

Overeaters Anonymous Region One Conference

Spokane, WA Sept 27-28, 2012

Delegate Report

I attended the conference as an appointed delegate for the Greater Seattle Intergroup. I was one of three delegates that had the honor to represent our area.

This was my first experience attending a region conference, and I'm so happy that I was able to go. It was at times thrilling, at others – more challenging to stay focused, but all in all such a great opportunity that I would definitely do again if I had the opportunity.

Region One includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. 17 out of 25 inter-groups were represented at the conference.

We also had a total of 9 out 10 Region chairs from around the world in attendance; Region 6 had their convention the same weekend. Whether it was from California, Israel or even New Zealand, the chairs for each region get meet up in a region once a year – this year is was Region One. It was a wonderful benefit to hear how other regions have dealt with some of the same issues we've wrestled with.

OK, so now that all the stats are out, why would I return if given the chance? I learned so many things about OA – personally and in service to OA. First of all, did you know that anyone (yes, even you) could attend a region conference? Yeah, me neither. You do not have the ability to vote, but any member can attend the entire conference. This is a good idea if you felt like you wanted to be of more service but a little intimidated by it all.

I got to witness when HP is involved, anything can be handled, even conflict. We were voting on an issue regarding if virtual groups would be allowed represented in our region's conference. The issue was discussed and discussed and discussed some more. We voted on sending this to reference committee – a committee that meets outside of regular conference time to look up info, or to basically continue the discussion, but that didn't pass. We discussed and disagreed some more (this was the challenging part), and again voted for reference committee, which passed the second time around. They met at lunch and came back with a solution. In the end the measure passed and everyone was satisfied. It taught me so much how to take that pause and look at things in a new way.

The thing that surprised me the most is that we are struggling to be self-supporting. Our seventh tradition is only covering about 28% of Region 1's costs; the rest is by literature....and hope. We went through the 2013 budget line-by-line and still ended

up with almost an \$8,000 deficit. The 2012 budget also had to be approved with a deficit. We watched a cute skit that was later performed at our GSI meeting, as to why we need more seventh tradition donations. Think about it – how much money did you invest in your disease with food, diet clubs, books, and the bigger clothes? Groan! And how much do you spend on nonessentials – coffees, magazines, etc? I realized I was spending more in apps on my phone per month than on the gift of my life back from this horrible, fatal disease. For me, I made a decision that my recovery comes first – even before my double tall, decaf, coconut milk, sugar free vanilla coffee.

Each delegate member then becomes part of a committee for a year. Me the “craft challenged” one, am on the “Quilt Committee”. Each year, intergroups create a square and they are all sewn together into a quilt and raffled off at the convention. The quilt made about \$800.00 this year. (Thanks Kaitlin for doing our square this year.) At first I was a little overwhelmed – I know nothing about sewing, much less quilting! By the end of the conference our committee had a plan, color scheme and someone to actually sew the quilt. The amount of people willing to help for the good of OA was amazing. The folder with 20 years of quilts and all the information we would ever need didn’t hurt either! These are just a few of many things I learned by being of service.

What did I get personally from attending this year’s convention? Well this isn’t the reason to go, but service does have it’s own rewards. For me, I got to meet people from all over the world that were abstinent for some time and working the steps. As a 100 pounder, I got to meet people that have taken off the weight and kept it off – I received hope. I made friends with others and feel more connected and plugged in to something that is a vital part of my life.

OK, so how do YOU get to become a delegate? It’s easy. The first step is committing to service above the group level (the meetings you attend), by becoming a GSI (Greater Seattle Intergroup) representative. We meet on the first Tuesday of the month and just like the region conference, you can come and just listen in at any meeting before committing.

So, two years of service above a group level, along with one year of abstinence make you eligible to become a delegate. Besides the Region 1 conference, there is also the World Service Business Conference, held in New Mexico in May.

Thank you GSI for allowing me this wonderful experience!

Yours in service,

Camille U.