

The Penn-Pal

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW, Inc.
Pennsylvania Intergroup Newsletter

WINTER 2009

Tiny Dancer



I have been blessed with a 60 pound weight loss, and I work this program one day at a time.

I'm so grateful to everyone in this program, but I know from before, that my abstinence and recovery is a delicate gift and that I don't take it for granted. I put one foot in front of the

other, do what I need to do on a daily basis, and leave the rest up to God.

That's how it works for me.

I've learned there are no superstars here, no one is perfect, especially me. I thank God today for the willingness to do the work ahead of me.

I am a food addict and compulsive eater in recovery today, thanks to this program.

I was a food addict at a young age. I can remember loving a particular salty snack, and my mom used to hide snacks from my siblings and me, in case company came to the house. At least that's what she told us.

She always hid them in the same place, and I would always find them. I would hound her until she would give in and let me

(Continued on page 3)

**Volume 6, Issue 1
Winter 2009**

Inside this issue:

<i>Meetings Calendar</i>	2
<i>Meeting List</i>	2
<i>We are Self-Supporting...</i>	2
<i>Next Intergroup Meeting Date</i>	2
<i>Meditation for the Month</i>	3
<i>Contact Information/Preamble</i>	4

Seeing spots before my eyes



It seems to happen every January.

The new year brings new reminders about how life use to be before I stumbled into this 12-Step program.

The TV these days is overflowing with commercials about products that claim to help people lose weight.

There are celebrities

(some of whom actually are overweight) speaking in commercials for weight-loss programs and the special foods participants must buy. And in very small print at the bottom of the screen, disclaimers warning that the advertised weight-loss is not typical and that the product or service also recommends doing some sort of exercise.

Other commercial spots are for exercise contraptions - usually demonstrated by remarkably fit and impossibly beautiful people - to tone just about every part of the body.

Diet and nutrition gurus are making the rounds on

talk shows trying to sell their books and CDs.

The one common denominator is that they focus only on the *physical* problem.

Maybe some of the products or services actually would work for anyone. Maybe they all would. Who am I to scoff? Who am I to say what is best for another human being?

Speaking only for myself, I have come to accept that excess weight is a physical, emotional and spiritual problem.

I had been at my goal weight several times in my

(Continued on page 3)



**SUBMIT ARTICLES
FOR THE
PENN-PAL TO:**

info@ceahowpa.org



Schedule of Meetings

CEA-HOW Business Page

- (1) **Sun. 8:30 a.m.** - Bethel Park Library
5100 W. Library Road
Bethel Park, PA 15102
Jane: 412-951-9157
- (2) **Sun. 6:00 p.m.** -
Trinity Episcopal Church
500 S. Main Street
Washington, PA 15301
Denise: 412-377-2334
- (3) **Mon. 6:30 p.m.** - Avalon Ministry Center
336 S. Home Avenue
Avalon, PA 15202
Sharon: 412-761-1100
- (4) **Tues. 7:30 a.m.** - Wesley Spectrum Services
26 S. Main St.
Washington, PA
Toni: 412-805-2334
- (5) **Tues. 6:30 p.m.** -
Dormont Presbyterian Church
2865 Espy Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15216
Laura: 412-561-8176
- (6) **Tues. 5:00 p.m.** -  St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
220 8th Street
McKeesport, PA
Ruby: 412-664-0912
- (7) **Weds. 6:30 p.m.** - Vineyard Church
The Uptown Theatre
100 N. Main St.
Washington, PA
Kathy: 724-531-1985
- (8) **Thurs. 6:30 p.m.** -  Cranberry Township Municipal Bldg.
2525 Rochester Road
Cranberry Township, PA
Jane: 412-951-9157
- (9) **Fri. 6:00 p.m.** -
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
105 Gateshead Drive
McMurray, PA
Denise: 412-377-2334
- (10) **Sat. 8:30 a.m.** - Alliance Church
2510 Old Washington Road
Upper St. Clair, PA
Jane: 412-951-9157

New Meeting Time

New Meeting Time



February, 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 (1,2)	2 (3)	3 (4,5,6)	4 (7)	5 (8)	6 (9)	7 (10)
8 (1,2)	9 (3)	10 (4,5,6)	11 (7)	12 (8)	13 (9)	14 (10) 
15 (1,2)	16 (3)	17 (4,5,6)	18 (7)	19 (8)	20 (9)	21 (10)
22 (1,2)	23 (3)	24 (4,5,6)	25 (7)	26 (8)	27 (9)	28 (10)

“We are self supporting through our own contributions...”

Suggested breakdown for any meeting that decides - in its group conscious - to send donations to other CEA-HOW entities:

- 50% CEA-HOW Pennsylvania Intergroup
2400 Oxford Drive
P.O. Box 179
Bethel Park, PA 15102-1856
- 30% CEA-HOW World Service Office
5500 E. Atherton
Suite 227-B
Long Beach, CA 90815-4017
- 20% CEA-HOW REGION (AREA 4)
Ansonia Station
P.O. Box 1042
New York, NY 10023

The next CEA-HOW Pennsylvania Intergroup meeting is 9:30 a.m., Saturday, March 7, 2009, at the Alliance Church in Upper St. Clair after the weekly 8:30 a.m. meeting.

Tiny Dancer *(Continued from page 1)*



eat them. I would shove handfuls of them into my mouth, and chew to a likable consistency, swallow, and start again. I remember feeling almost numbed out while I was doing this.

Nothing else mattered, and nobody else mattered.

I remember once being at a neighbor's house and being served this particular snack food, and playing this game with the younger kids. I would shove handfuls of the snack into my mouth, chew like a pig, and the kids would laugh. I got the last laugh though, because I got to eat the entire snack. At least that's

what I thought at that time. As I got older, I started enjoying other snack foods as well, but my favorite was always my favorite.

The thing that seemed constant with all junk food, though, was the way I zoned out while I was eating them. I didn't know then that I was a compulsive eater.

I was a dancer, and that's probably why I didn't gain as much weight as I should have from eating the way I did. I was a little on the chubby side, heavier than my school peers, but not as heavy as the rest of my family. To my family, I think I was considered at an ideal weight, maybe even on the thin side. So, I never wanted my family to know what I really did with food. I wanted to appear to be perfect maybe because I didn't want my supply to be cut off.

I never even thought about why I did what I did

with food, I just did what I did, and that was that.

I started dieting when I was in 9th grade. I remember going on a three-day clinic diet. I think I lost 10 pounds and gained seven back in a weekend. I was up and down that diet and weight scale all through high school, but I was never obese, just chubbier than my peers.

I always felt inferior to others, and I sort of acted the part of the class clown. I was emotionally over sensitive and I don't think I had much of a social life. I found it easier to get along with food; a classic case of low self-esteem.

When I graduated, I started working and I started gaining more weight. I overate more wholesome food along with junk food. I could really put it away. I don't know why or when that started, but I had one hell of an appetite (that's

what I called it then, now I would call it binging).

I remember binging so badly, being so swollen, and in physical pain and misery, and I called off sick from work so many times, that I was afraid I would lose my job. But I just couldn't stop.

I truly believe today that all the dieting fads I tried; the gaining and losing weight, the restricting and binging of food, fed my compulsion, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I found my first 12-Step program, when I was in my late twenties, early thirties. I don't remember how I heard of it, but I found the number in the

(Continued on page 4)

Seeing spots before my eyes

(Continued from page 1)
life before coming to this 12-Step program. However, I always gained it back -- and then some. I never really worked on the underlying issues about why I ate to excess. And I certainly never even thought to turn to my Higher Power (God) for help or for

much of anything else.

It was only when I knew I was beaten into submission by my weight gain - when I knew there was nothing out there that was going to work for me long term - that I got a CEA-H.O.W. sponsor to guide me through the three parts of CEA-H.O.W. recovery.

I am abstinent for today.

That might be why, when another one of those weight-loss spots comes on the screen, I start to channel surf.

From a CEA-H.O.W. member.

Meditation for the Month

"Gratitude is a necessity for those who seek a better life"

— Twenty-Four Hours a Day



The Penn-Pal

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW, Inc.
Pennsylvania Intergroup Newsletter

2400 Oxford Drive
PO Box 179
Bethel Park, PA 15102-1856

For more information: 412-225-1664
Email: info@ceahowpa.org
Website: www.ceahowpa.org

WORLD SERVICE WEB SITE:
WWW.CEAHOW.ORG

Our Preamble

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope are recovering from compulsive eating and food addiction. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively.

There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. CEA-HOW is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

This section and CEA-HOW logo from World Service Office literature.



Tiny Dancer

(Continued from page 3)

phone book and called. I went to my first meeting, saw a bunch of obese women sitting around a table reading from a book and talking about God. I bought the AA Big Book, went home and never went back again.



When I moved from my apartment, I threw the book away because I didn't want anyone to think I was an alcoholic. God forbid.

But the seed was planted.

I continued several more years of binging and dieting, isolating, hating myself and everybody else, calling off sick from work, dodging weddings, parties, etc. Then, I finally went back again to that 12-Step meeting. This time I was ready.

I heard them say welcome to the program and welcome home, and I cried. I cried because I was no longer alone, I no longer had to wonder what was wrong with me, why I was so different from anyone else I knew. I was not alone. There were others like me. I was so grateful. I stayed in the program for many years

and learned so much. Then there was a split.

I went to a meeting that was an H.O.W. version of the program and continued to learn and grow. But I quit at Step 4. I wasn't ready to make amends (Step 9). That would be too much work.

So, I gave into relapse. My life had changed so much, and I had no time for myself, but the seed was still there, and I knew for me there was no other place to go. I was a food addict, and no diet could work for me without a program of recovery ... the twelve steps, and this time, all twelve.

However, with my work schedule, I found it impossible to get to three meetings a week. So, I asked God for guidance. And what wonderful guidance He gave me.

I was ready for CEA-H.O.W. in August 2007. I knew about it, but I heard it was a very strict, intense program, with no exceptions to any rules.

This frightened me, but I was in so much pain, that I thought I could just try.

I found the meeting list on the Internet, and called a contact person for a meeting near me. I

had met her in the other program a few years back, and she encouraged me to come to a CEA-H.O.W. meeting. I went, and my friend met me and gave me a hug and welcomed me. She helped me find a sponsor, hooked me up with the bridge (phone) meetings, (my life saver!), and here I am.

I am so grateful to her for helping me come back. I know this program has certain requirements, but I know for me it works. Without the steps, it's just a diet. But with the steps, it's a change of life, my life. It's a chance to live one day at a time happy, joyous, and free, if I choose so today.

I'm grateful today for a wonderful program, my wonderful Higher Power, a wonderful sponsor, a wonderful friend who helped me come back, and especially all of you wonderful compulsive eaters in recovery today.

God bless you all. And, thank you.

(A CEA-H.O.W. member who recently had her first anniversary)

