



# The Austi-Mate Journal

Ostomy Association of Austin Monthly Publication  
P. O. Box 143383 Austin, Texas 78714

[www.austinosstomy.org](http://www.austinosstomy.org)

Gethsemane Lutheran Church  
200 West Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas 78752



**No January Meeting**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 7, 2019 @ 7:00 pm**

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This bi-monthly newsletter is available on our OAA website

Printing Courtesy:  
The American Cancer Society

*Have you paid your dues?*

The Ostomy Association of Austin is a volunteer based Non-Profit Health Support group dedicated to providing mutual aid and education, information and advocacy for persons and their families who have had or will have ostomy surgery. It is our vision to educate, empower and inspire through information and mutual support in all phases of life.

### I Am the New Year

I am unused, unspotted, without blemish.  
I stretch before you three hundred and sixty-five days long.  
I will present each day in its turn, a new leaf in the book of life  
For you to place upon it your imprint.

### I Am the New Year

Each hour of every day, I will give you sixty minutes  
That have never known the use of man.  
Clear and pure, I present them;  
It remains for you to fill them with sixty jeweled seconds of  
Love, hope, endeavor and patience

### I Am the New Year

I am coming -  
But once past, I can never be recalled.  
Make me your best!  
Author unknown UOAA Update January 2015

We had a fun Holiday Dinner celebration in December. Great turnout and the wine gifts were VERY popular! See pictures on page 6.



Carol Laubach is the founder and **Heart & Soul** of our group. Read Carol's story on page 2.

**February 7th Meeting:** Body Image & Intimacy with an Ostomy.  
**Refreshments:** Marina Chavez, Dan & Martha Boswell, Linda Broadbeck, Board Members



## Remembering...by Carol Laubach

October 2018



I would like to share with you the thought and feeling progression of a young mother and homemaker almost 47 years ago ~ March 22, 1968.

There was sickness, pain, darkness, fear, anger, despair, panic, a sense of shock, uncertainty, and a feeling of worthlessness....then curiosity, defiance, confidence, amazement, fascination, admiration. It was Morning, a fresh start, living—beauty—my dear close friend—my ostomy! March 22, 1968, a second real birthday to be greatly celebrated each year!

There is in our souls that ability to have “recovery” as a part of life. No one knows this about ME more than I do. We have a supreme obligation to reach out to those people who haven’t learned this yet. I hold my hand out because it is the best I have to offer....and say, “I know it’s tough right now, but hang on, we’ll get through this.” We are all miracles. We have been given a great, precious gift. We have been allowed a major decision in our lives and have said...I choose to deal with my ostomy. I’ve got much more important things to expend any worry on.

We shouldn’t get to midnight without having an exquisite moment...what the moon looked like tonight, a kiss on a grandchild’s cheek, stroking the velvet fur of a kitten, accepting the gentle smile of a friend or the sweet touch of a hand. We are alive to seek out exquisite moments. When we look on our ostomies as assets, not liabilities - this is an exquisite moment. Dr. Sally Karioth says, “We might as well go ahead and enjoy life, because as best I can tell, this is not a dress rehearsal.” If having an ostomy is the worst thing that happens to me, I am in in really good shape! I was fortunate to have an extension on this life and it is good!

The majority of folks don’t have an inkling of what an ostomy is. By definition an ostomy is a surgically created opening through the abdomen for elimination of bowel waste or urine when the intestine or bladder has been removed. The surgery necessitates wearing a collection pouch or appliance that adheres to the abdomen. The majority of these surgeries are done for cancer, ulcerative colitis, birth defects or accidents.

I was a victim of ulcerative colitis for four years before my surgery. The cause of this disease is still unknown, but it is lumped in with the autoimmune diseases like arthritis. Every day of those four years held its own kind of agony...constant pain, constant diarrhea, weight loss, and blood transfusions every five weeks. Trying to live was not so good. I have heard some say, “I would rather be dead than have a colostomy”. I knew I would die if I didn’t have ileostomy surgery. The decision was made....the diseased colon and rectum had to go.

I had two small children and felt like I was not being half a good mother, I was so sick. It was not an easy decision to make. No matter how diseased a part of us may become, we still grieve for the loss of a part of us. But...we were not created to grieve forever. God made us resilient beings!

In 1973, I was one of seven ostomates who felt we needed to establish a support group. Our first meetings were held around a big table in a wonderful old antique shop, The Waterloo Compound. Our first program was given by one of Austin’s urologists. We elected officers and eventually we produced a monthly newsletter, established a bank account, and got a post office box. The Ostomy Association of Austin was up and rolling!

Our numbers grew as the medical community became aware we existed. We outgrew our first meeting place. Holy Cross Hospital hosted us in their small downstairs auditorium until May 1978, when Gethsemane Lutheran Church offered its facility to us and this has been “home” since that time and we are very grateful. Our support group is enthusiastic and we continue to grow in numbers.

Through the years we have seen many changes...people have come and gone, people have come and stayed, lending support to those yet to need us. Our ostomy equipment has drastically changed for the better. Many years ago there were only rubber gloves, wads of heavy batting, and juice cans strapped to the abdomen. People became reclusive, unable to carry on normal life activities and leave their homes. Now our supplies are disposable, odor proof, lightweight, and invisible under

clothing. Until I tell about it, people would have no idea my “plumbing” is different from theirs. I think of 1968 as the “dark ages” of ostomy equipment and recovery. We have quite a collection of past ostomy equipment that we bring to show at meetings occasionally.

October 1973 was our beginning...October 2018 marked our 45th year! The “now” time is so much easier and better for anyone facing this surgery. There is help out there and less risk with ostomy surgery today. We are so fortunate to have our dedicated WOC nurses to get us started and help us over the humps. We especially appreciate our faithful specialists...Karen Hollis, Carol Marshall, and Linda Burks who attend every one of our monthly meetings and present programs and answer questions.

One thing has not changed, nor will it ever...that is our need and love for each other. Those of us who have experienced ostomy surgery have a special bond that has brought us together. Maybe that in itself is a reason for having experienced a life-saving surgery. Our support group is certainly not a droopy faced, poor me, feeling sorry for myself bunch of folks. We are all eager to learn how to better live with a new situation without fear and to help each other. What better classroom is there than with people who have crossed over the hard times and gotten on with normal living! I have never asked, “Why me??” I have had the good fortune to have my life touched by lives of so many wonderful people because of my ostomy surgery. Because of that, I feel blessed to have my second best friend, my ostomy, to be healthy, happy, and whole and to be able to witness to God’s goodness in my life. The past, we cannot change. The future, we cannot know. The present is where we must learn to live.”

## Resolutions of an Ostomate

via New Outlook, UOAA Chicago (edited)

Whats your New Years Resolution?

### I RESOLVE TO:

- ✓ keep myself neat and presentable at all times.
- ✓ not begrudge the time necessary for my personal care.
- ✓ keep my bathroom sharable.
- ✓ value the cooperation of my family.
- ✓ appreciate the fact that I am one of the lucky ones.
- ✓ try to do the things I want to do but think I can't.
- ✓ be patient.
- ✓ LIVE all day, every day.
- ✓ help others whenever I can.
- ✓ go places and do things.
- ✓ give full credit to modern medicine.
- ✓ urge my fellow ostomates to see people.
- ✓ be grateful for my present good health.
- ✓ be of good cheer. renew my pledge the first of every month.

2019  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Even in winter, remember to stay hydrated.



Are you in need of donated supplies? We have **plenty** available! Please contact Carol Laubach, (512-339-6388) and indicate what type of ostomy you have, brand preference, size, and whether it's a one or two piece. This will help to get you the best fitting supplies possible.





## Intimacy with an Ostomy

By Laura Cox Ostomy Lifestyle Specialist | Shield HealthCare



Intimacy and intercourse are a part of the human experience. It can be an extremely beautiful experience shared between partners, but it can also feel extremely vulnerable. Add a body altering surgery, and the change in body image to the mix, and thinking about intimacy with an ostomy can almost feel uncomfortable. That is a completely normal feeling, but with a little preparation, pep talk, and open communication, intimacy can still be a wonderful, fulfilling practice between partners.

### Communication with a Potential Partner



Initial communication about your ostomy with a potential intimate partner should happen before the clothes come off. I would suggest going on a few dates before talking about the ostomy so the person can get to know you on a deeper level first. There's no rush to tell a potential partner, but if you feel that you would rather tell them sooner than later, go ahead! Whatever feels most comfortable and natural for you is what should be done.

When you feel it's the right time to tell the potential love interest about your ostomy, approach the topic with confidence. If you seem confident and happy to have an ostomy, odds are your partner will be happy you have an ostomy, too. No matter who I'm telling about my ostomy, I always try to put a positive spin on it. I'm never trying to evoke sympathy, but trying to help someone understand my way of life. Talk about why you have it, how you got it and what having an ostomy means for your body.

When I told my significant other about my ostomy, I started by talking about my experience with being dangerously sick with Ulcerative Colitis, being on all sorts of harsh medications, not being able to live the life I wanted to and eventually needing surgery to save my life. I then told him my colon was taken out in 2011 and I was left with a little bit of my small intestine sticking outside of my abdomen and that a bag surrounded it. He then (very tactfully I may add) asked, "So you poop in the bag?" I answered with a straightforward, "Yes." He looked at me, kissed me on the forehead and said, "Doesn't bother me one bit. I'm glad you're still here, and I'm here to stay." Since that day he has been one of my biggest supporters, my ER companion, my light on a dark day and my advocate.

He took it upon himself to learn about Inflammatory Bowel Disease and ostomies. We don't let it become a huge part of our relationship, but it is one of the many parts. When I'm feeling well, our relationship has many moving parts and my ostomy doesn't come up fairly often (we got all of that talk out of the way at the beginning of our relationship). When I'm not feeling well we make sure our communication is open and honest. When my stoma makes a funny noise, we laugh. When I don't feel well enough to go out, I tell him to go out and have fun, but that I'm not feeling up for it (although these nights usually turn into movie and cuddle nights). When my abdomen is too sore for intercourse we talk about it. When I need emotional support, I ask for it.

Not all cases have gone as well as my current situation. I try not to take offense to someone losing interest after I share with them that I have an ostomy. I simply think of my ostomy as a way to weed out the people who wouldn't have worked anyway. The nature of having a chronic illness (or just being in any relationship) is that you need someone to support you and cheer you on when you're not feeling well. Finding that person may take time, but you are so worthy and deserving of love and support.

### Communication with your Current Significant Other



If you were already with a significant other before having surgery, he or she probably knows how sick you have been and will be thankful for life-changing surgery and for your health. Still, make sure to have open, honest conversation about your ostomy, how you and your partner feel about it, what things will be the same and what will be different after your ostomy surgery. Try to understand that your partner is adjusting too.

You can ask open-ended questions like, "How do you feel about my ostomy?" or, "How has my ostomy changed our relationship?"

I talked to a woman who asked her husband how he felt about her ostomy, expecting a negative reaction. To her surprise he said “I love it, because it allows you to live your life more fully and we can actually go out and do things without having to worry where the bathroom is.”

**Tips for Intimacy with an Ostomy** 

After you’ve phrased your explanation positively to your partner, intimacy may progress at the normal speed. When it is time for an intimate moment, there are some tips that can make you feel as sexy as ever.

- **Empty your pouch prior to intimate moments**
  - This will make it more comfortable for both partners.
- **Use deodorizing drops or spray**
  - Even though there generally isn’t an odor that comes from a closed pouch, if using deodorizing drops makes you feel more comfortable, I would suggest it! Any way you can make yourself feel as comfortable as possible will allow you to forget worrying about your ostomy and enjoy the experience.
- **Use an opaque pouch or a pouch cover**
  - This just allows you to hide the contents of the pouch.
- **Ask your doctor if you can take Imodium, Beano, GasX or comparable products about 20-30 minutes before intercourse (if anticipated)**
  - This tip is mainly for ileostomates. Imodium may slow output and allow you some time to have an empty pouch.
- **Try out some of the available products that are made to conceal your ostomy during intimate moments**
  - These products conceal and secure your ostomy, making you feel confident and unencumbered. These products include:
    - Wraps
    - Bandeaux
    - Lingerie and underwear
  - You can find these products online at:
    - Awestomy
    - OstomySecrets
    - Vanilla Blush, etc.
    - [www.betweenyouandme.com.au](http://www.betweenyouandme.com.au)



Intimacy can usually be just as enjoyable (if not more enjoyable because you are healthy) with an ostomy as before. Usually intercourse will be pain free, but if you do experience continuous pain during intercourse talk to your doctor. You may also find that your relationship will become much closer and stronger because you have to talk about health and support each other.

The right person will love and support you for who you are, not what you have. You can help by loving yourself and loving your body for what it is – a beautiful, resilient body that has struggled and fought to keep you alive.



*Yearly Anniversaries - 2019*

**January**

Joan Wertzberger	19
Sammie Buchanan	14
John Duncanson	14
James Chandler	15

**February**

Lou O'Hanlon	50
Bob Guidry	36
Rollie Sidla	13
Vernan Empken	5

2019 Thursday Meetings

- No January Mtg
- February 7
- March 7
- April 4
- May 2
- June 6
- No July Mtg

Happy



New Year!



We are a health support group, a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide mutual aid and education to persons who have ostomies and their families. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible. The information contained within our newsletters is for informational purposes only and may not be applicable to everyone. **Please do not follow any medical advice in our Newsletter without first checking with your physician or Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse.**

## OAA Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ostomy Type \_\_\_\_\_ Surgery Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Relative/Partner/Friend Name \_\_\_\_\_

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_ give permission for my name to be included in our newsletter or membership directory.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Annual Dues:

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Ostomate

\$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Relative/Partner/Friend/Other

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Professional

Mail Application to:

Ostomy Association of Austin

P.O. Box 143383

Austin, TX 78714



Membership benefits include:

- Monthly support & informational meetings
- Social events
- The Austi-Mate Bi-Monthly Newsletters

**Newsletter Preference: Check one**

\_\_\_\_\_ Printed version via US mail

\_\_\_\_\_ Email notification/download to your computer via website [www.austinstomy.org](http://www.austinstomy.org)



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1-800-866-3002

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Toll-free 800-750-9311.

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