



# 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>

**July/August 2013**

## **Why is that???**

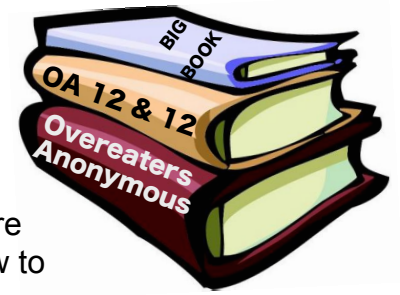
**Paradoxes** are common in the recovery process. They remind us that trust is more powerful than intellect in combating the disease, and “acting as if” really works. Here are just a few:

- ◆ By surrendering, we are relieved from a compulsion that nothing else we tried could stop.
- ◆ Something as benign as food turns into a deadly substance in our hands
- ◆ By eating all of our committed food, we don't get fat, our worst fear.
- ◆ We can do something for one day that we could never do for the rest of our lives.
- ◆ Willfulness never works to fight addiction. Willingness is the key.
- ◆ We know deeply personal things about our OA friends, and may not know their last name.
- ◆ We are told to be vigilant. Yet we need to let go.
- ◆ By not focusing on our weight, we lose weight more easily.
- ◆ The less we try to manage our own lives the more effective we become. The less we try to “teach” or “fix” someone else, the more help we are to them.
- ◆ We avoid doing the tools because they “take too much time”, but when we start doing them, we find we have time for them, as well as the other things we never had time for.
- ◆ We're told to “put our program first,” yet by doing so, we become more selfless in its practice. In order to keep the gift of recovery, we have to give it away.
- ◆ By letting go of what we crave most, it becomes what we least desire.
- ◆ By praying for the benefit of those we resent, our resentment is removed.
- ◆ We do what we feel like avoiding (tools/steps) to avoid doing what we feel like doing (eating).
- ◆ We come to meetings to hear what happens to people who don't come to meetings.
- ◆ Our strength arises out of complete defeat and weakness
- ◆ Doing service unconditionally brings us the support and affirmation we always wanted, but could never achieve by doing it conditionally.
- ◆ By telling someone what to do, we drive them away, by sharing what WE do, we attract them.
- ◆ You can be too smart to “get” this program, but never too dumb.
- ◆ There are no “musts” in program, except for the 75 listed in the first 164 pages of the Big Book.
- ◆ By maintaining our anonymity, 12-step programs have become the most widely known process for addiction treatment in the world.
- ◆ The people with the least amount of time in OA, the newcomers, are considered the most important people in the fellowship because they keep us in touch with our roots.

A Collective Effort

**Gratitude is the hinge on which an abstinent life swings.**

## LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS



### OA LITERATURE AND ABSTINENCE

I often hear people who have been in OA for a few weeks or months or even years talk about how they don't understand what abstinence is or how to become abstinent. OA has a treasury of literature designed to help members understand the nature of abstinence and how to achieve it.

A book entitled *Abstinence* is a collection of stories and essays written by members of the Overeaters Anonymous Fellowship for *Lifeline*, OA's international magazine of recovery. The book was revised recently and 50% of the stories are new. The stories and essays are organized into chapters according to topics. The topics include: The Meaning of Abstinence, Practical Ways to Achieve Abstinence, The Search for Abstinence, Abstinence Is a Priority, Abstinence and the Tools, Abstinent Living, How Abstinence Changes with Time and Experience, What Abstinence Has Taught Me. The collection has been designed to be an exhaustive exploration of abstinence and how it relates to recovery in OA. Recently, a member talked about how this collection clarified the meaning of abstinence for her even after several years in program. Reading segments along with a sponsor or other OA fellows really helps to answer questions about this fundamental aspect of recovery.

Along with this great book, several pamphlets have been designed over the years to help members understand and achieve abstinence. *A Commitment to Abstinence* (#141) suggests ways to reinforce your commitment to abstinence and develop a plan of eating. *A Plan of Eating: A Tool for Living* (#145) discusses how to use a personal eating plan as a tool, evaluate your eating history, deal with binge foods and define a new way of eating. It doesn't provide specific plans of eating, but helps with the process of developing a plan for one's self. *Before You Take That First Compulsive*

### Just Enough...

In my mind the point of the 12 steps is to: clear us of our guilt – just enough, join us with our fellows – just enough, and get us feeling loved – just enough, so that we are brave enough to explore our own spirituality. Whether we go deeper into religion or seek for other ways to stretch

*Bite* (#150) includes practical suggestions of experience, strength and hope to help you conquer the urge to eat compulsively. *Dignity of Choice* (#140) provides guidance to both new and longtime OA members in devising their own plans of eating. It covers topics such as:

- The difference between a plan of eating and abstinence
- Having a choice of plans
- Reviewing our eating patterns
- "Trigger" or "binge" foods
- Eating behaviors
- Structure and tolerance

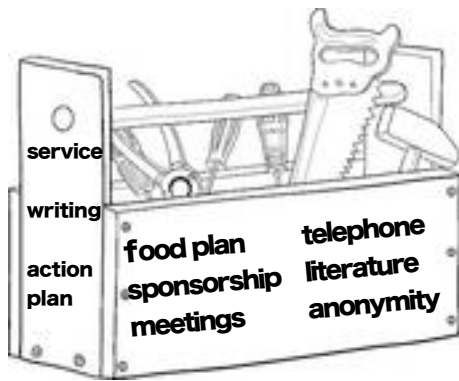
The pamphlet also provides six sample plans of eating (reviewed and approved by a licensed dietitian) with which some OA members have had success.

*Compulsive Overeating: An Inside View* (#320) indicates how, "Our true insanity could be seen in the fact that we kept right on trying to find comfort in excess food, long after it began to cause us misery." Through these pamphlets members find that through abstinence we refrain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors food behaviors to achieve spiritual, emotional and physical recovery through working the 12 Steps.

So, if you are struggling with the concept of abstinence OA literature can help. A book and pamphlets have been designed to answer your questions, guide your thinking and help you establish your own abstinence as the foundation and support for your program of recovery.

or challenge our beliefs, it is All Good. Even going around in circles is good because it is movement. This is a program of action, growth and learning. It is impossible to do all that and still stay stuck.

Anonymous



## OA TOOLBOX

### WHY SPONSOR?

How many times have we lamented that OA doesn't have enough sponsors? Have we been worried that newcomers will not stay in OA if there is no one to guide them in the early stages of recovery through the 12 Steps and abstinence from compulsive eating? I sure have.

I was glad that at this morning's meeting, several hands went up when the leader asked abstinent sponsors to identify themselves. But there were a few members who have good recovery and abstinence who did not raise their hands. Was it because they have as many sponsees as they can handle? Or is it because they're hesitant to be a sponsor?

My experience as a sponsor is very rewarding. I have the pleasure to be a sponsor for several local members as well as a few members from other areas. My sponsor and I sponsor each other, again a rewarding experience especially since she lives on another continent. Between e-mails, Skype calls, phone calls, and visits together, my sponsor, my sponsees, and I share our experiences: learning from each other as we celebrate a successful day of abstinence, gleaning an insight discussing our writing about one of the steps, and seeking ways to apply a spiritual principle to our actions in life's occasional struggles. We become friends in recovery, earning and gaining respect for each other and our diversity in living the 12-Step way of life.

I would love to see many more of our members become available to sponsor. There are several pieces of OA literature that guide the sponsor and sponsee on how to interact with each other and work through the 12 Steps. Literature is also available on how to attain long-term abstinence. There are plenty of sponsors in our area (and in our telephone and online meetings) who will guide members seeking to stretch and grow by trying out sponsorship. The benefits of sponsorship are immediate – not only do we learn new ways to live the 12 Steps, we have a strong new incentive to stay abstinent from compulsive overeating, because who would want to tell their sponsees that they binged today?

Would you reach out to one person today who is seeking a sponsor? If your experience is like mine, your recovery will improve immensely as you begin the service of sponsorship. Don't miss out! -- Mike B.

### NEW: MONTHLY TOPIC MEETING TO BEGIN IN JULY

The Topic Meeting Committee met and picked out topics for the next EIGHT months! Each meeting will take place on the **third Thursday of the month** in the Women's Council Room of **The Church of the Redeemer, from 6:30-7:45pm.**

Here's the schedule for the first six months:

- July 18 ABC's of Abstinence
- Aug 15 Anorexia, Bulimia, and Restricting
- Sept 19\* Writing Workshop
- Oct 17 Cultivating Spirituality
- Nov 21 Holiday Preparedness: Family, Food, and Gratitude
- Dec 19 The Road to Happy Destiny: Long-Timer Shares

Anyone with questions or a burning desire to do service can contact Alexis at [alexis.inrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:alexis.inrecovery@gmail.com) or 410-598-4023

\*We tried to avoid major Jewish holidays, but that is a challenge in September.



## IS THERE AN EXCUSE?

### I have been collecting Step 1 excuses for taking the first compulsive bite.

- It is my favorite
  - This is a special event or holiday, I can make an exception
  - I am so sad, angry, lonely, stressed etc that I just have to eat
  - Nobody here knows I am in Oa so I can get away with it
  - Everyone else is having it,
  - I have to go this food event because of my job/husbands job
  - They paid for it so it's free.
  - It's only salad from the salad bar.
  - If you only take one at a time/sliver it won't count.
  - It is a new flavor, and it is for a limited time only, so I need to try it now.
  - This is a food from my childhood and I am full of nostalgia and so I am going to eat it.
  - It is only one,
  - I do not want to explain why I can't eat it
  - I've already eaten too much, I might as well go all out
- I've lost weight so I can handle it now
  - They made it especially for me
  - It's organic
  - I don't want to offend the host
  - I'll just try it
  - Everyone will notice if I don't and I will stick out like a sore thumb
  - I've been so good recently- I deserve one
  - It looks so good
  - I am having it on a full stomach
  - It is not fair - everyone else is eating it
  - I have never tasted it before
  - It is the specialty of the restaurant and I may never come to this restaurant again
  - I am not feeling well, it will make me feel better
  - I haven't had it in so long, I can handle it now.
  - The food has been calling to me for days- I can't stand it, so I will eat it and then I will have peace.

Karen T, Wilmington, DE

*Forgiveness is letting go of a better past.*

## EVENTS CALENDAR

August 2013: Inspirations and Intentions Workshop, Serenity Center

August 29th-September 1st: WSO Convention, Cleveland, Ohio. Meet OA'ers from all over the world. <http://www.oa.org/world-service-events/world-service-convention/>

September 29, 2013: Playing Nice with Others: 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of OA. Serenity Center

November 1-3, 2013: Region 7 Convention, Ocean City, MD. Fliers are available. Early registration through September 15. Save \$10. Register at [www.oaregion7.org](http://www.oaregion7.org)

November 17, 2013: 37th BAIG Anniversary Celebration. Save this date.

April 6-13, 2014: Region 7 Cruise. For more info go to [cruise@region7.org](mailto:cruise@region7.org)

**Baltimore Area InterGroup Meetings** occur monthly at the Calvary Baptist Church at 120 Pennsylvania Ave. in Towson from 3:30 to 5:00 PM.

Scheduled meetings:

July 21  
August 18  
September 15  
October 20  
November 17  
December 15

**All are welcome and encouraged to attend.**

## Allowing Higher Power “In”

When I first attended OA, I was in the grips of the disease. Eating all the time was an obsession like no other. My doctor suggested another diet pill that was proven to work. I thought to myself, “really now?” A pill to keep me from being hungry, as if the majority of my eating was ever from hunger.

I walked into an OA meeting room on a Saturday morning and immediately felt at home. As members shared their experience, strength, and hope I felt energized. That was until God was mentioned. I felt my body stiffen. The hairs on the back of my neck bristled.

I was desperate for recovery. I pushed through these feelings. I was raised in a non practicing, non religious Jewish home. God was not part of my upbringing. Everyone who shared seemed so happy, so free. I wanted that!!

Although the phrases and slogans seem so corny, I listened to them. I kept coming back. I acted as if. I let go and let God. I started praying and meditating. What happened? I felt better. I felt good. It was nice to be able to “turn it over.” When I tell someone I will keep them in my prayers, I do, really.

Daily, I make every effort to talk to my Higher Power. I am thankful and oh so grateful for all that OA has given me. I’ve put down the food and instead pick up the phone, attend meetings, and share the message. Thank you Higher Power for allowing me to do what I could not do alone!!

--Robin A., Baltimore, MD USA

### BALTIMORE AREA INTERGROUP OF OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:

#### YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

<b>Chair</b>	Neil R.	410-318-6737	<a href="mailto:neilrauch@comcast.com">neilrauch@comcast.com</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Mike B.	443-610-7846	<a href="mailto:mike1bear@gmail.com">mike1bear@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Shabina B	410-960-0050	<a href="mailto:sbahl1@hmi.edu">sbahl1@hmi.edu</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Sam B.	410-241-0775	<a href="mailto:samfb123@yahoo.com">samfb123@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Librarian</b>	OPEN		
<b>Public Info</b>	OPEN		
<b>Web Master</b>	Mike B.	443-610-7846	<a href="mailto:mike1bear@gmail.com">mike1bear@gmail.com</a>
<b>StSt Editor</b>	Tonia G.	410-665-5754	<a href="mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com">tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com</a>

#### 7th TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS

**Intergroup is again receiving mail at the address below. Please resume sending contributions.**

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

30% OA World Service Office  
Box 44020; Rio Rancho, NM 87174

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

**DISCLAIMER:** The opinions expressed in *The SteppingStone* reflect those of the individual writers and not those of Baltimore Area Intergroup or OA as a whole. Materials submitted cannot be returned. We reserve the right to edit. It is understood that all copy may be reprinted by other OA groups without permission.

## 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</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 Twpson Speaker Meeting</b> Calvary Baptist Church (closed) 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave Side entrance - basement Brenda 410-491-3446</p>	<p><b>6:00 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</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 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@isaccccpa.com">garr@isaccccpa.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 211 740 1/2 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) St. James Episcopal Church</b> 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>						