

Spring 2019

SOAR8
Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Puerto Rico
South America
Central America
Caribbean Islands

Sunlight of the Spirit

PLANTATION, FL

Join us and share your experience, strength, and hope with other OA members while strengthening your own commitment to recovery. Whether you are new to the program or an "old-timer," we invite you to a weekend full of recovery and fellowship basking in the **Sunlight of the Spirit**.

**SOAR8 Regional Assembly
April 5-7 Plantation, FL**

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Workshops & panels covering Abstinence, Higher Power, Recovery from Relapse, and much more...

Saturday Lunch Fashion Show and Dinner Banquet with Entertainment!

Speakers from across Region 8 sharing experience, strength, and hope on recovery in Overeaters Anonymous.

Registration Opens: Friday 3 pm
Convention Starts: Friday 4 pm
Sat & Sun 8 am
Opening Ceremony: Friday 8 pm
Convention Closes: Sunday 12 pm

HOTEL INFORMATION

SHERATON SUITES
FORT LAUDERDALE PLANTATION
311 N UNIVERSITY DRIVE
PLANTATION, FL 33324

Reservations: (954) 424-3300
Online: <https://goo.gl/uUzeBT>

Hotel Amenities:
Pool, Fitness Room, & Free WiFi
Free Hotel Shuttle (5 mile Radius)
Refrigerator & microwave in every suite
Complimentary self-parking
ADA guest rooms upon request

The Three Legged Stool

In the OA program there is much talk of the three legged stool of our disease, spiritual, physical and emotional. I am instructed to work each leg of my stool equally or my program cannot succeed.

There is also the three legged stool that contain the three legacies of the program which are recovery, unity and service. These are the cornerstones of a new way of living.

What is recovery ? For me what it means to recover is spelled out beautifully in the promises that are on page 84 and 85 in the Big Book of AA. Now the question becomes how do we achieve this recovery. The first step must be to understand our condition fully and to put down our “alcoholic foods” which are spelled out in the chapter The Doctors Opinion in the Big Book. We must truly understand the grave nature of our addiction and treat it just like an alcoholic or a drug addict would treat their addiction. We would never tell them it was ok to just cut back and congratulate them for making “progress”. For me if food is an option when push comes to shove my mind will tell me it is the only option .

The Second leg of the stool is unity. We are told that our common welfare should come first and the personal recovery depends on program unity. In the appendix of the AA big book it states we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone. In essence unity or death! Thankfully in OA we have the twelve traditions which teach us how to have unity in our fellowships and apply to life in general.

The third leg of the stool is service. In the chapter Working With Others it states that nothing will insure immunity from drinking (eating) as intensive work with others . We are told life will take on new meaning and to watch people

recover, loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up around you, to have a host of friends- this is an experience you must not miss! We are instructed that in order to keep what we have we must give away what so graciously has been given to us. So what does it mean to give service and when can I start giving service? Service starts the moment you walk into your first meeting and remind others what it was first like at the beginning of our program. Everyone can and needs to give back no matter where you are in your recovery. Sometimes when people are struggling in their program they say I don't have the time or ability to share anything useful but that is exactly when we need to reach out and help another person. Just remember do not think of what you will get out of a situation but of what you can bring to it. To be helpful is our only aim!

I know that to sit firmly and comfortably on this stool each leg must be equally worked and that even if two legs are very strong one bad leg can topple my program.

Susan D - Twelve step Within committee member



Blessings Received in O.A.

Hello Everyone!

This will be my last article in the Newsletter as Region 8 Trustee. I have served Region 8 for six years. In my six years of service I have received many blessings.

My first blessing....God knew what I needed before I did! I was nominated in July of 2012. I went home very excited and asked my husband if he thought it would be OK...after all, I would have to travel four times a year for the Trustee position and three times year to the S.O.A.R. 8 Business Assemblies.

Not to mention all the other service. I didn't want this position to interfere with our retirement plans, so asking him was the right thing to do. He said go for it!

I happily sent in my application. I would be elected May of 2013.

I've heard it said that God can see around corners....Well he certainly saw around a corner when it came to me. My husband passed away before I was elected. God closed one door and opened this door; He gave me the opportunity to serve O.A.

Blessing two was my ability to be able to serve even though I was heartbroken. The job surrounded me with very supportive people. It took time to learn the job, but I was teachable. Working my program helped me work through all my fears surrounding this position.

Blessing three was the opportunity to travel all over Region 8 to do service. My husband and I traveled extensively, but to have the opportunity to go to places in Region 8 and do service was my pleasure. We even had Region 8 Business Assemblies and Conventions in Medellin and Bogota, Columbia. I traveled to Rio De Janeiro, Brazil to attend the JUNCCAB National Service Board Business Assembly. I have been to many of

the states in Region 8 to give workshops and retreats. I have also used my vacation to speak at meetings in other parts of the world. I remember being in Athens a week after the W.S.B.C. I had met a woman from Athens at W.S.B.C. and I mentioned I was going to be there on vacation. She asked me if I could speak at her meeting. I did! I couldn't believe she managed to get 40 people to attend that meeting on such short notice. I also spoke at a meeting in N.Y. while on vacation. There were many places I was willing to do this service.



Blessing four has been the pleasure of meeting old friends and making new ones along the way. I am so grateful and humbled by this position. The Trustees are on the bottom of the inverted triangle...we truly serve the people of O.A. I saw exactly "how it works". Members think we make up the rules and write the books.....NO.....It all comes from the members. It is important to have your voices

heard at your intergroup. It's not them and us...it is a WE program. Together We Can!

Blessing five is continued abstinence to be able to do this service. I am currently holding down a 147 lb. weight loss.

I have many daily blessings, but these are the top 5 I received from doing service.

Sooooooo if you're having some fears about doing service, all I can say is "Just do it". You will be so happy you did. It was an enhancement to my program.

I hope to see you around at Region 8 events! I am not leaving, just rotating out of service.

Thanks for all your love and support through the years!

Hugs,

Linda H. Region 8 Trustee

The Importance of Being Educated

During my annual check-up, my doctor's office had incorporated some new pre-appointment questions that screened for domestic violence (dv) and alcohol use. In the examination room, I was further screened for depression/mental health issues. Since I had formerly been employed as an advocate for victims of dv, I was particularly impressed with their efforts on behalf of those suffering with dv, alcohol and mental health issues. However, when it came to understanding food addiction & the disease of compulsive overeating, there was an awareness gap the size of size of the Grand Canyon.

As my doctor and I discussed the 18 lbs I gained since my last annual exam, she questioned me until I admitted that I had gained weight due to my food choices and inactivity. She then stood up and said, "It's hard to grow up, but we can't just do what we want all the time."

Now I'm all for the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps mentality," but I truly felt shamed and blamed. Victimized by both a disease I struggle to understand and overcome, as well as by her, who in that moment represented what many in society think when they look at me as an overweight person – "just stop eating." We know, however, that comments inflicting self-loathing on addicts do not miraculously free them from their addiction. In fact, often they have an opposite, devastating effect.

Years ago, when a friend was to be married, we bridesmaids went to try on dresses. One of us was overweight. Comments were made during the dress-trying-on session that were very hurtful to my overweight friend. They were insensitive and expressly directed at how her weight was negatively impacting our ability to find a suitable dress.

She immediately began extreme dieting. That dieting led to anorexia, over exercising and bulimia. She struggled with this for decades. I remember picking her

up off a bathroom floor once when she had been rendered temporarily blind. A ladies' night out cut short by extreme lack of nutrition that was beginning to take a devastating toll on her health.

It got worse. Eventually, I moved in to her home to care for her 2 children while she was hospitalized for her anorexia and bulimia. One day, her tiny daughter looked at her belly and said, "I am fat." There was not an ounce of fat on her body.

Years later, my friend became pregnant and at one point weighed only 80 pounds. She was hospitalized to try to get nutrients into her body. Miraculously my friend and her baby survived.

Those thoughtless comments, though perhaps holding some truth in them, were devastating to her and her family for years. Just recently, decades later, she had to have most of her teeth pulled as a consequence of the anorexia/bulimia.

Recently I attended the funeral of a friend's brother. Around Christmas, my friend had taken his brother to rehab for a 30 day stay for alcohol abuse. In frustration, he told his brother that this was it. If he didn't complete the program and change his behavior, he was done. He wasn't going to have anything else to do with him. His brother checked out 6 days later and on February 22nd, only 2 months later, he buried his brother. My friend sobbed as he remembered and regretted his last words to his brother.

It is important that we educate and bring awareness about addiction. As addicts ourselves, we can have a powerfully compassionate, positive message and inspiring testimony of help that is focused on solutions and hope rather than victim blaming/shaming. In fact, as Step Twelve encourages, *we are the message!*

Our challenge – Be the message to someone every day!

Submitted by Cecelia – Smoky Mtn TN



12th Step Within Story

I came into OA March 1, 1984 in Miami after years of trying every diet, explored shock treatments and getting addicted to exercise. At my first meeting I heard if I believed in God (a higher power) I could get better. I was willing to try anything as what I tried on my own didn't work.

After 10 ½ months I finally got abstinent. Somebody in my advanced aerobics class had been in OA and told me she had been abstinent from her binge food (sugar-same as mine) for 4 years. She said I just had to give up my binge foods today. I thought I could do that-just for today I wouldn't eat _____. And, I "acted as if" there was a higher power and saw that people in the rooms became abstinent. If they could do it, I could too.

I am a very grateful relapse survivor. I had 2 relapses-1 after 1 ½ years of abstinence and another after 6 months. Each binge lasted 1 day. Someone in my home meeting in Miami used to say "you never know when it's your last recovery". Those words came to me after my second relapse. I didn't want to gamble with my abstinence again by taking that first bite. I am very grateful I was able to get my abstinence back so quickly. God willing I will celebrate 32 years of abstinence September 9, 2018.

This is a TSW article so I want to

share how I remain abstinent. I made a commitment early on to my sponsor that I would meditate for 15 minutes and pray each day. I have missed maybe 10 days over



the years since I started this practice. That means whether I'm on a family vacation, slept in, out of the country I begin my day with prayer and meditation. I make many outreach calls daily. My best friends are people I have met in program. I talk to a few of the same people everyday and then a wide group of others including newcomers, people struggling, members I haven't seen for awhile and friends in recovery. I read my literature everyday and sponsor and have a sponsor. I attend meetings weekly and have always had a home group in Miami, and for the last 8 years since I moved to Charlotte, in North Carolina.

I was encouraged to do service when I started in OA. The first service I did was bringing the coffee and later moved onto becoming the Lifeline chair and contact person at my meeting. I have also been the information line chair and the treasurer of my meeting. I recently became the

Piedmont Intergroup Region 8 representative and got to go to the Region 8 conference in Miami, which was a fabulous experience. I am currently the intergroup Chair. Both of these service positions have helped me grow in my recovery. I got out of my comfort zone and met many wonderful fellows by going to different meetings. I practice the tool of anonymity. I have to say I don't use the tool of writing that often unless there is something really bothering me. When I do have a problem, I ask God to remove it and put it in my beautiful God jar, which was made by a dear friend in program.

I have a definite plan of eating, and for me that is 3 meals a day, with nothing in between and I do it 1 day at a time. There have been occasions where I'm going to have a super late meal and I will have the rare snack, which is almost always a banana. Since I've been abstinent, I'm able to go longer between meals if necessary. My abstinence has changed over the years from a food plan from Dignity of Choice back in 1984 to an abstinent food plan based on medical and dietary needs.

The last thing I do every night is my 10th step. I ask myself 4 questions (I do this in my head, but for years wrote them down). What have I done for myself, what have I done for others, what am I

REGION 8

TRUSTED SERVANTS

Board Officers

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Katrina S. / Prairieville, LA
chair@oaregion8.org

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WAYS & MEANS CHAIR - Andy S. / Coral Springs, FL
waysandmeanschair@oaregion8.org

12th Step Within Story con't

grateful for and what could I have done better. Since doing the 10th step for many years, I have become a happy person and a grateful person. I was very negative in the past and never thought I could change, let alone give up my drug of choice.

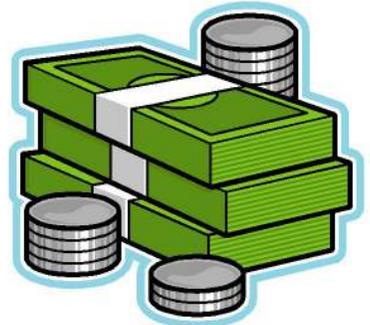
I am so connected to OA –I now have a higher power I choose to call God, have made the best friends in program, have 12 steps and 12 traditions to help me live my life mostly happy, joyous and free-I said mostly as I do still have things that come up I have to give to God. I am so grateful that my relapses were very short lived, but as was said, I never know when it will be my last recovery.

Thank you for letting me share. Susan W, Charlotte

Reminder:

new Region 8
Treasurer's address
is:

PO Box 242522
Little Rock, AR 72223



GREETINGS FROM THE BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

I'm Susan Berland and was appointed Bylaws Committee chair at the last assembly. We have a small but mighty committee.

We have been working on some Bylaw amendments which you will see presented at the Spring Assembly. We are reviewing the Policy & Procedures Manual, one section at a time. We have also submitted some amendments for that document.

We will continue to review the manual and the Bylaws. Thank you for allowing me to serve.



PINELLAS TRADITIONS INTERGROUP
INVITES YOU TO THE
8TH ANNUAL OA FRANCISCAN
CENTER RETREAT

JULY 26 – 28, 2019

“YOU ARE NOT ALONE”



Fragrance Free Zone Please

WHAT: Three days of fabulous speakers, crafts, the usual Pinellas Pizazz, serenity and peace on the river

WHERE: The beautiful Franciscan Center Campus, 3010 Perry Ave., Tampa, FL 33606

WHEN: Friday, July 26, (check-in 4PM), to Sunday, July 28, 2019

COST: (Note, there are two separate places to pay: Franciscan Center for food/lodging and Pinellas Traditions Intergroup for registration)

Step 1: Pay the Franciscan Center at 813-229-2695, for room and board accommodations, and tell them it's for the OA Retreat. Room/board packages include five meals; single rooms are \$184 and double rooms are \$164 per person. For directions or more information about the Franciscan Center, visit franciscan-centertampa.org.

Step 2: and PAY PTI: **MAIL** your registration form and check or money order payable to PTI: \$30 for early bird (postmarked by **June 30, 2019**) or \$40 for regular registration (no one will be turned away) to:
Pinellas Traditions Intergroup, P. O. Box 16582, Clearwater, FL, 33766

Direct any questions to francenter@oapinellas.org.

Space is limited so register early. There will be a waiting list.

(Sorry, but NO DAY Trippers allowed, must come for whole weekend)

- ◆ Call and book your reservation at Franciscan Center
- ◆ Call all your friends and make plans to carpool with them
- ◆ Announce this Retreat and print copies of this fine flyer for your meetings, pretty please.
- ◆ Save this flyer for your information. See you at the pagoda on the peaceful Hillsboro River!

Cut on the dotted line & mail Retreat Registration Form and check or money order made out to PTI to:
Pinellas Traditions Intergroup, P. O. Box 16582, Clearwater, FL, 33766

PINELLAS TRADITIONS INTERGROUP EIGHTH ANNUAL RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Print Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check one: ___ \$30 Early Registration ___ \$40 Regular Do you wish to participate? _____