

Inner Voice

Newsletter of New Freedom Intergroup of OA

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

My Junk Food Habit Was Like a Part-Time Job; Now I'm an Investor in Recovery



When I was in the food, a trip to the store was a nightly affair. It took an hour to troll the aisles for items that fit my cravings: sweet, crunchy, sour, soft, hearty, salty, fun, fresh, new, familiar, healthy, decadent, frothy, fruity, tasty, smooth, fizzy, cold, hot, easy, or any combination. This took serious thought. I wanted to nail down the most accurate collection, so when I was nestled at home, there would be no need to trek back to the store. *Time: two hours, including driving and searching.*

After unpacking my goods, my spirits lifting in eager anticipation because I couldn't wait for the magic to begin, I'd flip on the TV, retrieve my afghan, and transport the bags, bowls, and plates of chow to the sacred coffee table to set up my altar's offerings to me. *Time: thirty minutes to unpack and prepare.*

Ripping, scooping, smacking, chewing, slurping, burping, gasping, picking, gobbling, scarfing, wolfing, munching, swallowing, drinking, crunching, gorging, breathing. *Time: fifteen minutes or less.*

Feeling satiated (or an overeater's definition of satiated: stuffed, fluffed, and puffed), I'd zone out in my special chair. *Time: one hour.*

Then I'd hit the sack, accompanied by sinking dread. I'd feel my ongoing failure as a human being and hear a faint whisper that tomorrow was a new day: I could live it differently, struggle no more, and change the belief that I was a complete waste of skin. *Time: variable.*

A choking gasp for breath would yank me out of the quiet pocket of night. Cursing and vowing, I'd roll to the medicine cabinet for antacids (loaded with sugar) and place two under my tongue for a slow dissolve. I'd waddle back to bed and prop my pillows to catch another twenty winks, sitting upright. *Time: thirty minutes awake.*

My total time investment: an average of at least four hours every day, or twenty-eight hours per week—it looked like a part-time job.

Now, I use my newfound abstinent hours for meetings, Step work, prayer, phone calls, working with my sponsor and sponsees, preparing abstinent meals, reading, and writing.

I realized I still had free hours left and discovered opportunities to give service beyond the group level. I can step out of my isolation, recommit my abstinence every day, expand my community of friends, and participate in Step Twelve.



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Rotation of service helps me practice balance and learn new skills. I still get anxious when trying something new, but the cool thing is I don't have to do it alone. I get to meet new people and hear their experience, strength, and hope.

I feel light-hearted and excited about life. When my self-seeking slips away, I feel I have a right to be on the earth, that my Higher Power thinks I'm kind of groovy. I'm blessed with so much more; an enormous return on my new time investment.

—Meg, Minnesota USA, reprinted from *Lifeline*

Step 1: Digging Differently

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over food—that our lives had become unmanageable.

As part of my daily program routine, I have been reading the *Big Book* and then writing on certain passages. On page 325 of *Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition*, it states, "You hit bottom when you stop digging."

I can thankfully say that I'm not still digging in the way that I used to. I had many years of digging and doing research, trying to find the answers to my living problems, yet I thought I was doing fine in life. Similar to what it says on page five of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*, I had a good job, a house and car, and money in the bank, so by outward appearances, I was doing just fine. No one except my Higher Power knew that my insides presented a totally different story.

When I looked for the next diet or weight loss scheme, I continued to dig, hoping that it would bring me a thin body and a perfect life. Gradually, as I continued to fail by trying to find the answer myself, I turned to a Higher Power. I had really been backed into a corner. It was with some unwillingness and reluctance that I turned to this Higher Power, but I had nowhere else to turn.

I had always been taught to rely on myself, so why would my compulsive eating not submit to my will? I felt it would mean I lack character if I admitted I could not do it myself. But when I admitted I could not do it and that my way was not working, then I came to the end of me. Only when I came to the end of me could my Higher Power take over. He said, "walk this way," and when I walked that way, I dug less and less into the old ways because, when I stopped digging, I started finding the answers that I sought.

Today, I find I'm drawn closer to this Higher Power, and that nurtures my spiritual program. By continuing to work the Steps and use the Tools of the Overeaters Anonymous program, the emotional side of me is more stable, and I am able to be in a more balanced state. By admitting my powerlessness over food and my life in Step One and by continuing to come back for twenty-nine years, I have maintained an 80-pound (36-kg) weight loss. Now, after all these years, I do my digging in a different way: by working the Steps and maintaining conscious contact with my Higher Power. That is how I find the answers that I always sought through using food.

— Kristin, reprinted from *Lifeline*

Looking Back on Step 12

Step Twelve says: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

A spiritual awakening is the prime—the most important—outcome. If I have not had a spiritual awakening, then perhaps I need to revisit some of the preceding steps to figure out why.

If I truly accept my powerlessness over people, places, and things (Step One); believe in a Higher Power that can restore me to sanity (Step Two); give my will and my life over to the care of my higher power (Step Three); search fearlessly to uncover, discover, and discard those things that have kept me imprisoned to my disease (Step Four); confess my character defects (Step Five); become willing to humbly ask Higher Power to remove these harmful traits (Steps Six and Seven); be willing to make amends to those I have hurt (Steps Eight and Nine); continue to examine my actions and make amends (Step Ten); and continue to pray, meditate, and seek contact with my Higher Power (Step Eleven); then,



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just maybe, I too, can achieve this spiritual awakening that hundreds and thousands of others before me have experienced in this program.

Two words that stand out in all this are honesty and willingness. Without honesty, I cannot take the first three steps. Without honesty plus willingness, I cannot take Steps Four through Nine and therefore cannot continue to apply them in my life. That means I must practice them daily in the form of Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, often called the maintenance steps. So, before I can carry the message to other compulsive eaters and practice them in ALL my affairs, I must complete the first eleven steps, else I have no message to carry.

In addition to carrying the message, Step Twelve asks me to practice these principles (1-Honesty, 2-Hope, 3-Faith, 4-Courage, 5-Integrity, 6-Willingness, 7-Humility, 8-Self-discipline, 9-Love, 10-Perseverance, 11-Spiritual Awareness, and 12-Service) in all my affairs. What does this mean? It means moving from honestly admitting my powerlessness over people, places, things, situations, and outcomes (Step One) to actively applying these principles to every personal interaction, place, situation, and outcome in my life (Step Twelve).

The steps are in order for a reason. For example, it is easier to admit that I am powerless over my family member's actions than it is to apply the principles of self-discipline and love when dealing with this individual. Steps Two through Eleven give me the tools to help me do so. And even then, it takes practice and more practice! Likewise, I first must accept my own shortcomings (Steps Six and Seven) before I can help a sponsee accept theirs.

Perfection is never required. All I need is sincere honesty and willingness to open the door. These are the keys to practicing all the steps, including the last. Upon reaching Step Twelve, I can finally walk a free person and most effectively carry this lifesaving and life-changing message to my fellow overeaters and practice the principles they embody anywhere Life takes me.

— Anonymous, Florida USA

Tradition 1: My Part of Together

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

OA's Twelve Traditions offer guidelines on how we can all get along. Simply put, we come into OA from diverse cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, personalities, and defects, so these guidelines are necessary for our survival as an organization. It is no surprise, then, that unity should be our First Tradition. This Tradition forms the cornerstone of our organization; it's how we continue to prosper and help those still hurting from our common disease.

The best word that describes me when I'm in my disease is "alone"; therefore, the solution involves connection. The support I get from my friends in OA is priceless. This is where I find my recovery. We come together, supporting each other as we abstain from compulsive eating.

It is even more important that we come together to get the business of OA done: we must be a strong and united organization to attract and help those who need our help most. This, in turn, affects my own ability to stay strong in program. So, I give service and work to bring us together.

Groups are people coming together to be strong together. Intergroups are groups coming together to be strong together. Regions are intergroups coming together to be strong together. What we do together affects every person in our region. To be strong together, we need to work together.

Tradition One teaches that we are all dependent on each other for our shared welfare. I used to pride myself on being independent, believing I was able to take care of myself. The lie in that belief was proven by the weight I carried and the insanity in my head. Only after I accepted that I was powerless over my food behaviors did I become ready to ask for help. And when I did, you came with a commitment to love me until I learned to love myself. I still count on that commitment twenty-two years later. Because I owe you for that love and acceptance, I get the work done that needs to be done. If I'm not giving my experience, strength, and hope to others, then I won't be able to keep what I have received.



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But that doesn't end with just sponsoring, making calls, and attending meetings—I'd be forgetting the bigger picture, all the other OA members who put on events, gathered in intergroups, and gave service at the region and world levels. For our common unity, I have to do my part to create a strong, thriving organization, so we can help those in need.

— Anonymous, reprinted from *Lifeline*

Trusted Servants and Committee Chairs (New emails)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Chair
Vice Chair/Bylaws
Treasurer
Secretary
Delegate
Newsletter/Meeting List
Public Info/Prof. Outreach
Young Persons
12th Step Within
Sponsor Coordinator
Website
Ways and Means

Secretary will forward as needed
Echo G. 561.704.2917
VACANT—Consider doing service
Augusta L. 912.508.4777
VACANT—Consider doing service
VACANT—Consider doing service
VACANT—Consider doing service
Nancy K. 516.286.1888
VACANT—Consider doing service
VACANT—Consider doing service
Hailey 404.797.5586
Brian B. 904.616.0608
VACANT—Consider doing service

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vicechairnfi@gmail.com
nfitreasury@gmail.com
oanfig@gmail.com
delegatenfi@gmail.com
innervoiceinfi@gmail.com
piponfig@gmail.com
youngpeoplenfi@gmail.com
ghabanero56@yahoo.com
sponsor.nfig@gmail.com
websitenfi@gmail.com
wandmnfi@gmail.com

NFI Meeting Highlights:

(Note: These are NOT the official minutes; they are only a recap of what was discussed. Official minutes are released after changes and approval in the next month's business meeting.)

New Freedom Intergroup business meeting was held December 9. Each meeting is welcome and encouraged to send two voting members, and as many observers as desire to attend. The meeting is always the second Saturday of the month (unless otherwise decided) and runs for one and a half hours. Thus, the next business meeting is Saturday, January 11 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am by Zoom. (Meeting ID: 872 7218 1719, Password: 883350).

Highlights of what was covered at the December business meeting:

Service Opportunities:

- VACANCIES:
Elected positions:
 - Vice Chair, Secretary, DelegateAppointed positions:
 - Parliamentarian, Newsletter Chair, Twelfth Step Within Chair, Ways and Means Chair, Young Persons Subcommittee Chair, Sponsorship Coordinator
- Want to give service, but you're not sure where to start? Consider volunteering for one of our committees! We can always use help, and it's a fabulous way to start giving service beyond the meeting level.
- In August of 2025, the World Service Convention will be held in Orlando, FL. While NFI is not officially sponsoring or hosting this event, ANYONE is welcome to give service for it! If you are interested in helping with planning or otherwise volunteering, please contact Susan B. by email at chair@oaregion8.org

Other Items of Note:

- We did not have enough attendees to have a quorum this month, so we were not able to hold any votes on things like approving past meeting minutes or the revisions to the proposed budget.
- All meetings are to let Chair know about changes in format. Thank you to those who sent us updates this month! They should be reflected on the website and meeting list.
- Still finalizing all of the income vs. expenses for Marywood retreat.
- Several members expressed concerns about how we move forward as an intergroup with all of the vacancies that we are currently facing. Suggestion was made to promote the needs at meetings and to sponsees who may be looking for ways to give service.



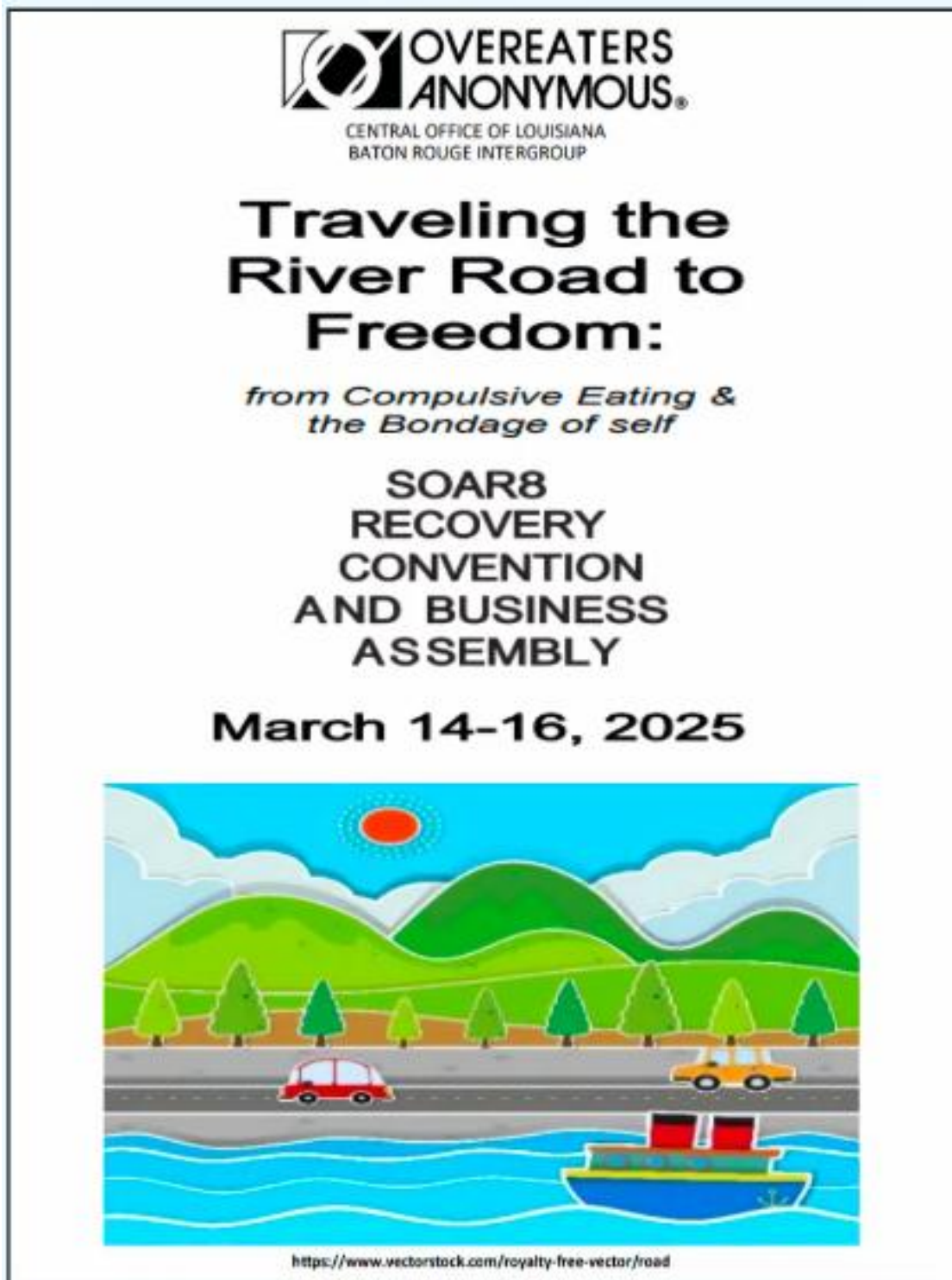
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Events from All Over

Full registration form:

<https://oaregion8.org/assemblies/2025/1st-Assembly/March-2025-SOAR8-Assembly-Registration-Form.pdf>



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Overeaters Anonymous

CONVENTION WISDOM

OA is hosting a recovery Convention for the first time since 2016. Come, join hundreds of fellow members in celebrating OA recovery at a live, face-to-face event.

- The Convention is NOT a business event; it IS a recovery-focused global gathering.
- Open to all - members, newcomers, visitors, family, and friends.
- Over 50 OA meetings, great and varied topics.
- Three keynote speakers, several workshops.
- Dedicated rooms for specific focus meetings.
- Three keynote speakers, several workshops.
- Socializing and a chance to meet your virtual friends, in person.
- A real-life hug!
- Banquet and dance Saturday night!
- OA recovery will be rocking in Orlando.

"This is an experience you...will not want to miss." Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 89



Save the Date!



To be kept up to date with the latest convention news, email CONVENTIONINFO@OA.ORG



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DONATIONS REPORT 2024		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD TOTAL
General Fund / no meeting # specified		\$225.27	\$23.30	\$70.61		\$1,749.26
Jacksonville Groups						
Mon: Shepherd of the Woods Church	00774					\$0.00
Tue: Lakewood United Meth Church	36763					\$0.00
Tue: 7pm Jacksonville (virtual)	800028					\$0.00
Wed: Step Study Mandarin	51223	\$48.55	\$14.08	\$14.08		\$473.89
Wed: JAX Beach-Wisdom at the Beaches	54507					\$70.00
Thur: Jacksonville 9am - Our redeemer	57370					\$0.00
Thur: Newcomer, Lakeview Health	47756					\$0.00
Fri: Orange Park - 10am	03654					\$0.00
Sat: Saturday Steppers-Ponte Vedra Bch	51693					\$750.00
Sat: Super Saturday Lakeview	20025					\$0.00
Sat: Believe in Recovery First, Mandarin	32773	\$28.64	\$28.64	\$28.64		\$515.04
Gainesville Groups						\$0.00
Mon: Big Book Study (Alachua)	51137	\$28.64	\$53.64	\$53.64		\$382.56
Thu: Unity Church(Acceptance)	50421	\$9.22	\$9.22	\$9.22		\$234.42
Wed: Gainesville Unity Church	57568					\$450.00
Sat: 9:30 AM Welcome Home	48324					\$0.00
Other Florida Groups						\$0.00
Mon: Palm Coast-St Mark by the Sea	38320		\$12.00			\$133.00
Mon:	32609					\$25.00
Wed: Palm Coast - 10am	56604		\$11.00			\$108.00
Thu: Fernandina Beach	49101					\$37.00
Thu: Flagler Beach	15171		\$12.00			\$194.58
Sat: St. Augustine Serenity	00235	\$23.79	\$23.79	\$23.79		\$377.46
Sun: Palm Coast/Flagler Beach	56072					\$117.22
Southern Georgia Groups						\$0.00
Tue: Jesup	54175					\$50.00
Wed: Douglas, GA	57445					\$0.00
Wed: Savannah - 5:30 pm	50301		\$170.27			\$170.27
Thur: Brunswick	51988					\$0.00
Sun: Savannah - 5pm	54362					\$110.92
Totals		\$364.11	\$357.94	\$199.98	\$0.00	\$5,948.62
Don to WSO		\$109.23	\$107.38	\$59.99	\$0.00	
Don to SOAR8		\$36.41	\$35.79	\$20.00	\$0.00	

Where are your donations going?

According to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. To donate directly to Intergroup, write a check made payable to 'NFI' and mail to: OA NFI, PO Box 550842, Jacksonville, FL 32255; or log onto oanfig.org and scroll down to the 'donate' button. You may pay by PayPal or credit card.

When you contribute your 7th Tradition donations, if you indicate your group number, the donation will be recorded for that specific group. When we do not have a group number to work with, we may include the donations as unspecified.

Each month, NFI tallies the group donations and sends 10% of the total to Region 8, with an additional 30% to the World Service Office. Donations sent directly to World Service Office do not reflect in our group donations total.

Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinion of each individual OA member and do not represent OA as a whole. Intergroup meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month. The deadline to submit articles is the 20th of the month before the Intergroup meeting. Articles may be edited. When submitting articles, please include your name and phone number and whether or not you would like your name printed. This newsletter may be reproduced and enjoyed by other 12-steppers without written permission. If you would like to submit articles and/or comments, or if you would like to receive the Inner Voice in color as a pdf, send your email address to the Newsletter Chair at innervoicenf@gmail.com.



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