



SPRING 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>

OA from Coast to Coast

God led me to OA in Miami, FL, when I was 21 years of age. At that time, I was obsessed with food, imprisoned by nightly binges, and isolated from the world due to my constant focus on food and weight. During my first OA meeting, I realized I was home, and I've been attending at least two OA meetings every week for the past four years. About a month into program, I found a wonderful sponsor who gently guided me through the steps and taught me how to open up to others and to trust. Through working the 12 Steps, in order, I've been imperfectly abstinent for the past four years and given a life beyond my wildest dreams!

During my seventh month in program, while abstinely working Step 6, I was discharged from active duty in the Navy and decided to go back home to Washington State (where I'm from) and start attending college. This was a scary time for me! I was still new to OA and new to abstinence, but I felt the loving hand of my Higher Power guiding me. Without the stability of program and the steps during this time, I would have never been able to get through this change without overeating, but because of the steps and the OA recovery program, I was able to move through the fear of change and a new life abstinely.

Fast forward a few years to today, and I'm still in OA, and still reworking the steps. Every day I learn how to further connect with God and become more of the person my Higher Power intends for me to be. I've attended OA all over the country, from Miami to Washington State, to Baltimore this summer while I was interning at a local organization in Baltimore City. Although Miami, Washington State, and Baltimore are all extremely different places in terms of population, weather, and environment, I've been able to find comfort in the familiarity and stability of OA in all those different places. It is very peaceful for me to know that no matter where I go in life, I can always find the comfort and stability of OA. I also know I have a Higher Power that travels with me wherever I go!

In just a few short weeks, I'll be graduating college, something I never would have accomplished without the 12 Steps and OA. Upon my graduation, I'll once again be moving across the country to accept a position and permanently settle in Baltimore. While I'm scared and nervous about the move and upcoming change, I can sense my Higher Power soothing me and telling me I have nothing to fear. I know as long as I stay anchored in working the steps, stay connected to my Higher Power, and remain abstinent, my move and everything that comes along with it will go just as it's supposed to!

What I've learned from being in OA on both sides of the country is that compulsive overeaters are the same no matter where I'm at! I know that no matter what state or city I'm in, I can find solace, peace, and understanding in the OA rooms. I am so grateful for the worldwide program of OA!

Heather H.

Overeaters Anonymous does not
open the gates of Heaven
to let you in;
It opens the gates of Hell
to let you out.

Wise OA Member

Please submit your SteppingStone articles, quotes, poems, or stories on any OA related subject to www.steppingstone@oabaltimore.org.

A Message from the Chair

When my husband and I moved from Lawrenceville, NJ to Columbia, MD last March, I did not expect to be writing a message to the Baltimore fellowship as Chair of the Intergroup.

We plan - God laughs. I was elected to complete the term of Vice Chair last summer and was elected Vice Chair this past December. I expected to help and support the intergroup and its efforts for the next year. I was surprised to find that, when our former chair stepped down from the position last month, that it fell to me as Vice Chair to step into the position.

So, let me introduce myself. My name is Karen. I'm a compulsive eater in recovery one day at a time. I walked into my first OA meeting in the fall of 1975 in New York City and have been coming back ever since. My top weight was approximately 350 pounds (I stopped weighing as I approached 300 pounds; my sponsor estimated my top weight for me). I've had several periods of abstinence with some rather painful relapses, but today I celebrate more than 28 years of abstinence; maintaining my spiritual connection with a Power greater than myself, emotional sobriety and a 205 pound weight loss.

My home meeting is the Saturday morning meeting at The Serenity Center in Columbia. I sponsor and I have a sponsor. And I love Overeaters Anonymous. It is my emotional center and a place I can call home no matter where I am.

We will be doing some exciting Outreach events in the Greater Baltimore area this year including attending several health fairs, celebrating OA's 40th Anniversary, and hosting the Fall Region 7 Assembly in Ellicott City at the Turf Valley Golf Club. There are lots of service opportunities, and I hope you will consider participating in and/or volunteering for any of these recovery opportunities.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns — and I hope to meet you at a meeting or an OA event sometime in the near future.

Karen B., Intergroup Chair

2016 Service Positions

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

Contact Information

Chair chair@oabaltimore.org
Vice Chair vicechair@oabaltimore.org
Secretary secretary@oabaltimore.org
Treasurer treasurer@oabaltimore.org
SteppingStone steppingstone@oabaltimore.org
Webmaster webmaster@oabaltimore.org
Outreach Chair outreach@oabaltimore.org
12th Step Within 12thStepWithin@oabaltimore.org
By Laws Committee bylaws@oabaltimore.org
Region 7 Reps region7rep@oabaltimore.org
WSBC Delegate wsbcdelegate@oabaltimore.org

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Desire and Beyond

Many a member has said that if the requirements for membership in OA were more stringent than “a desire to stop eating compulsively,” they probably wouldn’t have felt qualified to be at a meeting. Unfortunately, this unique requirement—the only requirement in our entire Fellowship—is often used to avoid being “made” to do anything else that makes somebody uncomfortable, like having a food plan, being accountable to a sponsor, working the Steps, or realizing that abstinence comes from continuous action, not just a desire.

A desire is the beginning of a process, but a desire alone will not accomplish very much in OA. The Third Tradition ensures that anyone who wants to can attend an OA meeting, but I don’t believe it was intended to be the standard to which one aspires to attain abstinence, or to effectively fulfill our primary purpose, or to insure the continuing wellness of our beloved Fellowship.

For six years, I slipped and slid. I’d get some abstinence, then become complacent and backslide. I’d “tighten my food up,” only to renege on my new commitments. I was alternately attracted to people with solid abstinence and repelled by them as rigid perfectionists who sang the shrill song, “I don’t eat no matter what.” They must have been cheating or lying, I thought, since nobody could possibly get and stay abstinent. Such was the state of my willingness to act upon my feeble desire.

My desire stopped being the answer once I realized that recovery was about taking suggestions, making commitments, embracing principles, and developing personal integrity. Until I understood at a deep personal level that I was different from people who ate what they wanted without hating themselves, my problem continued unabated. When I accepted the spiritual consequences of my eating, and the totality of my absorption in it, I found the willingness to convert desire into action and began to make progress. Today, after more than twenty years of continuous abstinence, I sing the praises of physical recovery and service as a formula for keeping a willing OA member moving forward in recovery.

OA became an international entity because people sublimated their egos, undertook tasks that forced them outside their comfort zones, and endured extreme emotional challenges. Without diligent, daily effort, our recovery and OA’s credibility will suffer. Undertaking a difficult action to attain or maintain abstinence is a desire to be a living example of the best that this program has to offer.

Neil R.

A Quick Step 2 Study

At the Baltimore Area Intergroup’s recent workshop, “Belief and Faith – Steps 2, 3, 7, and 11,” members spoke about how they learned how to incorporate these important spiritual steps into a life of good recovery. Members in attendance studied these steps through the experience of the speakers and wrote on several exercise questions.

The questions on Step Two, “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity,” were particularly interesting to me:

- What parts of my life need to be restored and made whole?
- What evidence do I need to believe that a power greater than myself can make me whole?

For me, the easy answer to either question is “everything!” But what I wrote about was my tendency for impulsiveness, as well as the need for financial gratitude, perspective, and discipline. I could always improve on budgeting and spending.

Where else I can be made whole is practice in being able to “shift gears” when interrupted, particularly at work. I have learned ways to be gracious to people who visit me or need help while I’m working on a detailed project. I greet visitors and ask them to wait a few seconds with me ‘til I can pause at a point where I can stop. Then I give them my full attention. I’m still practicing this skill, as sometimes occasional fear about getting “all that work” done will interfere with my graciousness...so I depend on my Higher Power with a quick prayer when I feel that level of stress where I would previously and impulsively lash out at someone.

When I am stressed or otherwise separated from serenity, the evidence that a power greater than me makes me whole is the fact that I don’t overeat in response. The fact that I get to trust the hope of abstinence, that my life will be better without consuming excess food, is miraculous. Through the tools, the 12 Steps, and the 12 Traditions my Higher Power restores me to sanity today and introduces me to the possibility of wholeness.

Mike B.

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition Twelve

The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

*I reach out my palm and
you touch my heart.
Together we make a valiant start.
We guard against any halfway measure
As we embark on this journey together.
We're raising the banner
for spiritual living,
Changing our actions from
taking to giving.
Our hands and our minds
retreat from the fridge;
The past becomes water under the bridge.
Taking it easy and paying attention,
We open our eyes to the fourth dimension.
Recovery beckons, joyous and free
What happened for many
can happen for me!*

Anonymous Member

Health Fair Outreach Planned

Baltimore Area InterGroup's Outreach Committee has reserved a booth at the health fair being held at Wilde Lake High School in Columbia, Maryland on Friday, May 20. Volunteers are needed to man the booth from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. This function will provide a wonderful opportunity to make contact with potential newcomers. Requirements for this service position are one year of continuous abstinence and a healthy body weight. Please contact Sue B. through the oabaltimore.org "Contact Us" page; she is listed on the dropdown menu as "Outreach." Remember to **"give a lot of love and service 'cause you're worth it!"**

A Message From Your World Service Business Conference Delegate

Whenever I realize I have a conflict between what I want to do and a service or recovery opportunity, I have to remember FIRST THINGS FIRST. If I don't put recovery first in my life I will not have a life. When it is beautiful outside, I am a little resentful about having to spend time inside a hotel when the weather is so perfect outside.

What I had to give up being at World Service Business Conference:

- Time with family • A bike ride with friends
- Enjoying the Spring weather.

What I have been given by being at World Service:

- Sanity • Joy • Hugs • Sharing delicious abstinent meals with friends • The opportunity to share the miracle of recovery with hundreds of recovering compulsive eaters • The chance to witness and hear about the miraculous recovery of others from this disease.

What I wouldn't be doing if I were in my disease:

- Enjoying time with family • Bike rides with friends • Spring Weather • Enjoying delicious healthy food.

A return to this disease would be, for me, a return to misery and insanity. If I have to give up something good to get something better that is a small price to pay. When I am asked to do something for this wonderful program and it conflicts with something else that is "more fun," I am reminded that I only have this full happy life as a result of living the 12 Steps as a way of life. I will do anything I can to keep this program strong. If I EVER think I am too busy to work this program and give service, then I am just too busy.

Please consider giving service at your group, intergroup or region level. Giving it away is the best way to keep recovery.

Thank you very much for granting me the privilege of representing Baltimore at the World Service Business Conference this May in Albuquerque. I will be sharing with you the outcomes of the conference.

In love and service,
Terri B., WSBC Delegate

What does Spirituality Mean to You?

Spirituality - Origin (Etymology) of the Word:

Derived from Latin - Spiritus (soul, courage, vigor, breath). Spirare (to breathe).

Spiritus: Used to translate the words pneuma (Greek) & ruach (Hebrew) - (breath of life).

Definitions of Spirituality:

1. "a set of beliefs and practices related to what exists beyond the visible world, including the idea of the existence of a transcendent spiritual entity" (Random House Dictionary. 1967).
2. "set of beliefs, practices, and language that characterizes the search for transcendent meaning, generally based upon belief in a deity" (Astrow et al. 2001).
3. "the practice of a spiritual system of beliefs, values, codes of conduct & rituals" (Speck. 1998).
4. "the experience or expression of the sacred" (Adapted from Random House Dictionary. 1967).
5. "...the search for transcendent meaning expressed in religious practice, nature, music, the arts, philosophical beliefs, or relationships with friends & family" (Astrow et al. 2001).
6. "individual search for meaning" (Bown and Williams. 1993).
7. "the search for meaning in life events - a yearning for connectedness to the universe" (Coles. 1990).
8. "a person's experience of, or a belief in, a power apart from one's own existence" (Mohr. 2006).
9. "a quality beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God....to be in harmony with the universe, strive for answers about the infinite, and come essentially into focus in times of emotional stress, physical (and mental) illness, loss, bereavement and death" (Murray & Zentner. 1989:259).
10. "...a broad set of principles that transcend all religions....a relationship between ourselves and something larger.... a stance of neutrality toward all living beings and an understanding of their mutual interdependence." (Kaiser. 2000).

Anonymous Member

Upcoming Events

OA Region 7 Assemblies

April 8-10, 2016 – Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
October 14-16, 2016 – Ellicott City, Maryland

The assemblies conduct business and provide informational workshops for intergroups in the mid-Atlantic area of the United States.

Meditation Workshop

Celebration of Step 11

Sunday, May 15, 2016

Good Samaritan Hospital - Conference Room 1

5601 Lock Raven Blvd, Baltimore 21239

10:30am to 2:30pm - Bring Lunch

Questions: Call Nancy G - 443-987-8044

Health Fair at Wilde Lake High School

May 20, 2016 10am to 4:00pm

Columbia, Maryland

Take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to make contact with potential newcomers.

OA World Service Convention

September 1 - 4, 2016

Boston, Massachusetts

Join fellow members from all over the world for a fabulous weekend of recovery that will show you "The Trail to Freedom!"

OA Region Seven Convention

November 4 - 6, 2016

Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Join hundreds of fellow members from Region Seven and beyond for a beautiful weekend of recovery! Details will come soon.

For more information see

www.oabaltimore/events/

***The Tools of OA are
the handrails I hold onto
while I climb the Steps.***

Anonymous

Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory

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

Sunday

6:00 AM Rise and Shine Baltimore

Bnai Jacob Shaare Zion Synagogue
6602 Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore 21215
Neil (410-318-6737)
Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire please.

5:15 PM Towson Speaker Meeting

Calvary Baptist Church
120 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Towson 21204
Side Entrance - Basement
Tania (443-660-8299)

7:00 PM "Hour of Power-Mixed Format" Bel Air

Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
500 Upper Chesapeake Drive, Bel Air 21014
Terri (410-459-9100)

Monday

7:00 AM Rise and Shine Baltimore

Good Samaritan Hospital
5601 Loch Raven Boulevard, Baltimore 21239
Conference Room 2 South
Joe (410-829-6307)

10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County

Health and Wellness Center
10710 Charter Drive, Columbia, MD 21044
Tricia (410-489-0033) or Ruth (410-740-6955)

6:00 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Gar (301-829-8218) Gar@saccocpa.com - HA

6:00 PM Baltimore City "Homewood Abstinence"

First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street, Baltimore 21218
Enter on east side of building
Tania (443-660-8299)
taniamazellss@gmail.com - HA Bus 8, 11

7:30 PM "A Vision for You" Big Book Study

7310 Park Heights Avenue, 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 Street & Broadway, Bel Air 21014
(main building basement)
Michelle (410-937-7500) - Call about HA

7:30 PM Catonsville

Salem Lutheran Church
905 Frederick Road, Catonsville 21228
Naomi (443-838-7970) - Call about HA, Bus 2

Tuesday

11:30 AM Big Book Meeting

Etz Chaim Center
3702 Fords Lane, Baltimore 21215
Gail (410-456-4306 - HA, Bus M3 & M10)

12:00 Noon St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

7834 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore 21224
Bob (410-335-7748)

7:30 PM Pikesville "Abstinence First"

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Room 227
7401 Park Heights Avenue, Pikesville 21208
Parking lot on Slade Avenue
Neil (410-318-6737) - HA, Bus M5

Wednesday

6:15 PM A Vision 4 You Big Book Study

Columbia Serenity Center
9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway)
Bekah (617-966-2790) - HA

7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway)
Naomi (443-838-7970) - HA

Thursday

7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Carol (410-551-1149) - HA

8:00 PM Search for Serenity Group (Mixed Format)

Church of the Redeemer Room 41
5603 N. Charles Street off Norther Parkway
Towson, MD
Tania (443-660-8299) - Bus 11, 44

Friday

5:30 PM Baltimore City (speaker on first

Friday of month and post-meeting fellowship)
First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street, Baltimore 21218
Enter on east side of building
Mandy (410-825-1782) HA Bus 8, 11

Saturday

9:30 AM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Kathy (410-312-2742) - HA

11:00 AM Baltimore City

First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street, Baltimore 21218
Enter on east side of building
Annette (410-825-4639) - HA, Bus 3, 11, 22

11:00 AM Lutherville Step Meeting

St. John's Methodist Church
216 W Seminary Avenue, Lutherville 21093
Phyllis (410-653-2284) - HA
lucindaruby@gmail.com

Abbreviations: HA=Handicapped Accessible,
Bus Number=Accessible by MTA bus routes
For Online or Telephone Meetings: <http://www.oa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php>

If your meeting information changes, notify the World Service Office (WSO) at www.oa.org
in the Meeting Registration/Change Information Section. In addition, call or email Neil at
(410-318-6737 or neilrauch@comcast.net).