



# 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>

**January/February 2013**

## **A PROGRAM OF RECOVERY, NOT RESOLUTIONS**

Together, let's begin a journey through the 12 Steps. Program starts with the concept of abstinence as found in the pamphlet, *Tools of Recovery*: "Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program."

During IDEA day back in November 2012, participants were asked, "What does abstinence mean to you?" The following were the responses to that question:

- \* Everything!
- \* Being at peace with food.
- \* My life would be empty if it were not for the gift of abstinence.
- \* Means committing to my food plan and following it with complete honesty.
- \* It means I have guilt-free eating - flexible but abstinent and sensible.
- \* It means vigilant awareness around food.
- \* Honesty.
- \* It means a clear mind available to God's will for my life.
- \* Being free of obsession.
- \* A daily commitment to getting better.
- \* Having the potential for a great life.

- \* A quieting of the chatter in my brain, and a calm in my esophagus.
- \* A good life, plain and simple.
- \* Having a food plan and sticking to it no matter what.
- \* A broader sense of myself and others.
- \* Abstinence is freedom to be and love and grow and work a program of recovery.
- \* Staying connected to my HP so I can accept life on life's terms.

To become abstinent, we need to use the tools *A Plan of Eating* and *Sponsorship*. Program begins with Step 1: "We admitted we were powerless over food -- that our lives had become unmanageable." Working with a sponsor to develop and commit to *A Plan of Eating* and working on Step 1 places us firmly on the path to recovery.

Anonymous

## **UNITY DAY, FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN TRADITION ONE**

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity."

(Article on p. 2)

## **OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS WORLD UNITY DAY**

**Please Join Us on Saturday, February 28, 2013, As We Celebrate**

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church  
10110 Greenbelt Rd  
Lanham, MD 20706 (Rt. 193)  
Look for flyers at meetings.

Save the date.  
Organize car pools.  
Look for flyers coming to meetings soon.

## Tradition One: OA Unity

*"In OA meetings, individuals are lovingly guided to keep the needs of the whole group in mind as we share our experience, strength, and hope." - p. 110, Tradition One of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.*

Not only in OA meetings am I called to keep the needs of others in mind, but in all areas of life. As a compulsive overeater who has been shown the opportunity for a new life through recovery, it is my duty to show my gratitude for this gift by thinking about others before I open my mouth. That includes both when I put food into it or decide what words come out of it.

When I eat abstinely, I retain a clear head, serenity and gratitude. When abstinent, I can discern what is appropriate to share at a meeting better than when I'm compulsively eating. It's easier to contribute to the meeting's harmony when I share briefly how I abstain from my drug-of-choice, excess food, when dealing with day-to-day challenges.

If I take five minutes or even longer to bitterly complain about something bothersome, especially if I don't discuss recovery actions, I take sharing time from other members and disrespect the feeling of safety during the meeting. Tradition One's spiritual principle of "unity" is not being followed, and I run the risk of compulsively eating after the meeting over the bitterness.

When I speak at a meeting, I must consider what I will say and how I will say it. If I am having a difficult time, I can use another tool such as the telephone, writing, and sponsorship to discuss my feelings at length. I must respect the meeting space as a place to share my recovery and abstinence experience so it brings strength and hope to others.

Mike B.

### A CRAVING IS NOT A COMMAND

I just read that, but it got me thinking: A thought is not an action, but it can lead to an action, thus we must be mindful of our thoughts and pray to have them directed to the positive.

Anonymous

May I be safe and protected from inner and outer harm  
May I be happy and peaceful  
May I be healthy and strong of body  
May I live with ease  
May I joyfully care for myself in this life  
May I be happy with myself just as I am  
May I be at peace with all that happens  
May I love myself completely  
May I be filled with loving kindness

Anonymous

shades of unknown

Dusk and dawn  
When what may come before and after  
Is unknown  
We remain, then -  
Briefly blissfully  
Shaded suspended  
(Unknowingly)  
In God's graced luminescence

Shabina B.



## **STEP 2: A SPIRITUAL PROGRAM**

Came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

### **My Higher Powered Journey**

I have been in the program for 35 years and been blessed with long term recovery. That story is for another day. What I feel moved to write about is my journey with developing a relationship with a Higher Power.

I grew up with a concept of a very punishing God that I didn't understand. We didn't talk much about God (okay, not at all) when I was growing up, but I knew in my heart there was a God, and this God was punishing me, hence the very unhappy dysfunctional childhood I endured.

Fast forward many years, walked into OA after trying every other weight loss scheme out there. They talked about a Higher Power. I have wanted this relationship desperately. I never have experienced what others talk about, being led by their Higher Power. What was I doing wrong? I prayed, I meditated, I wrote, I worked the steps and used the steps as a guide for living. I have been restored to sanity. I still have not experienced that presence I hear others talk about. What was I doing wrong?

I just decided to give up all the doubts and questions and live as if I believed in the higher power that I don't understand. I still can't bring myself to limit or define a higher power. That just feels wrong. I think I am afraid that God is going to be mad at me for getting it wrong. (Oh there is that punishing God again!)

My recent epiphany is that I don't have to have a clear concept of God, what I do have is a clear concept of how my God would want me to live. I am to make choices that are honest, kind, and true to myself. That doesn't leave a lot of wiggle room. This has been very comforting to me.

I don't know where this will take me, or even where I need to go. I already have more blessings than anyone deserves to have. I am now in my 60's, and I am still enthralled with life and all the miracles that abound.

I thank OA, and my Higher Power who I don't understand, and don't need to understand, for all this.

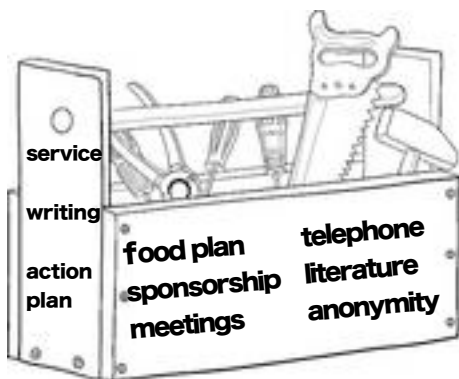
Terri B.

### **AT PEACE WITH MY HIGHER POWER**

"Hell is being in one place and wishing you were in another". I heard this line once and can identify with it. When I'm in recovery I'm happy to be in the present moment and can enjoy it. When I'm in relapse, no matter where I am, I'm wishing I were somewhere else. I thought for years I could outrun this disease.

Always in a hurry I never stopped to enjoy my life. I couldn't relax in my home because food consumed every thought. After years in OA, I have found peace. I am able to be still and enjoy all I've been blessed with. The simple things in life give me pleasure...., sitting on my deck, going for a walk, having a cup of tea. I can be in touch with my Higher Power and take comfort in knowing that for today, all is right in my world.

Linda R.



## OA TOOLBOX

### A Plan of Eating

As a tool, a plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating, guides us in our dietary decisions, and defines what, when, how, where and why we eat.

There are no specific requirements for a plan of eating; OA does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of eating, nor does it exclude the personal use of one. (See the pamphlets [Dignity of Choice](#) and [A Plan of Eating](#) for more information.) For specific dietary or nutritional guidance, OA suggests consulting a qualified health care professional, such as a physician or dietitian. Each of us develops a personal plan of eating based on an honest appraisal of his or her past experience. Many of us find it essential to take guidance from our sponsors to develop a plan of eating that reflects an honest desire to achieve and maintain abstinence.

Although individual plans of eating are as varied as our members, most OA members agree that some plan—no matter how flexible or structured—is necessary.

This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and achieve physical recovery. From this vantage point, we can more effectively follow OA's Twelve-Step program of recovery and move beyond the food to a happier, healthier and more spiritual life.

OA Pamphlet, *Tools of Recovery*

## HEARD AT A MEETING

Focus on the weight, loose recovery.

Focus on recovery, loose the weight.

Food is the shortest lived substance when used as a drug -- the after effects last a long time.

## OA UPCOMING EVENTS

February 23, 2013: Unity Day

April 29th-May4th: WSO Business Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico

August 29th-September 1st: WSO Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

## OA CARAVAN

The OA Caravan is a group of OA's who will hit the road to visit any meeting that is in need of support. Whether your meeting needs support or you would like to give support, contact Chris at 443-834-8590.

*The Steppingstone* needs your service. It is written by local members for local members.

Without you there is no *Steppingstone*. Work Step 12 and use the tool of service by writing an article of your choice. See the *Steppingstone* for ideas on what to write.

Send all submissions to [tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com](mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com).

Recently, I did some writing on the spiritual principles of OA's Twelve Traditions. When I was done, I realized that I had produced a set of promises, not unlike the Big Book "Promises" (P. 83) that we read in our OA meetings.

As inspiring as I've always found the promises, I was excited to turn them over to the fellowship. I hope others gain something of value from these words.

**The Promises of the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters**

If you have joined OA, and are looking for a road that leads to maximum service, you will find it in our Twelve Traditions. You will learn, as we did, that their underlying principles held the key to profound personal change. And as we changed, so did the fellowship, becoming stronger and more attractive to others. Here are our promises to you.

"If we walk this road with good intentions, we will come to choose partnership & community over individual desire (Tradition One). We will learn to express ourselves honestly, and to coexist peacefully with others, despite our differences (Tradition Two).

Where fellowship is concerned, we will find that inclusion makes us stronger (Tradition Three). We will mature, and weigh the value of "rocking the boat" (Tradition Four). We will stick close to our humble beginnings, and help others to do the same (Tradition Five). We will see the wisdom in remaining free from outside influences (Tradition Six).

We will find that everything of value comes at a cost, and we will pay it willingly (Tradition Seven). We will give freely & unconditionally, like members of a family (Tradition Eight). Our new way of life is our sole compensation. We will gladly protect and serve the common good, so that we might avoid the need for undue structure or formality (Tradition Nine).

When we meet together, our outside interests and concerns will cease to demand our attention (Tradition Ten). We will become a beacon of hope, and learn to help others without straining to do so (Tradition Eleven). Without fanfare or need for acknowledgment, we will learn to rise above our shortcomings, and give others permission to do the same." (Tradition Twelve)

These are not idle words. The promises are yours for the asking. This is what the future holds if we persistently travel the road to recovery in Overeaters Anonymous. "

In Service, Neil R., Baltimore, MD

**BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:  
YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS**

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**7th TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS**

60% Baltimore Area Intergroup,  
Box 20013; Baltimore, MD 21284

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10% OA Region 7  
3500 S. Dupont Highway  
Dover, DE

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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 - HISS 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:mcrose@verizon.net">mcrose@verizon.net</a> HA, Bus #19</p>	<p><b>5:30PM Baltimore City First English Lutheran Church</b> 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 Twpson 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> Elz 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 First English Lutheran Church</b> 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 500 Upper Chesapeake Dr. 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@isacccopa.com">garr@isacccopa.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 (mixed format)</b> 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>7PM - Carroll County St. Joseph's Catholic Church</b> Religious Education Bldg. 915 Liberty Road Eldersburg, MD Contact: Joanne 410-552-9246</p>	<p><b>7:30PM Pikesville - Recovery From Relapse</b> Shomrei E'munah Synagogue 6221 Greenspring Ave (Corner of Cheswolde) 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>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:spw1020@comcast.net">spw1020@comcast.net</a> Call about HA</p>					
	<p><b>7:30PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church</b> 905 Frederick Road Stuart 410-465-1914 <a href="mailto:strodos@comcast.net">strodos@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>Abbreviations: HA= Handicapped Accessible; Bus # = Accessible by MTA Bus routes; Closed: These meetings are only for Compulsive Overeaters</b></p>						
<p><b>For Online or Telephone Meetings:</b> <a href="http://www.aa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php">http://www.aa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php</a></p>						
<p><b>If your meeting information changes, notify the World Service Office (WSO) at <a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.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>						