



The Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

Volume 27, No. 1

January 2004

2004 INTERGROUP OFFICERS ELECTED

The Baltimore Area Intergroup has elected officers, whose terms began on January 1, 2004.

Mike B. of Baltimore is the new Chair, Terri of Bel Air is the new Vice-Chair, and Carol S. of Parkville is the new Secretary.

All three were honored to have been granted this occasion to serve their fellow compulsive overeaters in these important functions, and bring a wealth of experience, strength, and hope in recovery from compulsive overeating.



The TREASURER position is still available. The Treasurer regularly attends Intergroup and Executive Board meetings, pays bills, maintains financial accounts and records, and accepts and acknowledges donations. Also, provides a monthly Treasurer's Report, projects budget and advises Intergroup of feasibility of expenses. Estimated time to perform duties is four to six hours a month.

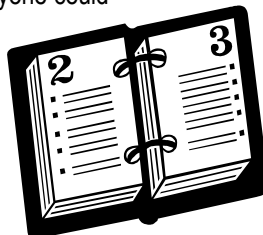
Take this extraordinary opportunity to step up to leadership in service to your fellows. Contact any of the Intergroup officers for information. We look forward to joining with you in service to OA in central Maryland.

NEW STEPPINGSTONE EDITOR TO TAKE OVER NEXT ISSUE

Beginning with the April 2004 issue, I am pleased to announce that Ashley S. of Baltimore will take over as Editor of the OA Steppingstone. Ashley will bring her creativity to only make the newsletter all the better in its content and layout. As the outgoing editor, I am excitedly looking forward to the next issue. I thank you all for entrusting me with the service of editor of the OA Steppingstone. It was great fun! I encourage all of you to write a short article on your experience, strength, and hope in OA, no matter how new or experienced you are, no matter if you have years of abstinence or are looking for your first day of abstinence, no matter if you think you can't write or if you write professionally. Your articles, art, writings, puzzles, and stories all make the Steppingstone what it is. Because of you, this paper brings recovery to hundreds of compulsive overeaters. Do take a few moments to send your contributions today. – Mike B., Baltimore

WE NEED TUESDAY MEETINGS!

Have you noticed in the latest meeting list on our website at www.oabaltimore.org that there are no active Tuesday meetings at this time? Did you also know that anyone could start a meeting? It's not as difficult as it sounds. Overeaters Anonymous' World Service Office will send you a meeting starter kit. It costs just \$10, but you get a \$10 voucher for literature with it, so it really is like getting it for free. The kit tells you how to start the meeting, how to register it with your Intergroup and the World Service Office, and how to publicize the



existence of the meeting. Several meetings have been started in our Intergroup in the last year, and it is exciting to see the growth of our fellowship. Will you and your OA friends start a meeting on Tuesdays? It is important that a metropolitan region the size of ours have meetings every day of the week. We need to have a presence daily to help each other and those compulsive overeaters yet to find the fellowship. Please contact the Intergroup for assistance to start a meeting, and thank you for your service!

GET YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO LIFELINE NOW!

Lifeline

OA's monthly magazine, it's written by and for OA members like you and me! Just \$15 a year, even less online or multiple years! Pay by check, money order, or credit card. Read it and enrich your serenity, abstinence, and recovery! Order online at www.oa.org, by fax to 1-505-891-4320, or by mail to Lifeline, Box 44020, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87174-4020.

NEW YEAR'S BLESSINGS OF RECOVERY

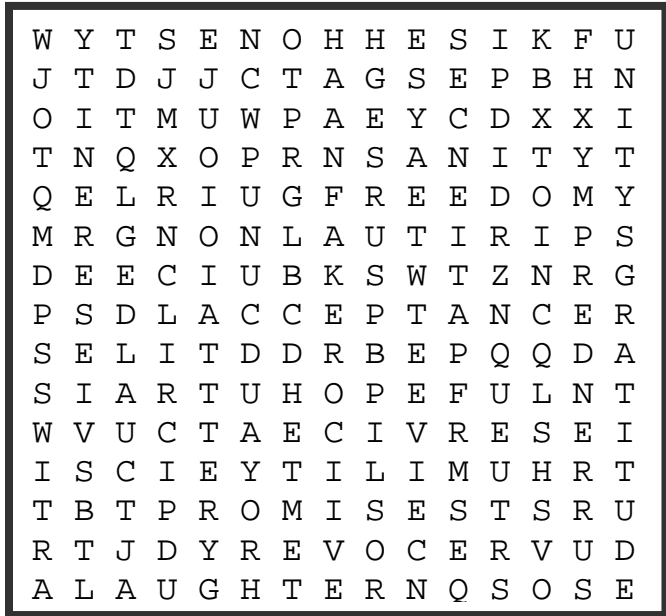
It is New Year's Eve. I have just returned from a wonderful OA meeting. The sharing was terrific. I particularly wanted to go to a meeting this evening as a great way to end the year. I am so grateful that I don't have to wait until the stroke of midnight and go on a diet. How many times did I stuff myself up until 11:59, because at the stroke of midnight it would be a new start? How many New Year's resolutions have I made and broken? Well, no more, thanks to this program. I am going to keep on keeping on. The 12 Steps are my ongoing, never-ending resolution. I change and grow every day. I don't need a holiday to give me permission to be the person I want to be. I am going to go to sleep gratefully and sanely as I see the old year out with my family. And wake up grateful to have another day to be abstinent. – *Anonymous, Maryland*

WORD SEARCH

Find these words in the puzzle!

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| ACCEPTANCE | PEACE |
| COURAGE | PROMISES |
| FREEDOM | RECOVERY |
| GRATITUDE | SANITY |
| GROWTH | SERENITY |
| HAPPINESS | SERVICE |
| HONESTY | SPIRITUAL |
| HOPEFUL | SURRENDER |
| HUMILITY | TRUST |
| LAUGHTER | UNITY |
| MEDITATION | WILLINGNESS |
| PATIENCE | |

- created by M. H., Catonsville



SOLUTIONS TO THE OCTOBER CROSSWORD PUZZLE:

ACROSS: 2-GOD, 3-SELF-WILL, 4-NORMAL, 9-POWERFUL, 11-SIX, 12-RESENTMENT, 14-HONESTY, 15-WILLINGNESS, 17-PROMISES.

DOWN: 1-BONDAGE OF SELF, 5-ACCEPTANCE, 6-ANALYZE, 7-THEORY, 8-HUMILITY, 10-FAITH, 13-SELFISHNESS, 16-SELF SEEKING

AS BILL SEES IT

The alarming thing about pride-blindness is the ease with which it is justified. But we need not look far to see that self-justification is a universal destroyer of harmony and of love. It sets person against person, nation against nation. By it, every form of folly and violence can be made to look right, and even respectable. It would be a product of false pride to claim that OA is a cure-all, even for compulsive overeating. - Adapted from "As Bill Sees It - False Pride" (p. 285)

Hi Friends, I read this piece and put it away. But I brought it out again compelled to type it out. Upon introspection it is easy for me to admit I often am filled with pride-blindness. "I know what's best for you and you and you and you!" It is this cocky and non-humble being that dwells within me and threatens to destroy my happiness so often. It is relieving to admit it, cry "uncle," let go, let God and take a deep breath and pray for the grace not to have to control everything. The last line about OA and its claims is also a humbling reminder for me. In my quest to heal from compulsive overeating and my zeal to share the glorious news, I need to remember acceptance, tolerance and respect for others and the pathways they have chosen to walk. As for me, I need to remember that I have chosen to walk the OA path so matter what to the best of my ability one day at a time. – *N.G., Bel Air*



"The important thing about your lot in life is whether you use it for building or for parking." – *Anonymous, reprinted from the January/February 1997 issue of this newsletter, then called "Baltimore's Steppingstone"*

LITTLE BITS OF THIS AND THAT...EXPERIENCE FROM A LONG TIME MEMBER

Problem: Running out of abstinent food, not having a fruit in the house, not enough protein, etc.

Solution: This is not an option. You absolutely must take the time to have what you need in the house. Shop for the week, plan ahead, looking at your food plan and what it requires. I actually keep an emergency can of vegetables (which I am happy to say I have never needed to use!), a can of tuna, and a can of fruit in the pantry, so I will always have something. If I find I am running out of the essentials for my committed food plan, that is something to inventory and discuss with a sponsor, it is a symptom of a deeper problem, and to me a red flag waving.

Problem: Not having time to fix abstinent meals.

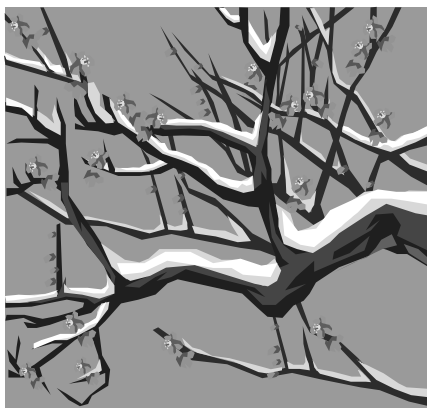
Solution: Here again, not an option, but here are some suggestions that might be helpful. I keep my breakfast very simple so that it does not take a lot of time, knowing what I am going to eat in the morning because it is committed saves me from "two pests, hurry and indecision". If it is going to be a particularly busy day I pre-measure what I can so it is there waiting for me. If I am going to workout and thus will be eating breakfast later, it is packed before I go to bed.

Problem: Not having time to make a lunch, so I make do with what they have where I work.

Solution: I take my lunch to work because it is the simple solution. I make my lunch at the same time as I make dinner; it is packed and ready to go in the refrigerator, what a simple time saver. But if you grab it in the a.m., be sure to peek inside to make sure it is the right one, I have taken some interesting things to work that I thought were my lunch!

Problem: My family does not always want to eat the things that I choose to eat on my food plan.

Solution: One is to serve what I can eat, and if they don't like it too bad. But that doesn't work for me. There are very healthy foods my family can eat and enjoy that don't work for me. I don't suffer in silence, but I also don't mind making two meals. I just keep it very simple, it's usually the difference of a protein and carb, so I make extra, measure it into my portions for those nights they eat stuff I choose not to eat. I refuse to eat something just because my family wants it. And I do like having dinner with them. Important, I don't apologize for the way I eat, nor do I feel self-pity. It's just the way it is.



Problem: We are going out to eat and I don't know if I can be abstinent there.

Solution: FIRST of ALL, no whining! If you can choose the restaurant, great, if not call ahead, and see what they have so you can have a game plan. In the past 25 years, there have been a few restaurants that don't have what I need, but mostly it is okay. I have been known to bring parts of my meal with me, and no one has ever given me any trouble. I am discreet, and this may not work in all situations! Just pray for honesty, and trust. God has never let me down on this one.

Problem: I don't have time to go to meetings.

Solution: If you are too busy to go to meetings, you are too busy. I know meetings are a tool, and not a step, but I believe meetings are where healing takes place, and where I see so many miracles. Having a home meeting is very important. May I also suggest that going to a meeting you have never been to before, maybe once a month, is a real adventure, and well worth it. Going to a variety of meetings keeps my program fresh and helps me to continue to grow.

Problem: I feel so overwhelmed, how can I do this program for the rest of my life?

Solution: Good news, the only day you have to worry about is today. This is a one-day-at-a-time program.
-T.B., *Bel Air*

FOR TODAY - NOVEMBER 28 - "Hope is the risk that must be run."

- George Bernanos

Have I tried and failed? Try again. The Big Book says, "If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -- then you are ready to take certain steps." Going to any length means taking twelve specific steps, one day at a time, and never being finished. In the process, sanity will be restored and abstinence will become a reality. Hope and willingness are the springboards of recovery. The hope of being healed of my illness is a risk I'm willing to run today and everyday. For today: I have hope, or I wouldn't be in OA. Do I have the willingness to take that leap into the steps; into abstinence?

I am very grateful for OA today. I had an emotionally upsetting event happen; but, I kept giving it and myself to my HP and I intuitively knew how to handle it after sharing it with an OA friend and my spouse. I love daily miracles that happen as a result of being abstinent and in recovery. I can't do it alone. God, help me to reach out to others when I am hurting and not to wait for someone to come to me. Help me to know that my burdens will be lessened if I share them even though it doesn't feel like it at the time. - *Anonymous, Maryland*

PERCEPTION COUNTS

Hi, Auds here, compulsive overeater, abstinent one day at a time by the Grace of God, this fellowship, and my own effort. Today I received an e-mail from a friend who seems to send the messages I need to hear. As the subject line says it was about perceptions and discord. Some thoughts I needed were as follows:



- "Our perception of any experience, even the smallest detail of an ordinary event is quite exceptional. No other person will share our particular vision. Frequently that results in arguments. The need to be right is a common affliction."
- "Because of our age, we may assume we have more wisdom than others."
- "What a dull world this would be if we all shared the same perceptions. There would be nothing to discuss, no opportunity to expand our minds, no reason to interact at all. Instead we are blessed with conflict and growth, the deepening of relationships and character development, choices, and decisions. All because our perceptions are individual."

Hmmmm. Just for today I pray that I might remember that not everyone needs to hear my perception of my wisdom that I do not need to say something in every instance. It is amazing that not everyone needs to benefit from my view on an event. Yesterday my grandson and I had different takes on a book we had both just read and, oh, boy did we need to be right. Of course being brilliant I gave the correct interpretations. Hmmmm. Just for today I thank my online friend for the following thought. "How I see an experience today is unique but neither right nor wrong. I will remember the same holds true for all my friends too." So just for today may I remember to pray for wisdom to know when to open my mouth and what to say. -A., *Whitehall*

OBITUARY

"I recently saw an obituary for "someone else" in the newspaper. I guess they won't be able to take care of everything for us anymore. Gosh, I'm gonna have to do some service for OA. What is the world coming to?"



This last appeared in the April/May 2000 issue of this newsletter. I must ask myself what I am going to do. What kind of service am I going to do for OA? For those of us who attended IDEA Day and participated in the Service Workshop, thank you for your service and commitment. Please remember to follow up with your Service Buddy. See if they are working on their service commitments. Are you working on yours? It's been wonderful to see so many people join in to serve their fellow compulsive overeaters in this

program. If you aren't doing something at the meeting, intergroup, region, and/or World Service levels, join your friends in this exciting and challenging way to deepen your recovery and grow your spirit. Talk to your sponsor about service. Then do it! Don't let the memory and legacy of "someone else" die and fade away. Let the legacy of this program build in you as you pass on the life-giving and life-SAVING joy of your recovery.
-- *Anonymous, Baltimore city*



SPONSORS, NIGHT OWLS, AND

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!

SPONSORS

Carol Anne
Kay
Lori
Mike B.
Nancy T.

Member contact information can be found in the printed copies at local meetings.

SPEAKERS

Alan H.
Anne M.
Carol Anne
Drew
Jane S.S.
Joan
Kathy M.
Ken G.
Mike B.

MORE SPEAKERS

Robin
Tania S.

NIGHT OWLS

Anne M.
Hinda
Robin

THE GOD OF MY UNDERSTANDING

1- This is a pleasant Surprise
I told him
After all these years
Thirty/forty

I see him again

Most of us teachers didn't like him

Always asking us questions

When we were only a lesson ahead of the class

Ourselves

But I always did

I liked the children who talked with a lot of sense

He came over and hugged me

I wished him well

But I hung back

When he went out the door

I could have given him a ride home

But I couldn't be seen with him

He had been stigmatized by the movers and the shakers

Of the city

2- All he did was take a stand

It took the heat off of us

But that was the deal

For the group to be allowed to move up the ladder

He was the one that had to be kicked off

Never to be let on it again

He never came back to the meeting

I was relieved

But when I heard he had died

I got in to a funk

I lost my recovery

The fourth step

Asks us if we have ever refused to help

somebody

We could have helped

Yes I was guilty

He had come up for a promotion

He had always been passed over

But my own child needed to be popular

So I did the popular thing

Use and abuse this old friend

I always liked

3- I tried to get back my recovery

My sponsor kept asking me to pray about it

And ask whoever was in charge of my life

To tell me what was holding me back

I knew already

And the One in charge told me too

My sponsor told me to get back my recovery

I had to make amends to my friend who had no friends

But how

He was gone now

I was relieved

I asked my sponsor and the One in charge

How

Both of them told me to help someone dear to this friend

I told him just about everybody was

They told me to seek out someone

Especially dear to my friend

I did

4- He had a nephew I was told

By people back in the old neighborhood

He wanted to get the proper schooling

Only a certain type of private school could provide

I saw to it

I like many others

I had moved up the ladder

Over my old friend's back

I got the nephew in one of them

I regained my recovery

But I asked my sponsor

Why wouldn't me or anybody else

He had ever met

Bring themselves to help the old friend

My sponsor told me to ask

The One in charge

The God of my understanding

My God told me

He used my old friend

As a pioneer

To go it alone

With just her as his company

And we would all understand it better

By and by.

-- M.W., Baltimore

THOUGHTS ON TRADITION THREE

I am bulimic, which means I've binged and purged. During the ten years that I was trapped in this maddening cycle, I had no idea that a group existed whose "only requirement was to stop eating compulsively." Perhaps I was not yet ready for the experience of sharing and loving and acceptance that is part of OA membership.

I only know that since I came into these rooms, I have met people with various forms of this compulsive eating disorder and I feel safe and at ease because I know that we're all trying to accomplish the same thing – to stop eating compulsively.

I know I'm where I belong whether I'm abstinent, slipping, or in relapse. Sometimes it's scary to face relapse in others, as scary as it is to face my own. But, I believe in Tradition Three, that relapse won't sink our ship, but strengthen it.

Our shared experience, strength, and hope, our individual connections with our Higher Power form a collective spirit to help us stop eating compulsively. My attitude of gratitude is: "Thank God for Tradition Three!"

-- C.L., Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, reprinted from the May 1991 "Calling", the newsletter of the South Central Pennsylvania Intergroup

SUCCESS = ABSTINENCE

Ask God for help.
Be willing to discipline yourself
Stay with your planned meals
Tools
Interest in others
No negative thinking
Easy Does It
Now is the right time
Count yourself out of the numbers game
Eat slowly and calmly.

-- reprinted from the September 1992 "Calling", which reprinted this item from a 1980 edition of the same newsletter of the South Central Pennsylvania Intergroup

DATES OF NOTE

January 17, 10:00 a.m. – Intergroup Meeting, Loch Raven Baptist Church, 8600 Loch Raven Blvd., Parkville, www.oabaltimore.org.

February 21, 10:00 a.m. – Intergroup Meeting, Loch Raven Baptist

February 28 – UNITY DAYS in Annapolis, Frederick, and Silver Spring. Details to come.

March 20, 10:00 a.m. – Intergroup Meeting, Loch Raven Baptist

April 2-4 – Region 7 Assembly, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, www.oaregion7.org

May 28-30 – Spring Retreat at Kirkridge, South Central Pennsylvania Intergroup
610-370-9090

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 April 1, 2004. Share and do a wonderful thing for your fellow recovering compulsive eaters!

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

THE BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF



**P. O. Box 20013
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<http://www.oabaltimore.org>**

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

- **Chair: Mike B.**
- **Vice Chair: Terri B.**
- **Secretary: Carol S.**
- **Treasurer: THIS POSITION IS AVAILABLE. CONTACT THE INTERGROUP FOR DETAILS.**

Member contact information can be found in the printed copies at local meetings.

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.

Outgoing Editor: Mike B.
New Editor: Ashley S

Member contact information can be found in the printed copies at local meetings.