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### Attention Intergroups and Service Boards:

Please inform the  
WSO whenever  
you have meeting  
changes to your  
directory.  
[oa.org/edit-a-  
meeting/](http://oa.org/edit-a-meeting/)

### Attention Group Secretaries:

Please make copies  
of this newsletter  
to share with your  
group members.

# A Step Ahead

Third Quarter 2015

Volume 19, Number 3

## Conference 2015 Explores Abstinence

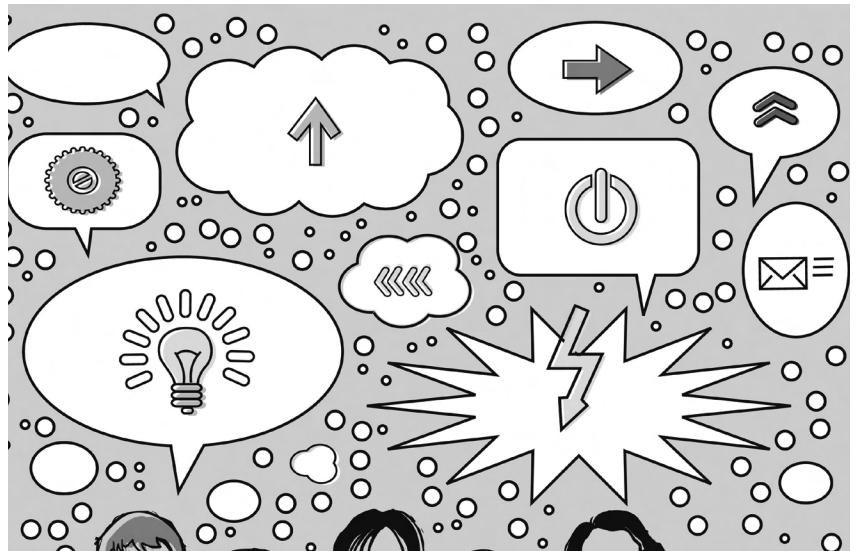
From April 27 to May 2, more than 190 delegates from around the world gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico USA, for the 54th annual World Service Business Conference.

Workshops and discussions supported the Conference theme, The Miracle of Abstinence, and included workshops on "How the Miracle of Abstinence is Supported by the Fellowship" and "We Receive the Miracle of Abstinence Within Intergroups/Service Boards." To purchase MP3 or CD recordings of the workshops and business meetings, download the order form at [oa.org/pdfs/audio\\_order\\_form\\_15.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/audio_order_form_15.pdf).

Delegates also participated in an interactive forum titled, "There's No Place Like OA: Follow the Yellow Brick Road to Recovery," which focused on working all Twelve Steps.

The delegates adopted the following motions:

- Conference Seal of Approval for the revised pamphlet *A Program of Recovery*.
- Conference Seal of Approval for the revised pamphlet *A Guide for Sponsors*.
- Conference Seal of Approval for the revised pamphlet *OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies*.
- Rescind the policy to pay founder's expenses at Convention.
- Notify delegates that they are expected to serve on a Conference committee until the following WSBC.
- Revise the OA Preamble to include "compulsive food behaviors."
- Make Final Conference Report available electronically only.
- Require World Service events to display "Overeaters Anonymous" on all displays, banners, and other signage.
- Require delegates to be registered seventy days prior to Conference.
- Require WSO to use the January Service Body Information report to determine number of delegates seated at Conference.
- Remove Outstates Intergroup from Region Three.



In addition, several housekeeping motions were adopted to delete unnecessary and outdated policies from the Conference Policy Manual.

The Final Conference Report will be available electronically in early August. Delegates and service bodies will be notified by email when the report is posted. Additionally, a contact list of all delegates will be emailed directly to each delegate. For information on Conference voting results, read the 2015 Wrap Up Report at [oa.org/pdfs/wrap\\_up\\_report\\_15.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/wrap_up_report_15.pdf).

## Board Finesses OA Operations Through Strategic Planning

—Meg H., Region Two Trustee, First Vice Chair, and Strategic Planning Committee Chair

Did you know OA has a Strategic Plan? The Board of Trustees, region chairs, and the World Service Office has created a Strategic Plan to help focus our efforts on improving OA as a whole. The current three-year plan for 2014–2016 focuses on our primary purpose. As stated in the OA Preamble, our primary purpose is "to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer." You can view the plan at [oa.org/pdfs/sp2014\\_2016.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/sp2014_2016.pdf).

**Strategic Plan Continued on page 2**



# “Compulsive Food Behaviors” Added to OA Preamble

**D**elegates to the 2015 World Service Business Conference approved a wording change to the OA Preamble, which appears below with the new language italicized and in bold.

OA literature items will be updated to reflect the change when they are reprinted, but for now please note the change when reading the Preamble in OA literature. Also, please update the Preamble if it appears on your group's or service body's website.

You can find the amended Preamble on the OA website on the “About OA” page under Newcomers. It is also included in the following meeting formats: *Suggested Meeting Format*, *Suggested Telephone Meeting Format*, *Step Study Meeting Format*, and *Recovery from Relapse Meeting Format*. All OA meeting formats are available as free downloads on the “Group Support” page under Members/Groups.

## New OA Preamble

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating.

We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating **and compulsive food behaviors** and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

## Strategic Plan *Continued from page 1*

Delegates experienced a wonderful “Strategic Planning Workshop” at the 2015 World Service Business Conference. They reviewed the Strategic Plan and then broke into small groups to brainstorm how to bring home to groups and service bodies the necessity of working all Twelve Steps. A list of their ideas is available at [oa.org/pdfs/strategic\\_planning\\_notes\\_15.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/strategic_planning_notes_15.pdf).

The Board of Trustees and the region chairs had a great session reviewing what has been accomplished in 2015 and refining the tasks for 2016. Completed tasks for 2015 include *Twelve Stepping a Problem*, a writing exercise for life problems, which can be downloaded for free at [oa.org/pdfs/twelve\\_stepping\\_a\\_problem.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/twelve_stepping_a_problem.pdf).

On track for completion is “Working all Twelve Steps,” a series of articles appearing in each 2015 issue of *Lifeline* and *A Step Ahead*. Also on track is a podcast series of virtual workshops, one per month, on each of the Twelve Steps. Podcasts for “step zero” and Steps One through Six are available now at [oa.org/oapodcasts/#workshops](http://oa.org/oapodcasts/#workshops). Trustees and region chairs will continue to offer these virtual workshops on the second Sunday each month at 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). See [oa.org/datebook-calendar](http://oa.org/datebook-calendar) for details on how to participate.

A *Newcomer Quick Step Study* and a mini workshop on The Importance of Working the Steps are yet to come.

For 2016, goals to Increase Focus on an Individual's Responsibility to Carry the Message and create a Carrying the Message Made Simple program include creating the following:

- A Sponsorship Training Workshop with a virtual workshop and podcast each month.
- A plan to promote the Responsibility Pledge to increase awareness and its visibility and use in meeting formats, at the WSBC, in *Lifeline*, in podcasts, and in other venues.
- *Tips for Carrying the Message*, including do's, don'ts, and why carry the message.
- Virtual workshops and podcasts on Service in My Recovery and to relate service to the Tradition and Concept of the month.
- Service Body Building—stay tuned for more info!

We have received terrific feedback about products that have been developed in the past two years from the Strategic Plan.

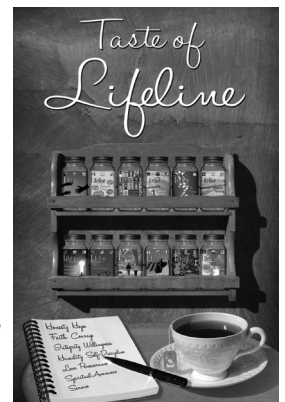
Together we can do what we could never do alone! Here's to OA growing stronger and stronger one member, one meeting, and one day at a time.

## New Book Available

OA's latest book is now on sale in the bookstore. *Taste of Lifeline* is a curated collection of more than one hundred stories from the pages of *Lifeline*, featuring:

- Personal accounts by OA members writing about their challenges and how they work the OA program.
- Stories for newcomers, stories about recovery from relapse, stories about long-term recovery, stories from international members, and much more.
- Journal questions so that you, your sponsee, and your group can use the Tool of writing to find and strengthen your recovery.
- “Welcome Home!” OA's beloved story of outreach to compulsive eaters around the world.

Get OA's new *Taste of Lifeline* at [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org) (#970/\$13.50; #971/\$303.75, box of 25). Shipping not included.



# What Do You Do With Your Old *Lifelines*?

—Gerri H., General Service Trustee, Chair

For the past two-plus years, my husband and I have been traveling around the country in our RV. This is great fun because I can visit lots of OA meetings! I often like to ask members what they do with their old *Lifeline* magazines. Most frequently, I'm told that old magazines end up on the literature table at their home meetings. My response? "Don't do that!"

The reason? Why would I want to buy a *Lifeline* subscription if I can get a free copy at my meetings? *Lifeline* needs your support because subscriptions are dropping at an alarming rate. At some point, if this number doesn't go up, issue frequency will drop and perhaps paper copies will be eliminated!

What can you do? Find better places to leave your old issues. When I fly, I leave copies in the airplane seat pocket in front of me. I also place old issues in my doctor's magazine rack. I hope that someone who needs our Fellowship finds out about OA from a well-placed *Lifeline* magazine. Our magazine is high quality and speaks well of our organization.

*Lifeline* is a fantastic magazine with amazing stories of recovery. If you aren't getting *Lifeline*, help OA and yourself by ordering your own subscription at [oa.org/lifeline-magazine/subscribe-to-print-lifeline](http://oa.org/lifeline-magazine/subscribe-to-print-lifeline). And if you see old copies at your meetings, bring this topic up at your next group conscience.



## Free Podcast Features WSBC 2015 Keynote Speaker

Hear this year's Conference keynote speaker, Matt S., tell his story about entering OA as a young person and how the Fellowship has saved his life.

Now eight years abstinent, Matt S. shares about learning willingness from his sponsor, experiencing peace from making amends, and beginning to take himself seriously as a compulsive eater, as an OA member, and as a man.

Filled with humor, passion, and compassion, the 2015 Conference Keynote Speaker podcast is available to download for free at [oa.org/oapodcasts](http://oa.org/oapodcasts). Share it with your sponsor, sponsee, group, or service body and be inspired by the power of the OA program to transform lives.

## Send Us Your Stories!

### The next deadlines for *Lifeline* are . . .

September 15, 2015

**HOW OA CHANGED MY LIFE:** Describe your life before and after being in OA. Include your physical state before and after OA.

October 15, 2015

**ABSTINENCE THROUGH THE AGES:** How has your abstinence changed as your body's needs have changed through aging, pregnancy, or other situations? How have you adjusted your program in response to life changes?

**UNITY DAY:** February 27 is Unity Day, when OA members pause to reaffirm the strength inherent in OA's unity. What does being part of the worldwide Fellowship of OA mean to you and your recovery? Unity is the spiritual Principle of Tradition One. Share your experience, strength, and hope as it relates to Tradition One.

November 15, 2015

**RECOVERY IS ATTRACTIVE:** How do you carry the message of recovery to others through attraction rather than promotion? What role does threefold recovery—spiritual, emotional, and physical—play in attraction?

**OA'S VIRTUAL FELLOWSHIP:** Share your experience, strength, and hope related to finding recovery and inspiration in OA's virtual Fellowship.

**LET'S MEET AT CONVENTION:** Share your favorite stories from Conventions past. What opportunities does Convention offer to carry the message? What gems from Convention, Conference, workshops, or retreats sparked your recovery?

For more information about these and other upcoming *Lifeline* topics, refer to the July 2015 *Lifeline* or visit [oa.org/lifeline-magazine/monthly-topics/](http://oa.org/lifeline-magazine/monthly-topics/).



## Honoring OA's Seventh Tradition: Donations and Bequests

*From Your Treasurer*

— Tina C., General Service Trustee, Treasurer

**E**very OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

Both the book *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* and the pamphlet *Seventh Tradition of OA* go into great detail on how OA is to be self-supporting through Fellowship contributions.

### Contribution Guidelines

Donations may come only from OA members or OA groups and service bodies. To preserve our autonomy and independence, we cannot accept donations from non-OA members or from any outside organization or business. To further preserve our integrity, restrictions are placed on how much an individual OA member may donate. Currently, the amount is \$5,000 per fund. Thus, an OA member may contribute up to \$5,000 to the general fund, \$5,000 to the Delegate Support Fund, and \$5,000 to the Professional Exhibits Fund. These limits endeavor to prevent any individual or service body from feeling that the donation gives them a larger voice in how OA functions. The ultimate authority is our Higher Power, who speaks through the OA group conscience.

In addition to individual or group donations, special contributions may be made in several situations.

#### *Donations to honor someone:*

- Both the donor and honoree must be OA members.
- The donation limits in honor of an OA member are the same as any donation, \$5,000 per OA fund.

#### *Bequests:*

- An OA member may state in her or his will, trust, or estate that OA will receive a donation upon her or his demise.
- Bequests do not have a financial limit. The only requirement is that the individual was an OA member.

- A bequest can be designated toward a specific OA fund, but if no instructions are given, then the monies are put into the general fund.

### 2015 Bequests

In 2015, OA received two bequests totaling more than \$116,000. No specific funds or instructions were listed, so the monies have been added to the general fund. These bequests were totally unexpected, and as a Fellowship and a corporation, OA is extremely grateful.

The Board of Trustees and the World Service Office are working diligently and using these gifts wisely to enhance OA services and programs. The bequests will be used judiciously over two or three years.

### Why Contribute?

Given these generous bequests, does OA still need individual and group donations? Absolutely! As much as we are a Fellowship, as much as we want to care and share everything to all, we are also a corporation. The 2015 budget for

OA, Inc., is approximately \$1.8 million. Clearly, for OA to honor its Seventh Tradition to be self-supporting through our own contributions and to honor Tradition Five and our primary purpose, OA continues to rely on donations from OA members and groups.

Perhaps that means giving the equivalent of an extra US dollar a meeting—whether your currency is dollars, euros, pesos, pounds, shekels, or rubles—making a special fund donation, or arranging a bequest to the Fellowship, which can support your recovery today and may save a life in the future. Regardless of how little or how much is given, OA will always need our contributions to reach out to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

Tradition Seven reminds us that we must be self-supporting through our own contributions. Contribute to OA today. Go to [oa.org](http://oa.org) and click on the Contribute page to make a one-time contribution or to become an automatic recurring contributor. Together we can.

## Web Links

Discover interesting and helpful OA website links.

**NEW! The Simplicity Project:** Use this free online resource to create a personal inspiration card to affirm your program and reinforce your abstinence.  
[oa.org/pdfs/tsw\\_simplicity.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/tsw_simplicity.pdf)

**Podcasts on The Importance of Working All Twelve Steps:** Learn more about the physical, emotional, and spiritual transformation that members experience in working each and every Step. Now available for free download: podcasts for “step zero” and Steps One through Six. [oa.org/oapodcasts](http://oa.org/oapodcasts)

**Datebook:** Let OA members know about your group or service body’s special event by posting it on OA’s online calendar. Submit info at [oa.org/pdfs/datebook\\_submission\\_form.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/datebook_submission_form.pdf)

# Twelve Reasons to Become an OA Automatic Recurring Contributor Today!

1. Your contributions support OA's primary purpose: to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering compulsive overeater.
2. Your contributions help OA develop and publish OA-approved literature, such as the new Brown Book.
3. Your contributions support OA's website, [oa.org](http://oa.org), where many newcomers first learn about OA and the promise of recovery.
4. Your contributions support free downloadable resources on [oa.org](http://oa.org), such as podcasts, meeting formats, and much more.
5. Your contributions support worldwide and virtual meeting information, outreach to professionals, and more.
6. Your automatic, regular contributions for virtual meetings means you never have to ask, "Did I remember my Seventh Tradition this week?"
7. Your contributions support carrying the message around the world through translations of OA-approved literature.
8. Your contributions help you work your program, with many OA members discovering that regular financial contributions support their recovery.
9. Your automatic, recurring contributions are easy to set up and can be scheduled monthly, quarterly, or annually.
10. Your contributions are tax deductible.
11. Your contributions are a meaningful way to honor your abstinence anniversary, acknowledge a sponsor, or remember the costs, financial and physical, of your last binge.
12. Your contributions make a difference, and no contribution is too small to help carry the message of recovery.



*Help OA grow by signing up on the Contribute page at [oa.org](http://oa.org) to become an Automatic Recurring Contributor.*

# Delegates Elect New Board of Trustees

**D**elegates to the 2015 World Service Business Conference elected or re-elected several members to the Board of Trustees. Also, committee chairs were assigned based on this election.

## Trustee Elections

- New Region Trustee: Stella C. (Region Nine)
- Re-elected Region Trustees: Vicki W. (Region Three) and Karin H. (Region Six)
- New General Service Trustee: Bonnie L. (three-year term)
- Re-elected General Service Trustee: Tina C. (three-year term)

## Officer Elections

Officers of the Board of Trustees and committee chairs for the 2015-2016 term are as follows:

- Chair: Gerri H.
- First Vice Chair: Meg H.
- Second Vice Chair: Karen C.
- Treasurer: Tina C.

## Board Committee Chairs

- Board-approved Literature: Linda H.
- Board of Trustees Bylaws: Bob F.
- BRM Review: Karin C.
- Conference Planning: Janice S.
- Convention 2016: Karin H.
- Convention 2020 Site Selection: Meg H.
- Internal Information: Barb G.
- International Publications/Translations: Stella C.
- Professional Tradeshows: Faith M.
- Public Awareness: Vicki W.
- Strategic Planning: Meg H.
- Virtual Services: Stephanie D.
- Literature Review: Linda J.
- Delegate Support Fund: Tina C.
- Website Redesign: Cyndy L.

## Conference Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: Cyndy L.
- Conference-approved Literature: Linda J.
- Finance: Tina C.
- Professional Outreach: Faith M.
- Public Information: Vicki W.
- Region Chairs: Karin H.
- Twelfth Step Within: Bonnie L.
- Unity with Diversity: Stella C.
- Web/Technology: Margie. G.
- Young Persons': Stephanie D.

For information on Conference voting results, read the 2015 Wrap Up Report at [oa.org/pdfs/wrap\\_up\\_report\\_15.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/wrap_up_report_15.pdf).

## What's New from WSO

### *Strong Abstinence That's Wallet Friendly*

The *Strong Abstinence Checklist and Writing Exercise* wallet card (#415, \$.40 each) fits in your pocket or purse and includes the board-approved *Strong Abstinence Checklist*, a helpful twelve-question writing exercise, and the Twelve Steps of OA. Find it at [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org).

### *Free Download: Step Work Solution for Life Problems*

Life problems can threaten abstinence, but you can Step your way to the solution with the *Twelve Stepping a Problem* writing exercise. Download it for free at [oa.org/pdfs/twelve\\_stepping\\_a\\_problem.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/twelve_stepping_a_problem.pdf).

### *Updated Pamphlet: To Parents and Concerned Adults*

The revised pamphlet (#250, \$.30 each) better describes the diverse signs and symptoms of compulsive overeating and compulsive food behaviors that teens and young adults exhibit. Find it at [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org).

## New Book Now Available!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED STORIES OF RECOVERY HIGHLIGHTING EACH OF THE TWELVE STEPS, THE TRADITIONS, THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY, AND MUCH MORE.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Now available for purchase at [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org) (#970/\$13.50; #971/\$303.75, box of 25). Shipping not included. Call 505-891-2664 to place an expedited order. E-book available soon from online retailers.

## **Attention Group Secretaries: Update Your Group Info**

**G**roup secretaries are an important link between the World Service Office and OA groups and vital for keeping meeting information up-to-date and distributing OA news, such as the release of new resources and convention dates, to members.

The WSO wants to hear from you! Update your group's meeting details and secretary contact information by going to Find a Meeting at [oa.org](http://oa.org). First search for your meeting and then click "Edit Details" to update your group's information. 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.

## Maintaining Your Weight? Send Us Your Story!

**OA** is looking for new stories to include in an upcoming revision of the pamphlet *Maintaining a Healthy Weight*.

All members are encouraged to submit stories that involve any manifestation of the disease, including the experiences of members suffering from anorexia or bulimia who had to gain weight to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

The deadline for submissions is **September 30, 2015**, and stories of approximately 500 words have a greater chance of publication.

All stories submitted are assumed intended for publication, are subject to editing, and when published become the property of OA, Inc. Submissions will not be returned. All submissions must contain the author's full name and address.

You may request anonymity with publication, and your state, province or country may remain anonymous if you so indicate. Email your story to [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org) with the subject line "Healthy Weight."

## OA Simplifies Translation Licensing

Literature translations help carry the OA message around the world by making program literature available to compulsive eaters in their own languages. To support the international Fellowship's access to OA literature, the International Translations and Publications Committee has simplified the process in applying to translate and distribute OA literature.

Now translation and distribution is just a two-step procedure:

- License 1 grants international groups and service bodies the right within two years to translate and distribute for validation OA literature.
- License 2 grants the group/service body the right to publish and distribute OA literature for twenty years.

Licenses 1 and 2 and the updated *Translation Guidelines for OA Literature* are available on the "OA Literature Translations" page under Service Body Support on [oa.org](http://oa.org). For more information, contact the WSO at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org).

## Translation Funds Deadline August 1

Intergroups and service boards may apply for funds to translate OA literature, including OA's new Brown Book (*Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*), the recently revised *To Parents and Concerned Adults*, or any other OA book or pamphlet.

The next deadline for applications is **August 1, 2015**.

To apply, complete the Translation Funds Application, available on the "OA Literature Translations" page of [oa.org](http://oa.org). Then email, fax, or mail the application to the World Service Office. Applications must be postmarked or electronically date stamped no later than August 1, 2015.

Applications will be reviewed and funds allocated at the August Board of Trustees meeting.

To learn more about OA's translation policy, see the updated *Translation Guidelines for OA Literature* at [oa.org/pdfs/translation\\_guidelines.pdf](http://oa.org/pdfs/translation_guidelines.pdf).

## Keep In Touch With WSO Email Bulletins

Sign up to receive periodic news bulletins from the OA World Service Office. Subscribers to the email bulletins receive updates on important Overeaters Anonymous news, such as announcements of new OA literature, decisions from the World Service Business Conference, and changes to the OA website. Keep your service body in the know by clicking on "WSO Email Bulletins Sign Up" on the [oa.org](http://oa.org) home page.



# Save the Date!

## World Service Convention 2016 "Recovery: The Trail to Freedom!"

Boston Marriott  
Copley Place  
Boston, Massachusetts USA  
September 1–4, 2016

Lodging reservations  
open September 2015.

Convention registration  
opens January 2016.



# Professional Exhibits Fund

## Will YOU contribute to help OA carry the message?

Please help carry the message by contributing to the Professional Exhibits (PE) Fund. The fund assists service bodies to exhibit at professional conferences and conventions if the service bodies lack sufficient resources.

In the last two years, the PE Fund has helped four service bodies attend conferences so that 20,000 professionals could be exposed to OA.

We have already committed funds to assist attendance in 2015 at conferences about eating disorders, psychiatry, and obesity. See what OA members are saying about this fund:

*We are still speaking with attendees who have not heard of Overeaters Anonymous. Reaching out to these health care professionals with the message of our Twelve Step recovery program is very important.*

**BUT**, the fund has only a few hundred dollars remaining. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

### Interested in Donating?

Please indicate "Professional Exhibits Fund" on the memo line of your check or choose that option from the designation drop-down menu on our contributions page at <https://50447.thankyou4caring.org>.

## Interested in applying for funds?

Download the Professional Exhibits Fund application from [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) under Service Body Support, Professional Exhibits Fund.

Applications are reviewed once a month. It is recommended that you submit your application at least two months prior to the conference or convention dates.

Service bodies can also download the *Professional Tradeshow's Manual* from [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) under Service Body Support, Professional Tradeshow's Manual.



## Sufficient Substitute

**T**wo years before I went to my first OA meeting, my husband and I bought our dream house. It had the high ceilings I considered absolutely essential to staying on a diet and losing the more than 100 pounds (45 kg) I needed to lose. Everybody knows low ceilings lead to claustrophobia, which leads to bingeing. High ceilings had to be the answer. My new house would be a pristine, binge-free zone!

Two days later I was bingeing to the point of pain and then sitting on the toilet in a locked bathroom. I did that for two more years before coming into OA.

In OA I learned I had to find a sufficient substitute for the food. Every diet I tried failed because I never found a substitute for the food. I was like a coiled spring, holding tight and managing to deprive myself for a while until I couldn't stand the deprivation. Then the spring would snap, and I would be on a four-month binge until I tried it all over again.

In OA I found a substitute for the food. Instead of using food to deal with life, I learned the Twelve Steps are the answer. They are my design for living the spiritual Principles and processes necessary to deal with every facet of my life abstinently.

I believe I took Step One many years before I came to OA. I knew I was powerless over food. I just was never willing to do anything about it. I simply stayed at "step zero," living in the problem while waiting for somebody to come along and do something!

In OA I learned I only had to change one thing—everything! I started working the Steps in earnest. But I wanted to skip Step Three. How could I ever have a relationship with a Higher Power? That seemed too simplistic and unscientific for me. But I was told that skipping Step Three was not an option! Step Three was the key. If I continued trying to do it on my own, in my own way, without spiritual Principles, I was doomed to fail.

Because I was desperate for recovery, I acted "as if" until I suddenly found myself six months abstinent. I realized I had indeed undergone vast changes in my attitude and outlook on life. I was different. There was finally a power in my life greater than food.



Was I now done? Had I mastered this thing?

No, there was more work to be done. I learned that the Twelve Steps form a natural progression, each one necessary preparation for the next. I now know with absolute certainty that the Twelve Steps are like a string of holiday lights. If any single bulb is missing or burned out, the entire string doesn't work. I can't skip any Steps. My life depends on working all twelve to the best of my ability.

Maybe yours does too?

—Gloria L.

**Q** How do you use the Twelve Steps as a substitute for the food, resentments, and self-centeredness?

**Editor's Note:** As part of the 2015 Strategic Plan initiative to increase the focus on the Importance of Working All Twelve Steps, members of the OA Board of Trustees and region chairs are contributing one article per issue to share their experience, strength, and hope on this theme.

# 2016 *Lifeline* Topics & Writing Prompts

Deadlines for monthly featured topics are three and a half months prior to the first day of the month of publication. Please indicate the topic and month for which you are submitting the article based on the deadlines in parentheses. Typed letters 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. *Lifeline* promotes "unity with diversity" regarding the race, nationality, gender, age, physical challenges, and sexuality of its writers. Thank you.

## **JANUARY** (Deadline: 9/15/15)

### **How OA Changed My Life**

Describe your life before and after being in OA. Include your physical state before and after OA.

## **FEBRUARY** (Deadline: 10/15/15)

### **Abstinence Through the Ages**

How has your abstinence changed as your body's needs have changed through aging, pregnancy, or other situations? How have you adjusted your program in response to life changes? How do you make OA your first priority? If you are a young person in program, how do you live for today while planning for your future?

### **Unity Day**

February 27 is Unity Day, when OA members pause to reaffirm the strength inherent in OA's unity. What does being part of the worldwide Fellowship of OA mean to you and your recovery? Unity is the spiritual Principle of Tradition One. Share your experience, strength, and hope as it relates to Tradition One.

## **MARCH** (Deadline: 11/15/15)

### **Recovery Is Attractive**

How do you carry the message of recovery to others through attraction rather than promotion? What role does threefold recovery—spiritual, emotional, and physical—play in attraction? How did someone first carry the message to you through attraction or threefold recovery? How does the OA Responsibility Pledge inspire you?

### **OA's Virtual Fellowship**

Share your experience, strength, and hope related to finding recovery and inspiration in OA's virtual Fellowship.

### **Let's Meet at Convention**

Share your favorite stories from Conventions past. What opportunities does Convention offer to carry the message? What gems from Convention, Conference, workshops, or retreats sparked your recovery?

## **APRIL** (Deadline: 12/15/15)

### **New Body, New Life**

How have you adjusted to life at a healthy body weight? How has physical recovery changed you? How has your body image changed in recovery? How has your experience of intimate relationships changed?

## **MAY/JUNE** (Deadline: 1/15/16)

### **The Right Tool for the Job**

How do you use the nine Tools in your daily life? What is your experience using the action plan Tool? How does the plan of eating Tool help you with restaurants, special occasions, or travel? Which Tool do you use the most? Which Tool do you struggle with the most?

## **JULY** (Deadline: 3/15/16)

### **Generally Speaking**

Write on any topic that has meaning for you

## **AUGUST** (Deadline: 4/15/16)

### **Struggles, Stresses, and Setbacks**

How do you handle "life on life's terms" in recovery? What has been your recovery experience during major life challenges such as death of a loved one, divorce, changing jobs, or moving? How have you maintained abstinence while grieving? How did you learn to keep coming back no matter what? If you relapsed, how did you get back on track? What has helped you remain abstinent over the days, weeks, months, or years?

## **SEPTEMBER** (Deadline: 5/15/16)

### **Changing Me, Not the Program**

How do you use program to "build a bridge and get over it"? What steps have you had to take to "get over" yourself? How did Step Two help you "resign from the debating society" (AA *Twelve and Twelve*, p. 26) and get on with recovery?

### **Anorexia and Bulimia**

Share your experience, strength, and hope related to using OA and the Twelve Steps to recover from anorexia or bulimia.

## **OCTOBER** (Deadline: 6/15/16)

### **Get Motivated with Slogans**

How do slogans fit into your recovery routine? How do slogans help you with compulsive urges? How do slogans help with cravings? What slogans help you get unstuck and move toward recovery?

## **NOVEMBER/**

## **DECEMBER** (Deadline: 7/15/16)

### **Calling My Higher Power**

How did you make contact with your Higher Power? What is your experience with the diversity of spiritual approaches in OA? What struggles have you faced when defining your HP? How do you maintain constant contact with your HP? What is your meditation routine? What gems can you share from meditation workshops? What have been the results of meditation in your life?

### **International Day Experiencing Abstinence**

International Day Experiencing Abstinence is November 19. IDEA encourages OA members worldwide to begin or reaffirm their abstinence from compulsive eating. To celebrate the day, share your experience, strength, and hope related to starting and maintaining abstinence.

### **Celebrate the Season**

How do you maintain abstinence during holidays and celebrations? Share your strategies for shifting focus away from food, dealing with triggers, and joining in the fun.

### **Holiday Magic**

How are holidays in recovery different? Share your stories, inspirations, and reflections on living the Twelve Steps during times of celebration.

## **OTHER MATERIALS** (No Deadline)

*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.

## **DEPARTMENTS** (No Deadline)

- **Stepping Out:** Stories focused on the month's featured Step.
- **Service with a Smile:** Stories focused on the Tool of service.
- **Living Traditions:** Stories focused on the month's featured Tradition.
- **Taking the Spiritual Path:** Perspectives about a higher power.
- **Newcomers Corner:** Newcomers' experiences and concerns.
- **OA Around the World:** Stories of the history of OA in your country or area.
- **Generally Speaking:** Shares on any topic meaningful to OA members.
- **How OA Changed My Life:** Shares on changes before and after recovery.
- **Main Attraction:** Stories about public information and attraction.
- **Ask-It Basket:** Member questions about OA.
- **Share It:** Letters to the editor of *Lifeline*.

Submit your story to *Lifeline* by email at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org), by mail to PO Box 44020 Rio Rancho, NM USA 87174-4020, or via fax at 1-505-891-5320.

A black and white photograph of a cake. The cake is decorated with a large, textured rock-like object on top. A swirl of whipped cream is visible in the foreground. The background is dark and textured. On the left side, there is a vertical text overlay that reads "g?" in a large, bold, sans-serif font.



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*cut*

• *cut*

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