

## **World Service Business Conference 2009**

Wednesday May 6, 2009

### **Forum: The many languages of recovery.**

The Forum is provided to cover important issues affecting OA as a whole. Delegates are assigned to tables where we discuss questions. Different tables discuss a variety of issues. Then one delegate from each table reports the solution that we have achieved. These answers provide the foundation for resolving the issues.

OA is convinced that we have to carry the message of recovery to people who speak in different languages. This is an expensive process. The forum is to focus on the issues that need our attention in this process. There are about 15 languages that some OA literature is translated into.

There are about 24 countries that have OA groups. Some of the translated literature is: For Today, OA Workbook, etc. There are online meetings in Spanish and Swedish. There are 40 languages that the Big Book is translated into. This is a big help to OA because we often use the Big Book in our program.

There are now policy procedures for translating literature into foreign languages. The first thing OA had to do was find all the literature that had been translated, who had that ownership of the translation. Low, for example one group may start translating a book, not realizing that someone else had translated it already in their country or in another country that speaks the same language. Now with more information on translations, there will be much less duplication of effort.

Currently if a group wants to translate literature, World Service Office licenses them. This avoids duplication. Sometimes WSO provides a financial grant to help the group pay for the translation.

The most used languages in the world in order are: Chinese, English, Spanish, Arabic and so on.

So, we have worked out some solutions that will speed up making more translations and have translations available to more members. This will help solve the problem of a new member coming to their first meeting and not having any literature in their language.

Wednesday May 7, 2009

## Business Conference

Today, we considered a motion to change the definition of abstinence. The definition abstinence was " Abstinence on Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining form compulsive eating. The motion itself changed "eating" to "overeating". This seems to bar anorexics and bulimics from the program.

Several amendments were made to the motion. There was a lot of interest in the subject. The Chairman of the OA Board referred the motion and all the amendments to the Reference Committee. In the Reference Committee, any delegates who wanted to say something about the subject, discussed the motion and amendments. After the delegates have talked for 20-30 minutes, their session ended. Now the Reference Committee discussed the topic for 20-30 minutes.

. We can make motions on what to do with the definition of abstinence for example. The motion that won the vote was that the main motion and all the additional amendments are defeated and the definition of abstinence remains the same. When the Business Conference meets again, the first thing the Conference does is take up the motion of the Reference Committee. The Conference voted and overwhelmingly rejected our recommendation. A lesson in humility for me.

On the last day of the Conference, the Reference Committee passed a motion to reject all the motions and amendments and instead add four words to the definition of abstinence "and other compulsive food behaviors".

## Reference Committee

During all of the four Conferences I have attended the most interesting, empowering and fun was being a member of the Reference Committee. I would wake at 6 am dead tired, grab breakfast to go at the buffet and go to that committee. Within a few minutes I would be excited about what we were discussing and forget how tired I was

This points out that the Reference Committee is one of the most powerful committees there. I volunteered for the Reference Committee while when I attended the Region 1 Convention. There are two delegates appointed by each Regional Trustee for a total of 20 committee members. We are used to resolve conflicts in motions and maybe recommend alternate solutions and hopefully save a lot of time for the business conference as a whole.

We are scheduled to meet up to four times each day of the Conference for an hour and fifteen minutes each. The only way we can do this is by taking sack lunches to the committee meetings. We go to the head of the buffet line so we can make it to the meetings. All of our meals are eaten during the Reference Committee meetings.

**Results: These are the details; some may not want to read all of this.**

Move to grant the Conference Seal of Approval to the revised pamphlet, Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps – One Approach.

Motion required 2/3 vote to adopt. Motion defeated by standing count vote, 105 yes, 71 no.

Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. conducts a Public Awareness Campaign using the services of an outside agency. Expenses connected to this campaign will be supported by member contributions to a special public awareness campaign fund established by the Board of Trustees. The BOT may use up to \$20,000 of current reserves for "seed" money to initiate the campaign. Such funds are to be reimbursed from the special fund established for that purpose. Motion required majority vote to adopt. New Business Motion E adopted.

Move that the World Service Office provide Web site templates for optional use by OA service bodies and groups in creating or revising their Web sites. Motion required majority to adopt. New Business Motion F adopted as amended by Standing count vote, 97 yes, 80 no.

Move that December 12 (12/12) each year be designated as OA's International Twelfth-Step-Within Day, the purpose of which will be to encourage OA service boards, meetings and individual members to reach out to those within the Fellowship who are still suffering from compulsive eating behaviors. Motion required majority to adopt. New Business

Qualifications for trustees must be met at the time the application for Trustee is submitted to the WSO. Specifically, such trustee nominees must also have: 1) Worked through all Twelve Steps; Motion required 2/3 to adopt. Proposal Item 1 adopted.

Substitute New Business Item H: The reference subcommittee moved to substitute Proposal Item H with the following: Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors.

Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program. Motion required majority to adopt. Substitute New Business Item H adopted.

#### Emergency New Business Motion 1

Move to establish a special fund to assist in the translating of OA literature, forms, correspondence, website and other materials to languages other than English. Money in this fund is in addition to the translation committee's budget. The Board of Trustees will establish guidelines to allocate the funds. Motion required 2/3 to adopt. Emergency New Business Motion 1 adopted.

Emergency New Business Motion 2: Move to create a Web/Technology Conference Committee starting at WSBC 2010.

Motion required 2/3 to adopt. Emergency New Business Motion 2 adopted.

Where the region is represented by fewer than forty percent of its intergroups and other eligible service bodies, the region may send up to five additional delegates. Preference shall be given to delegates selected from intergroups and service bodies that would otherwise not be represented by delegates. Therefore, Regions One, Four, Eight, Nine and Ten are eligible to send five additional delegates to WSBC 2010.

## **WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE 2009 DELEGATE REPORT**

I was privileged to be one of two delegates from Greater Seattle Intergroup to attend the OA World Service Business Conference (WSBC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico in May. I began to truly understand the concept of our fellowship being worldwide when I had dinner the first day with delegates from Mexico, Israel, Australia and New Zealand. We all shared the same love for our fellowship but I found out most of them were not as fortunate as we are. They have so few meetings and very little literature in their languages except the Big Book. Language became the main focal point of the entire conference.

Early each morning I attended an OA meeting. The first day only ten people attended but as more delegates arrived in Albuquerque the meetings grew and grew. What a wonderful way to start each day of the conference! The experience, strength and hope (ESH) in that room were tangible. Many had over 20 years of abstinence. Each day the topics were very thought provoking. I loved hearing the sharing with so much ESH.

The workshops started on Monday. I attended the following: Sponsorship and Service, Reaching Out Our Hands, As We Join Hands We Feel Love and Understanding, Raising Public Awareness, We Are All Together Now-No Matter What Language We Speak and a special workshop on Youth in OA. All of these workshops were full of great ideas from some very different experiences in recovery. The speakers at each workshop were from all parts of the globe. Each session had open sharing time after the speakers finished.

The first formal gathering was Wednesday. The seating for all delegates was by region. Our region is Region One so we were introduced first. I cannot explain the emotions I felt knowing I was representing our intergroup on a world level. The Serenity Prayer was said in two different languages at each business session and finally by the entire assemblage in English. What an incredible experience. The first full gathering was a forum on The Many Languages of Recovery. Language is a huge barrier. We are all encouraged to assist in funding the translating of our OA literature into other languages so the word can be spread throughout the world. Suggestions were made to have "sister intergroups" in other countries to assist them with literature and meetings. Greater Seattle Intergroup now has a "sister" intergroup in Mexico City. They have already received information on how to put on a marathon, creating a flyer, use of a website and meeting formats. I see this as just the beginning of a long relationship. A database at World Service Organization (WSO) is to be established to consolidate literature that has already been translated. An example would be translations done in French in Canada and perhaps repeated in French in France. At this time no one knows exactly which

literature has already been worked on. It was suggested we use the internet more to reach out worldwide.

There were five business sessions with 180 delegates and 15 trustees. The following actions were adopted:

- 1) December 12<sup>th</sup> (12/12) will be designated as OA's International Twelfth Step Within Day. This day can be celebrated by the group's choice.
- 2) After much heated discussion, the definition of abstinence was changed. It now reads "Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors".
- 3) Any motion to be placed on the agenda for WSBC must to be approved by 50% of the intergroups responding to the questionnaire. The old bylaw stated 30%.
- 4) A special fund is to be established to assist in the translating of OA literature, forms, correspondence, website and other materials to languages other than English. The money in this fund is in addition to the translation committee's budget. The Board of Trustees will establish guidelines to allocate the fund.
- 5) A Web/Technology Conference Committee will be established.
- 6) Website templates will be made available for use by OA service bodies and groups in creating or revising their websites.

Lifeline (our recovery magazine) lost \$60,000.00 last year. A committee was formed to look into the possibility of raising prices for subscriptions, having fewer published yearly (currently there are 10 issues a year) or discontinuing the printed version and having it available only online. The committee recommendations will be brought to the next WSBC in 2010. We were all asked to spread the word at meetings for all OA members to order a subscription if they want this great publication to continue.

My assignment was to work on the Literature Committee. Each committee assignment is a one year commitment. Each piece of OA approved literature is considered for revision every seven years. The Literature committee met four times. We broke into sub-committees. My sub-committee is revising the "To The Teen" pamphlet. The new Teen Pamphlet will be completed and submitted to the Board for approval by September. The entire Literature Committee will be working on a new Sponsorship Pamphlet in the coming year.

A special collection was taken for the new translation fund. \$1,487.85 was collected to begin this worthwhile project. Given that the theme for this year's conference was "I Put My Hand In Yours", surely there is no better way to put our hands together than to assist in this project.

From attending the 2009 WSBC conference, I walked away inspired, enriched and in awe of the impressive OA worldwide fellowship. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact me *barb.martinson@yahoo.com*.