

The OA

# STEPPINGSTONE



The

Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters

Anonymous

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## CALL FIVE TO KEEP 'EM ALIVE - JULY 26

Is there someone you know in the program that you haven't seen at meetings in a long time? Do you know someone who is struggling with slips in their eating? Do you know someone who is suffering in relapse? Are you having difficulties in following your own program of recovery? Now is the time to help yourself and help others! On Saturday, July 26 is the CALL FIVE TO KEEP 'EM ALIVE campaign. Overeaters Anonymous asks that you call five people that day to encourage them to return to OA, to offer your experience, strength, and hope that may turn someone around. Your simple phone call can save someone's life! If you aren't sure who to call, take a look in your meeting's "We Care List" and pick names of people who haven't signed the list in a few weeks. It's easy, takes just a little bit of your time, and gives the opportunity to serve your fellows and enhance your own precious program. Join your OA brothers and sisters in this important event!



## Lifeline

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*Lifeline, Box 44020, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87174-4020.*

### REACH OUT TO A FELLOW SUFFERER

Recently, I've attended a lot of meetings where members have shared about their struggle with relapse. It is important for members to share openly, but I will be the first to admit that stories of relapse scare me. I am afraid of losing my abstinence, when I should simply trust my Higher Power. Relapse is not contagious. Also, I don't know what to say to support people in relapse; I feel embarrassed to say, "How are you doing?" for fear of making them feel worse. But the honesty and pain of members in relapse has taught me some important lessons. First, it is very apparent that our disease of compulsive overeating must never be ignored; we must pay attention and support our abstinence on a daily basis or we may once again suffer the misery of not being able to stop our behavior. We each need to continue sharing about practical ways we avoid temptation and maintain our abstinence. The more we can speak about specific strategies, the more helpful we can be to each other. Also, as a fellowship, we should pursue more deeply the meaning of the Fifth Tradition: that our primary purpose is to carry the message to those who still suffer. Frankly, I'm more concerned about the health of the OA members I've grown to care for than in reaching out to newcomers, although of course that is another aspect of the Fifth Tradition. I like the Intergroup recommendation to "Call Five to Keep 'Em Alive" - that we should all reach out to people we haven't seen in a while, take them to a meeting or just stay in touch. You never know whose life you could change, or even save.

*-- Anonymous, Baltimore*

### THE 60-30-10 WAY...the WAY OF THE SEVENTH TRADITION

The Seventh Tradition states that we are self-supporting, declining outside contributions. What does this mean to OA and to your meetings? Overeaters Anonymous saves thousands of people from the horrors of compulsive eating and gives us all a life better than we have ever known. But it takes resources to spread the message to compulsive eaters in and out of OA. The Baltimore Area Intergroup has enclosed a pamphlet about the Seventh Tradition. Please take a few moments to read it and consider your levels of support and service to the fellowship. Are you giving everything your means allow, or are you putting in just a token of support? If your meeting is not giving using the 60/30/10 way, please call a group conscience to discuss this and ask the meeting to do what it can the 60/30/10 way. OA depends on



all of us to carry the message. Please do what you can when you can as a service to all. Thank you for your contributions of wonderful service!

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Time for some favorite Acronyms! NUTS = Not Using the Steps. HOPE = Happy our Program Exists. RELAPSE = Recovery Exits Life and Program Seems Empty. FAITH = Facing an Inner Truth Heals. ACTION = Any Change to Improve our Nature. - *from the Central Virginia Intergroup newsletter The Stepping Stone (yes, that's really the name of it!)*

### REGION 7 ASSEMBLY REPORT

Hello! My name is Mike B., a gratefully recovering compulsive overeater. I was given the honor to serve as the Intergroup's Region 7 rep at the Region 7 Assembly in April in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. First-time reps like me, called "green dots" met with Region 7 Chair Donna A. and Trustee Sanci M. who showed us how to organize for the assembly. Our duties were to attend at least two committee meetings, both business meetings, and submit an article for the next Region 7 Speaks newsletter. The articles will appear in the next assembly's edition this October. A smattering of these are at our meetings. Take a look for them! There was a Hospitality Suite that had literature, fundraising items, newsletters, and meeting lists from the Region's Intergroups. We received compliments for the good messages in our newsletter, so kudos to you!

The full reports of all committees, which in addition to the ones listed below are Convention Planning, Website, Ad Hoc Resource Library, First Tradition, HIPM (Hospitals, Institutions, Professional, and Military), Ways and Means, and By-Laws are available in the Region 7 book at the Intergroup meeting. The meetings I attended are reported here:

**12th Step Within:** Call 5 to Keep 'em Alive campaign discussed to reach out to members in relapse. Calls would focus on recovery, not relapse. A day-long marathon would be held shortly after the call campaign to keep the message alive. Intergroups can request funding and volunteers from the Region to speak at Intergroup meetings and marathons about various business and recovery issues. The funding, whose budget was increased to \$100 would cover the visitor's travel and lodging expenses. The form to request funding is on the Region 7 Website. Discussion of keeping meeting list current ensued. Phone contacts are essential, periodic updating as often as bi-monthly is recommended. Communication of updates to Region and World Service Office is essential. Intergroup members should visit meetings regularly to emphasize Intergroup presence and willingness to offer assistance.

**Public Information / Young People:** Intergroup reps shared various PI programs they do, ranging from loosely organized and informal all the way to a paid part-time service position that coordinates a multi-faceted public information program. Some of the work done includes public service announcements in the media, outreach to libraries and health professionals, information tables at health fairs where there is no one manning the table but lots of literature and posters are available to review and take. A Committee goal is the creation of a resource library

online and on paper. Also everyone was asked to bring information on their Intergroup's PI work to the next Assembly. Agenda for next meeting includes discussion and action on how to increase local PI committee efforts, craft PI programs for all Intergroup resource levels, buddying up Intergroups in a mentoring mode. A list-serv will be set up for attending members to exchange ideas and information until the next meeting.

**Intergroup Insights:** This committee is for Intergroups to share their concerns to brainstorm for solutions. Discussion included rotating positions in Intergroups to keep service fresh and desirable. Sponsors can request their sponsees to give service at an Intergroup level to provide new energy. Encourage sponsors to be involved in Intergroup to set the example. For Intergroups where distance or religious beliefs preclude attendance, rotate meeting dates and times and places. This works especially well for the Jersey Shore intergroup, 100 miles long x 10 miles wide. Add a column in the We Care lists at meetings that will list service participation information of members. This could encourage questions and discussion. Would you ask your meeting to include this in the We Care list?



A lovely Saturday lunch was provided on the top floor of the Hotel, which had a glorious ocean view. During lunch, the speaker, a former Region Six trustee shared a powerful story about living life on life's terms and having to recover on all three levels. While for years she experienced emotional and spiritual recovery, she claimed abstinence while keeping 140 pounds of extra weight. It took a gentle but firm statement of truth telling by a former sponsor to help her see the light. She has since lost her extra weight and has been abstinent and healthy for many years.

After the committee meetings, spent time with representatives of the Diamond State and Annapolis Intergroups, sharing recovery, our stories, and how we incorporate the steps into our lives. We had walked on the beach and I found a rainbow colored jump rope. We had fun trying to jump rope. I learned that jump roping is truly a learned art. It demonstrated the capacity for fun that was lost on many of us before recovery. What a true gift!

The business meetings generally discussed by-law changes, and other general business. Some items of note were discussion and agreement to purchase three laptop computers and a printer to be used at future assemblies and for Region business. Also, the Region will donate

several thousand dollars to the World Service Office. At the end of the Sunday meeting, Linda Lou of New Jersey sang an entertaining song about events, funny and serious over the weekend. We "green dots" removed the actual green dot off their nametags and received certificates of appreciation for our work at our first assembly. Those

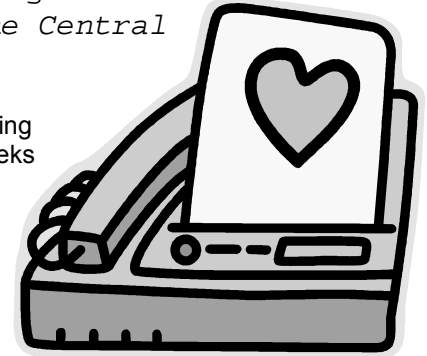
rotating out of the Assembly were also recognized and thanked for their service. A moving experience was had by all as 100 people joined hands in a giant circle and said the Serenity Prayer and "I Put My Hand In Yours..." You too can experience the joy of service at the Region level. Ask the Intergroup how, --M.B., Baltimore

More Acronyms!- GOD = Good Orderly Direction. BIG BOOK = Believing in God Beats Our Old Knowledge. SLIP = Sobriety Losing Its Priority. KISS = Keep It Simple, Sweetie. -- from the Central Virginia Intergroup's The Stepping Stone

#### TELEPHONE CALL CLEARINGHOUSE BEGINNING NOW

Over the years I get calls from people with no car, transportation or baby sitters in outlying areas, or from those who have jobs or families distant from current meetings. A few weeks ago I got two calls from Glyndon that if I had asked for and kept their name, location and phone number I could have connected with other members I know and maybe started a meeting in that area. If we had a clearinghouse maybe we could put these people together.

I volunteered at the June Intergroup meeting to begin a Telephone Clearinghouse. We who are meeting or Intergroup contact people are asked to keep a list of those who cannot go to a meeting because of distance, work, children, or what ever. Please forward the name of the person, location and phone number to [patcassdy@aol.com](mailto:patcassdy@aol.com), which is me, Pat C. I could look for commonalities of need and we would be able to get newcomers and others together to start a meeting with the assistance of some current members. Thank you for your service! - P.C., Cockeysville



#### FOR TODAY, June 15

*A man's reach should exceed his grasp / Or what's heaven for? - Robert Browning*

Abstinence is the beginning. Once grasped, I reach out for more--more sanity, more balance, more freedom. Recovery is an unending process. In the middle of a problem, it's easy to think that when it is over my life will be calm and ordered. But then more is revealed. I see another defect, another source of pain. Sometimes I make visible progress, more often I see little change. There is no reason to feel discouraged because I reached a difficult goal and failed. Reaching is a victory in itself; it is the very essence of recovery. *For today: Just staying abstinent--if it's all I can do today--is reaching for recovery.*



Hi! Thank you for being a part of our wonderful fellowship and allowing me to share my journey with you. Let me hear about yours. We cannot do it alone. I have tried. One small step at a time, one day at a time can build great things; repaired lives, sanity, joy, genuineness, tolerance, acceptance and working through discomfort and pain without having to reach for food as a numbing substance. I can be honest today, totally me, where I'm at right now in meetings and learn to be that way in other places. I can make mistakes and through the fellowship's acceptance, learn to accept myself. I am slowly learning how to put principals before personalities, not gossip and stay well. When resentments and anger come I can acknowledge it, attack with prayer (love, peace, serenity, abundance, joy for all the people, places, things and situations I resent and fear) and come back to a comfortable place of recovery, loving myself and taking good care of myself in thought, action and deed. I pray for the willingness to live this way today and every day. OA has shown me that it is possible. - N.G., Bel Air

#### A CHECKLIST OF DANGER SIGNS ON THE PATH TO RELAPSE

**Resentment** - The number one offender, it destroys more alcoholics than anything else." When I feel resentment, it is like a big red flag waving. An inventory about the resentment is very useful. I focus on my part in the resentment, there is usually one, even if it is that I am judging and not accepting another's right to their own decisions and actions.

**Exhaustion** - it muddles our thinking. Take HALT very seriously. Don't get too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. We will find new freedom with abstinence, and the ability to do so much. Before the program I had two choices, eat and be miserable, or not eat and be happy. After putting together a number of 24's I have so many opportunities to participate in life. Now I need to choose between good things, I cannot do it all, even abstinently.

**Dishonesty** - making excuses for doing what we know we should not be doing. This is very hard for me, but it effects every area of my life, from food choices to taking responsibility for my actions. The truth always works!

**Anger** - I have heard anger described as "fear announced". It is I getting upset because you don't do things my way. Anger is a big red flag that I need to do some inventory work.



**Self-pity** - this negative thinking will get us to the illness side of life very quickly. This is where a gratitude list comes in. Go to meetings, help others, get outside yourself, it melts the self-pity away.

**Cockiness** - to think I have it made is a sure warning sign of trouble. Gratefulness will take care of this.

**Complacency** - to think I have a guarantee of abstinence without taking the actions is very scary. Complacency is not the same as acceptance.

**Lack of gratitude** - do I want to be a compulsive overeater. Actually no, but that is not a choice. I focus on the fact that I am a compulsive overeater in recovery. Guilt and shame - another form of negative thinking. Let it go. Negative thinking is poisonous. What I focus on multiplies. If I focus on negativity that is what I get. I choose to focus on the positive miracles of this program, and gratitude for the life I have been given. And it keeps getting better!

-- Anonymous, Maryland

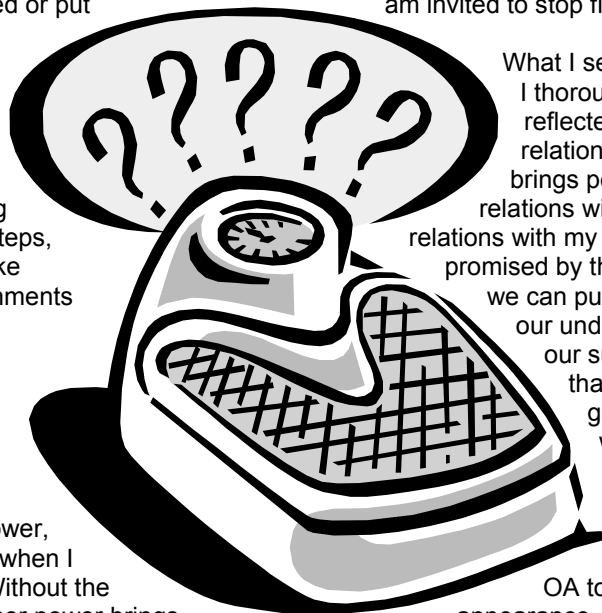
### IS IT JUST THE WEIGHT?

"I don't think I believe in OA anymore". A dear friend in program said that to me the other day. And I understood something of what she was saying. "I don't think I believe in OA anymore." I have felt that way. I still feel that way sometimes. When that feeling descends, what I am often saying to myself is that the visible elements of the program are not "entertaining" me anymore--I am bored with myself and bored with meetings. I haven't met any interesting people in meeting of late, haven't been moved by anyone's sharing, have perhaps been bored or put off by "12-Step talk". I may have been "mildly" offended by other members' actions or inaction's, quietly taking their inventories and hoarding small resentments. I don't make the connections between not working the steps, not experiencing the steps, and my change in attitude. It's like skipping school, not doing assignments and homework, and then feeling alienated from my classmates.

It is easier for me to notice how veering from my food plan has a drastic result, so it is easier to make a "higher power" out of it. But if my food plan is a higher power, why doesn't it work for very long when I am no longer relating to God? Without the peace that connecting to my higher power brings me, without the meaning that is brought to my life, I will turn back to the food and other compulsive "entertainment" as old feelings of emptiness and despair return. I'm not supposed to "believe" in OA. What I am asked to do, no, what is \*suggested\* that I do, is notice the fact that left to my own devices I always make a mess of my life.

Many people leave OA because it seems as though the "program" is not working for them, has failed them. I know I sometimes confuse the "visible" signs of the program --the literature, the meetings, the people, and

the written "steps"--with "working" the program. The essence of the program is so very, very simple that it is easy to miss--because it is not visible to the naked eye. It is something that resides in the heart, in a relationship that is both profound and subtle. In a moment of deep despair it is suggested that I completely reconsider my relationship to the universe, to God. The outlines of this subtle, invisible relationship are revealed in my struggles with the all too real obstacles, temptations, and pain in my life. I am invited to stop fighting in *every* area of my life.



What I seem to gain when I follow, when I thoroughly test the principles reflected in the twelve steps is a relationship with the universe that brings peace--peace of mind, peaceful relations with other people, peaceful relations with my own shortcomings. We are promised by those who went before us that if we can put the will of the higher power of our understanding before our own will, our suffering will be reduced. And that what suffering remains will be given a meaning and purpose which allows us to bear it with equanimity.

To be frank, I think there are faster and easier ways than OA to lose weight, to change my appearance. I think if you scratch the surface of any OA member who still struggles with the program, you will find the desperate desire to change their appearance, to eat what they want to eat and to look the way they want to look. When I wandered away from OA many years ago, I DID find "softer and easier" ways to lose weight, to change my appearance. But those ways did not lead me to peace or teach me how to maintain it. And without peace, I eventually looked for peace in food, in people, in places, everywhere but where it can be found--in my heart and in my relationship with God. --Anonymous, Maryland

### SPONSORS, NIGHT OWLS, AND SPEAKERS

Service is an important tool to give and keep our recovery from compulsive overeating. Intergroup asks members to give service as Sponsors, those committed to abstinence and working the Steps and Traditions to the best of their ability that are willing to help others; Night Owls, those willing to take calls late at night. Speakers are those who speak at meetings about their experience, strength, and hope. Your name, telephone number, and e-mail (optional) will be listed in future editions of

the Steppingstone. To be listed, contact your Intergroup rep or [The Steppingstone](#). Thank you for your service.

**SPONSORS**

Carol Anne  
Kay  
Ken G  
Lori (help get you started)  
Mike B.  
Nancy T.

**NIGHT OWLS**

Anne M. ('til 11:00 p.m.)  
Hinda ('til 11:30 p.m., no calls on  
Friday night)  
Jeremy E. ('til midnight)  
Robin ('til midnight)

**SPEAKERS**

Alan H.  
Anne M.  
Carol Anne  
Kathy M.  
Ken G.  
Mike B.  
Robin

**2003 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**August 6-8** – World Service Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org).

**August 16, 10:00** – Intergroup Meeting, Loch Raven Baptist Church, 8600 Loch Raven Blvd., Parkville, [www.oabaltimore.org](http://www.oabaltimore.org).

**September 20, 10:00** - Intergroup Meeting, Loch Raven Baptist

**October 10-12** – Region 7 Assembly, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, [www.oaregion7.org](http://www.oaregion7.org)

**November 11-13** – Region 7 Convention, Ocean City, Maryland, [www.oaregion7.org](http://www.oaregion7.org)

**TRADITION SEVEN: EVERY OA GROUP OUGHT TO BE  
SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.**

Much has been written about the value of this tradition, but it can be all summed up in the old saying, “He who pays the piper calls the tune.” Tradition Seven ensures that OA’s “tune” is determined by its members and only by its members, as guided by a wise and love God as God may speak to each of us and all of us. No agendas, no ideologies, just recovery – and that is sufficient. – *M. T., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Intergroup’s “Voice of Recovery.”*

## Questions to ponder:

- ❖ Who will you call on Saturday, July 26 for the Call Five to Keep 'Em Alive event?
- ❖ Would you be willing to host a special meeting or even half-day marathon to follow up on the Call Five event? It could be a mini-meeting or fun time at a local park where people can get together for an informal visit for recovery. Talk to each other and tell the Intergroup about it so we can announce it to all.
- ❖ Do you subscribe to Lifeline? It's only \$15 a year! Subscribe today!
- ❖ Will you join the Sponsors, Night Owls, and Speaker list? Discuss this idea with your sponsor.
- ❖ Have you considered your financial support at meetings? Do you give \$2.00 or more when you can? The 60-30-10 way works best when everyone gives what they can when they can.
- ❖ What are your danger signs in recovery? What will you do to avoid relapse? What will you do to help others avoid relapse?
- ❖ For what are you thankful today in recovery? Tell people about them at your next meeting and send a note to the Steppingstone.

*Write about your experience, strength, and hope for the next issue. Share it and do good for your fellow recovering compulsive eaters!*

The art in this newsletter is courtesy of Overeaters Anonymous and Microsoft Office Clip Art and Media.

## THE BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF



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- **Treasurer: Michael W.**  
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### 7th TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS:

- 60% Baltimore Area Intergroup, Box 20013, Baltimore MD 21284
- 30% OA World Service Office, Box 44020, Rio Rancho NM 87174
- 10% OA Region Seven, 15 E. North St., Dover DE 19903

### OTHER INTERNET RESOURCES:

Region Seven:

<http://www.oaregion7.org>

World Service: <http://www.oa.org>

The Steppingstone is the quarterly 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 two weeks before publication: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Submit your contributions by mail to BAIG, P. O. Box 20013, Baltimore MD 21284, or by e-mail to the editor, or by fax to 410-467-5605.

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