



## CNMI NEWSLETTER

Volume No. XLIV Issue No. 11  
Date: November 2018  
Central New Mexico Intergroup  
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**OA Responsibility Pledge:** Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible.

*It is the policy of Overeaters Anonymous and the Central New Mexico Intergroup that anyone is welcome at any open OA meeting. The third tradition states that the only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.*

### Step & Tradition of the Month

**Step Eleven: Sought through Prayer and Meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

**Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.**

### Intergroup Meeting

Your Intergroup usually meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:00 - 10:45 am at Central United Methodist Church, 201 University Blvd N.E., Albuquerque. The next Intergroup meeting will be **December 8, 2018**. Everyone is welcome at all Intergroup and Committee meetings!

**December Newsletter Deadline:** Friday, November 30, 2018. Please e-mail news, announcements, and recovery stories of up to 500 words or less to [oacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:oacnmi@gmail.com). You can also snail mail them to CNMI Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 30273, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0273.

### Email Newsletter Recipient Reminder

If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail the editor at [oacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:oacnmi@gmail.com). **For those with Apple computers:** Please be sure that you have the CNMI OA Newsletter editor's e-mail address in your contacts list/address book to prevent the newsletter from being sent directly to your Spam folder (or not delivered at all).

### Calendar

#### IDEA Day Workshop

#### (International Day Experiencing Abstinence)

Asbury United Methodist Church, 1000 Candelaria NE  
Sunday, November 18, 2018 from 2 – 5pm  
Please see page 4 for further details!

### Holiday Meeting Schedule!

The Sunday night meeting is happy to announce that the holiday meetings will be held at Presbyterian Kaseman Hospital 8300 Constitution N.E.

Thanksgiving Day (November 22), 12 noon and 6 PM  
Christmas Eve (December 24), 6 PM  
Christmas Day (December 25), 12 noon and 6 PM  
New Year's Eve (December 31), 6 PM  
New Year's Day (January 1, 2019), 12 noon and 6 PM

All meetings will be held in the Aspen Room except for New Year's Day which will be in the Cottonwood Room.

### 2019 Region 3 Spring Assembly and Convention

San Antonio, TX, March 29-31, 2019  
Doubletree by Hilton San Antonio Downtown  
[2109saconvention@oasanantonio.com](mailto:2109saconvention@oasanantonio.com)  
Watch for additional information in future newsletters.

### Meeting Updates



**The Friday 5:30 p.m. in Albuquerque, N.M. meeting needs support!! Remember, we all need fellowship! It is a meeting with a 15 minute option of writing or meditating in the middle of the hour.**

### Groups Stay Up to Date

Groups can now register and update their meeting information using the following link:

<https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/meeting-changes/edit-a-meeting>

WSO uses the information you provide to distribute OA news and keep meeting times current.

Please remember to also e-mail meeting changes to [oacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:oacnmi@gmail.com), so they can be included in the next newsletter, as well as being updated on the meeting list, and on CNMI's website. Thank you.

### From the Chair Finding Fellowship in Silence

I was one of the 33 people who had the good fortune to attend the silent retreat at the Pecos Benedictine Monastery a couple of weeks ago. The theme, Exploring the Eleventh Step, was beautifully suited to this quiet and contemplative time. During the 24 hours spent in silence we each had the opportunity to reflect on our own experiences of achieving or maintaining constant contact with our Higher Power while bonding in a new and meaningful way with old friends and strangers alike.

I'd noticed during other retreats how much a group of people can come to know and appreciate about one another while observing silence together. It really struck home to me this time as several of us walked together through the beautiful monastery grounds. Later in the day 20 of us

participated in a gentle seated yoga session conducted in complete silence, with signs prompting us to adopt one pose or movement for each of the 12 Steps. As a newcomer to yoga this melding of mind, body and spirit in the company of so many of my fellows was an experience I'll never forget.

Before coming to the retreat I reflected on how best I could use my quiet time to strengthen my program, and I remembered that I've intended for some time to reread *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*. I'm very grateful to my Higher Power for the inspiration because I rediscovered this OA approved literature as a valuable supplement to our own 12 & 12.

I'm grateful to everyone who attended this event for joining together in silence and for their honest and heartfelt sharing during our meetings on Saturday night and Sunday morning, I'm also thankful for the loving fellowship of all the CNMI members who worked so hard to make the weekend a success.

Mary S

#### **From the Editor Finding Peace and Acceptance**

You will read a lot about the Eleventh Step Silent Retreat in this newsletter because it was an awesome experience! This is the first time that I have had the opportunity to attend an OA Retreat. I have been in recovery for a number of years. I have participated in many other OA events throughout my time of attending OA. More than two decades of learning how to be in recovery in so many different ways and situations life has thrown at me.

What made this weekend stand out for me was participating in a "24 hour" silence. I have been discovering silence within my own faith practice since I have moved to Albuquerque. This was the first time for me within the OA context to experience silence.

I needed this opportunity to spend time with my Higher Power in the mountains away from all the chaos we call life. I had not slept well the night before the retreat.

My roommate was someone I had never met before and yet we were able to briefly communicate and then go right back to silence. I let her know that if I was crying a lot that they were healing tears! No need to worry about me. I went to sleep early that night and slept the whole night. I journaled before going to sleep after having had dinner.

What I discovered during the silence was that my Higher Power was very clear that this was the beginning of the end of my fighting that I have had to do all my life. I was surrounded by loving people, the beauty of creation, and all the support I could ask for. A friend of mine had prayed for me before I drove up to the retreat location.

I will be honest...I feel very strange that I do not have trauma, drama, nor chaos created by other people in my life today. As an adult, I had to get to the place that I would not accept people nor myself breaking boundaries on a consistent basis.

Had anyone told me years ago that I could get to this place of peace, contentment, and working towards not hurting myself because no one else is hurting me I would have laughed in their face.

I am a most grateful human being trudging this road of happy destiny with many of you. Thank you for being a part of my journey whether in the physical meetings or in Spirit. I even bought a little reminder from the gift store (which was not connected to the OA part of the retreat to bring home...the word on it means: New Beginnings!.)

Grateful to be in Recovery,  
Anna Charirose

#### **Silent Retreat in Pecos**

The second annual silent retreat in Pecos, "Exploring the Eleventh Step", sponsored by CNMI is now but a memory. We had a lovely weekend: perfect weather, beautiful fall colors, nice rooms, good meals, and 33 of us working recovery together in silence as well as in some happy, noisy, sharing.

We had a meeting each day, guided walks, gentle yoga, meditation sessions, and plenty of craft supplies to create with, and best of all, blessed silence in which to go deep and process the 11<sup>th</sup> step.

Thanks to those who participated and to the committee members who put it all together. At the November intergroup meeting, we will propose to CNMI that we once again sponsor a silent retreat next fall.

As a fundraiser, the retreat brought in a nice sum to add to our treasury to help carry the message, but more importantly, it gave 33 people a wonderful experience of working recovery together.

If we do go ahead with a retreat next year, we'll need new committee members to help out. I hope you will consider this important service. There are mentors, written descriptions, and plenty of notes and feedback to light the way. And, it is wonderful to work with a committed and fun group of fellow OA'ers.

Rotation of service is so important and each new committee puts its own unique stamp on a tried and true tradition, keeping the retreat fresh year after year. Give me a call and we'll talk about how you can participate in the planning of the next silent retreat.

In service, pat o. chair of the silent retreat committee 281-3638

## HP, Where Have You Gone?

This was my third silent retreat and I was bubbling with enthusiasm. It was wonderful to see old and new friends. What would my Higher Power have to teach me this time? The opening meeting was over and the 24 hour silence had begun. I so looked forward to the epiphany I would have to share tomorrow night. HP had other plans.

It was a long and sleepless night filled with thoughts of the future and how I could assure that it would turn out the way I wanted it to. The day was filled with nature walks, crafts, meditation and yoga. Unfortunately at the candlelight meeting to break the silence, I had to report that my HP had obviously gone on a Caribbean cruise.

Another almost sleepless night, found me missing breakfast, drinking coffee in my room and saying the 3rd Step prayer. When I reached " May I do Thy Will always " I involuntarily said, "No, that's too hard." I immediately heard, "Try it, you'll like it ". The conversation continued. "Where have you been?" I asked. " How could you go off and leave me?"

"You told me that you had everything under control so it looked like you didn't want or need me. Besides didn't you get the postcards I sent?"

"I did but I didn't read them because they were delivered by a sleepless night."

"Well there were 12 of them from the Recovery Islands. Four were from the Island of Physical Recovery. They were to let you know I am wanting to help you with your compulsive food behavior."

"Four were from the Island of Emotional Recovery. They were to show you that I care about your ability to go through life with joy and serenity."

"The last four were from the Island of Spiritual Recovery. They were to let you know that I love you unconditionally even when you don't have time for me."

Needless to say, I returned home with my heart filled with love. My Higher Power had not abandoned me, rather I had been too stubborn to read the postcards. You never know what will happen on retreat.

Kay G

### Elena's Story

**(This piece first appeared in a slightly different form in the NNMOA, Newsletter, *Trust and Service*, Vol.24, Issue 7, July 2013).**

When Terry asked me if I would write about my life in OA and my recovery I thought, "Wow! What an honor. Maybe I could write a whole book about me."

I came into OA 37 years ago. I had tried many diets; fasted for one whole day and was on a clean diet for three days thanks to hypnoses. I couldn't stay on a diet. I came in, as almost everyone, to lose weight. I had tried commercial food plans. Yes, I lost weight and gained it back again. I came into OA because my husband hated fat women and had threatened for many years to leave me. I figured that if I found the right diet, he'd love me and we would live happily ever after. It didn't happen.

I did not like OA nor could I understand any of it except to see it as a diet club. I would leave the meeting regularly if someone mentioned God, was happy, or said stuff I could not understand (such as "one day at a time").

I lied and looked for attention when I spoke. One OA member asked me when was I going to start being honest? I did somewhat become a little honest, especially in my angry days, which I had many of, always blaming someone else.

I did have a sponsor, but I was not honest with her. I went through a lot of sponsors and had expectations of them to be perfect in their abstinence and to answer the phone when I called. I blamed them also for my compulsive overeating.

I did this for ten years in and out. I lost weight and would leave, then gain it back again. I did try another program. It helped for a while as it had a strict abstinence plan. I never made a whole abstinent year.

I lived in California then. I told my husband to leave. We got a divorce. I ballooned up to so much weight that my legs would swell up and hurt. In 1989 I moved to New Mexico and took care of my mother. My children were on their own then. I came to OA meetings and still thought of it as a diet. I also thought the twelve steps were dumb. Who, me? Powerless over food or anything? I thought I knew it all!! After all, I had ten years in OA. What a big lie!

My mom had one kitchen drawer that was called the Goody Drawer. It was I who filled it up. One day as I opened it to grab some sugar stuff I suddenly realized what I was doing to myself. I remember that I put the sugar stuff back. Since that day I have worked a strong program.

I promised myself that I would be honest, follow direction, stay consistent with my program, have a sponsor, call in my food every day and stay teachable. I did one day at a time. I followed direction without questioning it. I also went to workshops, retreats, and women's programs. I did my first twelve steps with a group of women belonging to OA and other fellowships. I sponsored newcomers. I learned to speak the Twelve Step language. I learned how to write down the messages OA members gave me in the sharing of their experience, strength, and hope. I was no longer a know-it-all.

I worked on my own inner self through OA meetings women's groups, and journal writing. I also gave up my Catholic God. Mine has no religion. I learned to love myself. I taught others to respect me, such as those in my family. I keep in touch with my sponsor, stay honest, and most of all stay teachable. I learned to laugh and that it was okay to cry.

When I learned to accept me as I am, I learned to accept others. I also learned to exercise, walk, swim, and run when I have a lot of anger within me. I learned to think before I speak, or I don't speak. OA recovery has become a way of life.

I wake up early enough to journal "Dear God" letters using the Steps in my writing. I call OA members, especially newcomers and those that left the program. I stay consistent. My past experiences and mistakes help me to understand that others are going through the same experiences as I have.

I now have 27 years of recovery, one day at a time. My recovery has no vacation. Pre-planning my meals and following directions makes life much easier. One of my favorite sayings is, "I've come along way, Babe" and, "My family doesn't know how lucky they are that I am in OA, I am so much nicer" (Smile).

Elena M.

### **CNMI Election Results**

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who was elected to CNMI service positions in October. The following were election winners, and of course, CNMI is a winner with these members in leadership positions.

Chair: Mary S  
Secretary: Dodie H  
Region Rep: Kay G  
OA Young Persons' Chair: Carol Sp  
Special Events Co-Chair: Margaret C  
12<sup>th</sup> Step Within Chair: Frank L

For those who might be interested in giving service to our intergroup, the following positions are still open:

WSBC (World Service Business Conference) Delegate  
Electronic Communications Coordinator  
Intergroup Rep Support Chair

For information about the qualifications and responsibilities for these service positions, please follow this link on the CNMI website: <http://oa-cnmi.org/cnmi-service-position-descriptions-pdfs/>. Please contact me if you may be interested in filling one of the vacant positions. We would be grateful for your service

Kathy M, Nominating committee chair  
505-730-6788  
[picardysmom@yahoo.com](mailto:picardysmom@yahoo.com)

## **IDEA Day Workshop International Day Experiencing Abstinence**

The official OA definition of abstinence is the "action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight." And yet abstinence is a very personal thing, a personal understanding, and a personal application. It is a reality that evolves over time, and there is no one formula!

IDEA DAY is designed to help us share ideas about what abstinence means and how folks have achieved abstinence. CNMI is sponsoring a workshop from 2-5 pm on Sunday, November 18 for IDEA Day. Please join us at the Asbury United Methodist Church, 10000 Candelaria, NE, Albuquerque. The workshop will feature activities and speakers to share ideas, inspiration and tips on this important topic. We'll be sharing not only about compulsive overeating but all types of compulsive behaviors, including bulimia and anorexia. Please come with your questions and your IDEAS. Together we can do what we could never do alone! For more information, contact Carol at 505-221-4515.

### **Fall Assembly in Colorado Springs**

In mid-October, I had the honor of representing CNMI at the Fall assembly in Colorado Springs. It was a busy weekend, but a very satisfying one. There were 24 reps from 19 of the 21 intergroups comprising region 3, along with 4 steering committee members all committed to doing the business of OA in our region to the best of our ability.

Elections are held in the Fall. Brenda Q. was re-elected chair and Vonnie N. was elected as the new recording secretary. We did a lot of committee work – we have 4 very active committees – and we had a very interesting forum on Friday including a presentation concerning the potential restructuring of the WSO Board of Trustees.

You can view my full report with details on our website [www.oa-cnmi.org](http://www.oa-cnmi.org). If you would like a copy of the minutes from the assembly, call me and I'll be happy to share them with you.

The next convention and assembly will be in San Antonio TX on the last weekend of March. Brochures can be found online:

<https://oasanantoniidotcom.wordpress.com/region-iii-2019/>

Thanks for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It is great to meet and get to know so many wonderful people in recovery from all around our region.

In service, pat o. region 3 rep. 281-3638

NOTE: Recordings of workshops and keynote speakers at this convention can be found at [oadenver.org](http://oadenver.org) under Podcasts.

## Exciting News from the WSO!

Small meetings can face unique challenges. **Guidelines for Small Meetings: Help and Hope** offers inspiring and practical suggestions for making every meeting a reliable place to hear about the experience, strength, and hope of abstinence and recovery in OA. Get the PDF:

[https://oa.org/files/pdf/Small\\_Meetings\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://oa.org/files/pdf/Small_Meetings_Guidelines.pdf)

The **OA-Approved Literature List** is an indispensable tool for any group or service body. An updated list has been posted, which includes newer literature items and eliminates some obsolete items. Download the list here to make sure your literature table is up to date.

<https://oa.org/files/pdf/OA-Approved-Literature-List-2018.pdf>

## Rejoice in Uncomfortable

Recovery is not a walk in the park and does not have a pretty bow wrapped around it. Recovery can be hard work. It can be ugly. It is uncomfortable. That is why people quit the program or leave meetings without getting a sponsor or working the Steps. Rejoice in and be happy with uncomfortable. It means you're in recovery. God is stretching you. Father clock is turning the hands another way. You're doing something different, which the addict in you doesn't like because you are transforming. A new you is taking place.

I remember my first "uncomfortable." When I came into OA 25 years ago, I sat around the OA tables for one year just listening because my "uncomfortable" stopped me from doing anything else. No way was I going to get a sponsor, call her daily, ask for help, work the Steps and whatever else OA wanted me to do.

I hated the thought of calling and asking someone to sponsor me. It was like saying, "I like you. Do you like me?" The fear of rejection, and being told "no" hit me at my core. The belief that I am not likeable and don't fit in raised its ugly head. The thought of going against that feeling of inferiority felt impossible, even though I was miserable in my isolation.

For a year I went to and left meetings alone. I kept coming back because other people were telling my secrets. I couldn't believe their honesty. I thought I was the only one abusing food the way I did. A force much larger than myself kept bringing me back. I would hear, "I am as sick as my secrets," "The secret that I don't want to tell is the secret that is keeping me most sick," and "A secret half-shared is a secret half-repaired."

One morning while I was reading and praying, I felt inspired to take action. I picked up the phone left a message asking a young girl if she would sponsor me. I always liked her shares

at meetings. Days went by without a return call. Another day while reading and praying, I got the courage to try once more. Again, I got her answering machine. I left the same message...still, no return call. I said to God, "No more." But God had other plans.

Days later I felt the urge to try a third time. I screamed to God, "This is the last time. Either she calls me back, or I am history." Miserable and uncomfortable, I went through the entire telephone process again. I hung up the phone and started crying. I said, "God, I can't do this. This is too hard. I am just not liked."

I was startled when the phone started ringing. My anxiety level was high, and my heart raced. She had returned my call, saying, "Yes, I will sponsor you." She was sweet, darling, and kind. I learned she was a single parent with four children and worked a full time job. Through the OA program, she had lost 100 pounds and was keeping it off.

She let me be her alarm clock. Every morning I called her at 6:00 a.m. This was a difficult commitment. I didn't like it, but I did it. To my surprise and delight, I loved our conversations. She inspired, encouraged and praised me. Nothing shocked her. She understood my disease and helped me until I could stand on my own two feet. She showed me love, and acceptance, and I blossomed.

God writes straight with crooked lines, and he transformed me. Twenty five years later, I am still in this wonderful program maintaining my weight. Calling and asking for help is no walk in the park. I soon learned OA deflates my ego and gives me self-esteem. Rejoice in the uncomfortable!

Susie D. Maryland Heights, Missouri USA  
*Lifeline* August 2011

## Acceptance at Any Age

I am 19 years old and approaching one year of abstinence. I came into OA at 15, around the time I first figured out how to purge. I only came because my parents were longtimers; I grew up around program. Unfortunately I was not ready for the message. I didn't want to get better, but I was a people pleaser (one of my many character defects).

My lowest weight was 103 pounds (47 kg). It was not until later I realized this was a gift. On my body type, it looked like 83 pounds (38 kg). I believed I was a monster. I was dating a boy who was over 200 pounds (91 kg) and felt I was as big, if not bigger, than he.

Like any OA member, I was crazy with food. It inhabited my thoughts, and I was unable to be a real person. My parents took me to a psychiatrist, who told me I was bipolar. I may have seemed bipolar, but only because I never dealt with what I was feeling. Besides being bulimic, I was an anorexic, exercise bulimic and compulsive overeater. Lucky me – I got

the entire package deal! It was not until later I realized this was a gift.

My parents knew I was bulimic, but I tried very hard to make sure they never heard me. If they were near the bathroom, I would go into my room, turn my music up as loud as I could, take out one of the trash bags I stored under my bed and purge in my trash can. While they slept, I would sneak the trash bag full of vomit out to the dump.

As if eating five times too many calories and then purging were not enough, to make sure I burned off all the calories, I would bike 10 miles (16km) until I was ready to pass out.

Today I am the youngest person at the OA groups I attend. I tend to forget my age in those rooms because, unlike most people, people in OA understand and accept me. I no longer feel the need to party and stuff my face with junk food like others. It's difficult to explain, but I choose not to eat many kinds of food. I'm sure they would taste great, but I never feel well afterwards, and insane thoughts fill my head again.

I would not be where I am today without OA, OA members and my Higher Power. The best advice I have is to keep coming back and take it one day at a time. As cliché as those phrases have become, they are true. One day at a time my Higher Power takes care of me, as long as I let him.

Tara M. (*Lifeline* February 2010)

### **I Choose Life**

My parents and friends began to notice I was too thin. My parents took me to a dietician, who advised me to include certain foods in my diet, I did and gained 3 kg (7 lbs), which made me distressed and unhappy. My parents suggested I see a psychologist, who diagnosed me with anorexia. Anorexia made me feel in control and gave me a sense of power. It distinguished me from others and made me feel special in my diseased mind. It also got me the attention I craved, resulting in my unwillingness to get better. During a year of therapy I became more ill and began purging when I ate a little more than I would have liked.

At the beginning of grade 11, I directed and produced a school play and became "too busy" to eat. My weight dropped to 35 kg (77 lbs), and my parents hospitalized me despite my numerous pleadings. Admitted just before my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and petrified of gaining weight, I attempted to run away and was caught. Medical staff told me I would be locked up if I did not cooperate, but my father didn't want that, so he removed me from the hospital. We pleaded with my mother to take me back into her home, and she agreed on the grounds I come with her to work every day so she could make sure I was eating and refraining from purging.

In October while at my mother's work, I began bingeing. My inability to control my eating was my worst nightmare. Despite numerous attempts to stop, my bingeing got worse,

and I began to gain weight. I became more depressed and struggled to complete my schoolwork because all I could do when I came home was eat. My mother would often get angry because I had eaten all the food in the house. She began locking the cupboards and freezer. But I still had access to food because I drove to supermarkets daily to buy binge foods. I isolated myself and refused to attend social gatherings because I was ashamed of the way I looked.

In August of my matriculation year, I had a minor car accident. At that moment I decided life was no longer worth living, so I overdosed on pills. My mother rushed me to the hospital, and the doctors pumped my stomach. While lying there, I realized I had to choose whether I wanted to live or die. Something told me I wanted to live, and my disease was standing in the way of my happiness. I became willing to do anything to get well.

My mother heard about Overeaters Anonymous through a college and believed OA might help me. As soon as the hospital discharged me, I attended my first OA meeting. What I found there was unlike anything I had ever seen before. Here were people who understood me and were willing to accept me no matter what. They told me I would recover from compulsive overeating, as long as I was willing to work the program to the best of my ability and follow its suggestions. I learned I have a fatal disease, and while I am not to blame for having the disease, I am responsible for taking simple, daily actions to bring about my recovery.

The program does not just focus on my eating problems, but provides me with guidelines on how to cope with life without compulsive eating or starvation. It teaches me I have things to do "just for today," and I need to rely on a power greater than myself for direction. Through practicing the program and using its tools, I have been able to refrain from bingeing and to return to a healthy weight. I can now participate in life, instead of running away. I have a renewed enthusiasm and zest for life that I never thought I could have.

So many miraculous things are happening to me. I have many friends who accept and love me as I am, and I enjoy going out and socializing with them. I am in a wonderful, loving relationship and am even able to study a challenging degree at university. I no longer suffer continuous depression and embarrassment about who I am. I am grateful to this wonderful program for saving my life. I encourage anyone who has an eating disorder, be it anorexia, bulimia or overeating, to try OA because it really works, if you work it!

Nadine, South Africa (*Lifeline* February 2010)

### **Searching for OA Recovery/Relapse Stories**

Please send your stories of recovery/relapse to [oacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:oacnmi@gmail.com). In order to make room for more stories please limit your submissions to 500 words or less.