



WINTER 2016

# 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>

## *From the Chair*

Fellows,

OA offers us the opportunity to live life in a way that we may never have before. Those that came before us share their experience, strength and hope to help us identify, understand, and begin the work necessary to change our lives. Many of us come in with a personal Higher Power, and many of us don't. The beauty of this program is that no matter where we are, there is an endless resource of Power that we can choose to tap into at any time.

Resources such as the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, the OA 12&12, and other OA approved literature help guide us through our journey of recovery through the 12 Steps. But we must also acknowledge that the power found within our fellowship, from our sponsors, sponsees, our fellows and even our OA elected volunteers, is a great foundation supporting our efforts of sustained recovery.

With that said, it is BAIG's mission to help strengthen you in your recovery. We are positioned this year to focus on "12th Step Within" initiatives as well as "Outreach" to those who are in need of this program. Collectively we can help one another find strength and support, and, by engaging in the community around us and what it has to offer, we will conquer the weakness that binds us by working toward a daily reprieve from obsessive food thoughts and behaviors. BAIG is committing this year to YOU! We are excited to bring you workshops, events and other activities to help engage you and bring your recovery to a new level. All you have to do is participate! We will keep you apprised as we roll out the initiatives for this calendar year. We look forward to sharing this time with you.

I wish you all the best in this wonderful new year! As always, if anything is on your mind, please contact me.

Bekah W  
Chair, BAIG

### BAIG 2015 Election Results and 2016 Service Position Holders

Bekah W. ....	Chair
Karen B. ....	Vice Chair
Joanna W. ....	Secretary
Greg B. ....	Treasurer
Neil R. ....	Stepping Stones Editor
Mike B. ....	Webmaster
Sue B. ....	Outreach Committee Chair
Tania S. ....	12th Step Within Chair
Karen B. ....	By Laws Committee Chair
Nancy G., Blair I., Liz D. ....	Region 7 Representatives
Terri B., Neil R. ....	WSBC Representatives

### Baltimore Area Intergroup Meeting Schedule 2016 Good Samaritan Hospital 3:00PM to 4:30PM 5601 Loch Raven Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21239

February 21 - Parker 1  
 March 13 - Conference Room 1  
 April 17 - Conference Room 1  
 May 15 - Conference Room 1  
 June 26 - Parker 1  
 July 17 - Conference Room 1  
 August 21 - Conference Room 1  
 September 18 - Conference Room 1  
 October 23 - Parker 1  
 November 20 - Conference Room 1  
 December 18 - Conference Room 1

### **EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! THE STEPPING STONE IS CHANGING!**

In response to feedback from you, our readers, we are customizing our content to your specific interests. We will continue to highlight all OA-related events, but we are adding interviews, unique historical information, a Suggestion Box, and, hopefully, humorous articles that reveal recovery's lighter side.

With that in mind, we invite our inventive and creative readers to submit puzzles, poems, cartoons, "G-d moments," or harrowing adventures in recovery.

The Stepping Stone is one of our largest budget items. We want EVERY copy of our newsletter to disappear from our literature tables because YOU can't get enough of them.

That is our challenge for 2016, and we ask you to help us by TELLING US what you would like to see.

Neil R., Stepping Stone Editor,  
and Nechama Reizl, Layout Lady

## Interview With OA's Chairman of the Board, Gerri H.

Gerri H. is the current Chairman of the Board of Overeaters Anonymous. She's lost over 100 pounds and has been maintaining her abstinence for more than 22 ½ years.

We're pleased to present our interview with Gerri H. for this issue of the Stepping Stone.

**SS:** Gerri, could you tell us a bit about how you work your program?

**GH:** Well, I start out each day with my morning prayers, after which I read some OA literature. I take some time to see how it affects me, and then I write about it, sending my "Daily Musings" out on a list serve of friends and fellow OA's each morning. I share my action plan for the day, and describe how different my life is because of my involvement with Overeaters Anonymous.

I also write 5 things that I'm grateful for, and I say prayers for a list of specific people.

I use the Tools of Recovery on a daily basis I probably make at least 5 outreach calls and 10 texts every day. I follow a pretty structured food plan and abstain from specific foods, which has become more important, as I have aged and had to deal with some stubborn health issues.

I have a sponsor, and I sponsor several people, with whom I stay in touch by phone, text and email, and work on their step work. And of course, I do service!

For the last four years, my husband and I have travelled across the U.S. in our RV, and I visit many OA meetings. I get to see friends who also do service at the Region and World Service level. My activities as Chairman of the board can take up anywhere from 2 hours to 40 hours per week.

**SS:** Wow, you must be a pretty organized lady.

**GH:** I consider myself a typical compulsive overeater who works the OA program as it is suggested. I love the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book. It talks directly about my disease and the solution through taking the Twelve Steps.

**SS:** Tell me, Gerri, what was one of your biggest challenges as Chairman of the Board?

**GH:** Well, before I had my first board meeting as Chairman, the Managing Director of OA gave her notice. She had held that position for over ten years, and it was going to be extremely important to get that replacement hire right, and, in the end, we promoted the Associate Director from within the World Service Organization. The revamping of the

OA website is nearing completion since the meeting page crashed a year ago. That was a big project.

**SS:** What are some challenges facing OA today?

**GH:** Many of OA's expenses are paid for through literature sales, rather than Seventh Tradition donations. With the increased reliance on digital communication, how people read (and buy literature) is changing. The board of trustees is staying abreast of technology so that OA can be self-supporting through member contributions. You can help by taking advantage of 'ARC' (Automatic Recurring Contributions). It's easy to set up; just go to the OA website: <https://50447.thankyou4caring.org> and select "recurring contributions." I always try to remember how much I spent on my binges and donate accordingly!

We also are faced with the constant challenge to give our members, groups, intergroups and regions all of the information and services that they need to keep their meetings strong, and the fellowship healthy. That is why an updated, easy to navigate website is so important. Check out our new pocket cards, such as 'Abstinence checklist' and 'Twelve-Stepping a problem' and other great OA literature on <http://bookstore.oa.org>.

Last year, we began recording monthly podcasts which focused on the importance of working ALL of OA's twelve steps. This year, we're doing a similar program with all of the traditions. These and many other podcasts (including member qualifications) are on the OA website.

The theme of the 2016 World Service Business Conference is "Responsibility: To Carry the Message." I can't think of anything more important than OA members from around the world working together to send a unified message of recovery to our fellow compulsive eaters.

**SS:** Thanks so much for sharing with us. Is there a closing thought that you'd like to leave us with?

**GH:** Doing service is every OA's responsibility. It won't get you abstinent, but it sure will keep you abstinent!

My term on the Board of Trustees will soon be up and I'll be rotating out. I owe my abstinence and continued 100+ pound weight loss to the support of this fellowship, the Twelve Step process, using the Tools daily, and living by the principles embodied in the Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.



## *Did you know . . . ?*

Rozanne S., OA's founder, had a great many problems with the 12 Steps as originally constituted . . . so she rewrote them.

Rozanne started OA with the help of a gentleman named Jim W., the founder of Gambler's Anonymous. It was their 12-steps that were the template from which OA's 12-steps were born. Jim did not support her "creativity". He patiently encouraged her to go back to the original language, and she eventually did, but the change back took just over a year (1960 to 1961).

A feisty, well-educated woman with a business background, Rozanne bristled at language that suggested that she was powerless, and any talk about spirituality really upset her.

So Step One became "We admit that we are Compulsive Overeaters – that our lives had become unmanageable".

Step Two was rewritten entirely to become "Before embarking on this program, we know that we must seek the aid of a physician of our own choosing, returning to him for regular checkups. We know that he, and only he, can advise us regarding our own calorie allotments and wisest nutritional program."

"Step three was a monumental stumbling block for me," said Rozanne. "I picked up my pen and put a big "x" through (it)." Fancying herself as "an intelligent, sophisticated person", she was raised to believe in self-reliance and willpower, so Step Three became "We admit that we need help – that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to a normal way of thinking and living." (GA had changed the word "sanity" to "a normal way of thinking and living").

Step four remained pretty much the same, but she took out her red pen again and took G-d's name right out of Step Five. And the word "wrongs" didn't agree with her either, so that became "difficulties."

Step six became "We are entirely ready to have these defects of character removed".

At last, in Step Seven, a Higher Power makes its first appearance. "We humbly ask G-d (of our understanding) to help us remove our shortcomings." She felt that we were responsible for removing our defects - that we engage G-d's help (as if He was working for us, and not the other way around).

Other than changing the word "harmed" to "hurt through our actions" Steps Eight and Nine" remained largely the same as they are today.

Step Ten got a huge makeover. "We shall set up a regular pattern of eating for ourselves, and this we pray we may maintain for the rest of our lives". (So much for one day at a time).

Step Eleven, strangely, was almost exactly the same, but for the fact that Rozanne changed the word "power" to "(strength) to carry that out".

And finally, in Step Twelve, she wrote "Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we shall try to carry this message to other compulsive overeaters." The concept of a spiritual awakening would have to wait.

Since there were scant few OA members (three), as Rozanne said, "I presented...the Twelve Steps rewritten as I wanted to work them – and it was approved by default. Never again in the history of OA would I get my way so easily."

How's that for a chapter in OA history?

Quotations taken from  
*Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*

Abstinence is neither a possession nor an achievement. It was the result of an intention in me for food to become less important, and a reflection of my sincere reliance upon a Higher Power to facilitate changes that made this possible. Without humility, appreciation, and a desire to do service, it did not happen for me.

-OA Member

**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**  
 \*Subject to change - check [oa.org](http://www.oa.org) for the most up-to-date meeting calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8:00 AM Rise and Shine Baltimore Bnai Jacob Shaare Zion Synagogue 6602 Park Heights Avenue Neil 410-318-6737 Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire	7:00 AM Rise and Shine Good Samaritan Hospital 5601 Loch Raven Blvd Conference Room 2 South Joe 410-829-6307	11:30 AM Pikesville Big Book Meeting Elz Chaim Center 3702 Fords Lane Gail 410-456-4306 HA, Bus W3 & M10	6:15 PM Big Book Study at Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Bekah 617-966-2790 HA	6:15 PM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Carol 410-551-1149 HA	5:30 PM Baltimore City (speaker on first Friday of month and 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	9:30AM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Kathy 410-312-2742 HA
5:15 PM Towson Speaker Meeting Calvary Baptist Church 120 W Pennsylvania Ave Side entrance= basement Tania 443-660-8299	10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County 10710 Charter Drive, Health and Wellness Center Columbia, MD 21044 Tricia 410-489-0033 or Ruth 410-740-6955	12:00 Noon St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church 7834 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore Bob 40-335-7748	7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Naomi 443-838-7970 HA	8:00 PM Baltimore City (Open Meeting) Search for Serenity Group (mixed format) Church of the Redeemer, Rm 41 5603 N. Charles St, N or Northern Parkway Tania 443-60-8299 Bus 11, 44		11:00 AM Baltimore City 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
7:00 PM "Hour of Power-Mixed Format" Bel Air Upper Chesapeake Medical Center 500 Upper Chesapeake Dr Terri 410-459-9100	6:00 PM Baltimore City "Home-wood Abstinence" First English Lutheran Church 3807 N Charles St at 39th St Enter on east side of building Tania 443-660-8299 taniaminrazalss@gmail.com HA Bus 8, 11	7:30 PM Pikesville "Abstinence First" Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Room 227-7401 Park Heights Ave (Parking lot on Slade) Neil 410-318-6737 HA, Bus M5				11:00 AM Lutherville Step Meeting St. John's Methodist Church 216 W. Seminary Avenue Phyllis 410-653-2264 lucindaaruby@gmail.com HA
	6:00 PM Columbia Serenity Center 9650 Basket Ring Road (off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Pkwy) 21045 Garr 301-829-8218 Garr@isacocopa.com HA					
	7:30 PM Pikesville A Vision for You Big Book Study 7310 Park Heights Ave Baltimore 21208 Parking and entrance on left side of building Nechama R 443-717-1829 HA					
	7:30 PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air First Presbyterian Church Main St & Broadway (main bldg - basement) Michelle 410-937-7500 Call about HA					
	7:30 PM Catonsville Salem Lutheran Church 905 Frederick Road Naomi 443-838-7970 Call about HA, Bus 2					
<p><b>Abbreviations:</b>                  HA = Handicapped Accessible                  Bus # = Accessible by MTA bus routes                  Closed: These meetings are only for Compulsive Overeaters.</p> <p>For Online or Telephone Meetings:  <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>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 Neil at 410-318-8737 or email at <a href="mailto:neilrauch@comcast.net">neilrauch@comcast.net</a>.</p>						