



Volume 30, No. 2

**MAY 2007**

I'm Joan, and I'm a compulsive overeater and editor of the Steppingstone.

Would you like to participate in our OA email loop? We use this to share info about meeting changes, special events, hold-that-date alerts, etc. Your email address and identity are not revealed in these communications in order to preserve anonymity. It's an excellent way to stay in touch with what's going on in and around our Intergroup. Anyone who is not currently on the email loop and has questions or concerns and wants to be included, please email me at one of the addresses below. Also – if you have news to share with our other program members, please submit that information to me as well.

Another note – we posed some questions via the email loop on the Steppingstone format – about including the meeting list in every issue; font size, what to include and what to eliminate – and we would be grateful for ALL suggestions that anyone might have for improving the format. The Steppingstone is, after all, YOUR publication and wants to serve you well.

Yours in service,

Joan 410 483 4212 [jmwehberg@hotmail.com](mailto:jmwehberg@hotmail.com)/[joanmwehberg@yahoo.com](mailto:joanmwehberg@yahoo.com)

### **HOW HAS SERVICE HELPED ME IN MY RECOVERY?**

Service helps me because I know I am not alone in this program. When involved with the planning of my state's Unity Day, I corresponded with other OAs via e-mail daily, sometimes more often. Also, in helping to secure the location for the day, I was able to help my church receive some much-needed funds. So in being a conduit for OA and for my church, I served both organizations.

I also helped myself because OA gave me a chance to get outside of myself and my comfort zone. I met new OAs I'd only corresponded with via e-mail and others I didn't know at all until the event itself. I discovered some lovely people I might never have otherwise met had I remained in my comfort zone. In giving service, I provided a place where we could all experience OA unity. When I am in unity with other OAs, I am not stuck in my own head and in the disease. I am thinking of others and of what I have in common with them, namely, that we are all compulsive overeaters with a disease from which we receive a daily reprieve.

Service at my meetings helps me because it ensures that I *get* to my meeting. Meetings are an important cornerstone of my recovery. If I didn't have service to give at my meetings, I might never get there, particularly when inconvenient for me. Service ensures that my meeting continues - it says in the OA literature - that when two or more OAs gather, that is a meeting. And at meetings, we have a shot at recovery.

Service also connects me with my Higher Power. OA is a program of action and so is my HP - a power greater than myself in action. When engaged in action, I am ever closer to my Higher Power. Stagnation and inaction keep me mired in my disease and despair. Neither of these things can I afford or even want anymore.

Service reminds me to act humbly and walk humbly before my God and before others. Service reminds me that it's not all about me, it's all about "we". And that is what is in the steps. Note the language here in step one—"We admitted we were powerless over food and that our lives had become unmanageable." This attitude shift cannot help but instill a healthy dose of humility in my program.

Yes, I do service for the selfish reasons of wanting my own recovery. But service always takes me from a position of self-seeking to an interest in my fellows (as paraphrased from the Big Book), a much healthier way to live. So if that's to be, it's up to me. And I choose service! Thank you, God, and thank you, OA! Jill P., Laurel, MD

## **"JUSTIFIED" RESENTMENTS**

Keep it simple as far as "justified resentments" are concerned.

Yes, we have the right to be angry, but do we have the emotional maturity to be angry? For me the answer is no.

Anger is an emotion that can get out of hand for me. Anger releases as many endorphins as a six-mile run, or a few minutes of aerobic exercise. That euphoric high is dangerous for me. The "how dare theys" escalate to entitlement for me.

Anger turns into resentments, resentments to hate and hate obliterates serenity. I used to use the "I'll say and then they will say" conversation in my head until a minor irritation became World War Three. Then I'd eat until I came in contact with the "other" who had angered me, then I'd blow. The other would blow, and eventually when the situation was entirely out of proportion I'd stalk away and then came the shame and anger at myself for words I couldn't take back. Words are like water, my mother always said, easy to spill and impossible to retrieve.

Anger is another one of those feelings that we learn to work with in this program. If I am angry I am learning to say so and not fear the outcome. I am learning that although the resentment may be "justified" I must address it immediately and then let it go. Stewing in anger is like drinking poison and thinking it will kill the other person.

Facing others is uncomfortable but if it is done, when it is done, we can let it go. If the outcome is uncomfortable we learn to pray over it. Pray for the other, somehow this works every time. We can only clean up our side of the street. We have no control over the thoughts and feelings of others. We can say that we feel unhappy with the way others have treated a situation and take credit for our part what ever that might have been. If the other escalates the anger, then we can say with love that the conversation is not healthy for us and walk away, detach WITH LOVE, as our fellows in Al Anon say.

We can say a small prayer: Higher Power, please take this anger from me before it turns to resentment and hate and therefore a bridge to relapse. Let me know that I can only control myself, and let me stop trying to control others through means that only hurt me. Let me know that when people places or things disturb me the problem is within me. Give me courage to face things I need to face and the serenity to accept those I don't need to face.

## ANOTHER REWARDING WEEKEND OF SERVICE AT THE SPRING REGION 7 ASSEMBLY

Sunday weather was an issue but this seems to be part of the routine—in October we had a rainy weekend also. The emphasis of this assembly was the Convention over Labor Day weekend in Philadelphia and the Fall election for open positions on the board.

Old issues of Lifeline are available for free at the WSBC if you let our trustee, Donna, know that you need them ahead of time. Donna also emphasized the availability of a new brochure #120 titled "OA COMES IN ALL SIZES."

The Assembly considered two motions that will be brought before the WSBC. The motion to spend \$20,000 for a PI campaign was approved; the motion to replace him/her with God in the STEPS and TRADITIONS was defeated.

As Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee we discussed the fact that Pay Pal will be up and running on the Region 7 website in a couple of weeks which can be used for purchases of pins, paying registrations and making contributions to the assembly; reimbursement for mileage would be at 14 cents per mile (the amount allowed for charitable organizations by the IRS); discussion of the forms and procedures used for scholarship forms; to create an iron-on decal for tee shirts to be sold as a fund-raiser at the Philadelphia convention; to order 500 more pins to sell as a fund-raiser at the convention; and to print a card with an explanation for the Region7 logo to be included with the sale of these two items.

The assembly had an open discussion of sharing our experience, strength and hope on ABSTINENCE—how to get it and how to keep it.

The Outreach Committee will be spending \$2500 to create a new display board and the Assembly approved a \$ 200.00 scholarship fund to cover the cost of shipping the board for inter-groups that could not afford it. The fall Assembly dates are 10/5 to 10/7 and will link up with a meeting of the Worldwide Assembly Chairs that is held annually and will coincide with our Region 7 Fall Assembly.

**FROM THE WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE –  
PART FIVE - CONCLUSION**

This is the fifth and final article in the 2006 WSBC series. During the Conference, I jotted down some phrases and statements that I heard at meetings:

- **No BLTs, please: no bites, licks, tastes, or sips between meals.**
- **“This is an opportunity.” [Troubles, situations, AFGOs]**
- **It doesn’t matter who’s right or who’s wrong, but who’s left.**
- **If I’m overeating, I’m lying to me.**
- **Another phrase for ‘surrender:’ “Do what you’re told.”**
- **Everything that goes in my mouth today has a purpose.**
- **I may be right, but if I wreak havoc in my relationships, how important is it to be “right?”**
- **I have less opportunity to judge people as I have less time to be scared of people.**
- **If you have trouble taking your own inventory, take someone else’s and put your name on top.**
- **If my goal is tolerance, then I’m still judging. I must change my goal to acceptance.**
- **My honesty starts with my food.**
- **If you don’t have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?**
- **Recovery is a three-legged stool: spiritual, physical, and emotional and you really can’t cut any one of them off.**
- **Smelling food used to be “good,” but what’s great today is that I love to smell flowers.**
- **We don’t have to fear because we get everything we need.**
- **We’re to be powers of example, not examples of power.**
- **I watched people die who left OA and tried to recover by themselves! I am glad I was stubborn enough to stick around.**
- **We can try new [and unknown and scary] things in the safest of environments by giving service in OA.**
- **When I am cold, I need to hug more.**
- **Choose your own God as you will choose your own abstinence.**
- **If you’re overweight for your body, you’re overeating.**
- **Sometimes we give too much weight to anonymity...so much so that members won’t know that we are giving service.**

At the end of the Conference, there was much excitement about the information we have learned. We wanted to bring this gold mine of recovery back to our Intergroups and meetings. But how? Some of us came up with this list:

- **Post delegate reports on the Intergroup or service body’s website and distribute copies to our meetings, newsletter articles, and e-mail loops.**
- **Incorporate some of these ideas in a marathon.**
- **Delegates can speak at our meetings, Intergroup meetings, and events.**
- **The World Service Trustee members often pass through our airports to go to Albuquerque for Board Meetings. Make arrangements with a Trustee that’s passing through the area to speak at meetings or events.**
- **Write in our reports how we felt about business motion discussions influenced our vote.**
- **Make suggestions on how our Intergroup can add to the list of goals of service. Create value from our Intergroup’s investment of sending delegates to the conference.**
- **Create a lending library of tapes and CDs from the Conference.**
- **Play the “Hearing is Believing” CD in our meetings and events. Share how we feel about what we have heard.**
- **Create a mock World Service Business Conference business meeting at our service body meetings to show how it works and to work through an upcoming motion.**

The World Service Business Conference was amazing. Hearing the experience, strength, and hope of 200 OA members with long-time recovery and abstinence was profound. To see how the World Service level works inspires me to share what I have learned and to affirm what our Intergroup already does well.

Your and your group conscience’s opinions were vital on motions that influence the entire fellowship. You help create OA history. I can’t thank you enough for this honor to serve as a delegate. I’d be happy to speak at your meeting about this experience. I hope that this article series helps you and your meeting to reach out to those in need. May you always be blessed with ever deepening recovery. – Mike B., Baltimore (*MikeB1Bear@aol.com*)

## "CLEAN"

What does my abstinence "buy" me?

On the physical level, abstinence means health. On the spiritual level - an opportunity to be open, willing, and able to receive a higher level of existence and relationship with my HP.

On the emotional level, abstinence has allowed me many gifts including self-confidence, friendships and belonging, new coping skills, and the maturity to face my life instead of feeling the pain of trying to comfort myself impulsively by avoiding life.

I've heard people talk about having a "clean" abstinence. This got me thinking about the concept of *cleanliness*. When a person or thing is "unclean", it is unpleasant or dangerous for the unclean one as well as for others. "Coming clean" means honesty. "Cleaning up" means polishing the good and getting rid of the destructive. What abstinence means most of all to me is a feeling of being honest at my very core. By being willing to surrender by "coming clean", I am suddenly refreshed, grateful, more pleasant, and willing to continue being polished to reveal a better me. -- Laura

Today I have read many things pertaining to being ordinary. ORDINARY, not something I ever wanted to be while into my disease.

One reading was about how perfectionism kept us from being real. The gist of all this was that pretending to be perfect kept us from being of use to God or our fellows. It is a hard job being perfect and it is tiring. What a relief to know that the person God made us to be is the one he wants us to be. If we are ourselves we can treat everyone the same way, every day. We don't have to remember who we were yesterday. We don't have to judge the perfection of our fellows. We can breathe fresh air and thank God for it. We can want what we have and not pine for what we have not. If I buy my clothes at discount stores, they have the same labels as those bought at inflated prices. If I am given serenity through these programs which cost nothing except willingness, my serenity is as real as the serenity bought at the hands of those who make their living by letting us believe we need them more than we need God. My serenity lasts longer because it is God-given. All these thoughts let me know that being ordinary is spiritual. Being ordinary is a blessing, no keeping up with anyone. When I judge not myself, I judge not my fellows. That sense of entitlement that comes with being better, wiser, richer, poorer, fatter, thinner, more lovable or less lovable, ugly or pretty, is banished. Entitlement seems to be at the bottom of all anxiety for me, and remember this is my take on ordinary. The more I realize that I don't know what makes me happy, what I need versus what I think I want, the more peaceful is my life.

So just for today I will embrace being ordinary. The warm breeze caresses my cheek as I write in front of an open window. The sun sparkles on the handle of my patio door. My dog is off playing with his friends up the hill and some friends are fixing the dog yard so that Jack can be safely contained throughout the night when he likes to disappear through the dog door and disappear for hours. I have everything I need. The love of my family who used to wince at my arrival. The abstinence and sobriety that keeps me open to their needs. The knowledge that no matter how disquieting my day may be that it is how I react to people places and things that makes me serene or chaotic. If I know that I am ordinary, nothing is overwhelming me. I do what I can and if my names not on it I leave it alone. At the end of the day I talk with my HP and we have a closeness that I seek to enrich or he enriches despite me.

If I say that my life is beyond my wildest dreams it is not because of material things. It is because of that overwhelming feeling of perfect love, joy and peace that comes to me more and more often.

## PONDERING MY ABSTINENCE

The question has been posed to me, "To whom are you accountable for your abstinence?"

An excellent question requiring a thoughtful answer.

First and foremost, I am accountable to my Higher Power from whom all good things flow.

Second, I am accountable to my sponsor who lovingly guides me through my program.

Third, I am accountable to my sponsees and groups by being totally honest.

As I write I am reminded of so much that I have learned from my sponsor – and setting boundaries is one critical lesson I learned; prior to program I was living a life run amuck. So where my abstinence is concerned, my boundaries are set as listed above. Each and every one of us is entitled to our own concept of abstinence. But someone else's concept of abstinence doesn't have to be mine! I am comfortable with my abstinence as it is; I rely on my HP and sponsor to guide me if my abstinence seems threatened or needs correction. For me, suggestions of how to improve my abstinence from anyone else (however lovingly expressed) are not welcome. I MUST honor the boundaries I have set or I will wallow in my former "people-pleasing" mode and my ever-present struggle with feeling "less than."

So – I encourage each of you to respond – "To whom are YOU accountable for your abstinence?" -- Joan, Baltimore

**Editor's note: This is the first of three articles on our recent Sponsorship workshop. The other two will cover "BEING A SPONSEE" and "HOW IT ALL WORKS."**

We had a wonderful Sponsorship Workshop on a snowy Sunday in January. About 40 folks from far and wide came together to share and learn about being a sponsor, being a sponsoree, and how it all works. Here are some tidbits that I picked up. Take what you like and leave the rest. – *Anonymous, Baltimore, Maryland*

**BEING A SPONSOR**

- Know and set your limits with your sponsorees.
- Be careful to avoid care taking.
- It is imperative to work with others to keep my own recovery.
- Be sure that the person you're working with can meet your suggestions for food plans – there could be underlying medical conditions that your sponsoree has that might require a different plan of eating.
- Ask a new sponsoree how food makes his or her life unmanageable. Suggest to your sponsoree to write down what they eat and to measure food.
- Being a sponsor while "in the food" brings marginal results.
- You can't ask a sponsoree to do something that you're not doing myself.
- Honor the sponsor/sponsoree relationship. It's vital for each other's recovery.
- Sponsorship is a great accelerant to recovery.
- A sponsor is not a therapist or nutritionist.
- Serving as a sponsor boosts self-esteem.
- There are as many appropriate food plans as there are people.
- There is no "one way" to sponsor. Different approaches work for different people.
- If you have a suicidal sponsoree, ask your sponsoree to make a commitment to not hurt himself for an hour and to get to an emergency room. The sponsoree is looking for help and to be told what to do. Pray and turn over the results to your HP.
- Sponsors are not specially trained to deal with mental illness or threats of suicide. Ask the suicidal person if there is anyone with them. Often, sponsors can see a threat of suicide coming and suggest to the sponsoree to get help before a crisis. Sometimes, we can't see a crisis coming.
- Ask a sponsoree in crisis how we can help them end her pain without ending her life.
- As a sponsor, don't take on more than one can handle.
- Be careful about sponsoring someone to whom I'm physically attracted. Sponsorship is an intimate experience and boundaries need to be clear.
- When a person sponsors, it's good to ask a potential sponsoree about his or her expectations in a sponsorship relationship to make sure that you're a match.

**OA PHONE MEETINGS as of February, 2007**

Time (EST)	Meeting Type	Call In Number	PIN #
Sunday 8 am	90 Day: Big Book	(712) 432-6100	223163#
Sunday 11 am	GLBT Friendly	(641) 985-8555	204757#
Sunday 8 pm	21 Day: Steps 1-2-3	(641) 297-8000	79822#
Sunday 8 pm	90 Day	(319) 256-0500	315108#
Monday 10 am	90 Day: For Today	(641) 297-5500	79822#
Monday 8:30 pm	90 Day: F2F in Miami	(605) 990-0400	699563#
Monday 9 pm	Medically Challenged	(712) 432-3000	304567#
Monday 10 pm		(620) 782-2200	22072#
Tuesday 8:30 am	Steps & Traditions	(402) 756-9000	599734#
Tuesday 8 pm	90 Day	(641) 297-5400	59002#
Wednesday 8:30 am	Speaker	(402) 756-9000	599734#
Wednesday 1 pm	90 Day	(641) 696-6600	14560#
Wednesday 7:30 pm	90 Day: F2F Dallas	(319) 256-0500	951766#
Wednesday 8:30 pm	H.O.W.	(712) 580-1800	12128#
Wednesday 9 pm	Big Book/Speaker	(620) 782-8800	85742#
Thursday 4 pm (?)	Iceland. 9 pm GMT	011 (354) 755-7755	3724253#
Thursday 5:30 pm	90 Day: F2F in Bangor	(641) 297-4600	1012606#
Thursday 8 pm	90 Day: Speaker	(641) 793-7500	135103#
Friday 10 am		(319) 256-0100	1047827#
Friday noon		(641) 985-8000	742371#
Friday 8 pm	Lifeline Mag. Study	(563) 843-5600	168643#
Saturday 8 am	90 Day: For Today	(712) 432-6100	223163#
Saturday 9 pm	Ebony OA/Speaker	(319) 632-1100	104217#

Directions: Dial the call-in number. Follow the prompt to enter the pin number, followed by the # sign. Keep your phone muted except to share. Press 6 to mute/unmute your phone. "F2F" are face to face mtgs w/ an open phone line so that people in other cities can call to participate. Phone lines open 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting for fellowship & questions. 90 Day meetings suggest that those sharing have at least 90 days of abstinence.

NIGHT OWL – I can take calls in the evening or at night.			MORNING DOVE – I can take calls early in the morning.		
NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW LATE?	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	HOW EARLY?
Ann T.	410-435-8435	11:00pm	Ann T.	410-435-8435	7:00 a.m.
Jay K.	410 980 9624	24/7	Wajecha	443-271-2273	6:45 a.m.
Wendy S.	443-854-4522	anytime	Sheffi	443-858-7030	7:00am
Hinda	410 764 2279	1:00am	Alice	410-243-2314	9:00 a.m.
Rachel	410 913 1989	2:00am	Annette	410-825-4639	5:00 a.m.
Ashley S.	443 570 7890	11:00pm	Lisa M.	410-663-8219 443-677-7219	7:00 a.m.
			Laura	914-645-9839	11:30pm

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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month in which publication takes place in January, March, May, July, September, November. Submit your contributions by mail to BAIG, P. O. Box 20013, Baltimore MD 21284 or by e-mail to the editor, Joan W. [imwehberg@hotmail.com](mailto:imwehberg@hotmail.com) or [ioanmwehberg@yahoo.com](mailto:ioanmwehberg@yahoo.com). Thanks for your support.

SPONSOR – I am willing to sponsor others.		SPEAKER – I'll share my story at meetings.	
NAME	PHONE NUMBER or E-MAIL	NAME	PHONE NUMBER or E-MAIL
Carol S.	410-960-6493	Mary H.	410-256-8996
Wajecha	<a href="mailto:mispistivity@hotmail.com">mispistivity@hotmail.com</a>	Wendy S.	443-854-4522
Jay K.	410-980-9624	Wajecha	443-271-2273
Ashley S.	443-570-7890	Anne M.	410-825-4123
<b>Email Outreach</b>		Terri	410-459-9100
Kathy	<a href="mailto:kathymoriarty@comcast.net">kathymoriarty@comcast.net</a>	Tonia	410-665-5754
Lisa M	<a href="mailto:lkmoose@juno.com">lkmoose@juno.com</a>	Mike B	410-467-7472 <a href="mailto:MikeB1Bear@aol.com">MikeB1Bear@aol.com</a>
Pat C	<a href="mailto:patcassdy@aol.com">patcassdy@aol.com</a>	Kathy M.	<a href="mailto:kathymoriarty@comcast.net">kathymoriarty@comcast.net</a>
Joan W	<a href="mailto:imwehberg@hotmail.com">imwehberg@hotmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:joanmwehberg@yahoo.com">joanmwehberg@yahoo.com</a>	Laura	914-645-9839 <a href="mailto:Alegria5291@hotmail.com">Alegria5291@hotmail.com</a>
Sharon B	<a href="mailto:Sharon.Boddie@ssa.gov">Sharon.Boddie@ssa.gov</a>		
Mike B	<a href="mailto:MikeB1Bear@aol.com">MikeB1Bear@aol.com</a>		
		<b>ARE YOU WILLING TO VOLUNTEER????</b>	

# The Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

**Your Trusted Servants:**

**7th Tradition Contributions:**

<b>Chair: Mike P</b> 301 498 2711 <a href="mailto:mplotnick@mac.com">mplotnick@mac.com</a>	<b>Vice Chair: Neil R</b> 410 318 6737 <a href="mailto:neilrauch@comcast.net">neilrauch@comcast.net</a>
<b>Recording Secretary: Laura S</b> 443 631 6102 <a href="mailto:ljsicari@gmail.com">ljsicari@gmail.com</a>	<b>Treasurer: Larry A</b> 410 493 0400 <a href="mailto:larry@adasheklaw.com">larry@adasheklaw.com</a>
<b>Public Information Officer:</b> <b>Neil R</b> 410 318 6737 <a href="mailto:neilrauch@comcast.net">neilrauch@comcast.net</a>	<b>Corresponding Secretary:</b> <b>Joan W</b> 410 483 4212 <a href="mailto:jmwehberg@hotmail.com">jmwehberg@hotmail.com</a>

60% Baltimore Area Intergroup, Box 20013, Baltimore MD 21284	30% OA World Service Office Box 44020, Rio Rancho NM 87174
10% OA Region 7 3500 S. DuPont Highway, Dover DE 19901	