



## BALANCE

To you our subscribers, **YOUR COSA NEWSLETTER**

We continue to appreciate your support and patience as we experiment with changes necessary for the continuation of our newsletter. In the past few months we have managed to produce a newsletter about once a month. We hope to continue that process. As long as subscriptions continue to arrive and materials are submitted for content, we will strive to produce on a monthly basis. Please continue your recovery and sharing your recovery by submitting to the newsletter that is yours and could become a vital link of belonging for you as you continue your journey.

### COSA HISTORY:

The pattern of compulsive sexual behavior was identified by a number of therapists in their clients in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area during the late 1970's. Among them were therapists at Family Therapy Institute and Family Renewal Center. The impetus for using the 12 Step model came from these professionals and SAA (Sex Addicts Anonymous) groups were started in the fall of 1979.

In keeping with the Alanon experience the need for a group for family members was soon recognized. As a result, two groups were formed in early 1980. One group started with four members and the other with three. This history will be directed to the latter group. The former group chose to limit membership for boundary reasons. About 18 months later the name, CO-SA, was adopted, standing for Codependents of Sex Addicts.

During 1980 the CO-SA group met in the homes of its members. From the beginnings there was a strong desire to follow the 12 Steps of Alanon with which most of the members were familiar. Two changes were made in the wording of the 12 Steps. In the first step, the word "others" was substituted for "alcohol". In the 12th step the words "day-to-day living" were substituted for the word "affairs". In addition to the 12 Steps, three supportive messages were central to the healing among early members. They were, 1) Don't take the addict's behavior personally, 2) It's not my fault, 3) Take care of yourself. Members told and retold their stories when new people came.

By February 1981 members began coming in rapid succession. Referrals were primarily from therapists. Another dimension was added when CO-SA members learned about a death from sexual addiction from the victim's widow.

During the summer of 1981 CO-SA and SAA attempted to form a joint Intergroup. The CO-SA name was formally adopted and the first group had grown large enough to divide. Within another year there were 6 CO-SA groups in the Twin Cities Area. The first CO-SA brochure was written and distributed to churches, treatment centers and therapist's offices. CO-SA obtained a post office box and began to get many letters, both local and out-of-state. Return phone calls were made by members in response to local inquiries. If a person wanted to attend a group, they identified a preferred location and day, then the CO-SA caller passed this information to the appropriate group. A member from each group personally met with individuals to "12 Step" them into the group. By the end of 1981 there were 5-6 new members a week. CO-SA struggled with balancing the issue of confidentiality and the need to help

family members still suffering. With increasing numbers of new members, the personalized "12 Stepping" process was becoming a burden. There was also growing recognition that CO-SA needed its own intergroup.

About this time, an advise columnist (Ann or Abby?), published a letter from a man in Simi Valley, California describing sex addlction and offering to help start groups to arrest it. The response to his letter was large, including letters from Boston & Minneapolis, indicating that groups had already been started in those areas. The Simi Valley man and a Boston man decided to tour the U.S. sharing their experiences and assisting 12 Step groups. They came to Minneapolis and met with SAA and CO-SA intergroup members. They were surprised to learn that here there was help for family members. They had not encountered this anywhere else.

Early in 1982, CO-SA intergroup formally severed ties with SAA intergroup. A "How To Start A Group" packet was written in response to so many out of state requests. A first step inventory was devised. There was a need for more public information about CO-SA so a monthly outreach information program was started in 1983. Speakers were also provided to the Golden Valley Treatment Center from among the members. In 1984 a St. Paul group member designed the CO-SA symbol which became the CO-SA medallion.

The 12 lines on the design represent the 12 Steps. The sun is a symbol for the dawn, a new beginning. The flying gull symbolizes freedom. The original medallion contained the slogan, "From shame to grace".

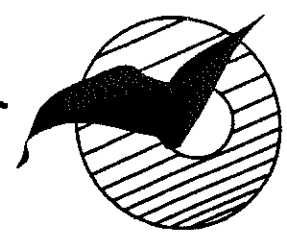
There were banquets celebrating both the 5 year and 10 year anniversaries of CO-SA. Some groups offered weekend retreats for and by members of their individual group.

Between 1985 and 1990 expansion and direction were the issues that intergroup had to address. Subcommittees were formed with a somewhat shaky beginning. They were; literature, events, outreach, and telephone. For a short time CO-SA experimented with having a paid part time employee to handle business, mail, and phone requests. From this experience, intergroup learned that the organization was not ready to handle the responsibility of selecting and guiding an employee.

A central answering machine was purchased to handle the ever increasing requests for information about CO-SA. The responsibility for responding to requests is rotated monthly among the various Twin Cities groups. The need for responses to out of state queries also multiplied. The same mail box had provided a continuous source of contact for people locally, nationally and internationally for over 10 years.

New literature was written and old literature was revised. The CO-SA stories were printed in order to share, "where we had been, what helped us to change, and where we are now". The on-going problem of how to maintain anonymity and yet remain open to new membership was a continuing struggle. Eventually individual groups decided through their own group conscience and the majority of CO-SA groups became open and available to anyone who "had a problem with sexual addiction in a family member or friend."

*Respectfully submitted by Jean A. and Marie B., August 1993*



*I WILL BEGIN TODAY WITH HOPEFUL ATTITUDES AND A SENSE OF RENEWAL.*

# JOURNAL NOTES

## Inner Thoughts

The grief process always is the same for me, each time. Beginning with shock, I deal with the loss by coping. This means I try to make my surroundings safe. I clean my house and my dogs and make my nest as comfortable as can be. During this time, I pretend there will be no pain or anger. Then, when I get safe and secure, knowing that I can take care of myself, and that what I can't do, one of my friends will be able to, then I allow the pain to come. The healthier the relationship I have had and lost, the greater the pain. This is because I have lost so much more. With intimacy comes true caring, sharing, and support. Also, or as a result of this, true love. To lose this is very painful.

There is also hope in knowing that, for once in my life, I can look back on a relationship and not feel shame or fear. My COSA recovery has given me time spent with a caring and thoughtful man who loved me in his own way and the next relationship will be more intimate and committed than the last. I am experiencing the progression of the recovery process instead of the progression of the disease.

What could be seen as a failure of a relationship, is seen by me as a success in my COSA recovery. *Anonymous*

**Remember:  
It's Your  
Newsletter!**

**BALANCE** is in need of more stories and other submissions to continue its planned publication schedule.

## TIGHTROPE WALKER

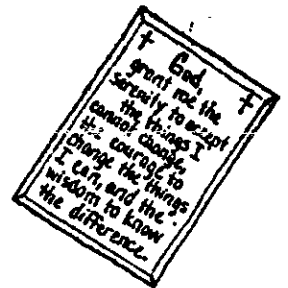
Shall she be a coward or a fool?  
The pendulum swings wildly inside her  
Seeking some still point of courage.  
Fool's upward scaling flight soar  
Coward's down descending flight flee  
Balance pole tilts crazily over the wire  
Nudge to right it & it swings way over the far side  
Perhaps each nudge makes each swing's circle less  
But the tightrope walker can't take a step  
Until the pole comes to rest  
At the still point of courage.

## GRIEF & ACTION

As I read today, in M. Beattie's meditation book, I get even more in touch with my feelings at this moment. "Trust in God & Do Something!" she says.

I'm not sure I'm ready. I have been crying for three weeks. I have lashed out in anger toward my husband. I have experienced so many feelings of grief. It feels good. It feels. For the first time it really feels. I'm enjoying just feeling. There's

a big part of me that doesn't want to let go of feeling right now. If I do something, feeling might go away. Yes, grieving is a process that we must go through. I'm simply not upset about being here. It can last awhile. The mediation says we will know when it's time to break out. The routine of grieving just feels like a secure cocoon. I don't think that's how I feel. I want to get through. I want the healing. The cleansing feels like healing. I'm okay where I'm at today.



# COSA Literature Available

To order literature, write Minnesota Cosa,  
PO Box 14537  
Minneapolis, Mn. 55414  
Ph. 612-537-6904

Send an order noting the quantity & cost of each requested item. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Please include postage and handling, according to the following order totals.  
Postage & Handling: .75 for an order of .20 to \$2.00; \$2.00 for orders totaling \$2.01 to \$9.00; \$3.00 for orders from \$9.01 to \$30.00; and \$5.50 for orders over \$30.01.

COSA brochures---.20 each  
COSA Welcome brochure---.20 each  
How to start a group---\$2.00  
Starting New Groups Audio Tape---\$5.00  
COSA Stories Vol.I---\$3.50  
COSA Stories Vol.II---\$3.50  
COSA Medallions---\$3.00 ea (5 inc., years 1-10)  
National List of Meetings---\$3.00  
Laminated COSA cards with Serenity Prayer, 12 Steps & 12 Traditions/our logo---\$1.00

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Send contributions to support your newly formed COSA/NSO to:

COSA/NSO  
9337-B KATY FREEWAY #142  
HOUSTON, TX 77024

To learn more about what your NSO is doing, refer to your Vol 2 #4 issue of your newsletter "Balance"

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## QUEST FOR SERENITY RECLAIMING OUR TRUE SELVES 1ST ANNUAL COSA/NSO NATIONAL CONVENTION

DATE: MAY 27-30, 1994  
LOCATION: PHOENIX, ARIZONA  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

SHERI T.  
4601 N. 56TH STREET  
PHOENIX ARIZONA 85018  
602 947-7370

CONCURRENT SAA/NSO NATIONAL CONVENTION  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
STUART G. 602-285-9910 OR  
MIKE O'D 602-863-3006

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