

World Service Business Conference Report 2013
Submitted by Barbara T., Delegate
Representing Palm Beach County Intergroup, Region 8

Here we are at the 52nd World Service Business Conference. What is that you may ask? It is a place where the trusted servants of Overeaters Anonymous representing the collective group conscience of the fellowship come together to discuss, debate, vote, and share for the good of OA as a whole. We delegates vote on new literature, by-law amendments, elect General Service Trustees, and participate in committees and workshops. I found that the place for me personally to be every morning at 7:00am. was at an OA meeting. It was a great way to start my day, and hear and see recovery from around the world. It connected me to other recovering people and got me ready for the work of the day.

I am honored, and humbled to be able to represent Palm Beach County Intergroup at the WSBC. Imagine working in a large global organization and you had lots of business to conduct and serious decisions to make regarding the organization. Imagine EVERYONE you were working with was a program person in recovery with continuous abstinence and willing to lovingly serve. You were working with people who have been working the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions and who have a working knowledge of the 12 Concepts of Service. There is a lot of work to be done and it is done in a spirit of fellowship and loving service. That is World Service.

This year there were 208 delegates from all around the world attending the 2013 WSBC. Represented were Columbia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, England, Ireland, Canada, Israel, Poland, Australia, Spain, Denmark, New Zealand, Mexico, and of course, the USA. With that in mind the work and workshops and business meetings begin. This year I was able to be mentor for a "green dot". A "green dot" refers to a first time attendee to the conference. This was a very fulfilling experience and I made a new OA friend.

The first few days were full of workshops and no matter what the topic, abstinence was part of it all. The need for abstinent sponsors is felt in every region throughout the world. The workshop "2013: The Year of Abstinence Awareness" had three speakers. I look forward to an opportunity to share the recording of that workshop which I purchased. Remembering that abstinence begins with each of us, and that abstinence is not the same as a food plan. Together with my green dot we attended workshops called "All About Conference" and "Parliamentary Procedure". The Region Chairs hosted a Forum called "Searching and Fearless: A Good Look". They performed an original skit to illustrate the need for taking inventory not only of ourselves but of our groups, Intergroups, Regions and the World Service Office. This includes but is not limited to getting rid of and cleaning out, outdated literature, updating our meeting formats, and keeping our Bylaws updated.

Several months ago, the Region Chairs sponsored a survey for the entire OA membership. More than 2500 responses were received. Some interesting facts gleaned out were that the favorite tool among those who responded was meetings while the least favorite tool is the phone. Interestingly, the number one item to help improve meetings is for people to make Reach Out phone calls, particularly to newcomers.

The main findings from the survey include 1. the need for more sponsors particularly in smaller meeting areas. 2. abstinence and physical recovery increases the longer people stay in OA. 3. there is an urgent need to carry the message to outsiders through the efforts of Professional Outreach and Public Information, and within the fellowship through 12-step within work.

A workshop on "Healthy Meetings" reminded us of the importance of having sponsors available, and returning phone calls. One member shared that their group gives away books to newcomers if it is a literature meeting. We are anonymous but not secretive and need to let people know how to find meetings. Also, having only conference approved literature at your meetings, using the "Strong meeting Checklist", being aware of what we do to attract and retain members make for healthy meetings. Healthy meetings follow and respect OA's Twelve Traditions. It is suggested that we use e-mail, give out welcome packets, and socialize outside the meeting rooms so we don't form cliques at our meetings. There was much discussion about attracting and retaining younger people to the fellowship, perhaps using more technology which they so relate to. We now have many virtual meetings, on-line meetings and e-books available for sale.

When we were not at workshops or the formal business meetings we were working with our assigned committees. My committee for the third year was the Conference Literature Committee. I had requested to return to this committee because I had chaired a sub-committee that was writing the E-workbook for For Today. This is an electronic workbook to accompany the "For Today" with a question or two for every day of the year. This electronic workbook will be an interactive PDF file downloadable from the OA.org website. Our long term goal was to bring this new piece of literature to the 2013 business conference for conference approval, which we accomplished. Other subcommittees of the Literature Committee include revising the Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition book, revising the OA Handbook, and writing an Intensive Step Study booklet as well as a new pamphlet on the OA Promises taken from our own literature as well as a pamphlet about Small Towns, Small Meetings.

Here is a brief over view of the Policy and By Law Motions that were discussed and debated and voted upon. If you want more details let me know and you are welcomed to borrow the binder we worked out of.

MOTIONS

25 motions were submitted to the WSBC. Based on input from the survey sent to Intergroups in February, three of the motions were not approved for addition to the agenda:

*Adding prayer and meditation to the tools

*Deleting the action plan as a tool (2 motions)

Of the remaining motions, eight were placed on a consent agenda, which means that they were treated as one because of the nature of their content and were noncontroversial in nature. Simple wording changes to existing policies and by-laws.

Adopted motions:

*to approve the publication of a new For Today e- workbook. This should be available for sale in about 2 months for about \$5.00. We will then have both the Voices of Recovery and For Today with companion writing workbooks for on line purchase. I

suggest you buy them both and keep them on your desktop for writing and/or sharing with your sponsor or OA friends. Great value for the money.

*The Unity with Diversity Inventory failed to receive conference approval this year.

*The Preamble to Overeaters Anonymous was amended by replacing "compulsive overeating" with "compulsive eating", and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

*The policy on individual donations will be moved from the Board Reference Manual to the Conference Manual. This policy includes "A member may contribute up to \$5,000 per year to a general fund, up to \$5,000 per year to any special fund, and up to \$5,000 per year to honor the memory of a deceased member. OA, Inc, may accept a bequest from the will of a deceased member in cash or cash equivalent. There is no limit on the amount of such a bequest.

* An introduction was added to the "Unity with Diversity" policy(binder page 136)

*A process was developed for the election of the virtual services trustee.

*Additional qualifications for regional trustees may be added by each region.

*In the qualifications for trustees, they must be currently maintaining a healthy body weight.

Defeated motions

*Virtual service boards may join a region.

*Service bodies must update their By-laws to reflect changes in the OA By-laws and policies.

MISCELLANEOUS

Interesting tidbits gleaned from various reports from members and the Board of Trustees:

* OA currently has about 5800 meetings with approximately 54,000 members.

*In 2012, World Service received \$485,000 in donations, which averages out to \$8.98 per member annually. Which comes to about \$.18 a week per member. We can ask sponsees and members to "show that you love OA" by contributing more to keep it alive. In New Zealand it is commonplace for members to put \$6.00 in the basket. With 208 voting delegates, the 7th Tradition collected during our business meetings totaled \$4,599.44

*Several pieces of literature will be available shortly:

A revision of the pamphlet introducing OA to clergy

A new intensive step study

* The focus of OA's strategic plan for the years 2014 to 2016 will be: Our primary purpose.

* New region trustees were elected for five of the regions including region eight. Our new Region 8 trustee is Linda H., former Pinellas Traditions IG Chair.

* Two new general service trustees were also elected: Bob F. and Gerri H. who just completed her term as Region 8 trustee.

* Of the 17 trustees, 5 are from Region 8:

General Service Trustees: Karen C., Gerri H., Janice S., Virtual Services Trustee: Stephanie D., Region 8 Trustee: Linda H.

Region 8 rocks!

One of the biggest tasks of the World Service Office is to store and sell literature, and maintain the oa.org web site including the list of all meetings around the world.

Here are a few extra tid-bits picked up during conference week:

*Bring the message to the meeting and the mess to your sponsor

*Recovery is worth planning for

- *I weigh and measure not just what I eat but I weigh and measure what comes out of my mouth
- *Be an example of recovery,
- *The importance of abstinence
- *talk to newcomers
- *pray about what kind of service you are meant to do
- *have business meetings during the meeting so everyone has a voice
- *ask newcomers how they heard about OA, so we can find out what is working
- *we are not a "glum" lot, laughter is good
- *use the strong meeting checklist
- *share a minute on the problem and two minutes on the solution
- * reach out to newcomers, attract, and retain members
- * practice these principles in all our affairs

The World Service Recovery Convention will be taking place in Cleveland, OH on Aug 29-Sept 1, 2013." The theme will be "Recovery to Rock the World". It is open to the entire fellowship.

The new Abstinence book is available for sale for \$10.00 on the OA.org website.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent Palm Beach County Intergroup at the World Service Business Conference. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I always did my best to represent you and to vote for the good of OA as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours in Loving Service,

Barbara T., Vice Chair Palm Beach County Intergroup