
2013 OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE BUSINESS CONFERENCE DELEGATE REPORT

TO GREATER SEATTLE INTERGROUP

BY CATHERINE B

July 15, 2013

The 2013 OA World Service Business Conference (WSBC) was held April 29 - May 5 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Approximately 200 international Delegates, Region Chairs, and Board of Trustees members of OA attended, cast votes on this year's OA business, and shared with each other the experience, strength, and hope of their recovery to help us all do a better job of carrying our message to those who still suffer from compulsive eating.

BUSINESS DECISIONS:

- **Changes (as shown) to the wording in the OA Preamble:** The last sentence now reads “...*Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.*”
- **Conference approval of the *For Today e-Workbook*.** This workbook is available as a downloadable interactive PDF file which you can purchase from the OA.ORG bookstore. A similar e-workbook to accompany *Voices of Recovery* was approved in 2012 and is also for sale.
- **Change to OA's Unity with Diversity Policy** was made to include that we welcome all who share our compulsion. However, the proposal to grant the Conference Seal of Approval to the *Unity with Diversity Inventory* failed. Delegates felt that some items on the proposed list were outside issues and that having a list at all inevitably excluded some people.
- **Individual contributions to OA:** Adoption of the proposal to allow individual OA members to contribute up to \$5000 annually to the OA General Fund and to any special fund, and to honor the memory of a deceased member. In addition, OA Inc may accept an unlimited bequest from a deceased member's will.
- **Virtual Services:** Changes to By-Laws were made to include the election, appointment, and duties of the Virtual Services Trustee as well as including language that applies to virtual meetings and their service body structures.
- **Note re Failed Proposals:** Proposals failed that would have required Intergroups and Region Boards to have not just their by-laws but also their policies comply with WSO's. (GSI's by-laws comply.) The feeling was that the tail (WSO) was wagging the dog (IGs and other service bodies) and that this proposed policy was treading on the tradition of group autonomy in addition to putting a large housekeeping burden on small service bodies.

MY WORK AS YOUR DELEGATE:

- **Virtual Meetings table at the “Searching and Fearless” forum:** This forum, hosted by the 10 Region chairs, was based on the information gathered last year from the all-OA online survey that we were all encouraged to participate in. The results were very interesting and will be published soon. All delegates were divided among tables to discuss different issues that arose from the survey. I found out when I

checked on the first day that I was assigned to the Virtual Meetings table. Since I rarely attend virtual meetings, I emailed GSI members who do, and they quickly sent back ideas I could bring to the table. We were asked for ideas about ways that virtual meetings could be better served by OA as a whole and about how the new Virtual Services Trustee could be most helpful to these meetings. Thanks to your help, here are some of the ideas our table came up with:

- Help virtual meeting leaders understand and follow OA's traditions.
 - Encourage Intergroups to provide information to members about virtual meetings.
 - Help virtual meetings find a way to help members easily make 7th Tradition contributions. Doing so will help raise funds so they can send delegates to WSBC.
 - Hold local hands-on training on how to use the meeting leader's console.
- **Conference Literature Committee (CLC):**

In my third year as your delegate, it is also my third year serving on the CLC. I'm continuing the work I started last year with a sub-committee assigned to create a workshop and write instructions for taking a group of OA members through all twelve steps in 16 sessions. This intense, very structured workshop is designed to help desperate OA members who continue to struggle with abstinence, who may not have worked the steps, and who are now willing to go to any length for recovery.

Last year our committee of four met every other week via two-hour conference calls. Our homework between calls was to write the curriculum for the course. . Using the group conscience process as much as possible, it took us a year to decide on the fundamentals of this workshop and to write the introductory material and the sessions through Step Three.

This year with a committee of seven members, we're dedicated to completing the remaining steps. We're following our group conscience process (with the occasional help of Survey Monkey, an online survey tool!), still meeting bi-weekly via conference calls (to review what's just been written) and doing our individual writing between calls. We are really Unity with Diversity in ACTION as we all represent quite different ways of successfully recovering in OA – different but all of us are abstinent because we work the Steps. You can imagine the opinions we bring to our discussions! However, our mantra is "How Important Is It?" and that can sometimes help us stay out of the weeds.

We hope to have the first complete draft of the entire workshop ready to hand off by the end of September to start its way through the rigorous literature review process. In May we worked on our General Format, worked on Step 12, and brought the new committee members up to speed. In June and the first half of July we worked on Steps 4 & 5 and the worksheets that will accompany Step 4. Today (July 15) we reviewed the write-up of Steps 6 & 7. If the group conscience of our subcommittee is fundamentally in line with that of the entire CLC with regard to this project, we may be able to complete this review cycle so that delegates to the 2014 WSBC can vote next May on whether to give this literature Conference approval. If that happens, it can be distributed as an official piece of OA literature, possibly as soon as next summer. God's in charge: Pray but keep typing.

Being chair of this sub-committee continues to be a wonderful challenge and a great place to learn the skill of project management which really requires conscious contact with God. As with all OA service positions, you take the plunge and help will show up. What a great loving circle in which to learn new skills! Everyone on this committee has given service at their Intergroup and Region level. They've taken on service positions where they have had little or no experience in that position's duties. In doing so, we learn not to isolate – to ask for help and graciously receive it. Several committee members are brand new

to WSBC this year, and they took the plunge into this committee's rigorous work and demanding schedule, as well.

Several committee members are experienced project managers so I'm getting a lot of help from them, particularly about how much information and activity will fit in each two-hour session in our curriculum. (I forgot that people need to take breaks.) I'm also getting help with learning how to gently herd cats, how to receive kudos for standing firm, and how to accept loving resistance when I'm not gentle enough. I also get to learn how to be unafraid of not being right. If you know what I mean....

- **Literally Carrying the Message:**

I brought home around 20 CDs of workshop recordings on Sponsoring, Strong Meetings, Service, WSO Strategic Plan, Abstinence, and so on, as well as a recording of a business meeting. I purchased them myself but I'm happy to lend them. Consider playing one of them as a "speaker" at your meeting. Please call or email me if you're interested. I'd especially like anyone interested in being a delegate to listen to the recording of one of the business meetings – they are NOT dull!!

- **Rotation of Service:**

One of my jobs as your delegate is to recruit our next delegate(s). Rotation of service is a strong tradition in OA. My term as your WSBC delegate ends in November, 2014, when GSI will elect new delegate(s). Unless no one else runs for this position, WSBC 2014 will be my last Conference. It's only if GSI can find NO ONE ELSE to fill this position that WSO by-laws allow me to return for a third two-year term. So, come on! Step up! One requirement for being a delegate is the desire and ability to give service by being a liaison between WSO and GSI to facilitate carrying the message to compulsive eaters everywhere. In addition, if GSI decides to fund a delegate, you'll get to represent GSI at the annual World Service Business Conference in Albuquerque in late April/early May, 2015.

Delegates are not required to be on a WSO committee, such as the 12th Step Within, Young People in OA, Professional Outreach, Public Information, or Tech committee--or the CLC (literature) committee I serve on. Nevertheless, the experience is personally rewarding and the Intergroup that sends the delegate benefits from this service because it keeps the delegate connected with other OA members throughout the world, all working on the same projects. In getting to know these other delegates, you'll hear and share ideas from our collective experience in helping our meetings and service bodies.

Qualifications for being a delegate and attending the Conference are one year of abstinence, two years of service above the group level (for example, being your meeting's Intergroup Rep, chairing a marathon or retreat, serving as an Intergroup Committee Chair or member), and having taken Step 5 (when things get crazy, you know how to figure out what's your side of the street and clean it up). See also the Bylaws of Greater Seattle Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Article IV – The Intergroup Board, as well as GSI's policies and position descriptions. You'll find this information on our website, SeattleOA.org.

Thanks again for sending me to WSBC 2013. I hope that you and your meeting are getting your money's worth. Please ask me to visit or speak at your meeting. Or call just to chat about OA – particularly about being GSI's next WSBC delegate. I have much more to say than I can put into a report. I hope this will do for now!

Sincerely,

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