



# THE STEPPINGSTONE

*Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous*

Hotline 443-475-0443 BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org> Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

**May/June 2014**

## **SPONSORSHIP WORKSHOP AT THE 2014 WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE**

Thank you for the honor of representing the Baltimore Area Intergroup at the 53rd OA World Service Business Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I was present all week attending workshops, a Forum on abstinence that the Region Chairs presented on Wednesday morning, and served on the WSBC Public Information committee. The business meetings started on Thursday where we elected trustees, voted on new or updated literature, and considered all 32 motions that were approved for consideration by your trusted servants - many of us in our intergroup and in intergroups everywhere - in this worldwide group conscience that is the WSBC.

I attended a powerful workshop on the importance of sponsorship - both why it's important to have a sponsor and how one can stay abstinent and will cultivate strong recovery by sponsoring others. I took lots of notes (of course, no surprise). Here are tidbits:

"To be an effective sponsor, I must maintain my willingness to recover. What can I do to stay willing every day so I follow through with my recovery actions - including my spiritual practices?"

"Encourage sponsees to contact all kinds of members when they need help, not just the sponsor. Also, encourage sponsees to share their food plan, inventory (and action plan) with newcomers. This can train the newcomer on how the program works."

"Ask sponsees to write down what they want from a sponsor. Tell them to use that list when they begin to sponsor. They can ask their sponsor questions when they're unsure how to answer a sponsee's questions."

Mike B., BAIG Chair

### **BALTIMORE INTERGROUP MEETINGS 2014**

July 20	Oct 12
Aug 17	Nov 16
Sept 21	Dec 14

### ***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 tools of service & writing by creating an article of your choice. Call Tonia at 410-665-57. Send all submissions to: [tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com](mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com).

## **How To Improve Your Chances of Finding (and having a good experience with) Sponsors:**

### **• Consistently attend face to face (F2F)**

**Meetings:** by doing this, you will be able to identify people whose recovery (not just their weight) you admire *and* whose style of recovery resonates with you.

### **• Try attending more than one meeting a week.**

Meetings often have different people who attend, and often have different “personalities”. Attending more than one meeting a week will better ground you in recovery AND will give you the opportunity to come in contact with more potential sponsors.

### **• If you can't get to many F2F meetings, or there are not sponsors at the meetings you attend, you can do the following to increase your chances of getting a sponsor with whom you can work:**

- Go on line to oa.org, click on “Find A Meeting”, and then Click on “Telephone

Meetings” or “On-Line Meetings”. By doing this, you can find phone or on-line (by Skype or Starchat). meetings You can attend these virtual meetings from home, they are at *many* times each day. You can also find special interest meetings (like meeting for anorexics and bulimics, for men, etc.) that you can attend. Many people have found sponsors this way.

- Attend workshops, marathons, etc. Many people find people to work with as sponsors/ sponsees at such events.
- Co-sponsor with another OA. This is used when you can't find a sponsor another way (for instance, if your group is too new to have folk ready to sponsor.) Here, two members work together to support each other in recovery until they can find a “regular” sponsor. *Hint: having each co- sponsor get, read, and use OA's sponsorship pamphlets and kit can really help make this process more effective.*

## **RELAPSE**

Why after years in OA do some of us at times struggle? After losing a large amount of weight and maintaining abstinence for years, the food again rears it's ugly head. Every waking moment is spent planning food, buying food, preparing food, eating food, and fantasizing about food. I do a spot check, have I been using the tools, working the steps, talking with my sponsor, and maintaining a spiritual connection to my H.P.? Usually one of these are lacking and it is evident not only in my food but in the way I treat others.

When I'm miserable and unhappy, I become a control freak, trying to make others bend to my will. I worry about what everyone else is doing and never think they're doing it right. I become self-centered, thinking it is all about me. I am hardest on those I love, expecting the most, maybe because I am not giving my best.

I rationalize my overeating. I pretend I'm doing fine, making every attempt to juggle things, to appear okay. I start to listen to everyone else's food plan thinking their's is better than mine. All this really does is confuse me. I become obsessed with trying to manage the food and the weight. My brain is cluttered, I get overwhelmed and feel like giving up.

The fear of going back into that insanity keeps me hanging on. I realize I lost confidence in myself and start thinking I'm a failure. I also lost confidence in God, asking "where are you?". I forget that my will is not always God's will. I forget that he loves me unconditionally, even at my worst, even when I don't like myself very much. At my core I think the food will make me happy but when I listen to those urges, I sink deeper.

I am an addict. It is my natural reaction to reach for food as a source of comfort, to use it for pleasure and socialization, ignoring the people and events in my life that really fulfill me. The food never provides the things I'm seeking. I have proven that every time I've “picked up.” Compulsive eating only puts me in a state of hopelessness.

Step one for me also includes putting down the food because with doing that I then have the clarity to work the other eleven steps. When I'm in the food I lose moments of my life, I lose me. I then realize in the depths of despair that I crave these more than the food. So abstinence begins again, one step at a time, one day at a time.

Linda R.

## Never Normal Again

I recently read the part of Step One that says that no matter how long we are abstinent, no matter how well we have learned to deal with life's situations, we will always have abnormal tendencies towards food.

Sometimes, the literature is so simple and profound that one sentence can alter an irrational belief that we lived by for ages, despite all sorts of evidence to the contrary.

How many of us had early success in OA, enjoying the freedom of a disciplined food plan, only to start believing that we had become imbued with a knowledge we clearly didn't possess, and started tinkering with a solution until it simply didn't work any more?

Knowing the freedom of leveling off a tablespoon or avoiding certain foods entirely; finally understanding that certain boundaries, if honored, minimize or eliminate the mental gymnastics that accompany compulsive eating, we still found it easier to do less, rather than more to insure our continued success.

This disease, kept in a personal vacuum, thrives. When I isolate, or try to do it alone, I falter and blame myself. Some blame the program itself for being defective or insubstantial.

When we move out from behind our secrets and begin to find a voice in the rooms of OA, we feel accepted and hopeful. This is the flip side of the awful reality that the disease doesn't go away, no matter how much success we may be having in the present.

Like it or not, we are joined at the hip with fellow addicts, and by reaching out and allowing our

experience to touch another, a mysterious alchemy takes place that transforms our pain and suffering into the motivational energy to live well more easily, for the next 24 hours.

Gratitude comes from remembering that we are receiving an unmerited and unlikely gift that reverses a longtime pattern of hurting ourselves with food one day at a time.

And, after a time, we bring the good news to a newcomer, and watch their life begin to change. That is the ultimate reward for someone who in the disease felt alone, deficient and crippled.

Our families and friends often do not relate to the significance of the simple pleasures that come to us in recovery. Talking about "not being able to have one," or being able to do something as simple as bending over or crossing our legs for the first time in years elicits a wave of empathetic nods to reinforce that OA members truly understand each other.

So as we now approach a much healthier relationship with food, we ironically see that "normal" for us means not having to face many of the health challenges that are common for the rest of the world.

By avoiding the first compulsive bite, we have turned the concept of "normal" on its ear, but we are better, more productive people for it. Not having to be like everyone else, in this regard, affords us a much better seat in the game of life.

Neil R. Baltimore, MD

### LETTERS TO *THE STEPPINGSTONE*

Dear Steppingstone,

I have been having trouble understanding Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. I came across a quote from Maya Angelou that really helped me. She said, "Whenever I am around someone who is modest, I think 'run like hell and all on fire'. You don't want modesty, you want humility. Humility comes from the inside out. It says someone was here before me and I'm here because I've been paid for. I have something to do and I will do that because I am paying for someone else who has yet to come." This message also helped me with the meaning and power of service, why it is so important for maintaining recovery. Hope this helps someone else.

Sincerely, Anonymous

## LITERATURE

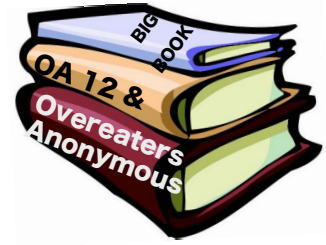
### OA Literature That Can Help You with Sponsorship:

*A Guide for Sponsors* -- \$.75 -- This pamphlet was revised in 2007, and answers questions on why, when and how to be a sponsor. It even includes OA's "30 Questions to Ask Newcomers."

*Sponsorship Kit* -- \$2.25 -- This kit is filled with inspiring and helpful information for sponsors. It includes these pamphlets: *Tools of Recovery*, *A Guide For Sponsors*, and *Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps* (Formerly *A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor*). It also has an article from *A Step Ahead* called *Working with Others*.

*Sponsoring Through The 12 Steps* -- \$.75 -- this pamphlet used to be called, *A Guide To The Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor*. It was revised in 2010 and now focuses more on helping sponsors as they work to guide their sponsees through OA's 12 Steps by sharing the ESH of other sponsors doing the same thing. It also suggests readings and thought-provoking questions that can help your sponsee work the Steps.

*Tools of Recovery* -- \$.30 -- revised in 2011, this piece can help you better understand why



sponsors encourage their sponsees to use OA'S 9 tools to build build their recoveries.

There is a lot of other OA literature that can help you as you navigate through sponsorship, including, OA's daily meditation books, *For Today* and *Voices of Recovery*. Look in their indexes to find guidance on recovery-related topics that your sponsor asks you to consider (like trust, surrender, letting go and letting God, etc.). You will be directed to daily reading that share the ESH of other OAs who struggled with the issue with which you are currently grappling. Most other OA books and pamphlets contain some ESH related to issues that arise during sponsorship, and that can help you as you and your sponsor move forward in recovery. The **AA Big Book's** "Into Action" chapter also is very helpful.

### A TRADITION SIX LEARNING EXPERIENCE

After reading, "Living Traditions – Tradition 6 (*Lifeline*, June 2012)," I realized that I may have made a mistake at a meeting I attended last year.

After the meeting, two members and I caught up on life's latest adventures, especially since we hadn't seen each other in a while. I shared about my action in a political activity, one that all three of us supported. In my excitement, I gave them information cards about the activity. While both took the cards, one seemed uncomfortable.

Thinking about it later, I wondered if I overstepped the bounds of Tradition Six, "An OA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose." Though the meeting

was over, we were still at the meeting place mingling with OA members. Since our lives are full of outside issues, some members may not mind discussing such items after the meeting, but others might be bothered by such discussions. What could have happened if another member overheard the conversation but had a different view on the issue? Would that person have felt uncomfortable to discuss it? Would he or she have felt unsafe in that meeting space, afraid to talk to another member because they knew of their difference of opinion?

I must be careful to respect the sacredness of the OA meeting space before, during, and after the meeting. I can discuss outside issues later at a time and place so not to dilute the pure and simple message of recovery that we carry in every meeting. -- Mike B.

**DONATIONS BY GROUPS  
January through April 2014**

Your group should decide how often to send donations to other service bodies and the World Service Office, keeping in mind your prudent reserve requirement. Many groups have chosen to send donations quarterly. Often, donations are split using a 60/30/10 formula, with 60% of contributions to Baltimore Area Intergroup, 30% to WSO, and 10% to Region 7. As with frequency of contributions, this is a matter for your group conscience. Mailing addresses for service bodies for the Baltimore area are available in *The Stepping Stone*. The following shows group contributions for the first four months of the year.

**Meetings with Donations**

Meeting Time	Meeting Location	Donation
Sunday 5:15	Calvary Baptist	\$270.23
Sunday 7:00	Bel Air	\$52.00
Sunday 8:00am	Pikesville	\$218.00
Monday 10:30am	Columbia	\$90.00
Monday 5:30/6:00	Baltimore First English	\$94.45
Monday 7:30	Bel Air	\$50.00
Tuesday 11:30	Pikesville – Etz Chiam	\$301.03
Tuesday 12:00pm	Dundalk (was Sunday)	\$50.00
Saturday 9:30	Columbia	\$78.80
Saturday 11:00	Lutherville	\$91.80
Saturday 11:00	Baltimore First English	\$102.00

**Meetings without Donations**

Meeting Time	Meeting Location
Sunday 7:00pm	Carroll County St Joseph's Catholic Church
Monday 6:00	Columbia
Monday 7:30	Catonsville
Monday 7:30	Pikesville
Tuesday 7:00am	Mt Washington
Tuesday 7:30	Pikesville
Wednesday 6:15	Columbia
Wednesday 7:30	Columbia
Thursday 7:30	Columbia
Thursday 8:00	Baltimore Redeemer
Thursday 10:00am	Parkville
Friday 5:30	Baltimore First English Lutheran

**Baltimore Area Intergroup Trusted Servants**

<b>Chair</b>	Mike B.	443-610-7846	<a href="mailto:MikeB1Bear@gmail.com">MikeB1Bear@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Tania S.	443-660-8299	<a href="mailto:taniads2@hotmail.com">taniads2@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Alexis T.	410-598-4023	<a href="mailto:alexis.tantau@gmail.com">alexis.tantau@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Gayle	410-997-7833	<a href="mailto:gkreckman@comcast.net">gkreckman@comcast.net</a>
<b>Librarian</b>	OPEN		
<b>Public Info</b>	OPEN		
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<b>StSt Editor</b>	Tonia G.	410-665-5754	<a href="mailto:tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com">tonia.g.4editing@gmail.com</a>

**SEVENTH TRADITION**

Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions.

*Just going to meetings  
without working the Steps  
is untreated compulsion.*

**SPONSORS CARRY THE  
MESSAGE ---  
NOT THE PERSON.**

**Seventh 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 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 Shaarite 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 Columbia, MD 21044 Tricia 410-489-0033 or Ruth 410-740-6955</p>	<p><b>11:30AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting</b> Etz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-456-4306 <b>HA, Bus M3 &amp; M10</b></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 <b>HA</b></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. Pat 410-663-3670 <b>HA, Bus #19</b></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 <b>HA, Bus # 3, 11 22</b></p>	<p><b>9:30AM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Kathy 410-312-2742 moriarty.kathy@gmail.com <b>Call about HA</b></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:taniamarzels@gmail.com">taniamarzels@gmail.com</a> <b>HA Bus 8, 11</b></p>	<p><b>Noon St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church</b> 7834 Eastern Avenue Baltimore Bob 410-335-7748</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 Baltimore City</b> First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St. at 39th St Enter on east side of building Annette 410 825-4639 <b>HA, Bus # 3, 11, 22</b></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@isaccocpa.com">garr@isaccocpa.com</a> <b>HA</b></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 <b>HA, Bus M5</b></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 Tania 443-660-8299 <b>Bus 11, #44</b></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> <b>HA</b></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 Eminent Synagogue 6221 Greenspring Ave (Corner of Cheswolde) Shani 410-917-7466 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire</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:SDV1020@comcast.net">SDV1020@comcast.net</a> <b>Call about HA</b></p>					
	<p><b>7:30PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church</b> 905 Frederick Road Naomi 443-838-7970 <b>Call about HA, Bus #2</b></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>						