

# BALANCE



## Step 5

“Admitted to God, to Ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

It feels like magic to me, the way the steps work. When we talk about the situation, it takes the power away. The problem/situation seems to lessen in intensity.

Sometimes I wonder how that happens. It feels like magic. Yet, I know my recovery isn't magic. It is just the opposite of magic. It is my

first experience with reality. When I share my truth, my reality, I am set free. My fears, my anxiety, my problem doesn't have to keep racing round and round in my head. It comes out. I say it. I hear it. Yes, hearing it is an asset.

Ah..... yes, the magic of step five. Admit my truth to myself.

Admit my truth to God[he already knows, he just wants me to say it out loud]. Admit my truth to one other person. I don't have to expose myself to my family, my community, or the national evening news. My program is so simple, just one person will do.

~IIa

## Step 6

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

This step doesn't tell me that God has to get ready. Only me...I'm the one who has to become ready.

This step doesn't even say I have to let go of my defects right now, this very minute. It only says I have to become ready. Oh, did you notice I left out a word. The step

doesn't just say become ready. The step says I must become entirely ready. When I am rigorously honest with myself, I can admit that many times I have said I was ready. There are a few times when I have been entirely ready. I must be at a place in my program where I am

entirely ready, before this step will give me the release from my defects that I am seeking.

The only way I know to get to the place of becoming entirely ready is to continue to work the steps.

~IIa

## Step 7

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

To me, humbly means obey. I don't shame myself. I don't blame myself. I don't shame or blame others. I simply humble myself before God. I also find it easier if I humble myself before my sponsor or other loving, supportive group people.

My shortcomings are easier to remove the more I share, talk and pray for their removal.

~IIa

## More about the steps ...

I worked 1 thru 5 and became aware of various defects I use with other people. I listed them, everything I could possibly think of [you know, to “finish” and be as perfect as possible—it was four pages] and then didn't know quite what to do. I listed them, I acknowledged them so then I went to the Step 7 prayer and asked they be removed. It felt too intangible, too easy, too unclear—wasn't I supposed to “do” more? A

month or so went by. Some main defects began growing, becoming more glaring, not lessening or being removed. Operating from fear, selfishness, self seeking, pride, martyrishness, control. As I met up with my inability to change them, then my further defenses to facing and changing them [I couldn't just pick the main ones—what about my list?] my sponsor took me back to earlier steps

(Continued on page 2)

# More about the steps ...

(Continued from page 1)

Step 3—Turning it over. Letting Go. Having faith is the opposite of fear.

Step 4- re-do a fear inventory—what am I really afraid of? I had done my Step 4 fear inventory before and listed many an event, person, place and thing which elicited fear within me. But what was this fear that clung to the inside of my guts? That came up from within me, not stirred from outside of me?

By God's grace I experienced my fear of the nakedness of dropping my defects. I could see, they are a security blanket I hold onto—to protect my nakedness, to protect the stark uniqueness of my being. I can avoid stepping out in sharp contrast to another human being. [I wouldn't want to make anyone uncomfortable—to believe differently, to make my own choices.] My defects also help me to avoid the nakedness of my own feelings and compulsions—I can soften and dull them inside myself by acting out my martyrdom, my arrogance and control.

If I let myself just be, I don't know what will happen. I have not trusted God to just BE with me. I must maintain some semblance of control over the unpredictableness of life – What if..., How will I..., How can I..., But I

might..., I will probably..., Why do you think I can....This thinking, these defects, also keep me as the center of the universe. Dropping my defects brings into clear, sharp reality that I am not God and that I need God. If I hang onto my defects I can delude myself that I am somehow God and I can figure it out.

As I let go, I find that Step 6 is a much deeper trusting in God. A complete release of my own self will- to even change myself. I feel the paradox of complete self-responsibility melded with total accountability to my God [not my husband, not my mom, not my friends, not my brother or sister, not even my groups]. I see the freedom of complete self-responsibility and it frightens me. I waver and quiver, like a toddler standing alone, wanting its security blanket. Today I can make the choice to hold my Higher Power's hand, rather than the security blanket defects, when I become afraid. I am slow but I make progress. I see and I can stop and think before I jump in a dark hole. I am learning to walk emotionally and spiritually for the first time. One must be gentle, patient and kind with such a new toddler. The guide must be mature, clear and of steely strength

also – For a toddler will throw a tantrum, or run off quite sporadically or try to avoid work with silliness. A toddler is very clever in their attempts to stay a child sometimes, and hold onto that blanket. The guide must be persistent.

God doesn't let me off the hook. God sees and knows all of me. God keeps pulling the blanket away and giving me His hand instead. He loves me so incredibly when I simply turn to him rather than grasping for my defect blanket. His power is so immense. I am afraid and it is okay. I can feel I am clinging to His hand,

but still desperately searching to see where my blanket is [What if...I might need it...I love that blanket...It is so comfy and warm and I can hide...]. The growing adult self in me really wants to let go of the blanket, and was able to lay it down on the ground. But the child in me doesn't want to let it out of sight. I see how He is guiding me to "entirely ready". I am so grateful He is so gentle with me, so patient and kind. He will let me look at the blanket from afar for awhile, until I am really ready to walk away from it, with Him.

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## COSA National Phone Line NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!

There is a dedicated group of members who are doing service work by answering the phone lines.

This service work is adaptable to your schedule. Volunteers call a message service in Minnesota, one day or evening a week, to pick up messages and then return the calls. Expenses are reimbursed. Right now we are in need of three volunteers to cover Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We are sure you will receive more than you can possibly give in this volunteer position.

Please be sure to announce this in your group meeting. COSA asks that the volunteer has been attending COSA meetings for one year or more and is working a COSA program.

If you are interested in volunteering, write:

**COSA NATIONAL  
PHONE LINE,  
PO Box 14537,  
Minneapolis, MN  
55414**

*Sincerely,  
Bonnie Sue  
(a grateful  
volunteer)*

# Are you ready to really grow?

Do you really care about whether this organization survives and what it looks like? Does your recovery feel pretty solid now? Are you ready to give back in a big way? Are you ready to assume more of a leadership role?

Are you ready to commit the time and energy to be really present at two board meetings each year? Participate in telephone conferences? Follow up on your duties? Do your homework? Process disagreements and resolve conflicts? Try to practice your recovery in each thing you do?

Are you ready to really

grow? To stretch? Are you ready for new challenges? Is recovery beginning to get — dare I say it? — a little EASY on some days? Do you experience longer and longer periods of sanity, clarity, serenity, even joy? Congratulations, welcome to the next level.

Working with other COSA's will give you the chance to have your own issues (mistrust? control? fear?) in your face constantly. A perpetual 4th step. What matters is how you handle it. A tremendous growth opportunity awaits.

There's a lot of work to be done. NSO has com-

mittees such as Literature, Budget and Finance, Communications, Outreach, Bylaws and Personnel — several of these are inactive and need to become active. Opportunities abound. Committees should be chaired by board members. Board members will select officers when the new board meets. The officer positions are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers serve for one year; board terms are for two. What do you want to do?

Prospective board members are encouraged to obtain the support of their local groups prior to

the annual meeting. Such support helps us realize the significance of what we're doing. Prospective board members should plan to attend the annual meeting in July in Minnesota.

Because it sometimes takes awhile to figure out how things work on a board, the new board is urged to plan to spend an extra day meeting after the convention in Minnesota. This time will allow board members to get acquainted, get oriented, set priorities, assume responsibilities, and lay the groundwork for accomplishing their goals for the next year.

## Group and individual registration: We want you!

The benefits of registering as a group with the COSA National Service Organization (NSO) are as follows:

- We can help newcomers who contact COSA-NSO to get in touch with your group and find your meeting. This type of outreach is our primary purpose; without it, we cannot help those who still suffer.

- Registered groups receive a free subscription to the Balance, COSA's newsletter.

- We will be able to mail NSO information to your group from time to time, so that you will be part of COSA as a whole. Such mailings may include an-

nouncements about new literature, materials for the annual convention, and other information for the good of our fellowship. At this time we do not have accurate addresses for mailing business information to every group, so be sure to let us know about address changes!

- You will be able to send a Delegate to participate in the Annual Meeting, so that your group can have a voice in decisions that affect COSA nationally and internationally.

- Note that even if you are only one person, you can still register as a group, provided that you are willing to commit to starting a

meeting.

The NSO also accepts registrations from individuals who do not attend a COSA group. The benefits of registering as an individual are as follows:

- We can locate the closest registered COSA meeting in your area.

- If there isn't an active COSA meeting, we can help connect you with other people in your area who are interested in starting a COSA group.

- We can add you to our long-distance sponsorship program. A recovering COSA member will exchange letters, phone calls, and/or e-mail messages with you. (This is a popu-

lar program, so it may take a while to match you up with someone.)

Please note that we do not encourage you to register as an individual if you are a member of a COSA group; to keep it simple, we prefer to correspond with group members through their Group information.

Please contact the NSO to receive either a Group or Individual registration form! (Forms are also available on the COSA NSO website.) We respect your privacy and confidentiality; all information is restricted to only those who need it for NSO service work.

# What Does NSO Need?

- by Barb C and Burnet O

NSO needs YOU — your energy, your involvement, your commitment. If you've come far enough along in your recovery that you feel ready to give something back, then it's time to get active as a national volunteer.

What do you have to offer? What do you like to do? Write? We are desperate for new material to publish in Balance and our other literature. Organize events? Help us put on a convention and two meetings every year. Talk on the telephone? We need volunteers to handle calls to our national phone line. Sponsor? We need people willing to be long-distance sponsors. Is there something you think we should be doing that we're not? Jump in and get it going!

NSO needs new board members. Board members commit to serve a two-year term and attend the two board meetings held each year plus telephone conferences as needed. Board members are working volunteers. Each board member serves on or chairs a committee. That way, each board member will be able to report on the status of various service works at our board meetings.

NSO needs groups to be involved and represented by a delegate who keeps informed on the issues and participates in our annual meeting. Having a group member on the board is a great way to get involved. Your input is important to the fellowship. Remember — we are a new organization, and we are in the process of defining ourselves.

NSO needs accurate information about your group. Keep your meeting time, location and contact person up to date in the national record system by registering your group with NSO. Your group will not be on the list if you don't register and new people will have difficulty finding you. If you do register, your group will receive a free Balance subscription.

NSO needs financial support to meet our goals. Our expenses are many.

Long-distance telephone calls, shipping and postage, literature development and printing costs are just some of them.

**The 11th Annual Texas COSA Women's Retreat will be held at the Round Top Retreat Center in Roundtop, Texas, June 2-4, 2000  
Call Burnet O (713)526-6525  
for information.**

## Change in COSA's acronym, and the new COSA Steps & Traditions

This article was published in last year's Delegate Packet. Since some groups and individuals are still asking about the process, here it is again:

For the past three years, the COSA fellowship has worked on developing an approved version of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of COSA. A brief history of the process follows:

\* At the first Winter Board Meeting in 1997, the Board Members recognized that COSA didn't have one distinct set of the steps and traditions. Many groups were using different variations in their meetings, and the literature had different versions.

There was even disagreement as to whether "C.O.S.A." stood for Codependents of Sex Addicts or Co-Sex Addicts. An approved version was needed for unifying our COSA literature.

The board voted on a single version to present to the groups, which was then included in the delegate packet. The 1997 Delegate Packet asked the groups to vote on the steps, traditions, and meaning of COSA.

\* At the 1997 Annual Meeting, the strong debate over what "COSA" means and what our Step 1 should say indicated a lack of fellowship-wide group conscience in the matter of who we are and what we stand for.

Unfortunately, the votes of absentee delegates (who did not have the opportunity to participate in the discussion) outweighed the delegates who were present, and the version in the delegate packet passed (by a close margin on some points).

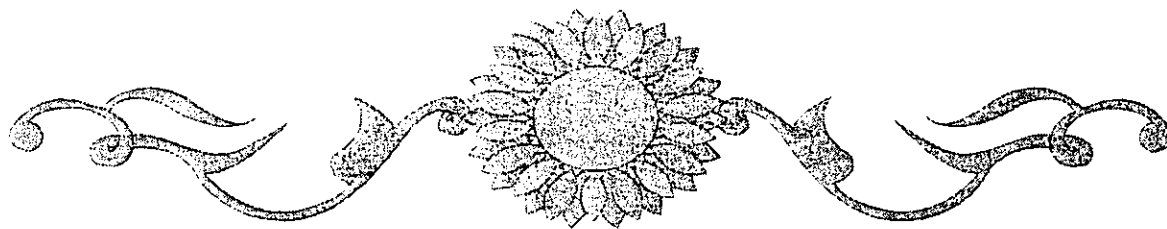
\* At the 1998 Winter Board Meeting, the board recognized that the fellowship needed another opportunity for input. A questionnaire about the wording of steps and traditions was included in the 1998 Delegate Packet. The Board Members decided that the questionnaire results would not be counted as a vote; all voting needed to be done by delegates who attend the Annual Meeting.

\* At the 1998 Annual Meeting, the groups' responses to the questionnaire were presented. There was only a short time to discuss the results, so the delegates and Board Members present decided that the board would be responsible for future actions based on those results.

\* At the Winter 1999 Board Meeting, Board Members discussed at length and unanimously agreed on the new, approved wording of COSA's 12 Steps and 12 Traditions and the meaning of COSA. Then at the 1999 Annual Meeting, the only new discussion concerned letting the fellowship know how this process brought us to the version we are now using.

In summary, the official name of our organization is now "COSA", not "C.O.S.A." It is no longer an abbreviation. The steps and traditions listed on the NSO website and in the packet "How to Start a New Group" show the new version; wording changes were made in Steps 1 & 7 and Traditions 3 & 5. These changes are meant to honor the differences that exist in how COSA groups choose to define themselves; the new version attempts to be as inclusive as possible. This

*Continued on back page*



## **Nature's Simple Gifts Back to the Basics**

**2000 COSA CONVENTION  
Minneapolis - St. Paul, MN  
July 20 - 23, 2000**

### ***Ready to Recover & Have Some Fun? Arrangements & Schedule***

#### **Thursday Night, July 20<sup>th</sup> 2000**

Arrive at the Carondelet Retreat Center in St. Paul. All COSA delegates (if you represent your local group you are invited) and the COSA National Service Organization's Board will gather for fellowship and maybe a little business.

The Carondelet Retreat Center is located on the campus of the College of St. Catherine's in St. Paul near the bluffs of the Mississippi River. It is about a 15 minute taxi ride from the airport (approximate cost \$15.00). Lodging consists of sleeping rooms accommodating 1 or 2 persons with a central kitchen & lounging area. Cost will be \$25.00 per person including a continental breakfast on Friday morning. You must pre-register.

#### **Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup> 2000 8:30 am – 4:30 pm**

The business meeting for COSA's National Service Organization (NSO) will occur at the Carondelet Retreat Center. The purpose is to discuss and make decisions about how we attract, maintain & support COSA people through our committees. **Everyone is strongly encouraged to participate.** Lunch and snacks will be provided for \$5.00. We'll make time for a quick walk in the woods or stroll to the Mississippi River.

At **5:00 p.m.** we will gather and leave as a group for our ultimate destination, **Koinonia Retreat Center**, located 1.25 hours west of St. Paul on Lake Sylvia. **Please indicate if you will need transportation or if you can provide transportation.** There may be a small cost if we need to rent a bus.

## Arrangements & Schedule (Page 2)

### Friday Night

We will eat at Koinonia at 7pm and kick off our conference including a bonfire by the lake. Koinonia offers lakeside views, swimming, boating, hiking, a one-acre labyrinth walk and much more. We have rented the entire retreat center so our confidentiality is secure. Lodging is retreat style – most sleeping rooms sleep 2 or more people, and few are air-conditioned. COSA women and COSA men will be housed in separate areas. (Note: This convention is for COSA participants only – no other fellowships will be in attendance.) Please indicate on the registration form if you have any special needs regarding accommodations.

### Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2000

Recovery workshops, speakers, food and fun in the sun continue. We'll laugh, cry, and take time to enjoy *Nature's Simple Gifts: Back to the Basics*. Saturday night will feature our keynote speaker, Jennifer S. from AZ. Come ready to share your talents or some silliness. (Watch out for the Apple Valley players!!)

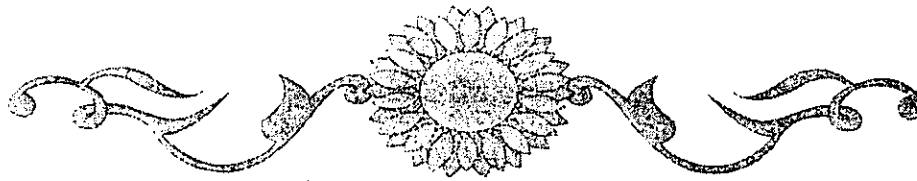
### Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2000

Meditation, spiritual connection, celebration of recovery and goodbyes.

We plan to run 2 shuttles back to the airport – the first at 9 am and the second shuttle at noon, following the closing and lunch on Sunday. **Please indicate if you need transportation or can provide transportation on the registration form.**

- **Please note that conference costs include ALL meals and lodging for Friday night through Sunday lunch. Be prepared for additional costs for taxi from the airport to Carondelet, and for transportation to/from Kononia (\$40.00 maximum-probably much less). If you plan to arrive on Thursday night see above for costs.**

**If you have questions or comments, you can call us at (612) 537-6904 ext. 3 or e-mail us at [naturessimplegifts@hotmail.com](mailto:naturessimplegifts@hotmail.com). We'd like to hear from you!**



## Nature's Simple Gifts Back to the Basics

2000 COSA CONVENTION  
Minneapolis - St. Paul, MN  
July 20 - 23, 2000

### Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (as you want it on your name tag) \_\_\_\_\_

- Female  
 Male

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

#### National Convention Business Meeting Options

Please check all that apply.

- I plan to stay at the Carondelet Center on Thursday night, July 20. Payment of \$25 for one night of lodging is enclosed. Payment for meals will be collected at the Carondelet Center.
- I plan to attend the National Business meeting at the Carondelet Center on Friday, July 21.

#### National Convention Options at Koinonia Retreat Center

Please circle your selection(s).

	Dates	Accommodations included in cost	Register before May 15	Register before June 15	Register after June 15
Friday evening To Sunday noon	July 21 - July 23	2 nights lodging 6 meals*	\$165	\$180	\$195
Saturday morning to Sunday noon	July 22 - July 23	1 night lodging 5 meals*	\$130	\$145	\$160
Saturday day only	July 22	Up to 3 meals*	\$45	\$45	\$55
Friday night or Sunday morning	July 21 or July 23	1 meal*	\$25	\$25	\$30

- You must register a week in advance to have your meals provided.

- I need a scholarship. Amount Needed \_\_\_\_\_  
Scholarship assistance will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. Scholarships will help to cover the cost of the convention fee only.
- I am enclosing a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for scholarships
- I request vegetarian meals
- I need special accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_
- Payment of \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. Make checks payable to Nature's Simple Gifts. Mail payment and registration to:  
COSA Convention 2000  
P.O. Box 14537  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

**Transportation Options**

**Shuttles** – We plan to run shuttles with the following schedule. We will use car pools and if necessary vans or a bus. If your flight schedule cannot accommodate these shuttle times you will need to rent a car to get to the retreat center. Transportation costs will be collected when the service is provided.

**Friday**

- 5:00 pm Shuttle will leave from the Carondelet Center in St. Paul for Koinonia Retreat Center.
- 8:00 pm Shuttle will leave from Mpls/St. Paul Airport for Koinonia Retreat Center.

**Saturday**

- 9:00 am Shuttle will leave from Mpls/St. Paul Airport for Koinonia Retreat Center.

**Sunday**

- 9:00 am Shuttle will leave from Koinonia Retreat Center for Mpls/St. Paul Airport.
- 12 noon Shuttle will leave from Koinonia Retreat Center for Mpls/St. Paul Airport.

**Please indicate your transportation status: CHOOSE FROM ABOVE SCHEDULE PLEASE**

**I will need transportation to Kononia Retreat Center on \_\_\_\_\_ (day & time).  
I can provide transportation to Kononia Retreat Center from \_\_\_\_\_ (location) on  
\_\_\_\_\_ (day & time).**

**I will need transportation from Kononia to the airport on \_\_\_\_\_ (day & time).  
I can provide transportation from Kononia to the airport on \_\_\_\_\_ (day & time).**

**Questions? Call (612) 537-6904 ext. 3  
or e-mail naturessimplegifts@hotmail.com**



**COSA National Conference 2000**  
*Nature's Simple Gifts -- Back to the Basics*

# Call For Speakers

**This year's national COSA conference will focus on  
the simple gifts of recovery basics.**

**We welcome your participation as a speaker or presenter!**

**Workshop ideas include:**

*The first step*  
*Working through pain*  
*Making it through early recovery*  
*Grief and loss*  
*Beginnings of COSA*  
*COSA tools*  
*Dance*  
*Healthy sexuality and recovery*  
*Co-dependency and family of origin*  
*Tarot*  
*Self-care*  
*Shame and guilt*  
*Higher power in our lives*

*Meditation*  
*Finding forgiveness*  
*What is a co-dependent slip?*  
*When a partner slips*  
*Ongoing recovery*  
*Internet issues*  
*Yoga*  
*Intimacy*  
*Parenting through recovery*  
*Panel discussions*  
*Healthy boundaries*  
*Journaling*  
*Working the steps*

**All workshop ideas welcome, consider co-presenting with a friend!**

**This Year's Featured Keynote Speaker:**  
**We welcome Jennifer S. from Arizona**  
**sharing her experience, strength and hope**

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1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Years in COSA \_\_\_\_ 3. Best way to reach you? (phone #, e-mail address) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Workshop Title/Type (e.g., presentation/panel, activity (journaling, art), demonstration/participation (yoga, meditation)).

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5. Tell us about your workshop! Please outline your workshop and format in 1-3 paragraphs. **IMPORTANT** -- please attach an extra sheet to this tear off.

*We are grateful for your interest and ideas,  
but recognize we may not be able to program all workshops.  
Your flexibility and understanding are appreciated.*

**Questions? Call (612) 537-6904 ext. 3  
or e-mail [naturessimplegifts@hotmail.com](mailto:naturessimplegifts@hotmail.com)**

## Let me go ...

Let me go, so I may fly. I've seen around me, Blue open skies.

I need to soar, where freedom rest, develop my strength for the journeys quest.

I need to be free, that I may return, to wholeness & free ness in that of my own. In my flight I will come to find, the tools to support & build a new home.

I need to look down at the earth I have covered, feeling free above that I hover

Set me free, to feel life, that's been promised, as I begin to heal.

I can not do this, caged up inside, unable to move with watching eyes. The song I sing can not be heard. From trapped inside and longing birth.

Are hearts in song, they soar with me. I see now where I need to be. Free in love above the trees. How green they are, how tall they stand, their branches long their roots in land.

I see the flower how fragile it seems pushing thru, its beauty, how serene. Sweet perfume the fragrance repels. Bringing your love as I continue to sail.

In guidance of my journey God shows me the way. I soar in his love in protection he displays.

I have begun to recapture, my inner love, my heart how it beckons in longing rapture.

I shall return from this inner place, for there you will join me & take your place. With your hand in mine, together we will fly through open doors. I will share the place's I have soared.

But for now, let me free, that my heart shall grow as the strength of the tree, that it will reach as the branches to the sun, that in time are journey will have begun.

As flowers send the fragrance of my love, to remind you that I am just above, looking on with you. Let the beauty of our love represent the peddles of the flower, In softens of those lonely hr.'s.

I will take in comfort as I rest in your love. Allowing it to grow with me.

But for now I take my flight, understanding how hard it was or is too set me Free.

~Kris A.

## Change in COSA's acronym, and the new COSA Steps & Traditions

*Continued from page 4*

material is what will be used in COSA NSO literature as the "official version," with the understanding that individual COSA groups have the right to "take what you like and leave the rest" (since each group is autonomous). Each COSA member may choose to define him/herself as a codependent of sexual addiction, as a co-sex addict, or simply as a member of COSA, according to his or her own personal experience and conscience.

It has been quite a process to come to this approved wording. We feel we've done

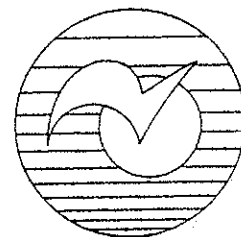
our best to honor all opinions and information. It is the Board's hope that the COSA fellowship will understand this process and accept the outcome. We ask the group members to keep in mind Tradition 1, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon COSA unity."

Steps and Traditions in the literature have not been updated universally; that work is currently in process.

Contact the Literature Committee if you want to help.

## National COSA Phone Line

612-537-6904



# BALANCE



To subscribe,  
send \$12.00  
to:

**BALANCE**  
NSO-COSA  
P.O. Box 14537  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Make checks payable to:  
"NSO-COSA"  
Please specify  
"For Balance Subscription"  
on your check

Send contributions to  
support your  
NSO-COSA  
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