



# BALANCE

THE COSA NEWSLETTER

I AM ON A JOURNEY TO DISCOVER THE STRONG INNER ME.

THE  
GREATEST  
POSSESSION  
YOU  
HAVE  
IS  
THE  
24  
HOURS  
DIRECTLY  
IN  
FRONT  
OF  
YOU.

## FOCUS ON: Step Four

*"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

Step Four is where living by the Twelve Steps hits home. After admitting how unmanageable our lives had become and our powerlessness over that, coming to believe in a Higher Power who could restore us to sanity and making the decision to trust that Higher Power, we are called upon to shift the focus to ourselves. For many of us this is an uncomfortable and downright unappealing thought. For addicts and co-addicts alike, there is a tendency to focus elsewhere. We see the faults of others all too easily and then, as codependents, set out to change the world on our own. Step Four asks us to stop all that activity outside of ourselves and take a look at our own behavior. But the step doesn't just say "made an inventory," rather it says "made a *searching and fearless* moral inventory." Perhaps some of us know what we'll find, and that is why we avoid truly practicing this step in our day-to-day living. Could it be that the fear of facing the truth about ourselves fills us with dread? We have the weight of the world on our shoulders; how can we carry this, too? But we must remember as we approach Step Four that the very next step on our journey through the Twelve Steps will ask us to release the burden once again by admitting it to ourselves, our Higher Power and another trusted person. Step Four is a necessary step toward overall recovery and a vital part of our day-to-day plan for sane living.

THE  
FIRST  
STEP  
TO  
WISDOM  
IS  
SILENCE;  
THE  
SECOND  
IS  
LISTENING

### MEDITATION TO FOCUS ON MYSELF

Early in life our parents and other caregivers modeled what relationships look like. In my family my primary caretakers frequently modeled unhealthy interactions among themselves and with me. One example of this was the expectation that I ignore my needs in order to meet theirs.

Since this was how relationships worked in my childhood, I continued to work relationships in this way during my adulthood. My energy was focused on the other person in relationships. I took responsibility for meeting their needs, even though I had not been asked. I also expected the other person to meet my needs without my having to ask.

In recovery, I began to understand how this could never work to my satisfaction. I needed to reverse my thinking and put the focus on me.

As I become aware of what my own needs are, then I can meet my needs and/or ask to have my needs met. This is my simple secret.

Affirmation: I CAN PUT THE FOCUS ON ME  
Co-authored by Lisa Mc. and Robyn M.

### A FIRST STEP

I always felt that my family was different from other families, that our secrets were unique. My earliest memory of my father enforcing the "No Talk" rule was when I was five and my mother had entered a mental hospital once again, for depression and suicidal tendencies. My father said, "We don't need to tell anyone about this." I can remember feeling deep shame and guilt when I let it slip to a friend. My parents divorced when I was ten years old. My sister cheerfully reported their divorce to me as I left school one day. My family believed that if the sick person was removed from the family then everything would be "normal".

I need to back up here because I realize I left out a very big part of who I am. From the ages of six to ten my brother sexually abused me. I felt shameful and different from others (again). I'm still unclear as to why the abuse stopped. I believe he found another victim to abuse. I had chose not to deal with the abuse and throughout my teenage years I denied it so very well I pretended it hadn't occurred. Yet through my behavior, there was no doubt I was an incest survivor.

I dated a series of unhealthy boys as a teen and was sexual with three before my current boyfriend. Out of the three, not one was addiction-free. I now realize that one of them also a sex addict.

I thought Brad, my present fiancée, was the answer to my dreams. He didn't seem sick or unhealthy as the others honestly did. We dated for three years, then moved in together. It was after we lived together for a year I discovered his addiction. The day I discovered the addiction he told me everything. He was tired of lying and said he felt like a sick pervert. I readily agreed with him. His addiction consisted of masturbation and fantasy utilizing all forms of pornography and frequenting strip joints. I was so angry when he disclosed all of these secrets he had kept. I felt that everything we had shared together was a lie. Later that same day I had sex with him thinking that if we had sex more often it would keep him away from the things he had done.

Being a great co-dependent, I set about to fix HIM. I looked for a therapist who worked with sex addicts and read everything I could find. He began attending a twelve-step group for sex addicts, yet I was still spending all of my energy on HIM and HIS addiction. My school work and job took a back seat to the addiction. I did many sick, unhealthy things before coming to C.O.S.A. and they are hard to admit. Yet I've learned that many other co-addicts have done these things or similar things to try to control the addict. I drove to strip joints to look for his car, stared at the men coming out of the building and wrote down their license plate numbers, took diet pills to get slim, bought lots of lingerie I couldn't afford to try to make him want to have sex with me, ate to feel better, smelled his clothes for smoke(evidence of a visit to a strip joint), read his journal, cut my hair to look ugly (self-punishment) and flew into angry, uncontrolled rages.

I know my life was very unmanageable before coming to C.O.S.A. I literally felt lost and at rock bottom. At my group I have a safe place to talk about the addiction, MY addiction to him and how I feel with people who have truly felt similar pain. I have intimate relationships for the first time in my life. I feel freer today than I have ever felt to whom I credit my Higher Power. He has accepted me as I am and has given me some powerful lessons to learn early in my life and for that I am very grateful. I also feel gratitude for all of you out there who have walked the path of recovery before me.

A recovering C.O.S.A. and Incest Survivor,  
Chris M.

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### HUGS

It's wondrous what a hug can do,  
It can cheer you up when you're feeling blue  
A hug can say I love you so,  
And how I hate to see you go.  
A hug means welcome back with cheer;  
It seems that you've been gone a year.  
A hug can soothe a small child's pain  
And bring a rainbow after rain.

About a hug there is no doubt.  
It's something we can't do without.  
A hug will warm, delight, and charm-  
It must be why God made an arm.  
Hugs are great for favorite aunts  
'Twill help them more than potted plants.  
Kittens crave them, puppies love them,  
Heads of state are not above them.

A hug can break the language barrier  
And make the dullest day far merrier.  
So stretch those arms without delay,  
And give someone a hug today.

*Author Unknown*

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We would like to share with you an event that is very healing in our area. We reserve a retreat center for a fall retreat and again for a spring retreat. It started small. Our first retreat was an eight hour retreat with very intense work on one issue... "SHAME". We started the day by naming our shame, then claiming our shame and finally dumping our shame. Higher Power has been very present throughout the retreats from the very first one. At the "SHAME" retreat our Higher Power guided us to the topic for our next retreat. The group conscious was that it needed to be "GENDER" & "FEELINGS" and also longer. We reserved a Week end, now starting on Friday evening and

ending Sunday afternoon. Since the "GENDER" & "FEELINGS" retreat, we have experienced a retreat on "FORGIVENESS" and most recently a very emotional week end on "INNER CHILD". Our retreats are organized by COSA people with SAA invited to attend. Our experience has been that attendance is usually about 50% COSA and 50% SAA. There are really no words to express the healing and growth that occurs at the retreats. We strongly encourage others to schedule one and experience the deeper level of recovery that happens. The gut level sharing, soul wrenching pain, the friendships and recovery that occur are more than we know how to express in words. We all leave exhausted, simply exhausted

from the feeling work that we have experience, yet we are already planning our return trip. Yes, and we did get our message from Higher Power. Our fall retreat is entitled, "INTIMACY". One of the tape series used on the week end, put it this way. "You cannot experience intimacy until you have experienced a solid connection with your inner child. No inner child work, no intimacy. That seemed to be our guidelines. Our next retreat will begin with Inner Child work with the hope that our recovery process will open us to intimacy. We are grateful to be connected with people in recovery who work so openly, honestly and sincerely. We have truly been a gift to each other. Michigan

## COSA National Service Organization - Letter to Members

Dear Fellow COSA Members:

March, 1994

So far it's been a very exciting first year of COSA's National Service Organization (NSO). The executive committee, board and various committees are working hard to provide COSA members with the support you've said you want. **Here's what we've accomplished from June 1993 - March 1994:**

- We incorporated as a non-profit organization, approved bylaws, developed a budget and financial procedures, bonded the officers, and received donations from 18 groups and several individuals in the amount of \$2,398 from June to March 1st. Our projected budget for the year is \$3,400.
- We've formed committees working on the subjects of: **convention, finances, literature, Balance newsletter, registration of groups, intergroups, communications and central office.**
- Divided the work around the country according to volunteer availability - including major work from members in Arizona, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Texas and other states.
- *Balance* newsletter has been published monthly, has 80 subscriptions and is self-supporting.
- The convention in Phoenix has been planned, funded and looks great. See the flyer.
- Registration of groups and convention delegates is proceeding. This will lead to a published NSO COSA directory (public) and a confidential NSO internal use only list of groups. If your group has not received a registration form please write NSO in Houston.
- The communications committee is working on ways to link up new members to groups using telephone technologies. (Goal to take some of the work/pressure off MN Intergroup) Started a new program linking those without a meeting in their area to "COSA corresponders" who act as temporary sponsors via the mail.

Not bad for a first year, huh. We have some topics to bring to the convention for your feedback.

### **Topics for Discussion at the COSA Convention**

1. Selecting a convention site for 1995. Should we continue to meet at the same time and location as SAA?
  - Many emotional, recovery, attendance and financial issues are involved with both viewpoints

*FYI - in a survey conducted one year ago the fellowship was split almost 50-50 between those who preferred meeting with SAA and those who preferred a COSA only convention.*

2. Goals for the next year and the next 5 years including topics like:
  - Literature - the development of standards and procedures for "conference approved" literature, negotiations about literature already produced, producing new literature
  - Publishing an NSO directory - addressing confidentiality and the need to make meetings accessible
  - Transition planning - Doing the work. Currently it's being done around the country with several addresses, seems to be working but there are many issues of communication between those areas to work out. For instance keeping everyone informed of address changes or current issues.

Please think about your reaction to these issues and send a representative to participate at the Convention in Phoenix over Memorial Day. If you cannot send a rep please write to the NSO post office in Houston with your thoughts on these issues. Volunteers for committees and other work is needed. Please consider what you can do to be there for new and established COSA members through NSO. Thanks for supporting NSO. Hope to see you in Phoenix.

Your trusted servant, Miriam B., COSA NSO chair



To order literature, write : MINNESOTA COSA  
P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS MN 55414 Phone:612 537 6904

Send orders noting quantity and cost of each requested item. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Please include postage and handling according to the following order totals:

Orders totalling	\$ .20 to \$2.00	include:	\$ .75
"	" \$2.01 to \$9.00	"	\$2.00
"	" \$9.01 to \$30.00	"	\$3.00
"	over \$30.00	"	\$5.50

Present items available from the above address:

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 each	COSA Stories Vol II.----	\$3.50
COSA Medallions..	\$3.00 each (6 mo., years 1 -10, also blanks)		
Laminated COSA cards with Serenity Prayer, 12 & 12, COSA logo..	\$1.00 each		

Send contributions to support your NSO-COSA to: NSO-COSA  
9337-B KATY FREEWAY #142  
HOUSTON TX 77024

To learn more about the formation of NSO, refer to your VOL 2#4 issue of "Balance".

**TO SUBSCRIBE**  
Send \$12.00 for  
a one year  
subscription to  
**BALANCE**  
P O BOX 502  
MT MORRIS MI  
48458

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\***REMEMBER:** It's your newsletter!!! "Balance"  
\* is in need of more stories and other submissions  
\* to continue its planned publication schedule.  
\* **Send editorial correspondence and submissions to:**  
\* **P O BOX 14654, LOUISVILLE, KY. 40214**  
\*\*\*\*\*

Make checks  
payable to:  
  
Ila Davis

A PERSON'S TRUE CHARACTER IS  
REVEALED BY WHAT HE DOES  
WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING.

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NOTE THE ATTACHED REGISTRATION FORMS FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL COSA NATIONAL CONVENTION AND THE 7TH ANNUAL SAA NATIONAL CONVENTION. Give yourself the gift of quality recovery time by planning now to attend. T-shirts will be available to purchase at the convention. Price will be approximately \$12.00. We're looking forward to meeting you there!!!!

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT IS THE REALIZATION  
THAT LIFE IS A GIFT NOT A RIGHT.

FALLING DOWN DOESN'T MAKE YOU A FAILURE, BUT STAYING DOWN DOES!!!!



Quest for Serenity...  
Reclaiming our True Selves

# 1st Annual COSA National Convention

Phoenix, Arizona May 27 - 30, 1994

**P**erfect accommodations at the newly remodeled Holiday Inn Corporate Center. 2532 W. Peoria Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85029. There is also a special room rate of \$42 per night for up to four persons per room. For reservations call 602/943- 2341, ask for the "Out of the Ashes" group rate.

**H**osted by the Phoenix Metro COSA Intergroup and held at the same time and place as the 7th Annual SAA National Convention.

**O**pen to all looking for fun, sun and recovery. Enjoy Workshops, Speakers and Fellowship. National Service Organization Delegates and Alternates are encouraged to attend.

**E**xpenses included in the registration fee are indicated below (register early to receive the "early bird" discount!) Scholarships are available based on need, see the other side for details.

**N**eed Registration Form returned by April 1, 1994 to get the "Early Bird" rates. You will receive transportation details with your confirmation of registration.

**I**nterested Speakers or Workshop Presenters please complete and return a "Request for Speakers and Presenters" form before February 1, 1994. Contact your local intergroup for a copy of the "Request for Speakers and Presenters" form.

**X**ceptional weekend for all.

Your registration fee includes a Pot Luck Dinner on Friday night; the Saturday Buffet Lunch, Saturday Night Banquet, Dance and/or Movies; the Sunday Skit and Ice Cream Social and the Monday Brunch. You are also welcome to attend all General Sessions, Workshops, Speaker Meetings, Meditations, the Newcomers Orientation, the Midnight Candlelight Meetings and all Recreational Activities.

## REGISTRATION FORM

(Please detach and return with your Convention Registration Fee - Thanks)

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (As you want it on your NAME TAG) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I want to participate:  As a speaker (Complete Speaker Request Form)

Mini First Step (Complete Speaker Request Form)  Regional Caucus

Newcomer Orientation  Meditation Leader AM/PM (Send Info)

Please check affiliation  COSA  SAA

Conference Fees	Before April 1	April 1 May 1	After May 1	Amount Due
Full Conference	\$65	\$75	\$85	_____
Saturday Only	30	35	45	_____
Sunday Only	30	35	45	_____
Monday Only	15	15	15	_____
Scholarship Donation				\$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed				\$ _____

Please mail one form per person - xeroxed copies are acceptable. Make checks payable to "COSA Convention" and mail your check and this Registration Form to:

COSA Convention - % Pam T  
4257 North 17th Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85015

# Tentative Agenda

## FRIDAY, MAY 27

Registration is the first order of a day filled with Delegate Meetings, A General Session, A Meditative Interlude\* and a host of recreational activities. Lunch is on your own in the hotel or in Metro Center, a nearby Mega Shopping Center. Dinner is a Pot-luck, hosted by the Metro Phoenix COSA and SAA Intergroups in the hospitality suite. After-dinner activities include a speaker Meeting for non-delegates followed by Story Time.

## SATURDAY, MAY 28

Open Registration will coincide with a Daily Meditation\* and a Newcomer Orientation. Workshops, Regional Caucuses, the General Session, Recreation Time, a Buffet Lunch, the Banquet, Speakers, Dancing, Movies, and a Midnight Candlelight Meeting fill-out the Agenda for the day... WHEW!

## SUNDAY, MAY 29

Morning Meditation\* will start the day, followed by more recreation time. Multiple workshops will be conducted throughout the day concluding with dinner (on your own.) In the evening you can enjoy a skit, "The Shame Of It All," followed by process groups to debrief the presentation. Other activities include an Ice Cream Social, a Talent Show and the traditional Candlelight Meeting.

## MONDAY, MAY 30

We will begin with our Morning Meditation\* and move to the "Quest for Serenity... Reclaiming Our True Selves" re-entry workshop followed by a Brunch with speakers. A Closing Ceremony will end this incredible weekend.

\*Bring your favorite Meditation Book.

*Out of the Ashes*



*Into the Light!*

SAA will hold their 7th Annual Convention concurrently with the COSA Convention. Many of the general activities including meals, General Sessions, Meditations, etc will be joint activities. For more information on the SAA Convention, call Mike O'D. at 602/863-3006.

Delta Airlines is offering discounted fares to Phoenix for the Convention. For information and to make reservations, call Delta at 1-800-241-6760, and ask for File Number XV0390. Delta's office is open between 7:30 AM and 11:00 PM - Monday through Friday; and between 8:30 AM and 11:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday. Happy Trails to you.

### SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Scholarship assistance will be given on a first come- first served basis with preference given to group delegates. The Scholarships are available to help cover the costs of the conference fee only, not for hotel or transportation costs.

- I need financial assistance to attend this convention.
- I have asked my local group for assistance.
- My local group will be able to help me with \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- My unmet needs are \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Registration \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Amt of Check \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit # \_\_\_\_\_ Awarded \_\_\_\_\_