

# SOAR 8

Southeast Overeaters Anonymous Region 8



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

## Don't Leave Before the Miracle Happens

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### OA Responsibility Pledge

- Always to extend the heart and hand of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.

I was not one of those people who walked into their first OA meeting and was willing to do whatever was necessary to recover from this cunning, baffling, and fatal disease. I was mired in fear, denial, and a heavy food fog. I could not imagine life without certain foods and eating behaviors, even though I was very overweight and in marriage counseling for issues directly or indirectly related to my compulsive overeating.

I would go to meetings, sit in the back, and never share. Some days, weeks, and months I did not attend any meetings. I

asked someone to be my sponsor and never called them. I did not buy any literature. I was gaining back my second 100+ pounds when I first walked into an OA meeting. I lost that 100+ pounds and gained another 100+ going in and out of OA.

I was bound and determined to prove that I did not have to work this program the way that the OA and AA literature, speakers, and other members said that I needed to work it. Surely I, in my terminally unique personage, could find a way — my way — to lose weight and not have to

give up all my favorite foods, eating behaviors, binge buddies, and restaurants. I just needed the perfect food plan, exercise

regime, willpower, and the right time in my life to appear, and everything would just fall into place. None of this ever happened for me.

The one right thing that happened for me was that I kept coming back to OA. Maybe it was that first meeting with its openness, warmth, and laughter that welcomed me as I nervously walked into the room. Maybe it was the people that honestly, willingly, and humorously shared their experience, strength, and hope. Maybe it was the strong meetings that kept outside issues and controversies from diluting the message of recovery. Maybe it was that feeling that I had in my first meeting, that HP feeling that said “I am home; this is where I belong.”

*(continued on p. 4)*



## Quiet is Good



"...filled with an indescribable love for OA and for each one of us..."

This year was not my first time in WSBC. I had attended WSBC last year as a funded representative for IG Esperanza Venezuela. But this time I attended for the first time as region chair. At first I was very nervous: I felt a lot of pressure by the tremendous responsibility of representing Region 8, which is very highly respected because our region has performed some of the most committed service worldwide. Thank God my roommate was a bilingual person whom I'd known for years in the regional assemblies and in previous WSBC. It was wonderful to have someone to talk to in my own language at the end of each day. We prayed together. And together we made a wonderful team.

I had my first experience working on the Region Chairs Committee. It was fabulous, very committed members and filled with an indescribable love for OA and for each one of us *as part of a team*. I felt grateful to be

part of a team led by a Power Greater than ourselves. We did the Forum. We did our 1% and God took care of the results. The forum was amazing.

I had my first meeting with the BOT (Board of Trustees). I had high expectations. At the end, as is customary at this level of service, I witnessed great testimonies of humility in service, commitment and love for the community. We worked honestly and responsibly.

Finally, I experienced the WSBC itself. Very important things were discussed. I felt lot of pressure. I believed, I should serve my region and as its chair, I should be there for each of the representatives; but also felt I should be attentive to the discussions and to the arguments that each of the attendees had with respect to motions and decisions that were done. I had to be constantly connected to God as I understand Him. And

God, just when I most needed it, sent me a clear message: "Quiet is good" and I managed all these demands with a the quiet grace I was given. It was a spiritual experience.

At the end, as I was heading home, I had a chance to carry the message. A Latino woman who was on the line for the flight from Albuquerque to Dallas, but she did not speak English and asked for my help through an OA. My fellows in service gave me literature and information to give to her because my OA things were in my luggage. So God wants me to continue serving, with just my goodwill and my disposition.

Thank you very much.

Viviana G.  
Venezuela

## *An Exciting Trip to WSBC!*

Doing service above the Intergroup level may seem challenging and a lot of work, but in my experience, every minute I have devoted to serving has given me unimaginable rewards at the personal, social and spiritual levels.

I am glad I first went to Region Assemblies before going to World Service Business Conference, because I knew what to expect. What I did not expect was to be able to see such a large gathering of committed servers from all over the World!

Conference is not only about business issues. It also has workshops that we should bring back to our Intergroups and Regions. The committees are varied and amazing. The work done at WSBC is then spread throughout Intergroups all over the planet!

At the personal level, I found recovery and strength as I never dreamed possible.

I found a sponsor, a food plan that worked for me and a fellowship that extends beyond my scope.

I am truly glad I dared serving above the IG level. Moreover, service is part of my life and recovery. The more I recover, the more I love this fellowship and the more love I put in my OA service. It does not matter to me whether it is to wash the toilets, sweep the floor or go to Conference! I find recovery in every single one of them. My philosophy and that I share with my sponsees is to always accept a service request that is offered—always say Yes—because you never know the mysterious pathways of recovery our HP will give you through that service.

Alejandra  
Costa Rica.



**"I found a sponsor, a food plan that worked for me and a fellowship that extends beyond my scope."**

## *Trusted Servants*

### *Voting Board Members*

Chair—Viviana G.  
Vice Chair—Aleta P.  
Secretary—Janet T.  
Treasurer—Samantha A.

### *Non-Voting Board Members*

WS Regional Trustee—Linda H.  
Parliamentarian—Judy K

### *Committee Chairs*

ByLaws & Electronic Documents—Marilyn T.  
Intergroup Outreach—Andi S.  
Public Information/Professional Outreach—Bonnie V.  
Technology/Website—Michelle SD.  
Twelfth Step Within—JC D.  
Unity With Diversity—Cici D.  
Ways and Means—Patty G.



**"Nothing, absolutely  
nothing happens in  
God's world by  
mistake"**  
-*Alcoholics Anonymous*,  
4th ed., p. 417

## *Don't Leave Before the Miracle Happens* (continued from p.1)

Whatever it was, I just kept coming back. I was in OA for 9 years before I began to put the food down and to work the 12 Steps. I had a lot of self-will and fear to let go of, and I was a slow learner. I needed to hear the same things a thousand times before I could understand and relate my life to the experience of others.

I kept coming back: fat, thin, arrogant, demoralized, fearful, angry,

food-fogged, hopeful and hopeless. It took as long as it took for me, but today, 26 years later, I am recovering, healthy, and happier than I have ever been before in my life. I have a purpose today, to be of service to my Higher Power. Oh yes, and to keep coming back to OA, one day at a time!

Neill M.  
Raleigh, NC

## *Seeking Joy*

Coming out of my last relapse nearly five years ago, my program needed a re-adjustment, not only physically but mentally and spiritually. I needed to latch onto something more than just staying away from those foods that caused me to not love myself or others. I needed to focus on moving from worrying about my next "fix" to finding peace beyond the food. Slowly but surely, as I faced the food issues, made the necessary changes in my program that are suggested (but which I previously ignored), my abstinence readjusted.

One clear message that I've learned is that I need to seek joy away from the food. My Higher Power wants me to lead a Joy-filled life, a place of inner peace, of kindness and service.

These last couple of months have been challenging for my family, both my husband and son have been experiencing medical issues. Rather than being swallowed by the fear, I took time for myself with God every morning asking for guidance and a path to follow, both physically and emotionally. I've had moments of clarity about my food knowing that my abstinence was the key to staying in the "joy place" in the midst of hardship. The "God, Grant Me the Serenity" is a powerful tool when you allow yourself to be lead through the storm to a place of quiet and calm.

Marilyn T.  
Englewood, FL

***One  
Day  
at a  
Time***

# July 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 SOAR8	16 SOAR8
17 SOAR8	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Mark Your Calendar

- July 15-17, 2016—  
*SOAR8 Recovery Convention & Business Assembly, St. Petersburg, FL*
- September 1-4, 2016—  
*World Service Convention, Boston, MA*
- September 16-18, 2016—  
*'Staying Abstinent Through Adversity' 21st Annual OA Retreat, Fort Mitchell, AL*
- September 24, 2016—*'In God's Time' OA Celebration, Houma, LA*



## Recovering Through Spirituality

This year, I had the great privilege of attending the OA World Service Business Conference for the first time. I feel that this experience has permanently changed my life for the better. As the chair member of the Unity with Diversity committee for Region 8, I paid special attention to the different shades of experience, strength and hope members shared from across the globe.

There are many faces to this disease, but the solution is the same. We each are recovering from a hopeless state of

body and mind called compulsive eating, one day at a time, through the spirituality of the steps, traditions and concepts. What a gift that we get to practice this way of life together.

I am humbled and grateful to be a vital part of this shared experience known as Overeaters Anonymous.

Cici

## TIP

To make my recovery stronger, I'm going to take a suggestion that has worked for someone else and give it a sincere and honest chance to work for me. And the suggestion I'm going to implement is:

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*Your Region 8 Ways and Means Committee will have the following items available for sale at our SOAR 8 Assembly in Saint Petersburg.*

*Available in St. Petersburg!*

*Serenity Knots \$6*

*Got Serenity? T-Shirts \$20*

*Before Buttsons \$2 small, \$3 large*



## *Keeping Abstinent During Challenging Times*

After being in OA for several years, after I stopped pretending (about basically everything), after I stopped lying to myself about the reality of my situation, after getting over my wish to be cured, after coming to understand that in a deliciously ironic quirk of fate, my failing health was the very thing that saved me from compulsively eating my way into an early grave, after I finally reached the other side of the grief stage called Denial... After trial and error and eventually reaching a plan that worked best for me, after I felt I'd finally been granted the grace and gift of abstinence for the last 21 months and reaching what felt like a comfortable equilibrium... after all this, I lost the job I'd loved for ten years, went on unemployment and was granted the unsought gift of maintaining abstinence during "challenging times."

From the first meeting I ever attended, I heard people say things like, "Even when I really don't want to come to a meeting... especially when I don't want to come to a meeting... I always hear someone say something that I really needed to hear." And I always found that to be true for me as well. Whenever

er I don't feel like going to a meeting, I know that's when I most need to go to a meeting.

After being unemployed for three months, I was offered a job in my field – a job that would require me to move to a new town a few hours away from my home of the past few decades. In my new job, I am encountering lots of uncomfortable situations and some unpleasant feelings as well. And in my new hometown, the nearest face-to-face meeting available to me is 30 miles away in an unfamiliar town, on a night when I sometimes have to work.

Not since I've been in recovery have I so very much wanted to go to an OA meeting. But not being able to reach a face-to-face meeting, I've called into my old home meeting and they let me be there with them via speakerphone. And I've taken advantage of OA's phone meetings. And of course, each time, I've heard something that I really needed to hear.

On one of the phone meetings, someone was sharing about going through a difficult time and how it was changing the way she sees and understands life. She said, "Life isn't

always going to be happiness and smiles. There are going to be tragedies and losses and our humanity demands that we grieve these losses. It's as much a part of life as the rest. That's an important thing for me to learn: that I can appreciate the difficult times too, for what they are, opportunities to experience life and grow. And I can keep my abstinence through this too. In fact, nothing else helps me cope as much as knowing I am not making food my Higher Power again." I thought, "Wow. Thank you, Universe for letting me hear this woman share her experience, strength and hope." Because after that, I really did feel a lot of hope and I felt stronger too. Maybe I will start a new meeting here. Maybe I will find a way to get to meetings that are so distant from me right now. I'll listen for guidance from my HP. I'll gratefully maintain my abstinence regardless of anything else in my life. And I'll appreciate what I'm going through for its own sake, knowing that if nothing else, it's enriching my humanity and increasing my usefulness to others.

I'm going through "challenging times" and I'm keeping my abstinence and there is surely no greater gift than that.

Erica  
North Carolina