

OA World Service Business Conference (WSBC) April 2011 Greater Seattle Intergroup Delegate's Report

Thank you for sending me to represent you at the OA World Service Business Conference (WSBC) in April, 2011. Your Seventh Tradition contributions made this possible.

I was one of about 200 delegates meeting in Albuquerque to represent OA Intergroups from all over the world. Greater Seattle Intergroup (GSI) sent two delegates. Nineteen delegates came from Region 1 (our Region), representing 40% (10 out of 25) of our Region's Service Bodies (Intergroups). Worldwide intergroup representation by Region ranged from 13% - 62%.

As with all OA events, our primary purpose is to carry the message that there is recovery from compulsive eating to those who still suffer. In this report, I hope to describe how decisions made by this group of delegates can help us as individuals, groups, and service bodies put our primary purpose into practice.

Abstinence

- We reaffirmed that delegates to WSBC must meet both abstinence and service requirements: One year of current abstinence, and two years of service (at any time) above the group level, such as serving as a meeting's Intergroup Representative.
- We approved a new definition of Abstinence and Recovery:
“Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.”

This new definition will appear in the revised *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet and will also impact meeting formats and other program literature.

Comment: Abstinence and physical recovery go hand-in-hand. Since ours is a program of attraction rather than promotion, working toward physical recovery is an important way to convey that our program works. Our recovery — physical, emotional, and spiritual — is like a three-legged stool that cannot stand on just one or two legs.

Meetings

- We agreed that if OA Virtual Meetings meet to practice OA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, register with OA World Service, and are guided by OA's Twelve Concepts, they are OA-approved. All OA members are invited to participate. Information about these meetings can be found on www.oa.org.
- We changed the definition of what constitutes any OA group to include being guided by the OA Twelve Concepts, meeting to practice the OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and affiliating as an Overeaters Anonymous group by registering with the World Service Office.

Comment: For OA unity, it's important that all OA groups agree to practice these principles and be guided by these concepts in all their affairs.

Anonymity

- We clarified OA's position on the use of public media (Tradition Eleven). It is suggested that members do not disclose their OA membership on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, due to concerns with anonymity.

Comment: No individual can represent OA as a whole, and Tradition Eleven on personal anonymity regarding press, film, and other public media still applies: no last names, no faces.

- We decided not to create a live online broadcast (streaming video) of the 2012 WSBC due to concerns about protecting delegates' anonymity.

Comment: Presenting WSBC live will allow delegates and OA members all over the world to see what happens at WSBC. One of the Regions plans to test technology which will likely allow us to do this in the near future while still protecting delegates' anonymity.

- We decided that the OA service title of an OA member may be printed on an event flyer if that member is presenting in their official capacity, e.g., Trustee, Region Chair, and so on.

Comment: There are no stars in OA; yet learning that an OA trusted servant will speak about their service can help attract OA members to such an event.

History

We agreed to name Rozanne S as the sole founder of OA (not the co-founder).

Comment: Other OA members formerly considered co-founders do not wish to be considered as such.

Literature

We made the following decisions regarding OA literature:

- We agreed on a definition for Action Plan, our Ninth Tool. This definition will be added to the *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet when it is reprinted in two to three months, and can currently be copied from <http://www.aa.org/new-to-aa/tools-of-recovery.php>.
- We gave the *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet the OA Conference Seal of Approval. This means that we approved it as revised.
- We approved the revised *Recovery Checklist* pamphlet which will be available soon.
- We learned that the Board of Trustees has created a new *Professional Outreach Manual*.
- We gave the OA Conference Seal of Approval to our new pamphlet, *A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery*, which will be available in two to three months.
- We decided that all AA Conference-Approved literature, such as *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the "Big Book"), *Came to Believe*, and *As Bill Sees It*, will continue to be considered OA-Approved literature (although not OA Conference-Approved).
- We will continue to publish the pamphlet *If God Spoke to OA* exactly as currently written.

Comment: Each piece of OA literature is reviewed by the Board of Trustees in seven-year cycles. If revision could better reflect WSBC group conscience, it is referred to the WSBC Literature Committee for further review and possible revision. The WSBC delegates as a whole decide whether to accept those suggested revisions.

Service Bodies (e.g., Greater Seattle Intergroup)

- Service bodies presenting an event publicized by a flyer may print the OA service title of an OA member, such as Region Chair, who will speak at that event about their experience in their service position.

Comment: There are no stars in OA, yet hearing an OA trusted servant speak about their service can help attract OA members to such an event.

My Experience at WSBC

From the moment I got on the airport shuttle in Albuquerque, unexpectedly accompanied by a friendly, joyful Region Trustee with 20+ years of abstinence, I was pretty sure I'd be well taken care of, and I was correct. Her advice to me: "get to the daily 7am OA meeting. It will start your day off right." Now, I'm NOT a morning person, but I was willing to go to any lengths: I wanted to know how she got what she has. So, I made my oat bran the night before, made coffee in the morning, grabbed my fruit and yogurt from the ice chest, and hustled to the Bring-Your-Own-Breakfast meeting. There I heard humility, joy, and living in the solution. Just what I needed.

I was thrilled to learn I'd been chosen for the Literature Committee which rewrites or edits current pieces of literature that need work. The Board of Trustees (BOT) reviews each piece of OA literature in seven-year cycles. Some get a "pass," some could carry the message in a better way. Sometimes we need a new piece of literature, such as our new *A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery*. Sometimes the WSBC delegates decide to follow a recommendation to retire a piece of literature which no longer effectively carries our message of recovery.

I chose to work on revising the pamphlet *Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite*. The "B4" sub-committee will meet deadlines throughout the year so that revisions are ready for the 2012 WSBC delegates to discuss and possibly approve. Before it gets to WSBC, our revised pamphlet will pass through several review cycles, including the BOT and the entire literature committee. Although control freaks at heart, we arrive at our decisions through a group conscience. So, I ask my HP to speak clearly with the guidance I need to set aside my ego to be of maximum service.

The "business conference" reflects the group conscience of OA worldwide. Thus, the BOT Chair reminded all delegates to leave opinions at the door and be open to whether a proposed agenda item furthered the good of OA. Many items were routine, and we quickly voted on them. Some proposals engendered passionate but to-the-point debate – up to three people speaking for, three speaking against. Before we voted there were often questions — NOT opinions disguised as questions. No booing or fist-pumping. No need to fuel resentments. All for the good of OA. After all, I might end up eating lunch with someone who didn't share MY opinion. Imagine!! Unlike some winner/loser meetings in the "real" world, this process really, truly worked.

The BOT Chair and assistants kept things moving. Delegates all followed along in our huge conference manuals. All the proceedings were clearly explained in a session the day before the business meetings started, and all the "old-timers" were happy to provide extra explanations for me – especially because I had a green dot on my badge, marking me as a newcomer. Isolating is always possible and a symptom of my disease, but everyone went out of their way to include me in conversations, expeditions, and meals. I did the same.

I was elected for a two-year term as your delegate. At a GSI meeting I was just asking questions about what it was like to be a delegate, and before I knew it, I was nominated. HP whispered, "Why not?" If I stay abstinent, one day at a time, I'm eligible to return next year. Yippee!! So, I encourage you to stay abstinent, take on an Intergroup position (ask me about opportunities), and make yourself available for service as a WSBC delegate. Truly, I am very grateful for this experience, which has a "beyond our wildest dreams" quality to it that I won't forget.

Thank you again for letting me represent you at WSBC. Please contact me if you have questions, would like me to speak at your meeting, or just want to chat.

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