



# THE STEPPINGSTONE

Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup  
of Overeaters Anonymous

Hotline 410-764-3136 BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org> Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

September/October 2012

**CHANGING OF THE GUARD** For the last 2 years, *The SteppingStone* has been edited by Allie. All in the OA Baltimore Area are extremely grateful to her for the fine job and tremendous service she has accomplished. Members always looked forward to receiving the latest edition. I only hope that I can carry on the fine tradition Allie has established.

Tonia, editor

## Healing an Ailing Meeting

**The System:** So you walk in the door at 10 minutes past the hour, and everyone looks up expectantly, hoping YOU'LL volunteer to lead. Either no one signed up, or the person who signed up just isn't there. ...And, you note that the scraggly meeting list on the table is 11 months old. And no one knows who the secretary is or when the business meeting is held. ...And then one week, there's just two of you there. Your meeting has a serious case of chronic fatigue syndrome.

**The Prescription:** First, find a core of people who care about the meeting - "We can do together what we cannot do alone." Several years ago, as several of us bemoaned the downhill slide of a favorite meeting, six of us committed to support it for the next six months. That meeting is alive and well today (although I don't think any of us are regulars anymore). A few committed members can make a world of difference. Commitment is catching. This is a program of attraction, and when members are sharing enthusiasm and demonstrating that they care about the meeting, others will follow suit.

Institute some kind of "we care" program. This means calling members who are no longer coming to let them know we're thinking of them and miss them at the meeting.

**Attracting New Members:** Let people know your meeting's alive and well: make a flier for members to take to other meetings and bring to intergroup, or write a small ad for your newsletter, or create a card with your meeting's time, location and contact person to let people know that your meeting exists.

Remember that when new people find your meeting a lively and friendly place to be, they will keep coming back ... and they'll bring their friends. The main thing to remember is that meetings need tender love and care, just like compulsive overeaters. They shrivel up and die when they're treated carelessly, when they are unloved, when they're abandoned. So treat your meeting like the wonderful friend and support it really is...nurture it, invest in it, and it will always be there when you need it.

Louise A., compulsive overeater  
Region One News, Nov./Dec. 1995

## STRONG MEETING CHECKLIST

The *Strong Meeting Checklist* is part of OA's 2008-2013 Strategic Plan. It is not enough to make the public aware that OA exists and can be a solution to compulsive overeating; meetings have to be strong and must function effectively for people to "stay for the miracle" and for OA to continue to grow and be there for those who need it in the future. Consider doing an inventory of your OA meeting using the checklist.

1. Does the meeting start and end on time?
2. Are all attending, including newcomers, greeted and made to feel welcome and accepted?
3. Does the meeting focus on OA recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?
4. Do we offer our own experience, strength, and hope sharing the solution we have found?
5. Is the group contributing financially to all levels of OA service as per our Seventh Tradition?
6. Are sponsors available and identified at meetings.
7. Does the group practice anonymity by reminding members not to repeat who is seen or what personal sharing is heard at a meeting?
8. Does the group follow a meeting format?
9. Is only OA literature on display and for sale?
10. Are group conscience meetings held regularly?
11. Are all service positions filled, and is rotations of service practiced?
12. Is the meeting format readily available and the WSO informed of all meeting details and changes so that newcomers and visitors can find our meetings?
13. Are cross talk and advice-giving avoided?

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### MORE TIPS ON MEETINGS

◆ People come to meetings with recovery; meetings with no recovery can die.

◆ Make positive pitches. Bring the message to the meeting and the mess to your sponsor. If you share about a problem, also share about the solution.

◆ Emphasize the Steps.

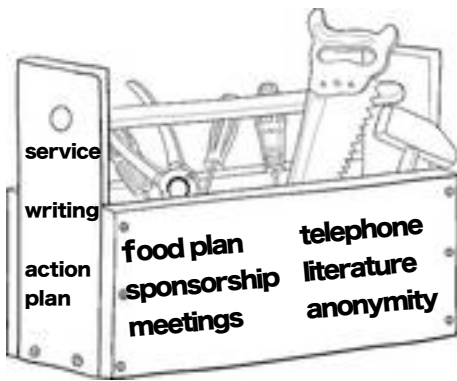
--Membership Retention Forum  
Region One Assembly 1995

### This Edition of The SteppingStone Is Brought to You by:

**STEP 9:** Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

**STEP 10:** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Consider writing an article about your program and Steps 11 and 12 for the next edition of The SteppingStone.



## OA TOOLBOX

### DAILY USE OF TOOLS CREATES SUSTAINED RECOVERY

I've seen a lot of relapse lately. I know the familiar pattern that precedes it because I lived it. Life gets busy. Priorities change. The tools that we NEEDED to use to stay grounded in recovery begin to slip.

After we receive the gift of prolonged abstinence, many of us grow tired of the repetition of it all. We think we know everything that continued use of the tools brings. Our determination to fight the disease weakens and our enthusiasm for our new life wanes.

The actions that brought a distinct change in our thinking slip away, and the addict mind begins to say things like: "Don't you have better things to do?" "Isn't it time to get back into the game and start making up for lost time?"

We stop using the tools when facing challenges. They brought us stability, balance and fellowship not so long ago. How did it all slip away so quickly?

One of the inevitable results of skimping on our disciplines is the fading feeling of connection to our fellow OA members. Fewer meetings bring less frequent (and maybe less honest) sharing. The initial bond that we felt with our sponsor feels more like a yoke. We become less accountable. We get off track.

I would slowly become more irritable, less patient and more negative. Next thing I knew, all I saw was the chaos in the world instead of all the beauty in it. My view would get smaller and more superficial, until I was less interested in you, and more concerned with making sure that my personal needs were satisfied. I stopped giving and I started taking.

Life in recovery never gets easier, but it does get fuller and richer. When I'm eating compulsively, I think I'm carefree, colorful and independent. Actually, I'm self-absorbed, irresponsible and distracted.

If I can't muster the wherewithal to use the tools, how will I ever find the proper attitude to work through the Steps, stand fast when the feelings come, and weather the storm?

Recovery is far more to me than a day without eating. That's just where it starts. Once I admitted, "I really am a compulsive eater," there was no going back to "settling for less." Choosing the easier, softer way meant an eventual loss of self-esteem, avoiding people who "go to any lengths," free-floating anxiety and a host of other painful, familiar symptoms.

When I stand together with my fellow OA members, the risk of regressing is minimal. By myself, all bets are off. Recovery is about connection. The disease is about isolation.

The tools are not a permanent solution, but they put me in touch with how easily I become lazy; first in my actions, then in my thinking, finally in my connection with my Higher Power.

Neil



### **ACTIVELY ATTENDING MEETINGS**

Are you a purposeful listener at OA meetings? Do you hear your HP through those speaking or reading? Or, are you a passive listener? I aim to do something with what I hear. I try to apply it to my life. The abstinent life demands more than just attending an occasional meeting. It requires conscious surrender (Step 1) and yielding to God (Step 3) through circumstances and other people. I listen expectantly, patiently, and prayerfully at meetings. As my life changes, I make fewer mistakes.

Pat R.

## A JOURNAL TREASURE HUNT...

Writing is a powerful tool and your journals are full of wisdom. Please look through your journal and consider sharing your writings by submitting an article to *The SteppingStone*: [tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com](mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com) or calling 410-665-5754



## LITERATURE FOCUS

### My Favorite Daily Reader: *Voices Of Recovery*

The first thing I like is the quotes at the top of each page. I like that they all come from OA literature. One of my favorites is June 2: "Before I turn a problem over to God, I am reasonably sure that God expects me to take a stab at doing my part." It goes back to when my mother would tell me that "God helps those who help themselves."

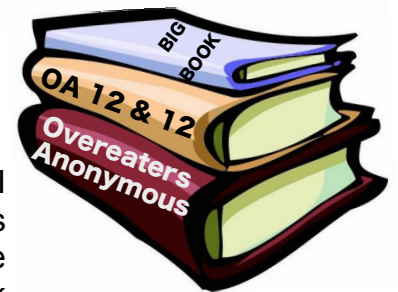
I also like that at the beginning of the month, the topic for the first and second day is on the step for that month (ex. September = Step 9).

In all my daily readers, I am grateful for the subject index. When something is bothering me I can go to the index and read several pages on that subject. When something is especially meaningful I circle that page number. It is a quick step to go back to that reading.

Finally, I like that the readers are small and light weight. I always take one or two with me on a trip.

Thank God for OA.

Irma



## LOSS

Recently I received a *Recovery Meditation* titled, "Loss." It ended with: "My Twelve Step program has enabled me to go through a mourning process for each loss I've experienced. I have allowed myself to feel the feelings. When all this was done, God's grace allowed me to heal."

I love the last line of this, "God's grace allowed me to heal." What other explanation is there when you are going through emotions and pain, yet a new day begins? I've had to learn to face my feelings, my fears, and to accept them and

move on. Through the strength of this program, it is what I've been able to do. I mourn what I perceive as lost, but I'm slowly understanding that it's not lost. Life is rearranging, and I have to transition with it. Things will never be exactly as they were, but that's not to say that they will be worse, possibly, they will be better. I can dwell on the negative and the way I imagine things will be, or I can focus on the positive, and the reality of what is.

Linda R.

I didn't know how big the onion was until I started peeling it. Carol



## OA Kept Calling

I have been in OA since March of 1981 and have had an imperfect past. I wish that I could say that I have had abstinence since day one, but I can't. I came in at the age of 37 wanting to loose weight for my son's Bar Mitzvah. At first looked at OA as a diet club and was successful. I lost the weight that I needed to Loose and felt good. Was I working the program? No!

I stuck around until June of 1990, still not really working it, not really surrendering! In June of 1990 at my daughter's wedding, I lost it. I lost it for two and a half years and a forty pound weight gain. Not just a forty pound weight gain, but depression and misery as well. The pain and depression I felt was just horrible.

I got abstinent when the suffering, pain, and misery I was feeling became greater than the fear of giving up my substance. I had reached rock bottom. That was what it took for me to get back into the rooms in February

of 1993. Thank God I did. I must also thank an OAer who kept calling me during those awful 2 1/2 years. It really helped to bring me back.

Staying abstinent takes work. I read, write, make calls, sponsor, and go to meetings. I do a lot of traveling and sometimes have to switch certain foods. I discuss this with my sponsor and it works. I am so grateful to OA - not only for the serenity it has given me, but also for the wonderful people who have come into my life because of it. I have made great friends with whom I can share, knowing that I'm safe. I can pick up the phone instead of the food. I try to keep a positive attitude and to be the best person I can be in my dealings with others. If only everyone had a 12 Step Program!

-Susan C., Larchmont  
*It Works If You Work It*  
*Westchester United Intergroup*



## **BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:**

### **YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS**

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<b>Secretary</b>	OPEN		
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## Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>8AM: "Rise and Shine" Baltimore</b> Bnai Jacob Shaarie Zion Synagogue 6602 Park Heights Ave. Neil 410-318-6737 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</p>	<p><b>10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County</b> 10710 Charter Drive, G level</p>	<p><b>7AM Mt. Washington - Big Book/Newcomer (New Mtg)</b> 6602 Chelwood Road 21209 Robin 443-742-9359 <a href="mailto:robinrocksinmd@yahoo.com">robinrocksinmd@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b>6:30PM Bel Air Focus: 12 &amp; 12</b> First Presbyterian Church 224 North Main St. (Main and Broadway) Daniel 443-655-6399 <a href="mailto:danielroz@yahoo.com">danielroz@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b>10AM Parkville Literature Meeting: HSS United Methodist Church</b> 8700 Harford Rd, RM C under the sanctuary. Park in lower level lot. M.C. 410-823-4377 <a href="mailto:indrose@verizon.net">indrose@verizon.net</a> HA, Bus #19</p>	<p><b>5:30PM Baltimore City</b> First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Mandy 410-825-1782 HA, Bus # 3, 11 22</p>	<p><b>9:30AM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Alex 410-489-2612 <a href="mailto:alexandchris@verizon.net">alexandchris@verizon.net</a> Call about HA</p>
<p><b>5:15 Tpwson Speaker Meeting</b> Calvary Baptist Church (closed) 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave Side entrance - basement Brenda 410-491-3446 HA</p>	<p><b>5:30 Baltimore City "Homewood Abstinence"</b> First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Tania 443-660-8299 <a href="mailto:taniamazaliss@gmail.com">taniamazaliss@gmail.com</a> HA Bus 8, 11</p>	<p><b>11:30AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting</b> Etz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-764-2532 HA, Bus M3 &amp; M10</p>	<p><b>6:45PM Federal Hill, Baltimore, "Powerflow" Dinner Friendly Meeting</b> Light Street Presbyterian Church 809 Light St., Baltimore, MD Jay 410-980-9624 Bus # 1, 64</p>	<p><b>7:30 Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Carol 410-551-1149</p>	<p><b>7:30PM Bel Air Big Book Mteeting</b> Main St &amp; Broadway (main building - basement) Daniel 443-655-6399 <a href="mailto:danielroz@yahoo.com">danielroz@yahoo.com</a> HA</p>	<p><b>11AM Baltimore City</b> First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Annette 410-825-4639 HA, Bus # 3, 11, 22</p>
<p><b>7PM "Hour of Power - Mixed Format" Bel Air</b> Upper Chesapeake Medical Center Eva 410-273-1114 Terri 410 459-9100</p>	<p><b>6PM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) Garr 301-829-8218 <a href="mailto:garr@isaccocpa.com">garr@isaccocpa.com</a> HA</p>	<p><b>Noon St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church</b> 7834 Eastern Avenue Baltimore Bob 410-335-7748</p>	<p><b>7:30PM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Mary Ann 301 775-0422 HA</p>	<p><b>8PM Baltimore City (Closed Meeting) Search for Serenity Group</b> (mixed format) Church of the Redeemer, Rm 41 5603 N. Charles St, N of Northern Pkwy Katie H. 856-506-1236 Bus 11, #44</p>		<p><b>11AM Lutherville Step Meeting</b> St. John's Methodist Church 216 W. Seminary Avenue Phyllis 410-653-2264 <a href="mailto:lucindaruby@gmail.com">lucindaruby@gmail.com</a> HA</p>
	<p><b>7:30PM Pikesville - Recovery From Relapse</b> Shomei Erunah Synagogue 6221 Greenspring Ave (Corner of Cheswilde) Shani 410-917-7466 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</p>	<p><b>7:30PM Pikesville "Abstinence First"</b> Baltimore Hebrew Congregation - Room 211 7401 Park Heights Avenue (Parking lot on Slade) Neil 410-318-6737 HA, Bus M5</p>				<p><b>Abbreviations: HA= Handicapped Accessible; Bus # = Accessible by MTA Bus routes; Closed: These meetings are only for Compulsive Overeaters</b></p>
	<p><b>7:30PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air, First Presbyterian Church</b> Main St &amp; Broadway (main building - basement) Suzanne 410-8383-9353 <a href="mailto:spv1020@comcast.net">spv1020@comcast.net</a> Call about HA</p>					<p><b>For Online or Telephone Meetings:</b> <a href="http://www.oa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php">http://www.oa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php</a></p>
	<p><b>7:30PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church</b> 905 Frederick Road Stuart 410-465-1914 <a href="mailto:stirodes@comcast.net">stirodes@comcast.net</a> Call about HA, Bus #2</p>					
	<p><b>7:30PM Parkron - Step/Discussion (New)</b> St. James Episcopal Church 19200 York Road Karen 410-299-1675</p>					<p><b>If your meeting information changes, notify the World Service Office (WSO) at <a href="http://www.oa.org">www.oa.org</a> in the Meeting Registration/Change Information Section. In addition, call Tonia 410-665-5754 or <a href="mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com">tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com</a></b></p>