

WMI

WESTERN MASS
INTERGROUP

June 2006

RECOVERY LINES

A TWELVE STEP PUBLICATION OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.

RECOVERY FOR RELAPSE

My relapse started when I forgot. I forgot I was a compulsive overeater. Other aspects of my life became more important than program. I no longer had time to get on my knees in the morning. Instead I spoke a short, "Please help me God," as I drove my car to something more important, my God was understanding. I forgot "half measures availed us nothing." I was too busy to read the O.A. literature. I forgot to call my sponsor I was too busy. I forgot to write down my food for the day. Just too busy. I forgot to say thank you at night. This time I was too tired, too interested in the TV show I was watching, or the novel I was reading. My God would understand. What got me to return to program was that my sponsor called me, and called me, and called me. I did not return her calls but I listened to the messages. She missed me and cared. I decided to go to a meeting one day and picked one I knew she would not be attending. Guess what, there she was! My God didn't forget me. My recovery began again because I remember. I remembered to ask her to be my sponsor again. She agreed instantly, joyfully without criticism or recriminations. She gave me the relapse questions for the 12-Steps-Within book. Today I remember to get on my knees first thing in the morning. I remember to read from my O.A. literature. I remember to write down what I am going to eat for the day, not to make changes without discussing it with my sponsor or another O.A member. I remember to call my sponsor every day.

I remember to take suggestions from my sponsor and read my writing to her every day. I remember to attend as many meetings as possible. I remember to do service. I remember to use the tools. I remember to eat abstinely. I remember to say thank you at night. Oh, did I remember to tell you that when I was "too busy" to remember to practice my program that I am retired? With God's grace and the help of O.A., I am recovering again, one day at a time.

Another grateful recovering O.A. member

Dear Newsletter Committee,

Thank you. A new updated meeting list, announcements and articles from members in recovery. I can carry this with me, I can share with others my serenity prayer, meeting locations, and I learn from each article. 12-Steps-Within Recovery from Relapse meetings in Massachusetts is a great tool, when my abstinence is shaky. All I need do is talk to someone trying to get back on track. Only when I speak with those who have struggled can I see how blessed I am to still be in these rooms.

Thanks so much,
Just another sister in program.

"Change begins with honesty"

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous –
Step Four - page 30.

WESTERN MASS INTERGROUP CONTACTS

Please direct **WMI** correspondence to:

WMI of Overeaters Anonymous
Communications Committee
Post Office Box 2911
Springfield, Massachusetts 01101-2911

Telephone: (413) 783-4198
e-mail: correspondingsecretary@oawmass.org

Please mail **WMI** contributions to:

WMI of Overeaters Anonymous,
Treasurer, Frank S.
Post Office Box 2911
Springfield, Massachusetts 01101-2911

The following information allows us to properly acknowledge your meetings contribution:

WSO Group Number
Meeting Name
Meeting Day and Time

Your canceled check is your receipt. Your meeting will receive an acknowledgement at either the next **WMI** meeting and/or can be found in the next issue of Recovery Lines. Group Representatives are to pick-up information and newsletter at the next **WMI** meeting. Please ask your group members to be as generous as possible. Thank you for your support, service and contributions.

Recovery Lines is the publication of Western Mass Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous
Post Office Box 2911
Springfield, Massachusetts 01101-2911

Editorial Policy

Recovery Lines is the quarterly newsletter of Western Mass Intergroup. The deadlines for copy are March 1 for the spring, June 1 for summer, Sept. 1 for fall and, Dec 1 for winter. Materials sent to WMI cannot be returned nor can payment be made. All submissions to the co-editors must be signed and when published, will appear with first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Names will be withheld upon request. Recovery Lines reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity. Other OA groups may reprint without permission. We ask that you cite the writer and Recovery Lines as your source. Courtesy copies of reprinted articles are appreciated. The opinions expressed are those of the writer, not those of Western Mass Intergroup or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and correspondence to Recovery Lines via e-mail to newsletter@oawmass.org or via US Postal Service in care of the Communications Committee at the address designated above.

What is **WMI**?

Western Mass Intergroup consists of Overeaters Anonymous group meetings from the following approximate geographical locations in: Agawam, Amherst, Brattleboro,-VT, Great Barrington, Canaan-CT, Greenfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Northampton, Palmer, Pittsfield, Southwick, Springfield, Westfield, West Springfield and Wilbraham.

The purpose of Western Massachusetts Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous is:

- To further the OA program in accordance with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA;
- To maintain communication for all Western Massachusetts OA groups. Specifically excluded is the endorsement of any outside enterprise as outlined in Tradition Six;
- To provide a forum for the selection of Intergroup, Regional and General Service Representatives;
- To host Western Mass Intergroup Marathon;
- To work for OA as a whole within the Region, Intergroup or Committees appointed by World Service.

Check Web Site for Future Site **WMI** Changes

The **WMI** meeting is scheduled for the 2nd Monday of the month, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Holyoke Soldiers Home, Rte. 202, Holyoke Mass. **Meeting site is changing please verify meet site on WMI web site for notification.**

RECOVERY LINES STAFF

The Recovery Lines is produced through the combined efforts of the members of the **WMI** Newsletter Committee, the Communications Committee and Archives Committee.

We are:

Mary M. and Jeff A. -----Newsletter Co-Chairs
Lyn C. -----Phone Service Liaison
John C. -----Chair of Communication Committee
Sue S. -----Archives Committee
Daniel D. -----Website Coordinator
Gabby-----Vice-Chair of HIPM
Pat-----Member of Public Information
Susan-----Meeting List Coordinator

TO BE ABSTINENT IS ABOUT WILLINGNESS, NOT STRUGGLE

If you are willing to be abstinent, this is a state of great humility.

If you are trying to be abstinent, this is a state of great confusion.

A willingness to be abstinent implies that you do not know how to do it, but are willing to learn. Trying to be abstinent implies that you should be able to do it, but are struggling with it.

If you are willing to be abstinent, you are open to receive. If you are trying to be abstinent, you are closed to guidance.

If you have been trying to give up old ways and have condemned yourself for failure to do so, simply be willing to learn how the old ways may be replaced with ways of peace.

If you are trying to be abstinent, you will fear not being able to be abstinent. You will judge yourself a failure. If you are willing to be abstinent, no setback is a problem, for you know that you will be shown.

If you are trying, you are attempting to surrender by yourself. If you are willing, you are asking for guidance. Trying to be abstinent places responsibility on you. Being willing to be abstinent places the responsibility on God.

Willingness to be abstinent is, in a sense, a prayer. Trying to be abstinent is an act of separation from God.

When you try, there is resistance. When you are willing, there is acceptance.

If you are trying to be abstinent, everything is an interference. If you are willing to be abstinent, everything is of assistance.

The freely made choice to be abstinent is the most important decision you make each day because it speaks for your willingness to be abstinent each day.

Outside of the will of God, there is no such thing as success. Inside the will of God, there cannot be any failure.

Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin.

THE STAIRCASE TO RECOVERY

Talking to God and listening are the ways that I actively seek help each day. Working the steps is the key for long-term transformation, and all I have to do is a little bit each day.

Sometimes I picture the steps as actual steps like a spiral staircase, very long and curved. If I'm willing to walk up the stairs, they will take me to a place much higher than I can even imagine. The top of the staircase is actually hidden in mist, not quite distinguishable. It's funny, because sometimes, I actually visualize the steps as stairs leading up, curving up, and heading up directly to a better life.

Faith keeps me walking upward even though I can't really see where I'm going. I just know I want to keep moving in an upward and positive direction, toward recovery.

"I'm powerless to rid myself of this trait. I can't but God can, and I'll let God take it."

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous – Step Six - page 57.

THE SPIRIT OF NATURE

What's the matter little girl? Why are you crying?

I can't find my way! I'm lost. There are so many trees and they all look the same. I just keep going around in circles and end up back here at this rock. And oh! I'll never get out of these woods!

There, there little one. I'll help you find your way.

Who – who are you?

I am the Spirit who lives in this rock – and I am a Friend.

You'll take me home?

No, but I will show you how to get there yourself.

Oh brother. What good is that? I want to get home – NOW!

Listen and learn. Look at my rock and tell me what you see.

I see a white rock with black dirt on it.

Look deeper.

Well, it has holes. And crevices. It looks kind of like an old skull I once found.

What else?

It's not just white and dirty is it? There are browns and oranges, silver and grays, and many different shades of white. And, oh look – it shimmers. The way the sun bounces off it just so – it's like a diamond. What a pretty rock you have.

Thank you. I want you to touch it. What do you feel?

It's cold. Wait, I can feel something. It's pulsing! What is that?

That is the energy that exists in all of Nature.

I always thought rocks were just rocks.

You must learn to see, not just look. Things are always more than black or white – like my rock.

Okay, fine. That's very interesting. But how does it get me home?!

Listen and learn. How did you get lost in the first place?

I guess I wandered from the path. And then all the trees closed in and they all look the same and there are so many trees. So many trees. And, I'm – I'm scared.

I know, but I want you to look again at the trees. Are they really all the same?

I want to say I see brown trunks and green leaves, but I have a feeling there's more isn't there?

You tell me.

Well, now that you mention it; they are all different, aren't they? The leaves are different. The colors are different. That one's smoother than the one next to it. Why don't they teach you this stuff in school? They need to make more crayons.

Go on. Touch one. What do you feel?

It's pulsing too, like your rock. Are there spirits in trees too?

Of course. The Energy of Nature. Each tree is an individual with its own spirit and its own energy. Each one is a home – like this rock. Each one can tell you a story if you stop to listen and pause to see. Each one can show you the way. Listen and learn. Now, look again. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

Well, I know I am not alone, and these trees cannot hurt me. If I look at each tree by itself, it's not so scary. They do seem to be telling me to go this way. Look! I see a path! Was it there all along? Oh, thank you Rock Spirit! You have taught me so much! Will I ever see you again?

Listen. And learn.

EDC

The following people are willing to speak at your meeting, sharing their experience, strength and hope of recovery in Overeaters Anonymous. If your meeting has specific requirements to speak, i.e., length of time, length of abstinence etc, please inform that person at the time you ask him/her to speak.

Amy	Longmeadow		Kathy	Windsor, Conn.	
Beth B.	Northampton		Linda A.	W. Springfield	
Carol C.	Pelham		Linda B.	Longmeadow	
Carol N.	Suffield, Conn.		Linda C.	Agawam	
Cindy B.	Longmeadow		Maria S.	Windsor, Conn.	
Darcy	Chicopee		Mary	Easthampton	
Dawn	Southwick		Maureen	Holyoke	
Deb	Connecticut		Melanie	Northampton	
Diane	E. Longmeadow		Naziia	Springfield	
Diedra	Longmeadow		Pat	Easthampton	
Doris	Connecticut		Phyllis	Longmeadow	
Ellen	South Hadley		Rita	Westfield	
Gabrielle	W. Springfield		Robin	Westfield	
Heather	Springfield		Robin	Feeding Hills	
Jeffrey	W. Springfield		Rose	Chicopee	
Jess	Longmeadow		Sue	Holyoke	
Joette	Springfield		Sue S	Westfield	
John C.	Westfield		Kathleen	Monson	
Mark C.	Pelham				

If you would like to add your name to the speaker's list, please let us know.

WMI ANNOUNCEMENTS –

Communication Umbrella Committee
CUCumber Meeting “it’s like a retreat”

When: Last Friday of each month.
Time: 7:00pm
Where: Southwick Community
Episcopal Church, Southwick, MA

OA Region 6 Convention

When: October 27-29, 2006
Time: 2:00 pm Fri. to 1:00 am Sunday
Where: Friar Tuck Resort, Catskill, NY
Contact: www.oaregion6.org

30th Anniversary

When: Friday, June 30th at
Time: 9:30 - 11:00 am
Where: Springfield, St. Barnabas Church,
41 Oakland St., Main Bldg

New Tee Shirts Now Available!

Please fill out order form or send a **note** with name, address, phone, and sizes to:

Western Mass Intergroup
P.O. Box 2911
Springfield, MA 01101-2911
Attn. Rhea

Tee shirts costs: \$15 plus \$5 for mailing.
Please make checks payable to: Western Mass Intergroup with completed order form or note required.

FEELINGS

Self-Will

Anger
Depression

God's Will

Forgiveness & Serenity
Into action

WMI offers all groups the opportunity to order all OA materials, soft-literature and hard-literature through its service members who can order and sell to group representatives at intergroup meeting. Soft-literature --Terry D., (413) 827-0077 Hard-literature-Ellen W., (413) 534-7192 Being a group representative is an important link for your group to communicate with Intergroup, Region and World Service Organizations.

Ask your group who your rep is for Intergroup!

See **WMI** website

www.oawmass.org for:

- OA Information
- Meetings locations and times.
- Event Calendar
- OA Promise and Prayers
- Recovery Insurance Policy
- Lifeline Magazine Form
- **WMI** minutes
- **WMI** e-mail contacts

QUOTES

“God gives us the love we need not the one we think we need.”

“Serenity is not peace from the storm but peace during the storm.”

“Fear kept me sober trust keeps me abstinent.”

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”

“Trust can be a foundation for treasure.”

Suggested writings by John C.

Toolman says:

A Plan of Eating*

As a tool, a plan of eating helps us to abstain from eating compulsively. Having a personal plan of eating guides us in our dietary decisions, as well as defines what, when, how, where and why we eat. It is our experience that sharing this plan with a sponsor or another OA member is important.

There are no specific requirements for a plan of eating; OA does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of eating, nor does it exclude the personal use of one. (See the pamphlets *Dignity of Choice* and *A Plan of Eating* for more information.) For specific dietary or nutritional guidance, OA suggests consulting a qualified health care professional, such as a physician or dietician. Each of us develops a personal plan of eating based on an honest appraisal of his or her own past experience; we also have come to identify our current individual needs, as well as those things which we should avoid.

Although individual plans of eating are as varied as our members, most OA members agree that some plan — no matter how flexible or structured — is necessary.

This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and helps us achieve physical recovery. From this vantage point, we can more effectively follow OA's Twelve-Step program of recovery and move beyond the food to a happier, healthier and more spiritual living experience.

* Reprinted from OA website –Tools of Recovery

Step 2**“Came to believe in a power greater than myself...”**

A light in my darkness
 A tiny spark
 I need your breath, Lord
 I am lost

There is a flicker of hope
 It is small
 Breathe on me Lord
 Let it grow

My soul is a vacuum
 Flame cannot be
 Breathe on me Lord
 Set me free

It is small today
 It needs some air
 To your will, Lord
 I give my care

It is a single flame
 I am alone
 Breathe on me Lord
 And let it grow

Join with my friends
 Each with a spark
 Together we can Lord
 Escape from the dark

EDC

The Mayonnaise Jar & the Two Cups of Coffee

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the two cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. And then he asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes." The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. "Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things -- God, your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favorite passions -- and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else -- the "small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you". "Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your spouse out to dinner. Play another 18

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holes of golf. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal. Take care of the golf balls first -- the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand." One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a **friend**."

Genuine
Energy
Neverending
Enthusiasm
Service
In
Spirituality

Recovery
Exist
Through
Real
Emotions
Actively
Trusting

It was a dark, stormy night yet, the parking lot continued to fill. People arrived in groups of two's, three's and four's and some arrived alone. They began to settle into their rooms. Small groups clustered in hallways chattering with anticipation. A while later the many assembled in the Carriage House, the room illuminated with spirit, hope and candles lit in the name of Recovery. The chairperson and the panel of speaker's began to weave a thread of

recovery that grew stronger as the weekend continued. The rooms shimmered with glowing auroras of the members, listening to stories of journeys. Most of the journeys began in doubt, fear, indecision and confusion, yet a trace of hope lined the paths. As stories were told, life lessons unfolded to a new way of life. The words and imagery grew powerful as the speakers taught us faith, trust and service. The willingness of these few became a concept we all began to grasp. The gray skies and falling rain enhanced our desires for camaraderie and community. Our common bond brought a diverse group together as a family; wishing recovery for one another and support to achieve it. The journeys all started with a first step, and a list of tools to go with it. We no longer go alone; we bring out Higher Power, our sponsors, our new buddies and faith to go on to each step. Each step is taken towards a new way of life. A life filled with promises if we continue to persevere. This journey of ours moves forward with love, acceptance, serenity and most important fellowship, because we are not meant to do this alone.

Peace

A loving grateful Recovering Food Addict

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God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference. Grant me Patience for the changes that take time; Appreciation for all that I have; Tolerance for those with different struggles; and, the Strength to get up and try again – one day at a time.