



SUMMER 2017

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>

TRADITION TWO: IT TAKES RESPECT

Tradition Two states that “for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Group conscience meetings are held for groups when deciding matters such as filling and rotating service positions, updating meeting formats, distributing 7th Tradition funds, and taking group inventories.

My experience in group conscience participation has been positive. I’ve learned to listen to others, set aside contempt and prejudice, and trust that solutions greater than I can imagine will emerge. Ideas that I propose to group consciences are remolded, changed, and even rejected. The final decision may be far from the original idea.

It takes respect and ego-reduction for me to accept a group conscience decision with which I disagree. It takes open-mindedness for me to observe the decision in action. It takes humility to accept that the decision was correct, assuming the decision has produced the desired effect. As an OA member in recovery, I have an obligation to support a group conscience decision. If the decision is not working or creates problems, the group can revisit and revise it.

I have seen members disagree with a group conscience decision strongly enough to stop attending a meeting never to return and later leave the fellowship. It’s hard to tell if the group conscience act

ion was the only reason for their decision to leave the fellowship, but it was at least a contributing factor. I’m saddened to see through social media that one such person has since experienced significant weight gain. That person’s experience is a lesson about what could happen to me if I leave the fellowship over a simple disagreement.

I’m grateful to have no desire to sacrifice my recovery and health over disagreement with a group conscience decision but rather desire to accept such decisions and support the group by attending meetings, providing service, and calling for another group conscience meeting when new concerns arise.

My spiritual recovery grows when I see my Higher Power expressed in the harmony and trust created by respect of the group’s decisions. My emotional recovery grows as a fully participating member when I listen to others and we collaboratively find a solution to our group’s concerns. My physical recovery grows as I don’t want to miss one of the many benefits of abstinence: the clarity to fully contribute to the success of the group conscience that appreciates my presence and participation.

Mike B.

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

From the New Chair:

I wanted to take this chance to introduce myself as the new chair of BAIG. I have been in OA since December 23, 2008, abstinent since February 16, 2009, and am maintaining a 60-pound weight loss. Having moved to Baltimore in 2014, I started attending BAIG meetings that fall. I've since served as treasurer and briefly as vice chair before my nomination to chair.

I cannot overstate the importance of service in my program. To make an obvious initial point: when I am of service, I am not eating. I regard compulsive overeating, at least how it has afflicted me, as a disease of intense self-absorption. When I am helping someone else, I am free of the obsession of self. This extends to sponsorship as well. Often what I needed to hear most, I have said when chatting with sponsees. Of course, this is HP's doing; I am just the mouthpiece.

Regarding the upcoming months in intergroup, I am very excited about our planned activities. Our special events, twelfth-step within, and outreach committees are working hard to provide several opportunities for us to meet as a fellowship to strengthen our recovery. One such event is BAIG's hosting International Day of Experiencing Abstinence (IDEA) in both 2017 and 2018. This will be a great opportunity for us to come together with our community worldwide to celebrate a freedom from food obsession we once only dreamed about. Members of nearby intergroups plan to attend as well, creating a diverse celebration of recovery.

Regarding intergroup itself, there are a few activities planned that are intended to strengthen our recovery and enrich our spirit of service. At July's meeting, we voted to take an intergroup inventory. Much like Step 4, the intergroup inventory will take stock of our assets and liabilities in order to take action for improvement. As part of this process, we also approved the development of a survey that will be sent to members in the area to solicit anonymous suggestions on ways BAIG can serve groups, and especially newcomers, better. The survey will be drafted after BAIG completes the inventory.

In closing, I want to say that I perceive BAIG as an instrument of service to groups, members, and newcomers. BAIG does not govern. There are many ways to provide service. Committees meet outside of BAIG's meeting time. Supporting activities around events such as logistics, planning, and phone calls are ongoing. No matter how small the action, service is service. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime via the contact page at oabaltimore.org should you need anything.

Yours in service,

Greg B.

2017 Service Positions

Chair Greg B.
Vice Chair Tania S.
Secretary Joanna W.
Treasurer Mike B.
SteppingStone Editor Nechama R.
Webmaster Lisa S.
Outreach Committee Chair Sue B.
12th Step Within Chair Tania S.
By Laws Committee Chair Karen B.
Region 7 Representatives Sue B., Blair I.
WSBC Delegate Karen B., Sue 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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World Service Business Conference

It was my privilege to be able to attend the World Service Business Conference in Albuquerque, NM in May along with 185 other voting members in attendance from all over the world. I loved meeting people from England, France, New Zealand and South Africa and discussing OA with them.

We attended business meetings from 8am to 5pm and accomplished a lot. On Wednesday, a Forum was held covering "Growing OA Unity Worldwide." Each table had 7-8 OA members with an empty chair. Every 15-20 minutes a speaker would come sit in that empty chair and share their story. They represented all types of meetings: 100+lbbers., 90-day meetings, HOW, LBGT, and Vision4You. All speakers were wonderful, but what I took away from the Forum was that anyone can recover in OA no matter what type of meeting we attend as long as we are willing to work the 12 steps.

The business meetings follow Roberts Rules of Order and I was glad that I had some limited experience with this format because it might have been difficult to follow the process. But so much was accomplished because of the way the meetings were conducted and I doubt that we could have completed the amount of work that we did without following Roberts Rules.

I know our Region 7 chair covered the results of the motions and proposals in her report, but I do want to highlight the few that were discussed at our meetings prior to the conference.

The pamphlet Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight was given a Conference Seal of Approval to be revised.

The Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions was approved for revision.

Proposal Item C Failed. The body did not want the tenth tool of Mindfulness.

Proposal Item H had a lot of discussion, but Failed. Meetings will not be required to read the entire list of Traditions as part of the opening.

Elections were held and I am pleased to announce that

Karen B from our Baltimore Intergroup was elected as Region 7 Trustee.

I would like to thank everyone for electing me as your delegate and giving me the opportunity to do this service. It was a learning experience I thoroughly enjoyed.

Sue B.
World Service Delegate
Baltimore Intergroup

2017 Baltimore Area Intergroup Meeting Schedule

Good Samaritan Hospital
5601 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

August 20 - Conference Room 1
September 17 - Conference Room 1
October 15 - Conference Room 1
November 19 - Conference Room 1
December 17 - Conference Room 1

Upcoming Events

OA Region 7 Assembly

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.

OA Region Seven Convention

November 3 - 5, 2017

Ocean City, Maryland

Join hundreds of fellow members from Region Seven and beyond for a beautiful weekend of recovery!

Convention Registration Now Open

The Region Seven Convention registration is now open. We will be at the beautiful Holiday Inn Ocean Front in Ocean City, Maryland from November 3-5. We have exciting workshops planned as well as two meals that should meet all food plan needs. Scholarships are available.

Call Terri at 410-459-9100 if you have any questions.

See you in November!

All details can be found at
<http://oaregion7.org/events/2017convention/>

For more information see
www.oabaltimore/events/

THE TOOLS WORK

As a child, I was simply either eating too much food or fantasizing about consuming all the food I imagined. I dreamed of being locked in a candy store overnight and eating every variety of sweets. I watched Gene Wilder in *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and fantasized about being tucked away in a corner when the doors of the factory closed, sneaking out at night to eat all I saw.

Last night I dreamed again about eating, and I was devouring everything I wanted. When I awoke, I was more than relieved to find I hadn't given up my five days of abstinence, five days that are as precious to me as the nine months I had before the winter holidays.

Why did I relapse? It still baffles me, as every return to the food does. Why did I choose the food well-knowing that I could return to the 400-plus-pound woman who urinated all over herself, her car, and her chairs because she couldn't hoist her enormous body up quickly enough to make it to the bathroom? Why did I choose to binge after three knee surgeries caused by decades of obesity? Why did I give up the confidence and peace I was developing for that "one compulsive bite" that led to the old thinking (I didn't eat well this morning, so I may as well enjoy eating all I want for the rest of today and start tomorrow), the old feelings (hopelessness, shame, fear), and the old behaviors (isolating and acting willfully)? That one bite before the winter holidays led to binges spread across six months and increased in frequency and intensity until I was consuming 5,000 calories a day again and gaining weight as fast as a locomotive.

Thank God for meetings. After sharing my shame over bingeing at a meeting yesterday, a woman who was visiting Baltimore OA from out of state reminded me that I returned to the food simply because I am a compulsive overeater and for no other reason. Sure, there were factors that contributed to it, but I have a disease that plays out in obsessions and compulsions with food.

And thank God for my sponsor who frequently reminds me, "Abstinence, no matter what!" Rather than making me feel ashamed during my relapse, he gently offered very valuable suggestions to help me get abstinent again. I've heard (and learned) over the years that willingness without action doesn't allow for the changes that I need to make if I want to arrest my disease and recover. So, if my sponsor suggests some action I might take to recover, I generally do it. First and foremost on my new action plan is his recent recommendation of using at least three tools a day. And it has been working. Last night, when I was struck by a compulsion to eat, I went through the list of tools I had used throughout the day: literature, meeting, and food plan. Realizing I hadn't called a fellow OAer, I picked up the phone and used another tool. As a result, I kept my abstinence rather than reaching for the food. The tools work!

Shelye K

CHANGES!

I've been in program for over five years, and, although I worked the steps several times, attended many different meetings a week, and sponsored several fellows, I was struggling with my abstinence. I never truly took the First Step and still believed I could control the disease through the use of program tools. This idea was extremely flawed, but the disease is cunning, baffling, and powerful, and it was able to convince me that I was abstinent despite my monthly binges.

One day, God made it clear to me that I had to change the way I was working my program. I was pushed to ask a recovered person to take me through the Big Book. I've become more honest about my trigger foods, and I've admitted to myself, God, my sponsor, and program fellows that I wasn't ever abstinent nor had I experienced the neutrality around food talked about in the Tenth Step Promises.

These changes were hard and scary to make, but I knew that if I didn't change anything, nothing would change! I was under the delusion that I was controlling my food, but I was not; it was controlling me! God gave me the strength and courage I needed to take my recovery to a new level. I am grateful God has been so patient and kind to me. When I was ready to see my delusions and face the truth about my illness, God gave me the strength and courage to do so.

I am writing this now with over three weeks of clean and committed abstinence (the longest time I've had abstinent in years). I've been working through the Big Book daily with my sponsor and just started writing my resentments for Step Four. I feel myself changing for the better all because of God willing me to get honest and do things differently.

Making changes can be hard and scary, but in the end, when I make the changes in my life that God is leading me to make, the end result is happiness, serenity, and abstinence!

Thank You, God, for giving me the courage to make changes! I pray I can always be open and willing to make the changes You want me to make!

Heather H.



Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory*

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

Sunday

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 Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

10689 Owen Brown Road, 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

7:30 PM "A Vision 4 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

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

7834 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore 21224
Bob (443-895-0163)

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)
Nancy L. (443-562-6447) or Berri W. (301-905-7160) - HA

7:00 PM Cockeysville Meeting

Epworth United Methodist Church
600 Warren Road, Annex Building, Upper Room
Cockeysville, MD 21030
Upper Room of the Annex Building with the staircase
up the back. Keep walking through the parking lot with
the church on your right to find the meeting.
Joanna (617-945-4883)

7:00 PM Bel Air 1st Presbyterian Church

224 N Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014
Basement, Room B
Building attached to sanctuary
Nancy (443-987-8044)

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

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

Church of the Redeemer Room 41
5603 N. Charles Street off Norther Parkway
Towson, MD
Sara D (443-928-7720) - 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 (410-653-2264) - HA
lucindaruby@gmail.com

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 Nechama R at (443)-717-1829 or nechamareizl@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>