



No Cocoon was published fourth quarter 2022 nor first quarter 2023. The most recent before this was third quarter 2022.

Twelve-Day Sponsorship Gets Newcomers Started Quickly

Before I went to convention, I was already thinking about how I show up for OA. I chose to invest in learning about the 12-day getting started sponsorship program by attending the Friday half-day preconference workshop. I was in great company.

The actual guide provided gave clear direction to help walk a newcomer through understanding what OA is. Whether completed in twelve consecutive days, or a day a week over twelve weeks or some combination in-between, there is flexibility. This approach allows the sponsor to help build an understanding of the program in addition to the sponsor being able to share their experience, strength, and hope.

In the pre-conference workshop, experienced OA members gathered and shared their fears, experience, strength and hopes about sponsoring. The consistent message I heard was everyone wants to do this service well.

The only requirement for membership in OA is a desire to quit eating compulsively. My hope for each of us is we take the steps to reach recovery.

We were never meant to suffer with this illness alone. Sponsorship is one of the ways we walk with one another. There are no gurus or perfect answers. To recover, it's suggested we need to have a sponsor, maintain abstinence, work the steps, and pass the recovery we've found here on to the best of our ability. In our wonderful, human imperfection, the best of our ability will be different, different days, showing by example how we "trudge the road of Happy Destiny" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*).

~Anonymous

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Our *Cocoon* is an example of the on-going work of OA members in MAI's communities. You can give service, by taking a few of your program moments to read a *Cocoon* article, and give your own comments on it (anonymously or with your name) to be posted in the blog on our website. Just email a few word to yourstory@oamilwaukee.org. Your words can make a difference to those who visit the oamilwaukee.org website.

The suggested writing prompt for the third quarter 2023 *Cocoon* is "What does it take to do your program?" What do you need to work your program? What benefits do you get from working your program?

Any article about your experience, strength, and hope also is welcome.

Deadline: Aug. 21, 2023

Milwaukee Area Intergroup

Serving Eastern Wisconsin

MAI Website oamilwaukee.org

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

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MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email? Send an email to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org with "Subscribe" in Subject. Include in the body of the email your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings.

MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., via Zoom. Contact chair@oamilwaukee.org for the information. Each member group can have two voting representatives. All OA members are welcome.

OA World Service

oa.org

This is the site to get World Service information. There also are free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: oa.org/podcasts/. A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

OA Website available in Spanish and French

Region 5

region5oa.org

Serving Midwest US and Canada

Cocoon Submissions

We need and want your stories of recovery, poems, and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!

Issue	Deadline	Suggested Writing Prompt
3rd Quarter	Aug. 21	What Does It Take to Work Your Program?

Send to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org or OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054, Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Editor: Cindy F.

Editorial Policy

Out of the Cocoon is the *quarterly* newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole.

Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. food, step, maintenance, late night calls, for newcomer, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

Clearing the Wreckage of My Past is No Accident

The scene of the accident. I arrived. Clearly it was a mess. And it was going to take the police and insurance both to figure out how best to clean things up. And then there is follow up that ensures everyone is okay and knows preventative measures moving forward. Ahhhhhhh.

The wreckage of my past is like an accident where harm has been inflicted. A mess. Initial clean up happens as I entered program. There is the fellowship available to help me stay afloat. If I am willing, I can pick a person or two who will really help me do forensic work around my mess. That would be my sponsors. Gently dismantling what spurs my compulsions. And giving me steps and tools to

respect and let go of the mess. My insurance kicks in. The fellowship and meetings help with the restoration process.

“A life well lived requires that I continue to change, grow, and clean up the wreckage of my past, and present.” Abstinence depends on it. So grateful of transformation that comes with the gift of OA!

An ambulance and stretcher are no longer needed to offer me hope. Instead I have the love of program helping me stay current and to deal with whatever comes. No sirens needed!

~Peggy

Life Was Resembling a Spiral Staircase

I was feeling sad and disappointed. Revisited by issues I dealt with, it felt like I'd been here before. I was abstinent, working my program, so why was I here? My sponsor explained I was on the spiral staircase. “You're moving up, but sometimes you see the same stuff on the way, just in a different spot.”

I needed to picture myself on a staircase to understand this. We had a grand spiral staircase in one of our childhood homes—wide and open with a wood banister. Yes, you would be moving up and likely seeing the same thing, but from a different perspective. I was five when we moved into the home and I somewhat slid up the stairs, my back against the gold wallpaper so I couldn't possibly fall over the railing. Remembering the view, it was a higher perspective. I was looking down into the good living room until the sky was the view through the large window in the upper hallway. Yes, I definitely got a higher perspective when I rose up the spiral staircase. I also gained confidence using those stairs and looked forward to the view out the window.

The reality for me, too, is accepting rather than fighting or

questioning how I feel is the easiest way through the feelings. When I willingly feel my feelings, they pass.

Acceptance. In the *Big Book* story, ‘Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict’ are the words: “And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today.” I wish you acceptance.

~Anonymous



MAI Marching Band

A Team-Based Approach to Carrying the Message...

“Marching Band” Creates A Unified Public Information Campaign

Tradition 5 states, “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffer.” Step 12 states, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

I’ve served as Public Information Chair or as a committee member several times over my years in OA and found it to be a bit of a solo venture, as has most of those in that position over the past 15-20 years. Sure, my fellows shared their journey at meetings and out it public as they felt drawn to do. Yet, the hard core carrying the message to the general public seemed to fall solely on the Public Information Chair.

We have used the World Service Public Information handbook and tried to incorporate those suggestions. We created a website and eventually hired a professional web designer to maintain the site. We created a Facebook page for quick announcements and to have a social media presence. We have sent press releases for our holiday events, convention, retreat, and even sent an occasional “this is OA” information release. We struggled to get the local media to publish the releases with any regularity. A

few of us hung posters about our special events. At least one meeting had a poster hanging party before MAI-sponsored events to make sure all public bulletin boards in the area had OA information on them. The PI committee created a list of various ways each individual could carry the message and even turned it into a “challenge.” MAI created stickers designed to place on bulletin boards and bathroom mirrors. We then created business cards with our contact information and a QR code to our website on the front and a place on the back where any member could put their name and phone number if they wanted to share with someone in the community or on a bulletin board. Each piece had some results, but the work was somewhat individualized and fragmented. Until the “Marching Band” campaign was created.

A little more than a year ago, the MAI Carry the Message got a huge boost in our area. The Public Information Chair created a campaign that not only incorporated Tradition 5 and Step 12, but created a coordinated, synchronized campaign. That “Marching Band” campaign directly expanded the public information committee and the area it reached across Southeast Wisconsin.

Like a traditional marching band, the OA Marching Band has several parts and levels. Our conductor is the Public Information Committee. The drum major is the Public Information Committee Chair. The musicians are our members. The music is the plan and the materials used to implement the plan. The parades are the specific publicity campaigns that allowed members to spread awareness of OA in the media and in public areas in the community as a form of service. Of course, there are “rehearsals” and added trainings, coaching, and problem solving to help everything flow smoothly. More specifically, we met together to learn how to post meeting notices and effectively post short pieces about experience, strength, and hope in the online newspaper *Patch* while using a psydonym, all in unity. Additionally, paper posters have been hung on community bulletin boards.



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...Across an Intergroup

No Musical Instruments in MAI's Marching Band?

I didn't get the chance to play an instrument as a child and I am no longer interested. So, when I saw Milwaukee Area Intergroup information labeled Marching Band at the 2023 convention, I disregarded it. I figured it was musical stuff for those who played instruments much like pre-COVID conventions.

The 11 inches of snow on the Saturday of convention caused some minor scheduling changes. I planned to attend the Tools workshop and instead found myself in the 12th Step, Carry the Message room. After a brief introduction, there was time well spent in small groups getting to know our fellow OA members and discussing ways we can carry the message that there is recovery from the disease of compulsive overeating.

We found it is often best to remember it is a program of attraction rather than promotion. Responding to people's inquiries about our weight loss, questions about our ordering in restaurants, or sharing why we pack our food for a plane, are all opportunities to carry the message. I know the consistency in my behavior is often the best teacher. If I consistently eat healthy and refrain from my binge foods and work the emotional and spiritual components of the program, people get to see the program works.

Carrying the message well is talking about the gifts we receive from working the program as opposed to complaining about the footwork we do. Sometimes, less is just enough because there's so much information about our program. One member carries business cards with a QR code to scan for more information about OA. Our intergroup provides materials to hand out within our intergroup area.



I now know Marching Band is a group of volunteers providing service, strengthening their program, and inviting other members to join them in sharing the message that there is recovery from compulsive overeating. They are finding what attracts those who are still suffering, and they repeat what works in planned, consistent ways, much like how we work our programs. You may have seen some of their social media posts or Patch articles. So, while March Band has no musical instruments, carrying the message *is* instrumental to our recovery. As one program slogan states, "When all else fails, work with another."

~Anonymous

Additional Marching Band participants have shared their experiences on the Milwaukee Area Intergroup blog. You can read them at oamilwaukee.org. If you want to join the Marching Band, send an email to the Public Information Chair through the website or directly to publicinformation@oamilwaukee.org.

...“Marching Band” Creates A Unified Public Information Campaign

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Because each member of the Marching Band is posting the same specific message in their local *Patch* at the same time, the impact is much greater than if I were posting as an individual in any one issue by myself. Additionally since the paper posters were hung in several places across the Intergroup area all at the same time, people were likely to see the message in more than one place and way.

MAI has a budget to provide us with professional printed materials and we receive coaching from our paid Communications Specialist to help each of us build our confidence in Carrying the Message as an individual and as a band member.

The bigger the band, the less hard each of us has to work. Like many tools and parts of our program, members can decide how much “music” they want to play. As was the theme at our 2023 convention says, “Together We Get Better.”

MAI members are welcome to join Marching Band at any time. I am hoping other members will jump on the bandwagon of Tradition 5 and Step 12 by joining

What Seemed Like Trite Sayings Are Necessary to My Program

All those trite sayings I have heard through my years in OA can become boring. However, those are the things I remember and they remind me that I have a lifelong incurable disease that can be in remission one day at a time for the rest of my life.

I can’t work this program without giving up control. I can only recover if I admit defeat and put my trust in the God of my understanding each day and in all situations. “We came, we came to, we came to believe.” Those “act as if” actions became the bedrock of my program. “I can’t, God can, I will let God.” “If I focus on the weight, I will lose my recovery, but if I focus on recovery, I will lose the weight.”

You probably heard many of those quotes at conventions over the years. These and the saying, “It works if you work it, and work it because you are worth it.”

~JW

Marching Band. The more people we have working together, the more people we will reach within the Milwaukee Area Intergroup boundaries and the better we can Carry the Message to those who still suffer.

~Anonymous

Service Opportunity

The goal of Milwaukee Area Intergroup is to have several representatives from each meeting be in the Marching Band so all communities are covered. Therefore, each meeting is welcome to learn more about how to Carry the Message in its own neighborhood. If you individually or your meeting is interested in finding out more about Marching Band, send an email stating your interest to publicinformation@oamilwaukee.org. You will receive training and you will be working with others.

MAI’s Marching Band Parts

A marching band needs a conductor...

...*Our conductor is the MAI Public Information Committee.*

A marching band needs a drum major...

...*Our drum major is the Chair of the Public Information Committee.*

A marching band needs sections of musicians...

...*Our sections are geographic regions and our musicians are our members.*

A marching band needs music...

...*Our music is a plan, printed posters, scripts, and more.*

A marching band plays music at parades...

...*Our parades are our publicity campaigns.*

A marching band practices before its parades...

...*Our band has training, coaching, and problem solving from MAI.*

Working Each Step Could Automatically Means Using the Tools

When I am asked at an OA meeting to talk about one of the OA Tools of Recovery, my share is usually different than what is typically expected. It goes something like what follows. (*Unless otherwise noted references are from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition.*)

I know OA has developed a set of tools to work the program, but when I work the Steps not only am I using the “tools” but rather, the Steps ARE the Tools of our Program of recovery. In fact, the *Big Book* says “there was nothing left for us but “*to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet*” (p. 25). Then later, the *Big Book* tells us when we work with others, we “*simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection*” (p. 95).

This Too Will Pass

"My moments of discord show me how great my blessings are." (*For Today*, Oct. 23)

Since I've been in the OA Program and have learned some important life lessons here, I have figured out how to focus on the bigger picture rather than on the discord of the moment. Knowing I'm in recovery and not actively compulsive overeating trumps just about everything else I can think of. I was a slave to food for so many years that I'm really grateful I am no longer am such, one day at a time by the grace of God. And since I've been a member of OA for so long, this has allowed me to iron out the kinks in my food plan and action plan. For me, this is all important: eat only as planned, one day at a time. I no longer listen to the devilish villain eating disorder that attempts to push me off track and back into the sorrow that actively overeating is for me.

So, yes, I have some discord in my life. But just as my dad used to say to me way before I'd ever heard of OA, "Roberta, this, too, will pass." At the times he told me this, 50 to 60 years ago, it never sounded to me like he was right. Now, hundreds of life lessons later, I have to give the old guy some credit. He was right after all
~Bobbi

What I am saying is I don't have to direct specific efforts toward using the “OA tools of recovery.” If I direct specific efforts toward working the Steps, I am automatically incorporating the tools into my program. Using the tools doesn't necessarily mean I am working the Steps, but working the Steps will automatically have me using the tools.

My experience is that if I look at each of the Twelve Steps, I will use the OA tools of recovery. So let's take a look at each of the Twelve Steps and see how, if I keep my attention on working the Steps, the tools are there.

Step 1: When I admit my powerlessness, the next step that typically follows is that I seek help—at *meetings*, using the *telephone* or online. “Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity.” (p. xxiv, *Big Book*). My first experience in contacting OA was that I was beaten up mercilessly by food/compulsive eating and, having learned of Overeaters Anonymous via Ann Landers, I *wrote* a letter to WSO for information.

Step 2: Studying the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (*literature*) was part of the process of coming to believe a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

Step 3: “We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend or spiritual advisor” (p. 63) *sponsorship*. I took this Step with my sponsor and I have also been privileged to witness sponsees share their Step Three with me (*service*).

Step 4 – Introduction to Step 4 begins with “Next we launched out on a course of vigorous *action* (*Steps 4-9*), the first step of which is a personal housecleaning.” (p.63). The *Big Book* makes it clear that the “program of recovery” is a set of actions we take – “a spiritual program of *action*.” I interpret that as an *action plan*. And *writing* is a core part of the inventory process and recovery. “In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper...” (p. 64)...If we have been thorough...we have *written* down a lot

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...Working Each Step Could Automatically Means Using the Tools

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(p.70). “We have a *written* inventory...” (p. 75).

Step 5: “...we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step.” (p. 74). My sponsor (*sponsorship*) was my trusted confidante. Of course, one does not have to share their Fifth Step with their sponsor but many do.

Step 6: As a result of Step 4 (*writing*) and sharing it, Step 5, I became “entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”.

Step 7: I don’t think I use a specific tool for working this step, but in order to arrive at Step 7, I need to work the previous steps.

Step 8: “We have a list (*writing*) of all persons we have harmed... We made it when we took inventory” (p. 76) (*writing*).

Step 9: “Now we need more *action* (p.76) and then it lays out how we are to go about making amends.

Step 10: “Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear” (p. 84) and lays out a course of *action* we take on a daily basis to continue in recovery.

Step 11: “We consider our plans (*action plan*) for the day” (p. 86). And it tells us to pray to “be shown all through the day what our next step is to be (*action plan*) (p. 87).

Step 12: *Service* to others is core of Step 12. Whether I do it face-to-face, at *meetings*, online or by *telephone* I have many opportunities to carry the message – “Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress.” (p. 100). It also tells me to share the Big Book. “On your first visit tell him about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. If he shows interest, lend him your copy of this book (*literature*) (p. 94) . . . If he is sincerely interested and wants to see you again, ask him to read this book (*literature*) in the interval. (p. 95). And finally, I practice *anonymity* when working with

others.

In regards to a *plan of eating*, the *Big Book* says, “When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” (p. 64). That is what I am experiencing in my life, little by slowly, as I do the work the Steps require of me.

I surely don’t provide this entire detail when sharing about a tool at a meeting. But simply what I am getting at is that if I work these 12 steps on a daily basis, I am automatically using the tools. They are embodied within the actions the steps require of us to recover. Thank you, my fellows, for trudging this Road of Happy Destiny with me.

~J

OA Tools of Recovery Used While Working the Steps

Plan of Eating (any or all)	Literature (Step 2, 12)
Sponsorship (Steps 3, 5)	Action Plan (Steps 4, 9, 10, 11)
Meetings (Steps 1, 12)	Anonymity (Step 12)
Telephone (Steps 1, 12)	Service (Step 3)
Writing (Steps 4, 6, 8)	

Overeaters Anonymous Responsibility Pledge:

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