



# The Trusted Servant

Spring 2007

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◇ “**My Home Meeting**” is a dispatch from the Tuesday night gathering in West Roxbury, where members look out for each other. Mary L.’s story is on Page 2.

◇ **The Traditions column** takes up the question of whether it is OK to mention specific foods in a meeting. Jen B.’s report is on Page 3.

◇ **Public outreach** is part of our primary purpose, and one way MWI is trying is by conducting public information sessions via toll-free telephone. Learn more from Steve M. on Page 2.

◇ **The annual retreat** returns to Grotonwood Retreat Center for an eighth year in April. The topic this year is the 11th Step; get more details about the event in Bee F.’s story on Page 3.

◇ **The meeting list**, which used to be inserted inside the Servant, is now its back page. To change or add to the list, send a note to [meetings@metrowest.org](mailto:meetings@metrowest.org).

◇ **We welcome contributions and feedback.** To offer a letter to the editor, suggest a story idea, or just to ask a question, write to [servant@metrowest.org](mailto:servant@metrowest.org).

## WONDERS OF SERVICE

### I ask myself: How did I get here?

By Virginia P. Ashland

As the new chair of Intergroup I was asked to write a few words about this new experience. Already I’m overwhelmed. But here goes.

Since the December Intergroup meeting I’ve been asking myself how come I said that I would be the chair of Intergroup. Well it seems HP has a sense of humor. At the time I said yes I would do it but that I didn’t drive at night. (I truly do not.)

I thought I’d be safe with that excuse. I had a lapse of memory forgetting that three of our members live quite close to me. They all immediately said they would get me to the meetings. So what choice did I have but to accept?

And because I believe “all events happen in God’s time,” here I am writing 400 words about my HP (Higher Power) and IG (Intergroup) experience.

My name is Virginia and I am the MWI chairwoman for the year 2007.

My experience with MetroWest began in 1994, when Georgina Z. completed her terms as intergroup rep. for the Thursday morning meeting I attended. Georgina encouraged us to volunteer to succeed her as rep., to do service for our meeting but especially for our selves. So I volunteered to be the rep. HP again.

When my term expired. I continued to attend the IG meetings, sometimes

as a rep., sometimes as a visitor driving another rep., Ethel “perfectly imperfect abstinence” G.

I remember telling another OA friend, Ed S., that I had no interest in doing work at the intergroup level. I really meant what I said, too.

Obviously HP had other plans for me and I kept getting another nudge.

I volunteered to be a Region 6 alternate and a Region 6 delegate. The really great things about going to IG and Region meetings are the welcoming smiles and hugs from other delegates.

You might ask, what kept me attending the IG meetings? The simple answer is I loved the people who came on a regular basis. I was impressed with the service they did, especially when I wasn’t inclined to do any service myself. Every now and then HP would give me a little tweak to do some service at Intergroup and I would. “Thy will not mine be done.”

I began to see how intergroup worked and how it fit into Region 6 and how Region 6 fit into World Service. These were new awarenesses for me.

Three years ago I was honored to be a delegate from MWI to the World Service Business Conference in New Mexico. It was an incredible experience, to be there and do committee work with Ed and Prue S. at WSBC. More smiles, more hugs.

*Continued on next page*

**<sup>1</sup>Service**, *n fr. L. servitium* **1 a** : Contribution to the welfare of others; **1 b** : Contribution to one’s own recovery; **2 a** : Endorsed method for weight loss in Overeaters Anonymous, as in, “Service is slimming.”

*Every word of this newsletter was written, edited, composed, printed, and distributed by peers in OA who believe that when they do service, they get as good as they give. Is there any room in your program to do a little more service?*

## THINGS WE LOVE: My home meeting

# In crisis, I got whole-life support

By Mary L.  
Roslindale

My favorite meeting (*Tuesday, 7:30-8:45 p.m., room A-217, VA Hospital, West Roxbury*) is about the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. The format has been the same since I started coming on April 6, 1999.

It wasn't my first meeting ever; that was a Gray Sheet meeting that doesn't exist anymore. It was not a meeting for me, but thank God, a woman I met at that meeting talked to me about the Tuesday meeting.

I was a very angry, 300-pound, chain-smoking woman when I came to OA. I was desperate enough to listen to her, and did go to that meeting.

The format of the meeting is we read two paragraphs of the step and share, and then open it to others. When we finish a Step, we then do a Tradition.

It is a small meeting, but a jewel where the support is wonderful.

In December 2005, I broke my hip and was in the hospital and a rehab for about a month. These wonderful people came to see me and called daily. They also brought me abstinent food as both those places did not serve food I could eat.

They also helped to check on

my husband, who was home with a terminal illness. When I was discharged, they would come to my house and help with household chores and cooking, always offering words of encouragement, as this was a difficult time for me and my family.

During my husband's illness and when he died, these members were with me ever step of the way, helping me to stay abstinent, telling me that no matter what, I could get through it. Sometimes this was the only meeting I could attend, and I was always welcomed in a warm and fuzzy way.

This is a meeting where I feel very comfortable, sharing my deepest, darkest secrets and not being judged.

This is a meeting where newcomers as well as old-timers are encouraged to share.

Over the 8 years I have attended, the format has always stayed the same. The only thing that has changed is the room. I feel truly blessed with the friendship and love I have received at this meeting. It also helped me to understand the program. I am truly grateful that I found this jewel of a meeting. Because of working the Steps and Traditions, I learn something new every time.

# Willing to serve, and to learn

*Continued from previous page*

This new commitment to intergroup teaches me that I still have a lot to learn, especially about using my computer and accessing the Internet. OK, OK, HP, I'm willing to learn — about cyberspace!! Steve M., our past chairman, current secretary, webmaster, and PI (Public Information) guru, is so supportive I have no fear of stumbling along till I get the feel for the task at hand.

There's lots of other help, too. Lisa M., past secretary and current corresponding secretary, is wonder woman. Treasurer Julie C. has our finances well in hand. Kristen S., our vice chairwoman, is ready to help plan some innovative events. Jen and Bee are well along with the annual MWI

## “Obviously, HP had other plans for me.”

Grotonwoods retreat. Jean E. just completed leading our Recovery from Relapse workshop, and Michael P., wordsmith extraordinaire, edited and put together this Trusted Servant. We look like a pretty cohesive unit.

My hopes for this year are to encourage each of our 28 member meetings to designate a rep. and perhaps an alternate so that all groups will be represented at intergroup meetings.

If this old warhorse, of 18 years in OA, is having fun, I invite you all to join in.

## P.I. BY PHONE

# Reaching out to touch someone

By Steve M.  
Ashland

OA is not a diet club, a fraternal organization, or a secret society. Our “primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.”

Carrying that message can be a challenge. How can we make it easier and more attractive to the person thinking about OA? One way is to lower the barrier to learning about us. To do this, we've started monthly toll-free telephone public information events.

During each event, members share about their recovery: What they were like, how OA helped them change, and what they're like now. After the shares, we answer questions about OA and offer to look up meeting information.

We never take more than a first name. We don't take phone numbers or e-mail addresses but we do share our telephone numbers and e-mail addresses so newcomers can contact us if they want to learn more.

Please, help get the word out to your community. Visit [metrowestoa.org](http://metrowestoa.org) to download a flyer, send announcements to your local paper, or just speak to someone you know who may be interested.

The next telephone PI event is at 7 p.m. March 19. The number is 800-704-9804, and the conference code is 31821352#.

## Write for us

One way to practice the tool of writing is to contribute an article to the Trusted Servant.

Whether it is a story about your home meeting, or how a wisdom from a Step recently came useful in your daily life, or even if you just want to respond to something you've read by contributing a letter to the editor, we want your voice.

Send queries to [servant@metrowestoa.org](mailto:servant@metrowestoa.org).

## THINGS WE LOVE: The Traditions

# Is mentioning food in a meeting OK, or not?

By Jen B.  
Somerville

*[Editor's note: Although Jen did the primary service of writing this article, all the Traditions columns in "The Trusted Servant" are read and edited jointly by members of MetroWest Intergroup, and the opinions expressed reflect a consensus. If you have any reactions, please write a letter to the editor or consider attending the next Intergroup meeting to express yourself.]*

Why is it OK to mention specific foods at some meetings but not at others?

Some meetings specify that no particular foods should be mentioned when someone is qualifying or sharing. Others say that it is OK to mention specific foods. What is the deal and why?

As always, Tradition Five guides such inquiries by reminding us of each group's

primary purpose, to carry the message of recovery to the compulsive eater who still suffers. Does mentioning specific foods during meetings contribute to or detract from this purpose?

At some meetings, the group conscience has concluded that mentioning specific foods interferes with some members' recovery. Foods that aren't a trigger for one person may be for someone else. The pamphlet "A Commitment to Abstinence" suggests that we avoid talking about specific foods if doing so will lead us to dwell on them.

At other meetings, the group conscience has come to the opposite conclusion. Being able to mention specific foods when sharing or qualifying helps the member be more candid and honest, essential ingredients to recovery. In addition, being specific helps members who have had similar struggles the opportunity to approach the member after the meeting to continue the conversation.

Both of these conclusions are consistent with OA Traditions. Traditions One, Two, and Four are relevant here. Tradition One states that the common welfare of the whole comes first, because our "personal recovery depends on OA unity." The key question arises from Tradition One: Does mentioning specific foods interfere with our common welfare?

Tradition Two tells us how to arrive at an answer to that question: to discern the group conscience on the matter.

Tradition Four assures us that, unless the matter affects OA as a whole, each group should be autonomous in making the decision. Therefore, one group may request that members refrain from mentioning specific foods while another comes to the opposite conclusion.

Sources: Ask It Archive ([oa.org/ask\\_it\\_basket.html](http://oa.org/ask_it_basket.html)); "A Commitment to Abstinence" ([oa.org/literature\\_catalog.htm](http://oa.org/literature_catalog.htm))

## COMING UP

# Together or alone, unity

Each year, OAs the world over celebrate Unity Day, which recognizes the strength of our Fellowship worldwide, on the last Saturday in February at 11:30 a.m. Pacific time.

This year, that falls on Feb. 24, and of course, we here on the East Coast mark the moment at 2:30 p.m.

It's true that our collective strength is available at every moment, but this symbolic pause helps reaffirm the point.

### Or, if you prefer...

If the idea of celebrating our unity by yourself is a bit too symbolic for you, you can travel to the campus of the University of New Hampshire, where five New England intergroups are hosting a Unity Day event from 1-4 p.m. There'll be speakers, sharing, and a raffle.

For information, call Lucille at 603-882-3632 or Peri at 978-448-3577. Or you can download a flyer at [oambi.org](http://oambi.org), in the announcements section.

## BACK TO GROTONWOOD!

# Retreat will dig into the 11th Step

By Bee F.  
Waltham

The 11th Step will be the focus of the MWI retreat, which returns for an eighth year to Grotonwood Retreat Center in Groton April 20-22.

The retreat will be led by an experienced OA member who will take participants on an exploration of Step 11's suggestion to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and mediation. No matter your personal experience with this step, you'll find something to help strengthen your program and recovery.

The program extends from Friday night at 7 to Sunday at noon. Accommodations will be in our own building, which has a refrigerator and microwave for those who want to bring their food. But the \$175 tuition includes five meals served cafeteria-style in a large common dining hall. (Note: Friday dinner is not included.)

Also included, of course, are sleeping quarters, two to a room. If you and a friend decide to room together, you must register together. (Registration forms are available for printing out at [metrowestoa.org](http://metrowestoa.org).) Otherwise, a roommate will be assigned.

The program allows plenty of time for rest,

meditation, walks, and recreation. You'll have access to all facilities at Grotonwood, which include a mile of lake shoreline, nature trails, and a trading post. An OA member will lead an outdoor activity.

Registrations will be confirmed by mail. Once the maximum of 40 slots have been filled, a waiting list will be kept in case of cancellations. No refunds will be offered after April 16. No day-trippers, please. Early registration is recommended.

If you have questions, please call Jen at 617-943-2641 (safe message) or me at 781-736-7965 (safe message in mailbox 2). Or, you can send e-mail to [retreat@metrowestoa.org](mailto:retreat@metrowestoa.org).

## OA online

◇ [metrowestoa.org](http://metrowestoa.org): Minutes of the most recent Intergroup meeting; the agenda for the next one (see "About OA"); meeting and event information; and more.

◇ [oaregion6.org](http://oaregion6.org)

◇ [oa.org](http://oa.org)

# THE MEETINGS OF METROWEST

## BY TOWN

**Acton** Tues  
**Ashland** Sat  
**Boston** Sun, Mon  
**Brighton** Sat  
**Brookline** Sun, Mon, Thurs  
**Cambridge** Fri, Sat  
**Framingham** Sun, Wed, Sat  
**Holliston** Mon  
**Hudson** Wed  
**Jamaica Plain** Sun, Tue  
**Marlboro** Mon  
**Natick** Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri  
**Newton** Fri  
**Needham** Wed  
**Somerville** Tue  
**Southboro** Thurs, Fri  
**Sudbury** Tue  
**West Roxbury** Tue

♻ Accessible for special needs

♿ Accessible by public transportation

## SUNDAY

**Boston** 10 am, Speaker/ Discussion, Our Lady of Victories Rectory, 27 Isabella St., Woody: 781-393-2518  
**Brookline** 6 pm, Speaker/Discussion, First Presbyterian Church, 32 Harvard St., basement Michael: 781-777-9772  
**Framingham** 10 am, Big Book, MetroWest Medical Center, 115 Lincoln St., 1<sup>st</sup> floor Amy: 978-443-3690 ♻  
**Framingham** 7 pm, Speaker/Newcomer MetroWest Medical Center 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 115 Lincoln St., Susan: 508-405-4544 ♻  
**Jamaica Plain** 9-10:15 am, Speaker/discussion ♿ Farnsworth House, 90 South St. Marthajoy: 617-277-9838 ♻

## MONDAY

**Boston** 5:30, Step, Paulist Center, 5 Park St., 3rd floor library Barbara: 617-523-7285 ♿ ♿  
*No meetings on holidays*  
**Brookline** 7:30 pm, Women's, First Presbyterian Church, 32 Harvard St., basement. ♿ Emily: 617-512-2150  
**Holliston** 7 pm, Step/ Tradition, 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church, Route 16/ Washington Street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor Debra, 508-881-0381  
**Marlboro** Noon, Step, Marlboro Library, West Main Street, Prue: 508-485-7227  
*No meetings on holidays*  
**Natick** 6 pm, Step AA12/12 Morse Institute Library, Route 135. Wendy: 774-217-1972 ♻ ♿

## TUESDAY

**Acton** 7:15 am, West Acton Baptist Church, 592 Mass Ave. Steve: 508-277-1662  
**Natick** 10 am, Speaker Temple Israel, 145 Hartford St., Donna F.: 508-429-5201  
**Jamaica Plain**, 7:15 am, Big Book ♻ Municipal Building, 20 South St., Vivienne: 617-522-3090  
**Somerville** 7:30 pm, Speaker (Step on 2nd Tuesday), United Methodist Church, 14 Chapel St. at College Avenue Michael R., 617-945-1419  
**Sudbury** 7:30-8:45 pm, Speaker/Meditation/ Newcomer, St. John's Lutheran Church, 16 Great Rd. (corner of North Road and Route 117) Susan: 978-897-7652  
**West Roxbury** 7:30 pm. Step, VA Hospital, 1400 VFW Pkwy, Room A217, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Mary: 617-323-1420 ♻

## WEDNESDAY

**Framingham** 7 pm, Speaker, Metrowest Medical Center, 115 Lincoln St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Lisa M: 508-881-2996 ♻  
**Hudson** 7 pm, Step, 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church, Felton and Pleasant streets Suzanne A.: 978-562-1366 ♻  
**Needham** 6:45 pm, Literature/steps/traditions Stephen Palmer Center, May and Pickering streets, basement. Judy: 617-527-1705 *Park on street* ♻  
**Needham** 8 pm, Speaker/ newcomer, Stephen Palmer Center, May and Pickering streets, basement. Judy: 617-527-1705 *Park on street* ♻

## THURSDAY

**Brookline** 7 pm, 100-pounders, First Presbyterian Church, 32 Harvard St., main floor. Rachel: 617-323-2770  
**Natick** 10 am Step, Temple Israel, Hartford Street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor Fran: 508-653-4840  
**Southboro** 7 pm, H.O.W. St. Matthew Parish, 105 Southville Rd. Virginia: 508-881-8922

## FRIDAY

**Cambridge** 7 am, Big Book, Youville Hospital, 1575 Cambridge St., center 1 conference room, Sharon: 617-970-8187 ♻  
**Natick** 7 pm, Step, Metrowest Medical Center, Leonard Morse Campus, Union Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, Victoria: 508-647-4732 ♻  
**Newton** Noon, Discussion, Elliot Church, 474 Centre St. Constantine: 617-562-8642 *Park on street* ♻  
**Southboro** 10 am, Big Book, Southboro Library, Routes 30 and 85, Bruna: 508-481-9417 ♻

## SATURDAY

**Ashland** 10-11:30 am, Speaker, St. Cecelia's Family Center, 54 Esty St., Mary: 508-429-2813 ♻  
**Brighton** 9:30 am, Step Study, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Cambridge Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor hospitality room. Joanne: 617-787-5548 *Suggested fragrance-free* ♿ ♻  
**Cambridge** 5:30 pm, Big Book, First Congregational Church, 11 Garden St., Michael R., 617-945-1419 ♻  
**Framingham** 4 pm, Discussion, Metro West Medical Center, 115 Lincoln St., 1<sup>st</sup> floor auditorium Judy: 508-842-2409 ♻

Meetings are one hour, except as noted. To alter a meeting's listing, drop a line to [meetings@metrowestoa.org](mailto:meetings@metrowestoa.org).