated," I answered. "Tell you what, let's you and I come over here to my computer, and see if we can't find some information that might help your friend, Alene."

As we walked into the other room where my computer lived, I began, "Elizabeth, long before you were born, I too had a problem with food. I did a lot of the same things your friend, Alene, is doing and worse. Then I found a group of people who helped me. They had found an answer to their problems with food, and they showed me what I could do. They're wonderful people. I'm sure they can help Alene."

With that I Googled "Overeaters Anonymous," but nothing came up.

So I entered "Pittsburgh Overeaters Anonymous," but the only link was to a group in Pittsburgh, Kansas. That's odd, I thought.

So I Googled "OA" And Overworkers Anonymous appeared. I thought to myself, Man! There's a 12-step program for everything these days.



I said, "Let's try this another way." With that I picked up my phone, scrolled through my contacts until I came to "OA Information." I called the number, and instead of hearing the recording I remembered, announcing how to get a meeting list and talk to an OA member for more information, all I heard was a Verizon recording saying, "This number has been disconnected; please check your local listings."

I paused and tried to think of yet another way to

contact Pittsburgh OA. An old friend came to mind. I hadn't spoken to her in quite a few years, but I knew if anyone would know how to reach OA it would be her. I wondered out loud, "Do I still have Jess's number?" The phone rang quite a few times before I heard her familiar voice say "Hello."

I said, "Hello. Jess, this is Ruth, do you remember me?" We spent a couple of minutes catching up, and then I told her the reason for my call. "Jess, I've looked both online and by phone, and I can't seem to find a number or an online way to reach OA in Pittsburgh."

After what seemed like a too-long pause she said, "OA doesn't have meetings anymore in Pittsburgh. It didn't happen all at once, it just sort of happened gradually until the last meeting closed." She went on, "After Intergroup folded," when I stopped her.

"What do you mean, ' Intergroup folded'?"

"Yeah, we tried to keep it going but there just weren't enough of us to get it all done. Initially it was easy doing away with some of the positions like Region Rep or World Service Delegate. We even doubled up on some like Public Information and Professional Outreach, and even the 12th Step Within and Marathon positions merged. But then no one wanted to be Chair, or Vice-Chair, and the position of Treasurer was the last to go. It just sort of withered away one position at a time, and before we knew it, the Special Worker was sitting there all by herself and no one was showing up. As the positions went away, so did all the events and services. First we quit having the area-wide events like the annual weekend-long Marathon and all the one-day events, such as the OA Birthday, Unity Day, the picnic, Sponsorship Day and 12th Step Within Day. Since we didn't have a Public Information or Professional Outreach person, no one was doing anything to spread the word that OA existed. The meeting list, phone number, and voice mail went away when we were no longer able to afford the Special Worker, who as you remember took care of all that."

She went on, "I don't think the OA members understood how important Intergroup was to keeping their individual meetings going. There are still a few meetings in the Pittsburgh area, but it's

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hard to find out where they meet. Word of mouth is the only way to find one. You can still find the phone meetings, but you and I both know they're not the same as the face-to-face meetings where you get real live hugs."

I was stunned, and not sure what to say next. Jess saved me by saying she had to run as she had a therapy appointment soon and would have to get going. She said she increased her therapy sessions as a result of being unable to go to any face-to-face meetings. We quickly said goodbye, and we both promised to keep in touch.

I turned to Elizabeth and said, "Honey I've got bad news. OA doesn't have meetings in Pittsburgh anymore."

With that she started to cry saying, "Granny, all those things I told you about my friend Alene were really about me. I'm the one with the problem with food."

My heart sank as regret waved over me. Would there still be meetings here if only I had done a little more to help? It wouldn't have been that big of a deal to give one Sunday afternoon a month to help keep things going. I remembered back to the help and support I received. How I felt the OA people were my tribe and literally saved my life. And now there was no one to help my granddaughter.

As my eyes opened I heard the sound of my phone alarm going off. My Fitbit was vibrating too. I lay there in bed trying to make sense out of the nightmare that had been interrupted by the alarm. Did I just dream all that or was it real?

My thoughts were interrupted by an incoming call.

"Hello."

"Hi Ruth, it's Linda. Did I wake you?"

"No," I answered.

"I thought maybe we could discuss some of the items on this month's Intergroup agenda."

I felt like Scrooge waking up the morning after having been through the night of visiting ghosts. It was all a bad dream. OA was still alive and well!

I responded to Linda, "I'd love to discuss those things. But first, can I tell you about this bad dream I had last night . . ."

--Ruth D.

GPIOA Service Opportunity

Not only is service a great way to keep OA alive, it's also a great way for each of us to achieve personal abstinence and recovery.

GPIOA (Greater Pittsburgh Intergroup of OA) generally meets the first Sunday of every month but May. Intergroup meetings take place from 2 to 3:30 PM at Hillman Cancer Center at 5115 Centre Avenue in Shadyside (15232). Parking under the Center is free. See gpioa.org for intergroup dates, agendas and minutes.

Get involved! Every OA meeting is encouraged to send a representative to ensure that GPIOA is serving the needs of all meetings in the area. Those who have attended three intergroup meetings and meet the abstinence requirements are able to apply for a standing chair or executive position. And there are no requirements-- beyond willingness-- to join a committee that will help all of us recover--as individuals and a group as a whole.



Working A Program

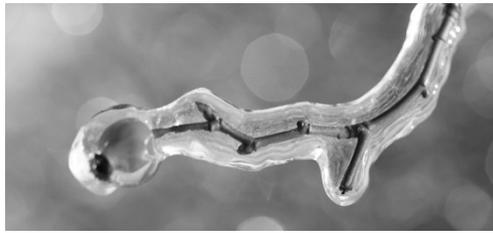
My recovery routine includes two meetings a week and conversations with co-sponsors twice a week. One of these conversations has been focused on step work following this calendar year, which has been very useful and meaningful to me-- especially with the 4th step over troubling issues. Following this work through the 7th step has brought meaningful insight and peace.

Lately, due to a reading in *Voices of Recovery* which said "If nothing changes, nothing changes," I've been writing down two "changes" or tool commitments every morning and pray to carry them through that day. This writing is promoting more stability to my food plan and my serenity. Each day begins with a reflection on the first three steps as they relate to the circumstances of that day.

--Chris S.

Overcoming Shame Workshop

Thanks to all who attended the Overcoming Shame Workshop on October 20 in the South Hills. And thanks to the 12th Step Within Committee for their wonderful efforts planning and organizing this event. Over twenty grateful attendees enjoyed sharing stories of strength, experience and hope and the workshop's writing exercises. As the group concluded: recovery and growth is only as good as the work you put into it. We listen to each other; we think; we take action.



In Memory: Anthony B.

Anthony B. passed away September 22. Anthony was a long-time OA member who was incredibly active in GPIOA, chairing Public Information and Professional Outreach Committees and was a founder of many OA men's activities, including the annual OA Men's Retreat. His obituary can be found at warcofalvofuneralhome.com/obituaries. Please respect Anthony's anonymity in any message you post.

Retreat March 29-31

Join the Roadmap to Recovery retreat, March 29-31, at Antiochian Village, 140 Church Camp Trail, Bolivar, PA 15923. It promises to be a weekend of recovery, relaxation and re-charging that you won't want to miss. Complete details are available at gpioa.org/events. If you registered by the December 15 deadline, your balance is due February 20. If you haven't registered but would still like to do so, call Susan C. at 412-951-2076 to check on room availability. If you plan to attend as a day tripper, please RSVP no later than March 15. All requests will be addressed on a first come first served basis.

Need Outreach Ideas

The Lower Burrell meeting is participating in a digital billboard at the intersection of Tarentum Bridge and Leechburg Roads to reach out to compulsive overeaters. To be cost-effective, the Lower Burrell meeting restricts their advertising to post-holiday timeframes when people are more receptive to weight loss ideas. Share your meeting's outreach ideas with Lori M. with an email to pro_outreach@gpioa.org with "OA public info" in the subject line or call Lori M. at 724-289-8044.

WSO Address Change

Effective September 2018, the World Service Office has a new post office box for all correspondence including contributions and Lifeline magazine. The new address is:

World Service Office
PO Box 44727
Rio Rancho NM 87174-4727

The WSO physical address is at 6075 Zenith Ct NW, Rio Rancho NM 87174 remains unchanged.

Wanted: Your Thoughts for Q2 VOR

Please share your thoughts about how you use the following Steps in your daily life:

- Step 4--Courage
- Step 5--Integrity
- Step 6--Willingness

Send a sentence or two or a brief paragraph to vor_editor@gpioa.org no later than Friday, February 15.

Greater Pittsburgh Intergroup Roster

Executive Board

Chair	VACANT	exec_board@gpioa.org	
Vice Chair	Linda A.	chair@gpioa.org	
Treasurer	Ruth D.	vice_chair@gpioa.org	724-939-3997
Ex-Officio	Ruth D.	treasurer@gpioa.org	412-337-9706
		ex_officio@gpioa.org	412-337-9706

Standing Committee Chairs

12 th Step Within	Beth D.	standing_chairs@gpioa.org	
Professional Outreach	VACANT	12within@gpioa.org	412-271-2431
Public Information	Monica F.	pro_outreach@gpioa.org	
Speakers Bureau	Elaine T.	public_info@gpioa.org	724-729-4748
VOR Editor	Jeanne H.	speakers@gpioa.org	540-383-2202
Marathon	Lanie T.	vor_editor@gpioa.org	412-848-0360
		marathon@gpioa.org	412-559-2028

Other Trusted Servants

Region 7 Rep	Dorothy W.	region7reps@gpioa.org	412-242-3032
Region 7 Rep	Kristi K.	region7reps@gpioa.org	412-780-7743
World Service Del.	Dorothy W.	wso.delegates@gpioa.org	412-242-3032
Webmaster/Admin Asst	Jessica F.	webmaster@gpioa.org	412-334-3955

Dates to Note

January 19, Saturday
OA Birthday, Monroeville

February 3, Sunday
GPI Intergroup Meeting

February 23, Saturday
Unity Day

March 3, Sunday
GPI Intergroup Meeting

March 29-31, Friday-Sunday
March Retreat

April 7, Sunday
GPI Intergroup Meeting

April 5-7, Friday-Sunday
Region 7 Spring Assembly

See gpioa.org for details.