



# THE STEPPINGSTONE

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*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>

**SUMMER/FALL 2015**

## **Bienvenue à OA (Welcome to OA)**

I recently took a week-long vacation to Vermont and Montreal. For me, this vacation was the realization of many of the promises of the program: my first self-supporting international travel, whereas I used to use my Mom to pay for everything (including having to borrow \$200 every week or so to cover my out of control food expenses), my first major vacation with a partner (I was single for my first 5 years in program, as I learned how to stop isolating with busyness and how to change my attitudes and behaviors around the opposite sex), and my first trip to Canada, which had been a gut instinct to take for several years.

I was very excited to go to a meeting in Montreal, where there are several French-speaking meetings every week. I spent nearly a year in the South of France, where I was able to attend French speaking meetings every week, and came to love the alliteration in the francophone version of Our Invitation to You, <<...C'est la faiblesse, et non la force...>> (it is weakness, not strength). I selected a meeting, deposited my boyfriend at a coffee shop, and eagerly made my way there.

There were many of the trappings of a normal meeting: chairs around a table, a secretary reading from a binder, meeting copies of the 12/12 (cutely protected by colorful book covers), and slogan signs up on

the walls. There were mostly women, of different ages and sizes, as well as 3 or so men. There was also a greeter at the door, who asked if it was my first time at an OA meeting, then kindly pointed out an open seat to me.

During a break in the 1.5 hour meeting, everyone got up and visited with each other. I was a little bit miffed that no one left up to talk with me and make sure I felt welcome. Fortunately, I've learned to "act on life, rather than reacting to it," meaning that I got up and approached people I thought I might be able to speak with. That courage is another tremendous gift of the program.

Part of me worries that a newcomer might have felt ignored, while another part of me wonders if it is part of their culture not to overwhelm new people by pouncing on them. I'm not certain that there is a perfect way to approach newcomers or visitors, but I trust that HP will show me what to do if I ask. I worry that sometimes after our meetings here in Baltimore, we get so caught up in visiting with people we know and like that sometimes the outsiders get left on the perimeter---sometimes. I've witnessed enough warm welcomes to know that my fellows here do actually reach out a hand. It's part of the beauty of the fellowship, and one reason I am glad to be back home!

- Alexis T.

## Tradition 8 Treasures

I used to think that Tradition 8, "Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers," which we read recently at the Saturday 11:00 First English meeting applied to the business and administration of OA but not so much to individual members. So I never gave it much thought. I was surprised to find all kinds of hidden treasures about Tradition 8 in the OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions book.

Since the fellowship is nonprofessional, I am free to share from my heart of my experience and what I discover works for me as I seek physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery. I treasure the opportunity for humility and authenticity when I share my recovery experience, no matter how dinged and imperfect it may be. I'm told that instead of trying to be perfect, I'll be more effective to seek excellence and consistency in my recovery and abstinence actions.

I have to remember that even with 25+ years in OA, I am certainly no expert or guru; I have

no place in "fixing" people or dictating what's best for them.

It's a wonderful feeling to know that I'm not responsible for another person's recovery and how he or she attains it. No one has to follow my food plan, work the steps the way I do, or be of service in the same way. All of those continue to change as my life progresses, so I certainly can't say what works best for others. It's gratifying when others relate to my experience and applies it to their recovery practices. I always look forward to hearing a member share something at a meeting that's profound and memorable.

I receive these treasures from you freely, as Tradition 8 tells me.

At the Saturday 11:00 First English meeting, we read and study the Tradition of the month in the last Saturday of the month. The Traditions enrich my ability to live with, work with, and love others. Do join us at a Tradition meeting soon.

- Mike B.

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## Save the Date: IDEA Day on Sunday November 22nd

International Day Experiencing Abstinence

Sunday November 22, 2015 from 1:30-4:30 PM at the Serenity Center (9650 Basket Ring Rd., Columbia, MD.)

Sharing from OA members with 5 or more years of abstinence, recovery, and fellowship.

All are welcome! Hosted by the DC Metro OA Intergroup, and co-sponsored by Baltimore, Annapolis, & Frederick Intergroups

For more info contact Linda S. at [\(301\) 641-9508](tel:3016419508) or [lindas@capaccess.org](mailto:lindas@capaccess.org)

## Showing Up For Life – No Matter What

After the newness of program wears off, recovery can sometimes seem like a tedious process, and when it does, it is often accompanied by an insistent voice telling us to just cut back on our OA efforts and enjoy the success that we may be having, without having to go to such extremes.

When this happens, as it invariably will – think back to the last days or hours before you broke down and went to OA. If you were fortunate enough to have done some journaling during that time, find it and read it... and then read it again...because your life will never get any better than it was back then if you reduce the amount of energy that you spend on recovery activities.

Working a 12-step program to find a long term solution to our problem means that there are no quick fixes for understanding and overcoming the long-submerged emotions that want nothing better than for us to give up and revert to our dishonest and self-destructive ways.

It's going to mean doing things that we don't want to do – things that we may say that we don't have time to do. I had to become willing to put my personal recovery before my family or my job – as dramatic as that sounds, because as it says in "How It Works", "half-measures availed us nothing" and the result of holding onto my old ways "was nil, unless we (I) let go absolutely".

Read "How It Works" every day for a month, because it clearly spells out what is required to have a chance to fully benefit from working our OA program. Honesty, commitment and a sincere and maximum effort.

So, if we've been fortunate enough to experience a nice stretch of abstinence, or what seems like a too-good-to-be-true period

of manageable living, it's so important to remember what things were like when we were hopeless and clueless – slaves to ways of thinking and acting that drained us of the will to fight back. I've seen that mindset re-assert itself, and taken people years to come back to program again, having to working harder than they did then just to get back to where they were before. It sure isn't fair, given how many days we've already wasted.

Until we've experienced every shade of frustration, every crappy situation, every human interaction that brings up those old feelings of worthlessness – and STILL chosen to put our eggs in the "Abstinence & OA first" basket... we have yet to learn the very important lesson that our abstinence is not an accomplishment or a possession. It is a gift – an unmerited gift from our Higher Power...a gift that can be taken away as well as given if we fail to cultivate the attitude required to persist each day and do whatever is within our power (with G-d's help) to stay the course. We must continue to see things as they are, rather than as our disease would have us see them – everything so quick & easy, so we can just abandon ship and "do our own thing".

Abstinence and recovery is a daily battle to the death with a cunning and powerful foe – and that will never change. If we become complacent, or come to believe that we can turn our willingness to work a rigorous program on or off like a light switch, we will end up where countless others have, back at step zero, wondering how it could possibly have happened again.

Every day, we have the opportunity to open the gift of abstinence, and to prove, by our actions, that we understand what a fragile and precious thing that it is. That is our gift back to G-d.

- Neil R.

There will be a meeting on Thanksgiving Day, 11/26/2015, at 10AM at First English Lutheran church 3807 N. Charles St. at 39th St. Any questions: please call Kay at [410-294-3735](tel:410-294-3735) or Pat R. at [443-663-3670](tel:443-663-3670) Hope to see you there!

## Twelve Stepping a Problem

This writing exercise is an approach using the Twelve Steps of OA to deal with life's challenges without turning to food. Enhance your recovery by using this document individually or as the focus of a workshop.

- 1) I admit I am powerless over \_\_\_\_\_. How does this make my life unmanageable?
- 2) Do I believe that a power greater than myself can restore me to sanity? YES or NO  
If no, explain why not. What would recovery look like in relation to this problem?
- 3) Have I made a decision to turn \_\_\_\_\_ over to the care of God/Higher Power? YES or NO If no, explain why not.
- 4) Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself. List any fears, resentments, harms. What is my part in this?
- 5) Am I willing to admit to God/Higher Power, myself, and another person the exact nature of the wrongs that contributed to this situation? If YES, continue to number six. If NO, return to number one.
- 6) Am I entirely ready to have God/Higher Power remove these defects of character? YES or NO If no, explain why not.
- 7) Have I humbly asked God/Higher Power to remove my shortcomings? YES or NO  
(Refer to fears, resentments, harms in number four above.)
- 8) Make a list of all persons I have harmed because of this. (Include yourself.) How have they been harmed? Am I willing to make amends to them all?
- 9) How and when will I make amends?
- 10) Continue to take a personal inventory. What specific actions can I take today?
- 11) What specific actions can I take today to establish, re-establish, improve conscious contact with God/Higher Power?
- 12) What spiritual awakening/new insight have I had as the result of working these Steps on this specific problem?

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## Reminder: Change in OA Preamble

(excerpted from A Step Ahead, Volume 19, Number 3)

“Delegates to the 2015 World Service Business Conference approved a wording change to the OA Preamble, which appears below with the new language italicized and in bold. OA literature items will be updated to reflect the change when they are reprinted, but for now please note the change when reading the Preamble in OA literature. Also, please update the Preamble if it appears on your group’s or service body’s website. You can find the amended Preamble on the OA website on the “About OA” page under Newcomers.”

### New OA Preamble

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating **and compulsive food behaviors** and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

### Don't Forget: Call 5 and Keep 'Em Alive!

On the 12th of each month, call five fellows who you haven't seen at meetings lately to remind them that you care.

Put a reminder in your phone to help yourself remember!

### YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS Baltimore Area Intergroup Trusted Servants

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### 7th TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS

#### 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 19901

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## Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory

\* Subject to change - check oabaltimore.org for the most up to date meeting calendar\*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>8:00 AM: "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>7:00 AM Rise and Shine</b> Good Samaritan Hospital, 5601 Loch Raven Blvd Conference Room 2 South Joe 410-829-6307 HA, Bus M3 &amp; M10</p>	<p><b>11:30 AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting</b> Etz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-456-4306 HA, Bus M3 &amp; M10</p>	<p><b>6:15 PM Big Book Study at 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>7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Carol 410-551-1149</p>	<p><b>5:30PM Baltimore City</b> (speaker on first Friday of the month, and opportunity for post-meeting fellowship) 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>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>5:15 PM Towson Speaker Meeting</b> Calvary Baptist Church 120 W. Pennsylvania Ave Side entrance - basement Tania 443-660-8299</p>	<p><b>10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County</b> 10710 Charter Drive, Health and Wellness Center Columbia, MD 21044 Tricia 410-489-0033 or Ruth 410-740-6955</p>	<p><b>Noon St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church</b> 7834 Eastern Avenue Baltimore Bob 410-335-7748</p>	<p><b>7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Naomi 443-838-7970 HA</p>	<p><b>8:00 PM Baltimore City (Open 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 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:lucindaaruby@gmail.com">lucindaaruby@gmail.com</a> HA</p>	
<p><b>7:00 PM "Hour of Power - Mixed Format" Bel Air</b> Upper Chesapeake Medical Center 500 Upper Chesapeake Dr. Terri 410 459-9100</p>	<p><b>6:00 PM 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:taniamazais@gmail.com">taniamazais@gmail.com</a> HA Bus 8, 11</p>	<p><b>7:30 PM Pikesville "Abstinence First"</b> Baltimore Hebrew Congregation - Room 227 7401 Park Heights Avenue (Parking lot on Slade) Neil 410-318-6737 HA, Bus M5</p>				
<p><b>7:00 PM - Carroll County St. Joseph's Catholic Church</b> Religious Education Bldg. 915 Liberty Road Eldersburg, MD Contact: Joanne 410-552-9246</p>	<p><b>6:00 PM Columbia Serenity Center</b> 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest, off Broken Land Pkwy) Garr 301-829-8218 <a href="mailto:garr@lsaccocpa.com">garr@lsaccocpa.com</a> HA</p>					
	<p><b>7:30 PM Pikesville Monday Night Miracles</b> 7310 Park Heights Ave Baltimore, MD 21208 Parking and entrance on left side of building. Yochanon, 718-427-5192 MEETING IS CURRENTLY ON HOLD</p>					
	<p><b>7:30 PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air, First Presbyterian Church</b> Main St &amp; Broadway (main building - basement) Michelle, 410-937-7500 Call about HA</p>					
	<p><b>7:30 PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church</b> 905 Frederick Road Naomi 443-838-7970 Call about HA, Bus #2</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.oa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php">http://www.oa.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.oa.org">www.oa.org</a> in the Meeting Registration/Change Information Section. In addition, call Joanna at 617-945-4883 or <a href="mailto:joanna.g.winkler@gmail.com">joanna.g.winkler@gmail.com</a></b></p>						