

The OA
STEPPINGSTONE

The Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

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April 2004

THE OFFICIAL NEW STEPPINGSTONE EDITOR

Hello Baltimore! My name is Ashley S and I am food addict and your new Stepping Stone Editor. I am overwhelmed by the amount of article submissions for this edition. Thank you for all your hard work and service. **Please** do not be offended if your article is not in here correctly or not at all. Bare in mind this is my first issue as editor and this is definitely progress not perfection! I am excited to accept this torch of service from Mike B and I ask for your patience as I work on improving this publication as well as myself. I am open to all feedback about the Stepping Stone. And look forward to inspiring and informing you quarterly with our area's great strength and hope. —

5 CALL
FIVE TO
KEEP 'EM ALIVE
ON 5/5 2004

In cooperation with Region Seven and its Intergroup, The Baltimore Area Intergroup announces Call Five to Keep 'Em Alive on 5/5! Is there someone you haven't seen in the program for a while? Has someone/s name been missing from you meeting's We Care List?

5 Do you know someone who is in relapse or has been struggling with his or her recovery program?

This is a perfect 12th step opportunity! OA is asking that **each of us** select five people and call them on Wednesday, May 5th to let them know that we care by



listening, talking about our recovery, and inviting them to our meetings. We help each other when we reach out to each other. Our recovery is stronger when we take time to care for one another. It's easier to achieve and maintain abstinence when we give such an important service.

Take the lead in your meeting! Coordinate with other members to pick names and telephone numbers. Commit to calling five people

on May 5th that you haven't seen in a while. If your meeting is a small one, pick a couple of names in your We Care List then go to another meeting and pick more names. When you call, if you get a voice mail, leave a message and commit to calling that person until you connect and talk. When you

do talk, or even leave a message, invite them to the Spring Marathon on Sunday, **May 23rd @ 1:00pm at the Serenity Center, 9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia.**

Plenty of members that have been in relapse returned to OA and their recovery because someone cared enough to reach out. You may be saving someone's life by participating in the Call Five event. Thank you for your kind service!—

Mike B., Baltimore

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How to get the most out of meetings:

I am writing this article to make amends for all the judgmental and critical thoughts I have had at meetings.



Disclaimer: the anonymous author of this article has sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, not followed the suggestions below. The amazing coincidence is, when I started following these disciplines, the meetings really improved, and so did my recovery!

1. Be on time: I did not take this suggestion seriously. I was always running a few minutes late. Or I stopped to get a coffee or do an errand. For me, this is not a good sign of my recovery. Having said that, part of a meeting is better than no meeting. I have gone to 10 minutes of a meeting if that is all I can make. Consciously choosing to allow enough time to travel, and making an honest effort to get to meetings on time has been very helpful.

2. Listen, really listen and focus.

3. If it is a literature meeting, follow along with the reading. Bringing your own book to **take notes** is helpful.

4. Let go of judgmental thoughts, listen to the message, not the messenger. My higher power has chosen some very surprising people to be his channel for the day.

5. All meetings are good, remove the idea that there are strong meetings and weak meetings. If you know a meeting is small and struggling, what a great opportunity for service.

6. Have a home meeting. The commitment really helps.

7. Respect anonymity. If you get a good message, by all means share it; just leave the messenger's name at the meeting. At the same time, let there be no gossip or criticism.

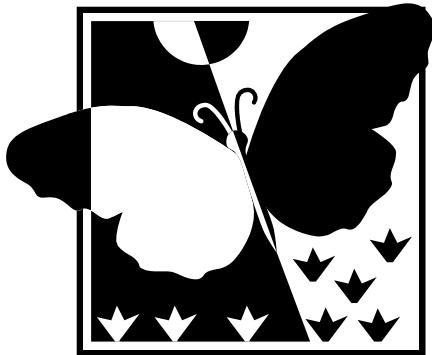
8. Turn off your cell phone. (That's just good etiquette.)

9. Use your feelings about a meeting as a barometer of your recovery. If I feel resentful or angry at a meeting because of whatever, that is a red flag.

10. Support the group conscience. And **GIVE SERVICE!!**

My meeting prayer is that I am able to share honestly and what is in my heart: Please guide my motives for sharing, that they be helpful. Please help me to carry the message, and to share experience, strength and hope. Guard me from judgment and criticism. Help me to accept all who enter the rooms. Remind me to extend my hand to the newcomer, not just gravitate towards my friends. I pray to bring love into the rooms as well as the recovery message.

T., Bel Air



Boiled down, these steps mean, simply:

- a. admission of compulsive overeating
 - b. Personality analysis and catharsis
 - c. Adjustments of personal relations
 - d. Dependence upon some Higher Power
 - e. Working with other compulsive overeaters
- A.A. World Services

WE MOURN OUR LOSS

Our Thursday morning Parkville group and our OA family in Baltimore lost a much loved and admired member to whom all our members owe a great deal.

Jim S., who at age of 95, died last month was a great inspiration to us all. Jim gave many years of loyal and faithful service and by his efforts kept more than a few meetings afloat. Although his wife died last year, at the age of 95 Jim kept driving and attending our weekly Thursday morning meeting. He was blessed with reasonably good health and was at our meeting a week before he died. It was he who put out the literature and put it back and was also our group treasurer. It was Jim who needed every meeting by telling us that the meeting was better because each of us was there—a practice Thursday morning meeting has chosen to continue in his memory. It was Jim whose humorous stories often had the meeting laughing heartily. I'm sure that losing his wife at such an advanced age must have been quite difficult and yet my task is to try to emulate what I most admired in him—his faithful and loyal service; his always positive mood; and his communication to all of us how much we mattered.

Shirley R.

As you know, our list of meetings in the Baltimore Intergroup service area is growing and growing. A complete online list is at <http://users.rcn.com/sadhya1/directory.html>, part of our

12 Reasons to be Abstinent:

1. To be a present, loving, open, & fun wife.
2. To be a giving, supportive, & available mom
3. To be an inspirational teacher.
4. So I can have a clear and creative mind: I can write and be creative in all the ways that satisfy me so much.
5. To be able to pay attention, learn, go to school, & study.
6. Live a healthy lifestyle, have energy and life.
7. To be of service, help others. To pass along the gift...
8. To join my friends in abstinence; avoid resentments and jealousy.
9. Eliminate self-pity, and enjoy the benefits of living without guilt hanging over my head all the time.
10. So I can revisit the past with a clear mind; so I can work the steps.
11. So I can forgive myself
12. So I can get right with God. So I can HEAR God.

Lisa M., Parkville

JUST FOR TODAY:

I will take care of my body. I will exercise it, care for it, nourish it, not abuse or neglect it, so that it will be a perfect machine for my bidding.

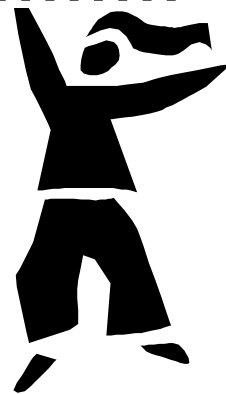
"Compulsive overeating has many symptoms in addition to mere fat. It is also an illness which isolates and gradually, or rapidly, causes increasingly serious problems in one or more areas of our lives: health, job, finances, family, or social life."

Brown Book p.1

EARLY MEETING STARTS THE DAY RIGHT

A Great start to an abstinent day

One of my problems in my life is that I'm a slow starter. This problem really wreaks havoc with me in the mornings. I wake up confused, and feeling like a mosquito in a nudist colony, I don't know what to do first. I have the desire to be abstinent but I don't have anything positive to do about it. I need to make an action step toward abstinence. That is why I am so excited about the 7:00 a.m. Wednesday morning meeting at Christ Lutheran Church. Christ Lutheran Church is at 701 S. Charles Street. Starting my day with a meeting fortifies me for the rest of the day. After attending that meeting I can better face the food challenges that confront me daily. Often times those challenges come in the beginning of my day. People bring food to work with them. They put it out in the common area where the aroma wafts into my office and would drive me crazy but for the strength I just got from attending the meeting.



Close to work

One of the things that I like most about the Wednesday morning meeting is that it gets me down town before the rush hour traffic gets too heavy. After I leave the meeting, I can go right to work with a minimum of effort and headaches due to the traffic. For those who work near the Inner Harbor, their offices will be in walking distance.

TAKES COMMITMENT

Let me get right to the point. Attending this meeting takes commitment. It is not for the feint of heart. I have found that the commitment that I had to make to this meeting is one of the best things I have done. I heard a story once about a golfer who got to the driving range one morning at 10:00 a.m. As he walked to where he was going to hit some balls he passed the club Golf Pro. He stood there for a moment and watched the pro hit the balls high and straight and far. Then he said to the pro "I want to hit the ball like that." The pro responded "No! I don't think you do. I think you wish you could hit the ball like that. If you wanted to hit the ball like that you'd have been here at 7:00 a.m. like I was". When I get up and go to the 7:00 a.m. meeting I know I am taking action against my deadly and baffling disease. I am doing more than wishing I didn't have this disease, I am acting on my commitment to defeat it.

Men's Meeting: That's Just Wrong!!!"

"What are they thinking?" "That must violate the Traditions of OA."

Several OA members have approached me with these sentiments regarding the new Wednesday Timonium Men's Meeting (8:00 P.M. at Grace Fellowship Church, 9505 Deereco Road).

As OA owes much to Alcoholics Anonymous, perhaps it is informative to look at AA's experience with specialty meetings. In many (most) AA meetings, women are the minority. In fact, for a long time, if a meeting of twenty to forty people had one or two women, that was strong meeting for women. As many women felt that they had issues that they would feel more comfortable sharing with other women in a meeting, they decided to start women's meetings. A place where they would feel safe sharing. If we look at

a Baltimore AA meeting list today, we will find at least five women's meetings.

So . . . take a look around your meetings and see how many men are there with you. Is it possible that the men may want to say some things but would feel more comfortable in a men's meeting? The group conscience of the Wednesday Timonium Men's Meeting is stated as follows:

It is this Group's Conscience that this be a Men's meeting. The group has decided this to provide a safe and nurturing environment for men in OA so that we may share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we can recover and achieve a healthy abstinence. Many men have been unable to find such a

home in other OA meetings as they are mostly attended by women. We ask that you respect the group's conscience on this matter.

But know that the Men's Meeting is allowed under our traditions because although the group conscience is that it be a men's meeting, we welcome any recovering overeater (the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop compulsively overeating). More importantly, remember that recovery needs to be a safe place for everyone.

I feel proud for OA that there is now a women's meeting in Columbia (Friday 11:00 A.M.) GO OA.

-Anonymous

WHY DO I HAVE AN ENVELOPE IN MY STEPPING STONE THIS MONTH?



In your Stepping Stone this month you will find an envelope with a notation "Second pass to send Intergroup representative to the World Service Conference."

One of the visions of the Baltimore Area Intergroup this year is to make certain that we have the ability to send a Baltimore area representative to the OA World Service Conference. Having a Baltimore area representative at the WSC gives us the following benefits:

- Keeps OA alive. World Service is the pinnacle of the OA fellowship. Without it there would be no literature and no guidance to the regions, the intergroups and the groups.
- It's how OA operates. The World Service Conference is the place where the most important decisions are made regarding organization, literature and operation of OA. Our representative votes for us on many important OA policy and procedure matters.
- Helps to maintain abstinence. It is a known equation,

the higher the level of service, the higher amount of abstinence.

- Makes our Intergroup part of the whole of OA. Our representative serves us and makes sure that our needs and objectives are raised and addressed to the entire OA community. Our voice and that of all of our groups can be heard.
- Provides literature to us all. All literature is approved through the WSC.
- Gives all of our groups important WSC information. The Intergroup representative agrees to bring important information back to the Intergroup and individual groups. He or she will do this through articles in the Stepping Stone as well as visiting individual groups.

Therefore, please use the envelope. Take it to your group. Pass the basket a second time stating the reason for the second pass (to help send a member to the World Service Conference) and send all those funds in the envelope by simply attaching a stamp. ALL FUNDS COLLECTED WILL BE HELD SPECIFICALLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF SENDING A BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WSC. Who knows, you could be the representative.

THANK YOU.

I'm just a crazy mixed up kid

Over the years we in Oa have had some crazy mixed-up ways of rationalizing, eating off a food plan, breaking abstinence or binge eating, ways of convincing ourselves (crazy mixed up kids) that it was OK.

- "This headache can only be from a need for more FOOD!" Sponsor: "Did you ever here of an aspirin?"
- "Sometimes I'm Sure I have bad breath and don't want to offend anyone. Those sugar-free mints do the trick. Maybe 4 or 5 a day or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10! Mouth wash and Listerine strips? Yes, I have heard of them."
- "It's my birthday!"
- "Well, I do have low blood sugar because I'm hypoglycemic and need more protein to balance all the sugar I just binged on"
- "Its just food, not heroin or anything like that. Little kids eat it. It's legal!"
- The scale in not exactly right
- If I skip a meal the next time I

can eat 2 meals!

If I have a slip I say: Well, I might as well just eat until tomorrow and make it one big slip—a whole 24 hours. If it's Friday, I'll start on Monday. You NEVER start a plan over the weekend. Now that I've slipped over the wknd I'll take a break for the week and start all over next Monday. "

Then you are back in the addictions and who knows where you will end up.

- "I went on vacation—it's hard away from home. So I'll take a vacation from my plan."

Our disease NEVERS goes on vacation and this thinking is the beginning of the end

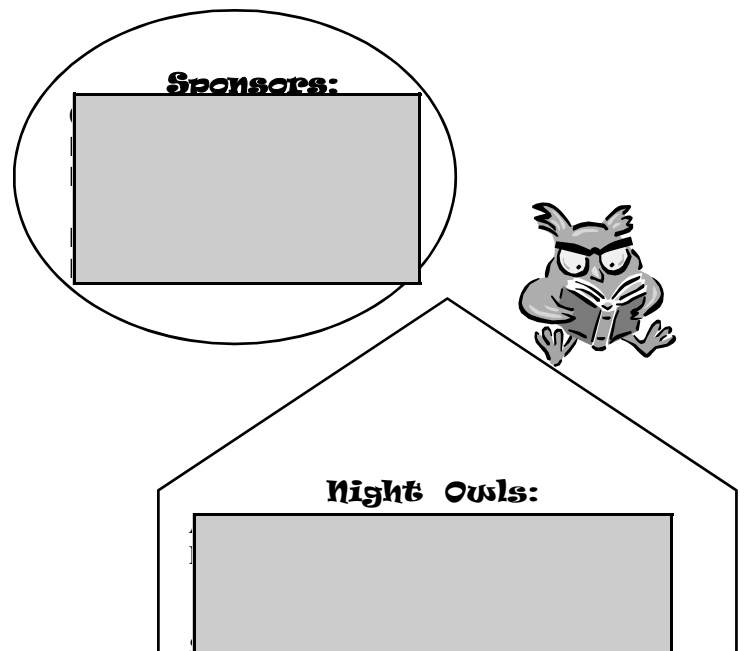
Red Lobster was a comfort place for me. I would buy at least once a month. Sometimes twice a meal "the ultimate feast." I'd go in and eat it in the restaurant because I believe carry out doesn't give you as much food. This a huge meal and drink—HUGE. Just as I was about finished this \$20 deal, I'd order one for my husband, who worked late! I don't even have a husband! This lie worked well as long ad I'd get different waiters every other week. I of course told myself it would be my Sunday

dinner, as I started this on Saturdays, but by Sunday morning I'd have eaten all of it! This whole deal could easily cost me \$45 every other Saturday. I felt I owed it to myself, I was lonely, everybody else in my mind had a boyfriend, husband, wife, somebody. They were always doing something as a couple. The \$90 I spent was the same amount I would have spent if I had somebody. I owed this food and cost to myself. \$90 a month on 4 dinners— 2 I ate in public, 2 I lied about. What was money if I couldn't enjoy it, I thought. I worked hard and deserved it. After all I was alone, single, fat, no friends—I owed it to my self. Thank God life isn't like this anymore

This article was written anonymously as an amends for an episode of binge eating. May it help me stay on the straight and narrow way of a good plan of eating. Thanks to the fellow OA'er who suggested this amends and other OA'ers who help me with get out of my crazy

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, or e-mail will be listed in future editions of the Steppingstone. To be listed, contact your Intergroup rep or The Steppingstone. Thank you for your service!



IMPORTANT DATES

- April 17th 10:00 am Intergroup Meeting
- May 5th Call **5** Keep 'Em Alive Day
- May 14-16th Ocean City Retreat-Info Shirley D. 410.282.3894 or shirleydriscoll@yahoo.com
- May 15th Intergroup Meeting
- May 23rd 1:00pm Spring Marathon, Serenity Center, Columbia
- June 19th Intergroup Meeting

Speakers

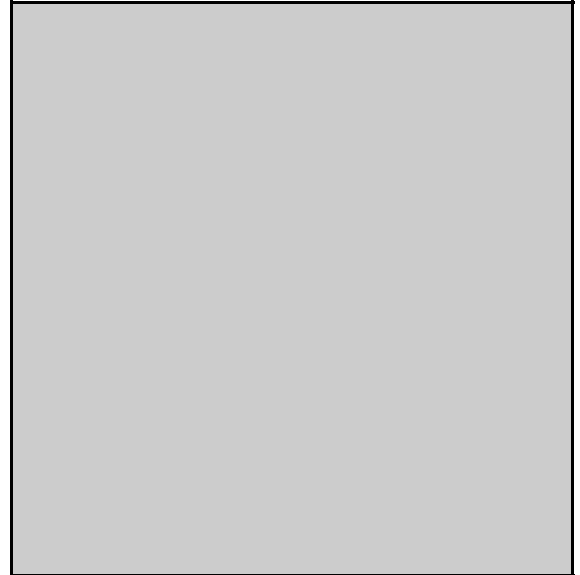


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The Baltimore Area Intergroup hopes your reading this newsletter will strengthen your recovery and allow you to maintain or attain your abstinence from compulsive eating. Please share by writing about your experience, strength, and hope for the next issue. Contributions for the next issue are due July 1st, 2004. Share and do a wonderful thing for your fellow recovering compulsive eaters!

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YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS:



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.

