



OA Desert Recovery

November &
December
2016

NEWSLETTER@OASOUTHERNAZ.ORG

Why go to WSBC?

Well, **Concept Two** says: the OA groups have delegated to the World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, the World Service Business Conference (**WSBC**) is the **voice, the authority and effective conscience of OA** as a whole.

The **Twelve Concepts** of OA Service were adopted at WSBC in 1994 to help us apply the Steps and the Traditions to our service work. Service is an important part of our recovery. We are told that **"in order to keep it, we have to give it away."** The Concepts also describe the "chain of delegated responsibility we use to provide service throughout the world."

In 2016, WSBC was attended by 182 voting Delegates and 17 voting Trustees representing 19 countries. OA is truly a worldwide organization. All the Delegates sit at long tables arranged on two sides of a giant ballroom facing the dais at the front of the assembly where the 17

Trustees, the Parliamentarian, and a paid staff person charged with taking minutes, sit facing the assembly. The business conference is in session for three days, considering the election of Trustees (both Region and General Service) and the disposition of motions to approve new literature, change Bylaws (subpart B only), and make/ change/ rescind policies. WSBC follows Roberts Rules of Order in doing its business. In all respects, it follows the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts of OA. Unity and the group conscience are guiding principles.

This was my third time at WSBC as a Delegate for SEAZ Intergroup. I was scared to death the first time in 2012, but there was so much support there from other seasoned Delegates that I soon learned the ropes and began to get excited about the experience. I even got the nerve to get up at that first WSBC to speak against a By-laws amendment and a motion.

One can't help but feel both the **privilege of being a part of** that voice and the burden of the responsibility

of it. The feeling that we are truly "not alone anymore", in our common disease or in our common solution, pervades the room.

OA staff people sit off to the side, to serve and to provide information and assistance in helping the assembly come to an informed group conscience. But, this all sounds so boring! It's not. It's exciting. It's thrilling to watch and to be a part of. It's amazing to hear the Serenity Prayer said at the beginning of each business meeting and in a different language. **The room is alive with the collective group conscience** and the spirit of OA as a whole. Each Delegate who gets up and goes up to a microphone to ask a question, or give a pro or a con for a particular issue, is speaking for OA as a whole. We trust our Delegates with this awesome task. And whether or not a particular Delegate actually gets up to go speak to the assembly, they are there for the common good of OA.

Every time I've attended WSBC, I'm renewed spiritually in my recovery.

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FALL RETREAT: “ALIVE IN RECOVERY”

The topic of the retreat was “Alive in Recovery,” and at each session, the guest speaker, Meg, shared her experience, strength and hope, and tips on living well in recovery. We started with writing down what we say to ourselves when we look in the mirror, then breaking into groups to draw our body shapes on to a piece of brown paper, then **writing positive statements that we could say to ourselves to replace the negative messages in our self-talk.** We did a craft project, making a bookmark with decoupage and a napkin, that we could decorate with stick-on words. In the evening session, the 50/50 drawing and the raffling of 17 baskets was held, and brought in \$386 in revenue for our Intergroup. After the drawings, there was a Q&A session, then a sing-along and dancing for those who wanted to participate. On Sunday, we discussed questions that could be asked when making outreach calls to the newcomer, the relapse-er, the still struggling, and the long-timer. We ended our time together by making a commitment for physical, emotional

and spiritual practices and having two witnesses of our choice to sign them, stating that they were willing to have you call and follow up with them in the future.

I have attended the retreat at the monastery several different times in the past 12 years that I have lived in Saint David, but I have never stayed overnight. I was concerned about my accommodations, but God provided a room that had access to a bath room, kitchen and an area to be able to get up early and not bother my roommate. I was a little concerned about the food that was going to be provided but there was a large variety to choose from and the ability to bring in food that I could eat, if what was served was not on my plan of eating. **It was very nice to be able to participate in all the planned events and to go to my room during the free time and lie down and relax.** Although I talked with my husband and son throughout the weekend, I did not have to interrupt the retreat experience to go home and cook meals, walk dogs, etc. I enjoyed just being able to relax and chat without worrying about getting home. **I would recommend saving up during this next year to be able to spend the weekend immersed in OA.** I enjoyed morning chats with my house mates, the fellowship, and the quiet and nature of the grounds at the monastery.

Since the speaker for the retreat grew up in my hometown, we spent some time connecting with each other and learned we have a similar family dysfunction as well as our compulsion to overeat. It was great to find so many OAs I had not met before who were my instant friends because of our common problem.

There were several tips on how to live well while working the program and **I appreciate the reminder that all we have is today.** Lots of things about how we work our program change. Our meal plan evolves over time as we are willing to look at other addictive foods and behaviors that need to go. Whether we have been abstaining, must start our abstinence over because of a slip or have been in a relapse, many things contribute to making each new day unique. This year the committee for the retreat offered a “We Care” list for all those at the retreat who would like to be able to keep in touch after the event. I am grateful to all the people who volunteered their time and service to plan the event, and to work at the retreat, as I feel it made this year the best year ever!

Darlyn



I.D.E.A. DAY

November 19, 2016
9:30 a.m.--3:00 p.m.
Church of Christ
815 El Camino Real,
Sierra Vista, AZ

THANK-A-THON

November 24, 2016
9:00 a.m.-12 Noon
St. James Methodist Church
3255 N. Campbell Ave.
Tucson, AZ



Step 11---Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

SINGING WITH MY HIGHER POWER

As a compulsive overeater using the Tools and Steps of the OA program, I now pray all the time. Each day, I talk to God, say the Serenity Prayer when I wash my hands, and sing and send praises to Him.

During a recent retreat, I chanced to do something I love: talking to God through song. Each day I walked with OA friends on nearby trails. On the last day, a new OA friend walked with me, and we readied our minds and hearts for the last morning of the retreat. We talked about our music experience and sang a couple of folk songs. In the car, we sang a gospel hymn. I was so relaxed and in touch with my HP that **I lifted my hand in surrender and closed my eyes in reverence.**

Gospel hymns have been a source of meditation for me with my Higher Power. I send up my thanks in music, and I may have to sing one phrase over and over. I get my soul in touch with God to listen to his direction for me today.

Of course, my HP knows just how reluctant I am to do new things. I will take a step back and want to just watch, waiting for the right time. **God knows when I am ready, even when I don't.** After our walk, my new friend suggested we practice the gospel hymn to open the morning session of the retreat. In a safe and quiet place, with a friend and music, I lifted my voice with praise and thankfulness for the many blessings and miracles in my life.

Today I walk hand in hand with God. As the Big Book says, ".....we must go further and that means more action" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., p. 85). Daily, in meditation and action, "I put my hand in yours....and together we can do what we could never do alone" (I Put my Hand in Yours, p. 1). **Natalie**



Step 12---Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

MY PERSONAL "GPS" SYSTEM

On a recent visit to my family, I attended an OA meeting on my way to the airport. Thoughts of traffic, best travel route and snowfall distracted me. **I remembered to focus on the present, to "let go and let God."** I chose God as my personal GPS advisor and quit worrying. Later I mused about how much more meaning the acronym would have if I changed it from the well-known "global positioning system" to "God Promises Serenity." Using Step 12 on my trip, I tried to "practice these principles in all my affairs."

The Principles of the Twelve Steps are honesty, hope, faith, courage, integrity, willingness, humility, self-discipline, love, perseverance, spiritual awareness and service (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, pp. 103-106). I admit I am a compulsive eater and can't enjoy the foods others use to celebrate. **I believe in a Higher Power and daily choose to turn my life over to God.** I speak up about my needs and ask that they be met. I am willing to use the OA Tools and humble enough to know I can't do it alone. I stick with my routine of prayer, meditation, journaling and exercise. I make loving kindness my benchmark for decisions. I keep working at it even when I'm away from home. **I pray some more, and I trust my presence in recovery is a service to my family.**

"God Promises Serenity" and my working for it fulfills His promise. **Cecelia**

ANONYMITY: HAND-IN-HAND WITH SERVICE

*Living in a small town can often present challenges to someone anonymously working a 12-Step program, but in recent years I have found it also provides many unforeseen service opportunities and rewards. I think back to the first weekend retreat I attended and to my surprise, the leader introduced himself with his full name and handed out cards with his contact information. Having been a member of OA and AA for 30+ years, he emphatically explained his practice of not hiding behind anonymity. He said **we should be available to all members of our Fellowship and to other people still looking for a way out of the disease of compulsive eating**. I was not ready to forego my anonymity at that time because I was still so new to OA, but in recent years I have learned a little less anonymity sometimes has been helpful in extending the hand of recovery.*

*I have learned that anonymity is not here to protect me or to keep my disease secret. It and my crazy dieting were not secrets from others, no matter how well I thought I was hiding them. I think anonymity was put in place to protect our Fellowship from ourselves: in my case, from ego and expertise and well-intentioned grandiosity. **I think anonymity is necessary to keep us focused on our common solution: the Twelve Steps of OA.***

At that retreat, the leader stated if he was a public figure involved in a public controversy and his OA membership was broadcast, then OA's credibility might be threatened. To ensure anonymity at some levels of public media, we only give our first names or sometimes give false names, and provide OA contact information. In those cases, anonymity is our responsibility, not that of the media.

*The leader pointed out we often hide behind another phrase in Tradition 11: "attraction rather than promotion." He said he is attracted to beautiful flowers he sees, not to just those growing in a secret garden. That makes me wonder **how still suffering compulsive eaters hear about the OA solution**. I know OA is listed in the phone book and on-line, but compulsive eaters who don't know about OA must flounder for help. I have come to realize how important it is for members to post notices on community bulletin boards and in local newspapers, and sometimes to let our anonymity "slip a little" so that others with our insidious disease will reach out to us.*

Where I live has provided many opportunities for me to speak about the benefits of OA. There is the cashier from a grocery

*store who came to a meeting and never returned, but many times as I go through her check-out line she asks me if I am still attending. I always say yes and I always invite her to come again, and have left a few pamphlets with her that I hope will be motivating. There is the delivery person who came to my house and met an acquaintance of hers just leaving, then asked how we know each other---so we told her about OA. And, of course, there are the family members and friends in my life who know I attend OA and tell other people about me. If anyone reaches out to me, even though someone else violated my anonymity, I still talk to them about OA. **I am now more concerned with giving someone help or information about OA than I am about them knowing my last name.***

*I have also learned other ways to attract compulsive overeaters, such as talking to my medical caregivers about my recovery. I leave them brochures that list our local meetings and contact information. Wherever I see a bulletin board, I ask permission to post OA meeting announcements. My groups try to list a contact person who is abstinent and well-versed in the workings of the program, so they can intelligently answer questions. What OA offers in that initial contact is a voice of sanity and gratitude, but we also offer a solution! I still remember that retreat leader saying that OA has something special to offer and that we should not keep it hidden. I also agree that many times we need to be **less worried about our anonymity, but rather to be bold about sharing our recovery and doing it without fear**. That provides those ignorant of OA and still suffering from their own compulsive over-eating the chance to get well too!*

Peggy P.

TRUE BLESSINGS

Nowhere can I go alone,
Nor can I hurt and cry alone,
For He is always with me
To lead me down the road.

When I feel I am put to the test,
And can go no further in my humanness,
There He is to hold me,
And in His arms I rest.

Thank you, dear Spirit, for guiding
My soul to You for rest,
And for taking my brokenness
Within You to bless.

And thank You for leading me
Into the fellowship of my friends
Who help me learn to listen and to heal,
Who teach me how to follow the
Steps to recovery.

No longer alone, no longer lost,
I have truly been blessed
With a Power to love and guide me,
Twelve Steps to lead me,
And friends who will remind me,
This too shall pass.

D.K.

**You're either surrendering to your HP or
the food—there is nothing in between.**

Marketing Ourselves & The Program

I am a self-employed mental health professional, and have learned to market myself using the “pull” versus “push” method. Tradition 11 suggests OA function the same way, and for good reason.

When I see a mother speaking roughly to her child or pulling him by the arm, hurrying him through a decision he doesn't have the cognitive skills to make, I think, “There's a future client” and wonder how I could market myself to her. “Push” marketing would suggest I hand her a business card and point out the ineffectiveness of her parenting skills and the trouble she's creating for herself. As you can guess, that's no way to establish rapport with a potential client.

Instead I must use “pull” marketing, which suggests I embody the skills and talents I am trying to sell and see if she wants what I have. I might begin interacting with the child in a light-hearted manner to distract the child from misbehavior, while guiding him into the behavior his mother wants. At that point she's able to ask me how I did that. I could then give her a business card without insulting her.

OA must work in much the same way. I often see obese people gorging on food at restaurants, such as all-you-can-eat buffets. Their condition is even more salient if their scooters are nearby or if they've parked in the handicapped spot with no discernible handicap but their weight. I think, “They could benefit from OA.” I want to run up and tell them about it, but I'm likely to meet with disaster. I may as well run up and inform them they're fat—a fact of which they are, no doubt, already aware. It is the “push” method again, and no way to make a friend or get anyone to a meeting.

Instead, I must use the “pull” marketing by working the Steps, working the OA program and focusing on my own recovery. Then if someone happens to think I look like I am in physical, emotional and spiritual health, he or she may ask me how I am achieving it. More often someone makes an off-hand, somewhat humorous comment about how good I have things. I consider the comment my invitation to offer OA information and extend an invitation into the Fellowship of OA. The fact the person made a catty remark makes no difference. The jealousy in the voice tells me I have what he or she wants, and rather than keep this fantastic information a secret, I tell the person how I attribute my success to my OA involvement.

Tradition 11 reminds us to quietly live the program and to attract others, rather than to noisily promote ourselves, which tends to alienate others. We must provide good “life examples” that will act as magnets to others seeking solutions to the insidious disease of compulsive overeating.

Mark

Tradition 11----Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.

Tradition 12----Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place Principles before personalities.

ANONYMITY, NOT CELEBRITY

One of the first things I heard in OA was people sharing from their hearts, souls and guts. I had never heard that before, anywhere. I also heard, “We eat over what is eating us.” **I understood what was said in OA rooms or to another OA member was a confidence to be kept.** This gave me the freedom to share what was in my heart and gut---what was eating me up. Anonymity still gives me that freedom, whether at a meeting or on the telephone.

I learned it is wise to be discerning about where and to whom I reveal personal information because we are all at different stages of recovery, and some individuals, especially newcomers, may not fully understand the deep commitment required in keeping anonymity.

The Tradition of anonymity makes us all equals.

OA has no stars. I must not put anyone on a pedestal, because we are all human beings with flaws. There is good in the worst of us and bad in the best. If I put OA members on pedestals, when they reveal their flaws, I could become devastated because their stars have been tarnished. I must learn to accept that human failings are normal in the program and in life. **No one is perfect.** Sooner or later we each display our clay feet. I don't expect perfection from anyone anymore, not even myself.

Ellen

There is an on-going need for original stories, articles, poetry and artwork to be published in the newsletter. Issues are bi-monthly and published in the odd-numbered months. **The deadline for the next issue, January/February, will be Thursday, January 5, 2017.** Your co-chairs of the newsletter for the last two years are grateful for such an opportunity to do service, and wish whomever follows us in the position the best of luck. We also want to thank everyone who submitted anything to us for publication and hope you will continue to contribute to the newsletter.

Peggy P. and Darlyn

Newsletter@OASouthernAZ.org

Continued from Page One: The strength and the power of the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts permeates the space and **it feels like I'm literally breathing recovery.**

We practice trust in electing new Trustees who we believe will serve us and OA as they are guided. We practice equality by allowing all voices and opinions to be heard, no matter how controversial the ideas or how difficult they are to understand. We know that they are there for the same reason that we are there – to recover from compulsive eating and to help ensure that the message continues to be carried to those still suffering.

If a good idea fails, we know that it will come back and be resubmitted in due time. Sometimes HP's answer may be "no", but sometimes it is "not yet." If there are not enough votes this year, perhaps there will be next year or the year after. And, in the meantime, the maker of the motion has gotten useful feedback that may help the proposition to be an even better idea the next time around. We don't worry that it didn't happen this year. There is a Higher Power in charge of results at WSBC as well.

Why do we need to send two (or perhaps eventually three) Delegates to WSBC each year? The collective conscience of OA decided long ago that each Delegate at WSBC represents 15 meetings or a fraction thereof in a particular service body. An Intergroup with 16 registered meetings may send two qualified Delegates to WSBC. **Concept Four** states: "The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process." When an Intergroup or service body fails to send Delegates that it is qualified and can afford to send to WSBC, then it is not exercising its right of participation and is not allowing the true group conscience of OA as a whole to be heard. Stepping up to service at this level is more than a right, it is a responsibility.

I was grateful this Spring to be able to step up to the opportunity to attend WSBC as an alternate Delegate for SEAZ Intergroup. **SEAZ is one of the strongest Intergroups in OA Region III.** It was and is our responsibility to send Delegates to represent us. We qualify, with our approximately 33 meetings at present count, for 3 Delegates and we could also send 3 RRs to Region Assemblies, if our budget would allow. It has been our custom to budget for and send 2 RR/Delegates to Assemblies and to WSBC. By attending WSBC, Delegates get to meet and to hear firsthand about the qualifications of the Trustees that they will elect to administer the WSO, as stated in **Concept Six.** The Delegates get to know the people they have trusted with serving OA as a whole. Delegates also get to meet many of the staff people that have been hired to carry out the business of OA.

But, what else happens there? Is it all just business? **In addition to the main business meetings, Delegates are assigned to a committee at the beginning of conference.** There are nine to choose from and Delegates indicate preferences when they register a couple of months before Conference. They don't always get their first choice, but usually they get selected for the committee their HP wants them on.

The committees each do projects that extend through the year until the next WSBC. Some, like the Conference Literature Committee and the By-laws Committee will probably bring motions to the Conference for vote. Some of those motions had to be approved for the agenda by the Fellowship as a whole through the Agenda Questionnaire, which we see each year. Other committees may create proposals for new literature or even create their own workshop or other resources that may eventually be found on the OA website.

Delegates usually arrive well before the actual business meetings of the WSBC begin. Committees generally meet before the actual conference starts. There are scheduled OA meetings held morning through the late evening. There are special focus OA meetings held in hotel rooms with announcements posted on the bulletin board next to the Conference Support Desk. There are several open Board of Trustees meetings where Delegates can watch the Trustees administer business and WSO affairs, and elect their officers for the coming year. **There is also a boutique where the Delegates bring fundraising items to sell for their Intergroup or Region.**

There are workshops related to the theme of the Conference --- this year, "Responsibility." Speaker/leaders from the various Regions shared their experience, strength, and hope on the responsibility to be abstinent, to carry the message, to work all Twelve Steps, to share with young people, to carry the message virtually. There was also a workshop on strategic planning--- ideas to take home on what individuals can do. And, if that wasn't enough to keep everyone busy, there were hotel shuttles to restaurants and shopping in Albuquerque.

But, honestly? **Delegates are there primarily to strengthen their own recovery and to carry the message back home with them. That's our primary purpose.** In SEAZ, our World Service Delegates also serve as our Region Representatives. Region III has two assemblies per year – one in the Spring a month or two before WSBC, and the other in the Fall. For the past several years SEAZ has sent two Rep/Delegates to represent us at these service levels. Each serves a two-year term and their terms alternate, so that there is always a Junior Delegate and a Senior Delegate.

I highly recommend this service to anyone who is qualified, able, and willing to do it. It will strengthen your recovery and expand your spiritual horizons like nothing else I have experienced. You will make new friends. And, you will have fun. Thank you all so much for letting me do this service for you once again this year.

Neva