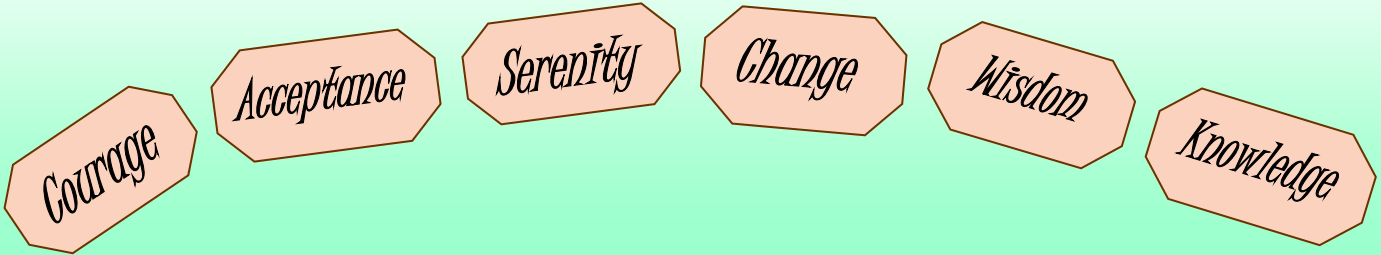




SteppingStone



Spring into your Recovery ~ March 2009

UNITY DAY 2009 – SOME NEAT THINGS THAT WERE SAID

I had the pleasure of joining 80 other recovering compulsive eaters at Unity Day last month in Lanham, Maryland for a full day of wonderful workshops and panel discussions. Like a good cub reporter, I took down some neat things that were said and would like to share them with you. I hope these will be helpful to your recovery and make abstinence a bit easier today.

SPIRITUAL UNITY

- Get as honest as you can.
- I'm not recovering by myself but with everyone who is in OA with me.
- Honesty and spirituality go hand-in-hand.
- Unity gets me out of self-centeredness.
- I replaced (excess) food with spirituality.
- I found the answer to the spiritual "hole" in myself with the 12 Steps.
- Every minute I sit in this (OA meeting) room my disease is being defeated.
- If I have enough curiosity to keep coming back, miracles begin to happen.
- I benefit from hearing others' views of God / Higher Power. Don't suffer from "tiny god" syndrome.
- My Higher Power believes that I can be abstinent every day for the rest of my life.
- One idea of a Higher Power: Reality.
- My success in staying away from excess food is accelerated by my spiritual recovery.
- Self-will doesn't work for me. I need God / Higher Power.
- I was praying to God but I wasn't planning on all this work! Instead, God sent me to this 12-Step program.

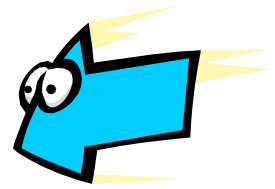


TIDBITS FROM THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- Consistency is a tool.
- I don't have to think – I just do the next right thing.
- Remember the Promises (on p. 83 of the AA Big Book).
- OA gives a new freedom and a new happiness (better than one we could have imagined).
- On hitting bottom: if we don't make a change, we won't live – or at best we'll be stuck where we are.
- We don't get thin by sitting next to someone at a meeting who's thin. We have to take action. We have to rightly right ourselves to God / Higher Power.
- Abstinence doesn't just happen to us; we have to do our part: Steps, Tools, Action.
- Humility is the nourishment that gives us serenity.
- Check out AA's "12 Steps and 12 Traditions" book for all kinds of promises made throughout the 12 Steps.

"The Year of the Meeting"

Sharing our Experience, Strength, and Hope



By the time you read this, I will have visited a majority of the meetings in our Intergroup. I've had more fun doing this than I ever would have imagined possible.

I've met new people, made new friends, renewed old friendships and enhanced my own recovery by hearing new stories of experience, strength and hope and by sharing my own. I've found that I enjoy the adventure of driving a little further and experiencing a meeting unfamiliar to me.

My great regret is that I've stayed too long in my comfort zone. There are meetings out there that desperately need support. Many of these meetings don't have an Intergroup Rep or anyone on the email loop (and they don't know what the email loop is) and so don't get announcements of upcoming events or know that they can appeal to the Intergroup for help and support. They don't have any idea that we just had a Unity Day celebration or that we have a Body Image Workshop coming up.

When I say that these meetings need support, I don't mean that only those with years of recovery need take notice. These meetings need **NEW VOICES**, be they abstinent voices or not. **TOGETHER** we get better; "it is a 'WE' program, not an 'I' program."

We have declared this to be "**The Year Of The Meeting.**" Do a service for others and do yourself a favor: visit a meeting that takes you out of your regular circle. View it uncritically, and do what you can to enhance everyone's experience at that meeting. Give it new life. Take some flyers for upcoming events and take along some SteppingStones. Do it once, then do it again. Give every meeting a chance to thrive! You will be amazed what it will do for others and for you.

Joan W.

Happy, Joyous, Free, & Fabulous!!

I love meetings.

They are social, motivating and profound. I have attended meetings at The First Baltimore 2nd Calvary English Suburban Hebrew Church of the Orthodox Lutheran Presbyterian Baptist Redeemer Congregation and rejoiced in every minute. But of course I have a soapbox to stand on if you will listen.

Being bisexual is a taboo which is exploited as glamorous in Hollywood but in the real world can leave you not here and not there. It is easy to wave your flag for whatever team is on the top of the heap at any given moment.

Being a compulsive overeater brings challenges which, Thank God, take us out of the ordinary rat-race as we recover. To be a Lesbian, Homosexual, Transgender, or Bisexual compulsive overeater can sometimes mean there are even fewer places where we feel the comfort of fellowship.

For this reason, I support the Monday night 7:30 Happy, Joyous, Free & Fabulous Special Focus Meeting held at the Second Presbyterian Church, 4200 St. Paul St., Baltimore. I encourage everyone to do the same, as all are welcome.

wishing all love and serenity,
Alix

The Call Five Challenge!

Call Five To Keep You and Your Meeting Alive!

Once a year we have an event and we ask everyone to call five people whom they haven't seen in meetings and say, "Hey, How are you?" But, it isn't enough. Who are you missing in your meetings? They just disappeared? Wow. Are they having a hard time, did something scare them? Do they need a hand to reach across the separation and say "Please come back"? Have you ever felt isolated and unsure of returning to something that you knew would help to heal you?

So, here is our mission: Call Five until we call **EVERYONE** we haven't seen. Our mission, if we have the guts to accept it:

1. Go to your meetings
2. Open up the We Care books
3. Flip back to previous months and take names and numbers of people you haven't seen
4. Call them, listen, and invite them to share in the recovery we enjoy in meetings, and in the amazing 12 steps. I challenge you to have the courage and kindness to do this.
5. Share you process with others in your meeting and pool together and come to Intergroup with the number of calls you have made!!! **WE ARE HAVING A CONTEST!!!**
6. If you **REALLY** want this to work, envision the people you are calling as being fully in recovery, and offer this service to your understanding of Higher Power. :)

Quitting the “Debating Team”

I have been a charter member of the debating team for most of my life.

From the time I was very small, my feelings of inferiority were so strong that pushing back against authority or challenging those who were concerned for me became second nature. It was a way for me to feel just a little bit stronger and more important. Fortunately, today I see the benefit of traditional approaches to common problems, and appreciate whenever someone cares enough about my welfare to discuss it with me.

Once I started using food (and later, other things as well) because of the way that I felt, my attitude only got worse. I was always under the influence, reeling from the previous days “assault”, or feeling the call for the next “hit”. The irritability that accompanied the withdrawals and the shame of knowing how sick I’d become fueled the anger and defiance that I used to keep people at arm’s length, lest they see how badly I was hurting inside

I came into OA through another 12-step program, and my seven years there taught me many new things that became part of my “recovery persona”. Unfortunately, this information did little for my food problem, which, like the other addiction, centered in my mind. All of that experience had limited value with this annoying “new” addiction.

So I got my debating shoes shined up and waded out into the muck to see how long I could prevent myself from finding contented abstinence. It took five years (of mostly abstinent days), trying to prove that doing OA piecemeal was going to work for me where it had failed so many others before me. Such is the way of the debater.

Then one day I became so tired of blazing a trail to nowhere that I stopped disbelieving and started asking questions as to just how one stopped eating compulsively each and every day, each and every meal, and not just the ones that were convenient.

Today, I’m thirteen year’s abstinent, and that moment of clarity led to a thorough exploration of the steps, and of that belligerent, argumentative little boy, who was so embarrassed not to know the “answers” that he had to bluff and posture his way out to “save face.” Never have so many people been so grateful for one man’s awakening.

Today, not knowing means asking others for help. It means having another reason to invite God into the equation, kick back and wait for Him to show me a way to the other side.

I still break out those old shoes from time to time, but my heart’s not in it anymore, and they seem to have gotten much less comfortable over the last six years. Now my job is to find compassion in my heart for other charter members of the “club” and give them the time and space they need to come around to the joys of continuous abstinence and emotional sobriety.

Neil R

STRENGTHEN YOUR RECOVERY AND THE OA FELLOWSHIP

I am writing to encourage you to become involved in the OA intergroup.

What is Intergroup? Two or more groups can form an intergroup (IG). The intergroup provides services to existing groups within its geographical area and spreads the OA message of recovery to those who still suffer. Intergroup (IG) is a clearinghouse through which meetings & members can communicate quickly and efficiently for the purpose of OA business. Intergroup maintains a local meeting list, publishes our bi-monthly newsletter “The SteppingStone”, disseminates information to the public, keeps the World Service Office informed of meeting changes, and arranges marathons & retreats. We also interact with other Intergroups and Region Seven to bring our members news of additional special events and meetings outside of the Baltimore area.

Why? *Service is a key ingredient in keeping our recovery strong.* As part of a commitment to recovery, Intergroup is a wonderful service opportunity above the meeting level. On a personal level it will strengthen your recovery. It will also make your home meeting stronger. You can invite others to attend your meeting, receive important information about upcoming events and get the latest issue of the SteppingStone.

How? MONTHLY MEETINGS are held every third Sunday of the month, 3:30 - 5:00, at the Calvary Baptist Church, 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave. Towson, MD 21204 (rear entrance). The next meetings in 2009 will be held on April 19, May 17, and June 21.

Everyone is invited! There are plenty of service opportunities at the meeting. If your meeting does not have an Intergroup Rep, consider representing the meeting for at least one meeting and more.

Terri B.

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2008 WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE – PART SIX OF SIX – OA’s STRATEGIC PLAN

Having the privilege to represent the Baltimore Area Intergroup for the last several years at the World Service Business Conference (WSBC), I have seen the amazing work of the worldwide group conscience evolve. Seeing the potential that our fellowship has to carry the message of recovery from compulsive eating, our Board of Trustees – in consultation with the Region Chairs and WSBC delegates – developed a five-year Strategic Plan whose implementation began last year. You will see an increasing number of Intergroup services that directly support the Strategic Plan, which you can see at https://www.oa.org/wp-content/uploads/sp_opsplan08_13_web.pdf. A report on 2008 activities is at <https://www.oa.org/wp-content/uploads/spops-summary08complete.pdf>.

There are four components: Public and Professional Awareness, Strong Meetings, Committed Service Bodies, and Financial Health. Each are designed to support the recovery of our members and grow our outreach to those who have yet to find our doors. I’ll describe some actions being taken at the World Service and Region 7 levels. As you read, think about how the Baltimore Area Intergroup could provide or expand these services to reach our central Maryland communities.

PUBLIC and PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS

To expand its worldwide outreach, OA is translating its website into Spanish and will launch the site in 2009. The site will appear in French and other languages in the next few years. Check out the redesign of the English-language OA website at www.oa.org. Also, the World Service Office is continuing to implement its Public Awareness Campaign, increasing outreach to mass media to inform the public of the opportunities for recovery in OA. The fellowship also wants to increase its visibility among professionals. Region 7 continues to remind Assembly reps and its Intergroups that we are all responsible to reach out to professionals in our midst: our doctors, therapists, nutritionists, and other health professionals. Please tell your story of recovery and give them a Professional Presentation Packet (see <https://www.oa.org/store/all-products/public-information/870-professional-presentation-folder/>). Also, volunteer on the Intergroup’s Public Information Committee.

STRONG MEETINGS

The World Service Office and Region 7 continue to encourage every Intergroup and meeting to emphasize the spiritual principles of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in all meetings. They help us recover from this disease of compulsive eating and gives us the tools to help others. Take a group meeting inventory every so often. A sample inventory was handed out at the Intergroup’s recent Service, Traditions, and Concepts workshop. Check with the Intergroup to get a copy. Also, the Regions will continue to provide copies of the OA Handbook, which gives advice on strong meetings. Represent your meeting at the Intergroup meeting each month and borrow a copy of the Handbook, or have your meeting purchase your own and use it.

COMMITTED SERVICE BODIES

The fellowship’s goal is to have 40% of all service bodies represented at the WSBC in 2009, and would like to have at least that much participation at the Region Assemblies. We meet that goal in our region, with about 60% of our Intergroups sending delegates to the WSBC and about 80% to our Assemblies. What Region 7 would like to do is help Intergroups send the maximum number of eligible delegates to the WSBC and Assemblies. While Intergroups like the Baltimore Area Intergroup usually send the maximum number of delegates and reps, not all can afford to. The Region encourages Intergroups to help each other financially when they can to send reps and delegates to these important gatherings.

FINANCIAL HEALTH – “GIVE AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDED ON IT!”

That’s the new 7th Tradition slogan that replaces, “It takes two!” My life really does depend on this program and it is my responsibility to financially support the work of OA.

You might have heard by now that OA has a new 7th Tradition pamphlet (see <https://www.oa.org/store/all-products/program-literature/pamphlets-booklets/802-seventh-tradition-of-oa/>). Have your meeting order some copies and take a look! Did you know that the suggested 7th Tradition donation at meetings is now \$3 or more? It sounds like a lot, but consider how much a binge costs. If you go to two meetings a week and donate \$3 per meeting, that’s only \$24 a month. Recovery from this fatal disease, a life worth living in the 12 Steps, and physical, emotional, and spiritual health is the incredible return you receive. Your meetings and service bodies receive the necessary funds to function, too. It’s a small but important investment, even in these tough economic times.

The Region and World Service Office asks every person to give what they can, in terms of service and funds, to keep the message of recovery going strong in the United States and around the world.

THANK YOU

It has been a true honor to serve as a World Service Business Conference delegate for the Baltimore Area Intergroup the last three years. The experience and the fellowship have been amazing! Thank you for entrusting me with this important service. I will be happy to share what I have learned at the WSBC at your meeting or with you individually. May your recovery be blessed with opportunities for service that will enrich your recovery and make your life fabulous! -- *Mike B., a gratefully recovering compulsive overeater from Baltimore*

Heard @ Meetings



Wisdom consists of knowing what to DO with what we KNOW.

Plan plans, not results.

Feel the fear and do it anyway.

Irma

Share your story, a poem or a joke. Send us your favorite puzzle or quote. We'd love to include your milestones, anniversaries, and news from your meetings. Share the love and the recovery!

UNITY DAY - continued from page 1

- Always be open to the possibility of prayer.
- Forgot to pray? Got out of the habit? Get back to it as quickly as possible!
- Step 12 is about the joy of living, where we ask no rewards (but we surely get them). We tell others about OA.
- This disease kills us if we lose our willingness to take the 12 Steps.
- We need to put our lives on a "give and take" basis.
- Love freely given surely gives us a full return.

TRADITION ONE PANEL

- I need service for me (my recovery) and for the fellowship.
- Tradition One helps us to get beyond ourselves and get along with people.
- I'm struck by the sanity of our meetings. We come "selfish" and end up caring for each other.
- These principles can be applied to any relationship.
- Curb those impulses – consider the welfare of the group as a whole.
- Committing to services gets me to show up...and I gain so much!
- Most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group.
- Unity helps us learn to live differently, outside of ourselves. It helps give us more moments of abstinence.
- What recovery is about is that emotions are finally available.
- If I am having trouble in my life, what is my part in the disunity of the issue?
- We who have found OA are the lucky ones who don't have to have this illness drive our behavior anymore.



UNITY AND ABSTINENCE

- Our desire to stop eating compulsively brings us together...as well as gives us freedom from negativity, illness, and regret.
- OA is a big tent with room for lots of styles of abstinent eating.

--- An anonymous and gratefully recovering compulsive overeater from Maryland

SPEAKER - I'll share my story at meetings.		NIGHT OWL - I can take calls in the evening or at night.		
NAME	PHONE NUMBER	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW LATE?
Tania		Rivka		Until midnight
Laura S.				
Jane S.S.				
Joan W.		Available to help someone in need of a ride to meetings:	Morty	

Upcoming Events



March 22 - Mini Marathon - *“Body Image, Sexuality, Relationships”* Sunday 1:30 - 5:00 @ Calvary Baptist Church, 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave. Towson, MD 21204 (rear entrance). \$8 suggested donation. Contacts: Tania Erica

April 26 - Spring *“Fun”*draiser for BAIG - *“Auction/Bazaar”* Sunday 1:00 - 3:00 @ Calvary Baptist Church, 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave. Towson, MD 21204 (rear entrance). Contact: Neil R.

May - TBD - Ritual & Spirituality Program. Baltimore Area, watch for flyers.

May 15 - 17 - *Annual Retreat of Overeaters Anonymous in Ocean City*, sponsored by the Dundalk, MD meeting. Contact: Shirley D.

June 19 - 21 - *Summer Solstice Weekend Retreat @ Wellspring* - sponsored by Washington DC Area IG. Contact: Judie

P O Box 20013 Baltimore, MD 21284 Hotline 410-764-3136
BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org>
 Other Internet Sources:
Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>
World Service: <http://www.oa.org>

The SteppingStone is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Baltimore area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous.
Editorial Policy: This is your newsletter. Your contributions, comments, and experience in the OA way of life are needed and appreciated. We also would like to print news about your area or meeting. Publication of any contributions or editorial opinions expressed herein does not imply endorsement by OA as a whole, but only by the individuals who wrote them. Material submitted cannot be returned. We reserve the right to edit, and it is understood that other OA groups may reprint all items without permission. Deadline for submitting contributions is by the 10th of the month in which publication takes place in January, March, May, July, September, November. Submit your contributions by mail (call for mailing address) or by e-mail to the editors, Suellen or Lisa M. - steppingstone@oabaltimore.org
 Thanks for your support.

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