



FALL 2017

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>

My Journey to the Celebration of Three Years of Abstinent Living

On Labor Day Weekend, I gratefully celebrated my 3rd year of abstinence. My road to recovery has been long and not perfect, but I am here today celebrating with joy that I didn't give up.

I came into these rooms in 1984 well over 200 pounds and desperate. To say my life was unmanageable was an understatement. I could no longer control anyone and couldn't understand it. I thought I had all the answers and knew the right path for everyone. How mistaken I was. I began to listen to people in the rooms who shared their experience, strength, and hope and believed that I could recover, too, if I followed their suggestions: get a sponsor, identify and be willing to put down my binge/trigger foods, and work the 12 steps. In no time, even amidst chaos in my personal life, I lost over 50 pounds. My family relocated to Massachusetts, and I learned about 90-day meetings and AWOLs (A Way of Life), which were closed meetings dedicated to studying the 12 steps. My abstinence was redefined and I gave away another 40 pounds. I worked through the 12 steps and wrote out my 4th step. I began to make amends and I did service. Sponsoring was my greatest joy. I found wonderful new friends in program and we shared many good times abstinently. I thought I "had it." My ego told me I was "Miss OA" and everyone should listen to my recovery because I had the answers. Wrong again. That was my disease talking. I was easing God out and letting my will and ego take over. Following my divorce, I went back into the food with a vengeance. I didn't think someone who was so "good and who was so devout" should experience this kind of a loss. I threw God out of my life, telling myself there could be no God after what had happened to me. I was extremely angry and didn't know what to do with that anger. I did not use the steps to process the anger. I stuffed it and gained all 90 pounds back. The biggest mistake I made, however, was pretending I was fine. I asked no one for help and went around with a smile on my face. Another relocation and I tried once again to find recovery by attending meetings, but I could not get abstinent for any more than 2 to 3 days at a time. I don't remember getting a sponsor, but I do remember sponsoring even though I was not abstinent. What a mistake. How can I help others when I am not recovering myself? I went to meetings, still thinking I had the answers, and, after another relocation, I had the excuse I needed to leave the meetings all together. "OA doesn't work," I

professed. Today I know how untrue that statement was. OA does work. I didn't work OA. I stayed out for 15 years and not only gained weight, but gained high blood pressure and high cholesterol. My knees hurt every time I walked, and my family relationships were non-existent.

In 2012 I went to a birthday party of a dear OA friend who was turning 80. She also had 30 year of abstinence. With the help of OA friends from Massachusetts, I became abstinent for the weekend. When I came home, I had the willingness to put my ego aside, admit I didn't have the answers, and return to weekly meetings. Again OA reached out to me and saved me from myself. I was abstinent from June through August, and, one weekend after an uncomfortable episode with a family member, I picked up the food one more time. This time I did things differently. I went right to a meeting and asked for help. The person I asked walked me through the 12 steps and

I began to understand them and "work" them in a way I had never done before. Steps 1 to 3 were the hardest for me. Once again it was about turning my will and life over to the care of God as I understood him. I didn't have a God at the time. My personal God was so remote I never heard His voice. I know that's because I wasn't listening. My own voice kept getting in the way. I found a God by believing in one thing I knew for sure was bigger or greater than me and that was Creation. Creation became my God for a long time, but, as I began to work steps 4 to 9, I developed a very personal God who lives within me. I had to open the channels by letting go of my will, and that allowed me to hear my

Higher Power. I have to listen to this voice continually throughout the day. Today I start the day with prayer. I do not put my feet on the floor before I say the 3rd step prayer. I offer myself to God and pray to follow His will for me throughout the day. That means before I enter the kitchen to prepare food, I must bring God in, which means I accept my powerlessness over anything that I know for sure is a trigger for me and that includes quantity. Over time, my food has become less processed and more wholesome. There are so many hidden triggers in processed food that, for me, I knew I had to be very careful when buying these ingredients. I learned to read the labels. I learned how powerless I am over foods that I had always eaten in the past,

NEW! EXCITING! NEW!

The SteppingStone emailed directly to your Inbox!

Be the first to access all the news and events.
Read hopeful articles by local fellows!
Join the OA Baltimore google group NOW.
To join, send an e-mail to this address:

oa-baltimore-intergroup-list+subscribe@googlegroups.com

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particularly fatty or salty, so I have stopped eating fried foods. For me this was key. I have to believe in my addiction and how dangerous it is for me. I have to take steps 1 to 3 every time I'm around food. I have completed steps 4 to 9 and have made most of my amends, vowing to finish that process as soon as I can. Sometimes I have to wait for God to put the opportunity before me so I can proceed. Working steps 10 to 12 is the best part of my program. I love doing step 10 because I can recognize and admit my defects and make behavioral changes immediately. If I can't do this alone, I reach out to a sponsor to help me. Being detached, my sponsor can always see a situation much more clearly than I can. I pray continually throughout the day and am working on taking more time for meditation. Sometimes I write down a question I would like God to answer and then mediate on it. After 10 minutes I begin writing whatever comes to mind and the clarity is amazing. Meditation calms me down and helps me get out of "self will run riot." Step 12 brings me to service. I love doing service. I sponsor and I am also the Outreach Chairman for BAIG. I am a Region 7 delegate and this year, and I had the privilege of attending my first World Service meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Meeting people from all over the world who share my disease and, most of all, my desire to stay in recovery one day at a time, was a gift like no other I have ever received.

Being able to admit that I have not been perfect in this program keeps me humble and grateful. I pray that sharing my experience, strength, and hope through this article will encourage others to "keep coming back."

In gratitude and service,

Sue B.



Keeping My Commitments

OA is the program that just keeps on giving. One thing OA has given me is the ability to keep my commitments. Never did I ever think I'd be a person of my word who willingly took commitments and stuck to them. Once upon a time, in my overeating heyday, I would cancel all sorts of plans with people, let my school work slide, let my work suffer, and just generally not show up for anyone, least of all myself. I did this all in the name of food and isolation so I could stay home in my comfort zone, draw the curtains, and eat. I enjoyed friends and family, but I enjoyed food more. I would come up with the wildest excuses as to why I couldn't make it or just flat out ignore calls and texts. The lies worked for a little while, but eventually people stopped asking me to hang out with them because I was always a no-show, always a flake. Today, I willingly enter into commitments, both of service and of life, knowing that I intend to keep them. I gladly volunteer to help others and follow through, even if, when the time comes, I don't feel like it anymore. I have gained so many rich experiences by simply saying "Yes!" to making plans. Every now and again I end up over-scheduling myself or something legitimately comes up and I have to cancel, but these are few and far between, and I always set another date right away. Giving my time and efforts to others has allowed me to stay abstinent and maintain a close bond with my higher power. Say "Yes!" to your life!

Laura M.

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 Noelle F.
- By Laws Committee Chair Vacant
- Region 7 Representatives Sue B., Blair I.
- WSBC Delegate 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 wsbcdelagate@oabaltimore.org

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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 action 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.

2017 Baltimore Area Intergroup Meeting Schedule

Good Samaritan Hospital
5601 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

December 17 - Conference Room 1

**Election of Service Position Holders for 2018
at December 17 meeting
Attend and let your voice be heard!**

Upcoming Events

**Twelfth Step Within Day: December 12
Call 5 to keep ‘em alive!**

BAIG Presents:

**Sponsorship Workshop
Sunday, December 3 at 3:30 pm
Calvary Baptist Church
120 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Towson, MD**

Don’t Work the Steps Alone!

**Next Abstinence Workshop
Stay Tuned!**

**For more information see
www.oabaltimore/events/**

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

Freedom From the Obsession

I've been in the rooms of OA for nearly 9 years. During this time abstinence seemed impossible, out of reach. After seven and a half years, I was granted the gift of food sobriety. The single thing I did perfectly in all those years was to "Keep Coming Back." The slogans and phrases can be very irritating in times of struggle. However, I am a walking, talking, and breathing example of the miracle.

My Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, was found in these rooms. What started as another illusive challenge, slowly grew, starting with the people, then with the change within me, to the unexplained "coincidences" in my life.

God somehow directed me to the phone meeting, A Vision For You. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous has been my main source of recovery. The simple but not easy process of working the steps has given me the neutrality around food and behaviors that I had never thought possible.

I am currently maintaining a 130 pound weight loss as the result of my step work, using the tools, following my food plan, and refraining from compulsive eating and food behaviors.

Every day I try to give back to the program of OA through sponsorship, service, and reaching out to others. The gifts have been returned to me at least 10 fold. Three weeks ago the most tragic event happened in my life. My dear, sweet, kind, husband suddenly passed away. Mercifully for him, it was peaceful and in his sleep.

Without a doubt this is the toughest thing I have ever experienced. To qualify, I lost both my parents and a younger brother. My 27 year old daughter was then diagnosed with breast cancer and the fight of her life began. Fortunately my daughter is fine and as a result of that diagnosis, I found out I was also positive for the BRAC1 gene and prophylactically had my ovaries and breasts removed.

After the initial shock of Mark's passing, I then had to deal with life. He was and continues to be my soul mate. I experience waves of grief and sadness.

As luck would have it, my OA family has jumped right in. Phone calls, emails and text messages show the love, support and care for myself and my daughter. I've immersed myself in reading, podcasts, and meetings. I'm given strength and hope daily from everyone. Miraculously, bingeing and eating off of my food plan has not even come into my mind.

As I sit here writing, I am overcome with joy and gratitude for the blessings in my life. Thank you Bill W., Dr. Bob, OA and God.

Robin A.

No Human Power

A workshop at the 2016 Region 7 Convention, titled "No Human Power Can Relieve Our Addiction," focused on Step Two, "Came to believe that a Power Greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

We were asked to ponder two questions:

- Do you believe that no human power can relieve your addiction?
- Are you willing to trust in a power greater than yourself to relieve your addiction?

I certainly came to believe that no human power - particularly this human's power - could relieve me of my addiction to food and my compulsive and selfish nature. My own willpower did not work, or it sometimes worked temporarily but was never a permanent solution, as I always relapsed into uncontrolled overeating. Human powers such as diets, exercise regimens, or other healthful activities - had I given them a serious try - might have addressed only the physical part of my disease by temporary weight loss, but my self-will would always overtake those efforts and back into overeating I would go!

It wasn't until I found OA and began work on Steps 1 and 2 that I truly understood that I needed a power greater than me to relieve me of the desire to overindulge in my addiction. I'm grateful that I was desperate enough for recovery to be willing to trust in and try a new power greater than me for help.

Here is some of what was shared in the workshop:

- The AA Big Book, page 60 describes all of us and tells us there is hope.
- There are some foods that, when we ingest them, we get a crazy craving and lose the power to decide about them.
- OA has taught us we can trust in a Higher Power for everything, per the AA Big Book: "We trust in an infinite God rather than our finite selves."
- The Steps and Traditions make us kinder people.
- When we are given gifts of food that we don't eat, we thank the giver for this thoughtful act of beautiful food and simply give it away to those who can eat it. We don't have to reject the gift or the giver.
- Be careful what you say. Sometimes, I'm told, "You've lost a great opportunity to keep your mouth shut."
- My "power" = self-will and loss of control. "Higher Power" or "Power Other than Ourselves" = hope, relief, and freedom.
- If I don't create my own patience, God gives it to me.

Anonymous Member

WORD SEARCH



Look inside the Overeaters Anonymous 12 Steps and 12 Traditions book for clues to fill in the blanks. Then search for those words in the puzzle. The words can be horizontal, vertical, slanted, or backwards.

- Step 1 - "Once we become _____, we can give up old thought and behavior patterns..."
- "This _____ to act on faith, then, was the key to Step 2."
- Step 3 - "...we reaffirm our personal _____, and ask our Higher Power to help us continue living in them."
- "This [4th] step continues a process of _____, which began with our admission of powerlessness in Step One, a process of increasing honesty and self-awareness that will graduate free us from our bondage to self"
- "When we actually do our 5th Step with another human being, we find that we are _____ without being humiliated."
- "The 6th Step calls for us to be _____ ready to have God remove all our defects of character."
- Step 7 - "Our job is to be willing to let go of old attitudes that block _____."
- Step 8 - "Most important, we begin here to become willing to make _____, that is to make changes..."
- "Were we to skip doing some of our amends, we would deprive ourselves of the full _____ that comes when we work the 9th Step thoroughly."
- "Step 10 suggests that we make amends _____."
- Step 11 - "[Prayer and meditation] gives us the direction and strength we need to live the rest of that day _____"
- In Step 12, "_____ in OA has been a surprisingly powerful factor in our recovery."



Thank You, Mike B!

Intergroup Elections in December!

Are you looking for a service commitment? Do you want to get more involved with OA? Do you have any special talents you could lend to OA? Well, have I got news for you! The Baltimore Area InterGroup (BAIG) is holding their annual election at their meeting this December! There are many levels of service available within BAIG including the executive board, committee chairs, and committee members. All of the service positions available and qualifications of those positions can be found in the BAIG Bylaws . BAIG is always looking for volunteers to get involved at any level, including one-time commitments for special events. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for a service position, then please send an email to laura.missett@gmail.com .

Link to BAIG Bylaws: <http://oabaltimore.org/intergroup/bylaws/>

*Give a lot of love
and **SERVICE**
'cause you're worth it!*

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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 Babysitting Always Available

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

5:30 PM Happy Destiny Big Book Study

United Evangelical Church of God
Second Floor, 3200 Dillon Street, Baltimore 21224
Liz D (410-499-9052)

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 Berry (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.
This meeting is not handicap/wheelchair accessible.
Joanna (617-945-4883)

7:00 PM Big Book Study

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)
Mary Ann (301-775-0422) - 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
Angela (410-486-4319) 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
Mike (443-610-7845)

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

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 Nechama
R at (443)-717-1829 or nechamareiz@gmail.com