

FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS REGION 5



November 2014

Convention 2015

In Chicago area:
Schaumburg, IL, Sept. 11-13, 2015

Twelfth-Step-Within Day:
Celebrated on December 12 (12/12) each year to encourage OA service bodies, groups, and individual members to reach out to those within the Fellowship who are still suffering from compulsive eating behaviors.

The mailing address for Region 5 has been changed to:

**Region 5
PO Box 199223
Indianapolis, IN 46219**

Please pass this on to your meetings!!

The old address (in Medinah, IL) will have forwarding service for only 6 months. After that, mail sent to the old address should be returned to sender. Please make note of this new address NOW!

It is important that every group uses this new address for their 7th tradition contributions.

Thank you!!

Yours in recovery,
Susan Mc :-)
Region 5 Secretary

SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE OF FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 27, 2015.

PLEASE SEND TO BARB1362@ME.COM

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 10, 2014: New Business Motions/ Bylaw Amendments postmarked to the WSO

December 12th: 12th Step Within Day

December 29, 2014

WSBC delegate registration deadline

March 13-14, 2015: **Region 5 Assembly**, Merrillville, IN

April 27- May 2, 2015: **World Service Business Conference (WSBC)**, Albuquerque, NM. *The Miracle of Abstinence.*

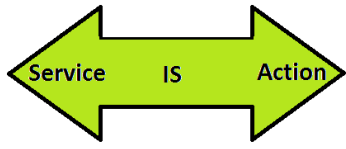
July 11-12, 2015: **Region 5 Assembly**

Sept. 11-13, 2015: **Region 5 Convention**, Chicago, IL

Nov. 6-7, 2015: **Region 5 Assembly**, NOTE DATE CHANGE!

May 2-7, 2016: **WSBC**, Albuquerque, NM

Sept. 1-4, 2016: **World Service Convention**, Boston



Middle of the Road Service

Ask any sponsor how to achieve and maintain abstinence. I bet somewhere in the answer you will find service. As a compulsive person myself, I tend to be all or nothing. If I cannot win, I do not want to play the game. For that reason, I had to be very careful about my commitment to service. I needed a balanced approach.

I started out doing setup, making coffee, clean up, etc. Nothing too committal. Don't get me wrong, any service at any level provides a brief relief from the obsession of self and food. After a while, however, I was not finding that level of service rewarding. I wanted to move to the next level but like so many of us, I didn't think I had much extra time. So what is the alternative? Here are some suggestions that require some level of commitment but often can be accomplished in short amounts of time.

- Write for *Lifeline*, *Freedom From Bondage*, or your intergroup's newsletter (1/2 hour)
- Send Professional Outreach literature to doctors and hospitals in your area (2 hours)
- Work with your home meeting and intergroup to put on a workshop (3-4 hours)
- Be a group secretary (1/4 hour per month)
- Be a meeting contact (1/4 hour per month)
- Be a group downloader (1/4 hour per month)
- Be the literature person for your group (1/4 per month)
- Be the designated new comer greeter and follow up person (1/2 hour per week)
- Call people from your group that have missed more than two meetings (1/4 hour per week)

~Anonymous

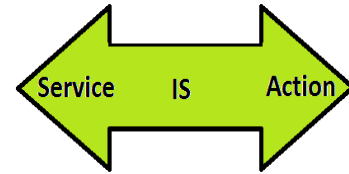
At this November Assembly, we asked the Region Chairs in attendance to share their recovery with the following question: How has your action plan changed over time, what have you added, deleted or discovered when developing or changing your action plan? Their answers are shared in this issue of *Freedom From Bondage*.

When I first came in, my action plan (it wasn't called that then since it wasn't a tool yet) consisted mostly of actions to aid my own recovery: writing my food down, going to a minimum of three meetings a week, calling at least three other people every day, staying physically active, etc. Today my action plan still includes items to strengthen my own recovery- I have to put my own oxygen mask on first, after all- but the far greater focus is on others. How am I helping another compulsive eater stay abstinent, work the steps and have a spiritual awakening? What am I doing to help strengthen recovery of people in my meetings? How am I encouraging others to give service? How am I personally carrying the message of recovery to others? These questions are the focal point of my action plan today. ~Visiting Region Chair

My action plan includes starting my day with meditation and prayer. I have increased my prayer over time. Service continues to increase. I sometimes think that I have too much to do but I am aware that I have a progressive illness and apparently this is the "more" I have to do to stay in fit spiritual condition. Lastly, service is my favorite tool because I hate doing all of the others, but by being actively involved in service I am compelled to use the phone, read literature, write, have a plan of eating, practice anonymity etc. By default I am put into action. ~Diane Region 6 chair

The continuous thing on my action plan is to call my sponsor everyday and talk to my sponsees. I used to exercise, now I don't. I pray and meditate first thing in the morning and last thing at night but my HP is with me every second of the day. I weigh and measure my food and prepare my meals at least a week in advance. I give service and remember where I came from. Thank you. ~Visiting Region Chair

Action is the magic word. Being willing to listen to my sponsors and my HP to add and delete things has made my action plan more useful. I have reduced the number of things on my daily action plan and included "fun" time. First and foremost are actions that support my abstinence and recovery. Then other things are added. I believe having an action plan is a practice. I get to practice making a plan much like my plan of eating that sets out what will make my life happy joyous and free. It gets fine tuned as I see what does and doesn't work. ~Visiting Region Chair



LIFELINE IN MY TOOLBOX

Give service and use the Tool of writing by contributing to *Lifeline* magazine. See the detailed descriptions here: [2015 Lifeline topics and deadlines](#) and be inspired to share your story of experience, strength, and hope, brief topic list below. Send to lifeline@oa.org

April (Deadline: 12/15/14): The Steps Made Simple, Step Principles. **May/June (Deadline: 1/15/15):** Lessons From Relapse, Twelfth Step Within. **July (Deadline: 3/15/15):** Generally Speaking-Write on any topic that is meaningful to you. **August (Deadline: 4/15/15):** My First OA Meeting; Strong, Healthy Meetings; Meeting Inspiration. **September (Deadline: 5/15/15):** Changing Relationships: the "New Normal", Setting Healthy Boundaries. **October (Deadline: 6/15/15):** Character Defects: An Examined Life Serenity in a Nonstop World. **November/December (Deadline: 7/15/15):** Great Big Gratitude List, Giving Thanks, IDEA Day, Celebrate the Season
To subscribe: <http://www.oa.org/lifeline-magazine/>

My action plan is different from others. I use different actions as needed. I am basically lazy, put it off today if I could do it tomorrow or next week. Procrastinator was my middle name. (still is?) But GOD has a plan for me. God has taught me to put OA first in my life if I want a life. (One day at a time). My action plan today is to hand my will and life over to God and let God decide what is going to happen today. I can plan a rough outline of my day but I cannot plan what will be put in front of me. An obstacle is just an opportunity to work the steps - and a wonderful event I can enjoy without going on "a high." Whatever happens I thank God that I have a God so I can live the best I can today.
~Letitia, Region 10 Chair

Reflections from the Leadership Retreat in Cincinnati

We received lots of tips and info on what to do to carry the message (workshops, programs, activities, etc) and the positive attitude and energy was great. The only disappointment was that we didn't get much time to share on what our intergroups were actually doing, or to connect with others. ~Danielle G.

I learned SOO much about OA and how small my little intergroup world was but how big it could become. There is so much OA info out there all we have to do is look for it and use it. The OA.org website is packed with useful info if you are willing to look for it. Since the retreat, I am working with a new committee in my IG maybe you've heard of it, Twelve Step Within. We have already drawn up an outline of what we are going to do next year. I am going to run for IG chair and whether I win or not I am going to suggest that we do an IG inventory first thing, see where we are at, find out where people want to go with the IG and start the New Year out a little different. Our committee already has plans to do an IG rep orientation or training after the first of the year. We want to get everyone on the same page and teach reps what is important to take back to their groups for voting for the next IG. We are growing and we want to be a healthy IG. Thank you to the leader of the weekend, he was a great gift from my HP showing me what we can do. And thank you to my IG for sending me and my roomie, I got to make a new friend and learned more about the program that has saved my life. ~Your trusted servant, Eileen C.

When WSBC voted to add action plan as the 9th tool, I was not a happy camper. So much was talked about doing exercise/sport, and I have never done too much of that. I discovered though that it was very individual - like the food plan. My action plan is writing what I need to do for that day, including all of my "OA stuff" (reading, writing, food plan, praying, and of course talking to my sponsors). The beauty of the tool is that I can make it be whatever I want it to be. Today that even includes walking!
~-Susan, Region 9 Chair, Israel

WHAT HAPPENS IN MERRILLVILLE

SHOULDN'T STAY IN MERRILLVILLE!

November 2014 Assembly Reports from committees



12th Step Within: Janet P. and Derita P. will update the speaker's list for March. The committee brainstormed action ideas and "blue sheet" ideas.



Intergroup Outreach: Decisions were made to reach out to all IGs who were not at the assembly to offer assistance, etc.



Nominating: Dick W., our parliamentarian, shared the history of Robert's Rules and wished us well as he is resigning as our parliamentarian.



Bylaws: Proposing a ban on internet usage during business meetings.



Finance: On the treasurer's contributions list, each state is represented by a number: 13=Illinois; 14=Indiana; 18=Kentucky; 22= Michigan; 35=Ohio; 49=Wisconsin; 156= Ontario. Representatives may want to scan these lists to identify meetings that may not be contributing to Region 5; some meetings simply don't realize how our OA 7th tradition works.



Website: Craig R. has resigned as Region 5 Webmaster. Please do not send him emails about the website.

Continue to send any flyers to our Trustee, Linda J. at region5trustee@gmail.com.

Continue to send any newsletters to our Chair, Denise O. at cole3616@gmail.com.

Send other website related correspondence to our secretary, Susan Mc. at susan.m.oa@gmail.com.

Continue to be patient as we transition to new website management. Thank you.



Convention:

Convention 2015 will be in Schaumburg, IL, Sept. 11-13, 2015. The Convention Committee motion to accept online registration and payment for conventions was adopted. The motion to add that all speakers for convention will need to be pre-registered was adopted.



PI/PO: See page 5.



Newsletter: Committee meeting was held with editor for this issue attending electronically for health reasons.

The 2015 theme is "Principles of the Steps"

March: Steps 1-3 (*Honesty, Hope, and Faith*)

July: Steps 4-9 (*Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love, Discipline*)

November: Steps 10-12 (*Perseverance, Spiritual Awareness, Service*)

Please send articles for the March issue to barb1362@me.com by February 27, 2015.

When I came back to program in 2004 I went to meetings, got a sponsor, worked the steps with my sponsor, developed a food plan and helped set up and take down at the meeting. Now I start my day with writing and meditation, talking with two sponsees, reading OA literature, and filling in my gratitude journal (5 things I'm grateful for from the day before). I read For Today at work, take sponsee calls, call my sponsor and other fellows. My service has gone beyond the group and intergroup. I continue to work the steps on a deeper level with both my sponsees and sponsor. I've adjusted my food plan with the help of a healthcare professional, sponsor and fellows. My main action is to look at making any necessary changes as I go along. I do whatever it takes to remain abstinent. No matter what.

~Visiting Region Chair



Public Information/ Professional Outreach (PI/PO)

PI/PO Works for All!

Bravo to the **Madison Area Intergroup Public Information Committee!** They have arranged to have an OA nationally produced Public Service Announcement (PSA) run on WMTV, Channel 15, from December 29, 2014 through January 25, 2015. Not only is this an incredible achievement - it is a perfect time of year to reach those individuals who are suffering from post-holiday guilt and depression. Bravo again to all you brave souls in the Madison area for taking to heart our **Primary Purpose** which is to carry the message of recovery to compulsive overeaters. (To view this PSA, go to www.aa.org and click on the Media/Professionals tab). As a member of Region 5's PI/PO Committee, I am pleased to have a small part in this happening.

The **Louisville Metro Intergroup** participated in their first professional exhibit at the Southern Obesity Summit in Louisville. Real interest was expressed by State and Local Health Departments from many of the participating states, who are "hungry" for information; especially information about low cost, or free, solutions to obesity and other eating disorders. Louisville Public Radio is doing year-long programming on obesity and expressed interest in "how OA works." They will probably be in touch with the Louisville Metro Intergroup. Not only were the professional organizations interested in OA, but the OA members who did service noticed that when they stepped away from the booth for a break, some of the hotel staff surreptitiously picked up some of the pamphlets. An unexpected bonus!

The Bariatric Program at St. Joseph Hospital in Chicago has reached out to an OA member with **Turning Point Intergroup** and requested that they start a meeting at their facility. The professional community is reaching out to us. What a wonderful development!

A majority of **Health Plans** and **HMOs** have a section for "member wellness" or "living healthy." Has your PI/PO committee considered contacting these organizations in your area? Consider a letter or a phone call with information about how their members may contact OA or attend a meeting. Emphasize that "OA has no dues or fees."

What about your local NPR or college radio stations: Would they consider doing an interview with an OA member who has long-term abstinence and is maintaining a healthy body weight?

What about your local "Craig's List?" Did you know that you can place an ad for free? However, you must be willing to change-up the ad every week. Would someone on your PI/PO committee be willing to give this innovative idea a chance?

PI/PO is about getting information out to the Public and to the Professionals who are concerned with their own and the health of our communities. **Our Primary Purpose is to Carry the Message to those who are still suffering.** What a wonderful way to keep your own recovery strong! Participate in service above the group level and join your Intergroup PI/PO Committee. What a wonderful time of year to shore up your own abstinence and raise your spirits and those around you.

Sending Peace, Love and Serenity to All from your Region 5 PI/PO Committee,
Alison B-W, Chair

Attention: In addition to running the OA PSA on a local TV network for the month of January, we'll be running a "slide" of the PI poster on page 6 of this newsletter before the movie trailers at a local movie theater for a year. Are your meetings ready for these potential newcomers? Do you have a service position to greet and contact newcomers? Do you have enough newcomer packets? Do you announce available sponsors? Have you had a group conscience about the Strong Meetings Checklist?

~Madison Intergroup

My action plan has changed in many ways over the last 15 years but there are still many core actions that remain the same such as prayer, meditation, journaling and using the tools. My food plan has changed; I find I have to eat less as I age. The type of exercise I do has also changed - exercise has always been part of my action plan but now I do more walking, interval and resistance training. The most significant change is that I write a daily 10th and 11th step which includes my plan of eating, my accountability regarding the tools I use and I answer 10th and 11th step questions from the Big Book. This keeps me abstinent, honest and livin' the dream!

~Visiting Region Chair

WHAT WOULD YOUR SPONSOR SAY?

Sponsee: I'm having a problem with my food plan as I'm getting older.

Sponsor: When my sponsee had these problems, I suggested reducing certain foods (as I myself had to do with the suggestion of a dietitian). Also, knowing that I'm not a professional, I suggested she speak to a dietitian, nutritionist etc. I pointed out the importance of self honesty, acceptance with this issue-that "I won't die" if I have less food on my food plan, to be grateful for what I have. As far as a chapter in my life in facing life changes, I remind my sponsees that in order to keep my food abstinence, I must work the Steps. I must use the Tools, follow the Traditions and respect the OA Concepts of service, and of course to hold close to me my higher power - God. ~By Susan

Service in Action-Because my sponsor said...

When I first entered OA and heard the phrase "Service helps you stay on track," I did not understand it. Why would service have anything to do with abstinence? But I helped where I could as far as setting up the room, laying out literature, etc. I found a sponsor within 5 months of entering the rooms, and the first thing she said was: "I want you to take on as much service as possible. It will help your recovery." Again that word: SERVICE. So I volunteered to be secretary to our meeting and then a Group Rep to Intergroup. "There, that should be plenty of service to continue my abstinence from compulsive eating!" I thought.

After approximately 6 months at this level, my sponsor again nudged me to sign on for an intergroup committee. I remember thinking: "Is she kidding?!" But I addressed my resentment and joined the 12th Step Within Committee to do outreach. Through this committee, I was able to go out to the various meetings and talk about Intergroup, recovery and service. I was hopeful we could contact every group listed on the CCI meeting list—and we did! It was wonderful! So again I thought, "This should be enough service to ensure my abstinence and recovery." I was complete.

Approximately 7 months later my sponsor approached me about running for our intergroup secretary position. I was suddenly overwhelmed! Haven't I done enough service??? Do I have to be involved in EVERYTHING to ensure

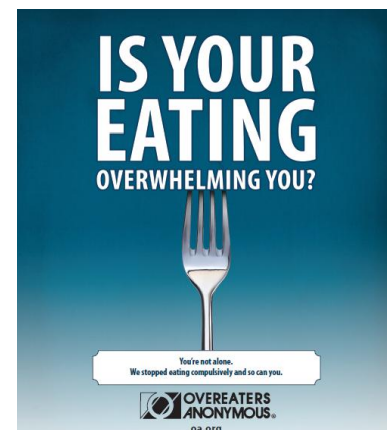
recovery?? The answer is definitely YES. So I ran and was elected as Secretary to our intergroup. It has been a rewarding experience to serve at the intergroup level---and to see the business side of OA. I have met some amazing people who gained my admiration for their dedication to our program. They are truly inspirational as they give without ceasing.

Recently, I was selected to attend Region 5 Assembly as an Alternate Delegate. Now I was beginning to feel resentment and self-pity. Aren't I doing enough? Haven't I given enough? Now you are asking me to serve at Region level and to spend an entire weekend in Indiana at a business meeting! But I agreed and dragging my heels I went to Region. WHAT AN EXPERIENCE! I heard 9 unbelievable leads. I became a part of the group conscience that hears and acts on motions, elections and business decisions of the Region. And I gained insight into the 'bigger picture' of OA and how it functions behind the scenes. It was inspiring!

What have I learned? I've learned that service DOES help us attain and maintain our abstinence. I learned that OA is an unbelievable organization with many ways to do service and many paths to take in finding service roles. I've learned that there are roots to this organization that grow deep and spread wide. It is rock solid. And there is always another branch to climb to fulfill a need. I am proud to serve. I am proud to be a part of the changes and the growth. And I am excited to move forward in my OA journey toward higher levels of service.

What I know for sure: I am abstinent...and I know the reason why!

~Trudy N., Cleveland Central Intergroup



From the Trustee

I am thrilled to announce that *Overeaters Anonymous*, 3rd Edition is now available! I was on the Conference Approved Literature Committee when we started this book and later as a Trustee I was able to review the book. As Board Approved Literature Committee Chair, my committee was honored to be able to choose the gorgeous cover of the book. Doing service can really be fun and rewarding! The book contains 40 new stories from our members and a new forward by an eating-disorder treatment professional. OA3 is also available as an e-book.

We also have a new "Our Invitation to You" to be read at meetings! Find it online in the revised Suggested Meeting Format. The update, approved by the OA Board of Trustees in August, draws from "Our Invitation to You" recently published in *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition*. This book, including the new "Our Invitation to You" was approved by world wide group conscience at the 2014 WSBC.

Public Information/Professional Outreach

The new Step One public information poster is now available for download and printing. This full-color poster features an area to enter local meeting information and tear-off tabs for oaquiz.org, which links to the Fifteen Questions online. Go to http://www.oa.org/pdfs/pi_step_one.pdf

The WSO Professional Exhibits Fund helps service bodies exhibit at professional conventions. The fund needs replenishing! If you or your service body would like to help, complete the contributions form and check the Professional Exhibits Fund box or choose that option from the designation drop-down menu on our contributions page. If your Intergroup is aware of a Professional Tradeshow where the OA Exhibit could help get our message to Professionals; the WSO has an OA Exhibit for your use and reduced rate literature can be purchased by contacting me, your Trustee.

WSBC 2015

"Miracle of Abstinence" will be the theme for WSBC 2015, April 27-May 2 in Albuquerque, NM. The first set of documents is already available on oa.org including registration forms and the tentative agenda. The WSBC 2014 Final Conference Report is also available for download. Included in this report are business session minutes, officer reports, summaries of the workshops & committee meetings, and other

valuable information delegates can carry back to their OA groups and services bodies.

Both the Region and World Service have support funds to help struggling intergroups send delegates to WSBC. Region 5 has a WSBC Delegate fund of \$1000 total for intergroups to request financial assistance. An application is available on the Region 5 website. World Service also maintains a Delegate Support Fund totaling \$5000, deadline **November 1**. Contact your Trustee if further help is needed.

Editor's note: We know the date has past for this year, but mark your calendar so you don't miss it next year. Region's deadline for next year is October 1st.

Phone workshops continue twice a month

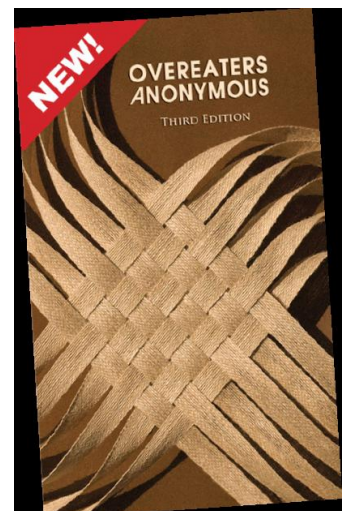
The Board of Trustees, Virtual Services Committee, and Region Chairs are continuing to offer a series of phone workshops. On the first Sunday of the month, the workshop will feature a Trustee speaking on a piece of OA literature. On the second Sunday of the month the workshop will feature a Region Chair speaking on a various key topics. The Workshops are at 2PM Central time. The phone number is: 424-203-8405 and the access code is: 925619#. The past workshops are available as podcasts on oa.org.

I'm available to present talks on Abstinence, Strong Meetings, Service, Traditions, and Concepts. Just let me know.

~Linda Region 5 Trustee
Region5Trustee@gmail.com

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From the Chair....November 2014

From the Chair....November 2014

Our theme this year has been “Service is Action”...very appropriate this time of year, I think.

Some random thoughts in my head at this moment: I’ve lost my routine....the days aren’t ‘normal’ for me. I’ve been traveling for Region the past few weekends. I woke up recently wondering what day it was and where was I supposed to be! The ‘fog’ lasted a few minutes...a very strange feeling. Convention was amazing. Our Region Assembly with the visiting Region Chairs was a powerful weekend of recovery on so many levels. A recent workshop and an Intergroup visit introduced me to new family members. At home, we’ve had company, meal times aren’t the same as usual, and the food is different. A family member is having surgery; other family members are struggling with parental care-giving. There are several non-routine events coming up in the next month. And darn it, it’s dark at 5:30...too early! What do I do with all of this? My sponsor would tell me to just keep doing what I’ve been doing...those “consistent daily activities – CDAs” that got me to this point in my recovery. First, it means practicing ACCEPTANCE! I am powerless over all of this, from the weather to the sunset to the people to the gatherings. Second, I have choices on how to spend my time – quiet time, prayer, meetings, literature, and phone calls. I can take a walk if the weather permits and I have 15 minutes.

Complacency Kills

I can choose when to say YES and when to say NO, especially this time of year. I’d like to “do it all” but when does that leave time to take care of me? I’m not a good “me” when I’m trying to do all things for all people. When I wrote this article for our July newsletter, I committed to PAUSE & PRAY & CHECK IN with someone before I said YES to something. I am grateful to say my answer

has been NO recently to a few activities – that’s progress!

My thinking at this time of year becomes very linear....one thing at a time, make lots of lists, write everything down to keep it straight, finish one task before I move on to the next, carry the calendar with me everywhere. I don’t seem to be able to visualize the next 2 days, let alone a week ahead. And yet, isn’t this what HP (for me, that’s God) really wants? He wants me to stay focused on today, in this moment, and the next right thing in front of me. He takes care of the future...my focus is the now.

One last thought about service and action – *what are YOU doing, to what lengths are you willing to go, to make sure OA is still here tomorrow for your recovery?* Can you get to a struggling meeting or reach out to a newcomer? Can you temporarily sponsor someone to get them started on the steps? Can you take a professional packet to your doctor at your next visit? Can you write an article for Lifeline? Can you increase your 7th Tradition contribution at each meeting? Can you take a meeting to a ‘shut-in’ member? Imagine for a moment what your life would be like if there was *no* OA. I don’t know what you’re thinking, but I’d be dead from my disease.

Each day, ask yourself – “What actions can I take, what service can I give, that will ensure I can still be in recovery tomorrow?” Then do the best you can, with what you’ve got, to the best of your ability, one day at a time.

My prayers and good wishes for a blessed tomorrow,
Denise O., R5 Chair

