



BALANCE



April 2002

What do I attend retreats, conferences, conventions, open talks, dinners or coffee/tea with my fellowships??

From Patrick Carne's book, "A gentle Path Through The twelve steps." *"Most groups also have a social life outside the meetings. Before or after meetings, people meet for coffee or food. Sometimes breakfasts or lunches where people gather as sort of a "second" group meeting for extra support".*

Some groups have retreats together to intensify work on the program. While these are not a part of the meeting, they are essential to program life. To regard them as an option for which one does not have time is to miss out on an important part of developing a program for oneself: building a support network.

I am so grateful that I did not regard the extra gatherings as an option. Whenever I take a moment to review my recovery, I realize the blessings, the love, the recovery growth that I received my attending every event that I could possibly attend. I know my recovery would be shallow, possibly nothing more than a ritualistic night out if I had narrowed my options to just one or two support group meetings a week with no other connection or communication.

I can review my recovery and observe how often someone from the "other group" guided me and assisted me with their insights. I know I would not be as grateful about my recovery journey today had I chosen to not utilize all of the available options.

I'm hoping you will take a few moments now to fill out the form and give yourself the gift of a deeper, fuller recovery experience. I'm hoping to grow with you at the San Francisco conference/convention.

Ila

February 2002—London, England

I believe in COSA service work. I relate COSA recovery & service to the pioneers heading across the plains & Rocky Mountains, to spiritual & physical destinations unknown. A covered wagon has served as the metaphor for my personal recovery in co-sex-addiction, COSA sponsoring, as well as the pioneering efforts of COSA as a whole.

The "Balance" is YOUR newsletter. Please help us to enhance the variety in every issue by submitting an article for submission. Any topic about your experience, strength & hope is welcomed. Group information such as outside activities: picnics, retreats, dinners, auctions... please share with us. It's a great way for the entire organization to move forward.

"Convention Update"

There is a change in the price of the 3-hour bus tour that SAA is hosting on Sunday. I misunderstood and therefore misquoted the cost of this add-on. If you would like to be included, the bus tour costs \$42, not \$20. The \$20 covers the cost of the meal at the end of the tour only; the other \$22 is for the actual tour. I am told this is a pretty standard cost for one of these tours and that the meal should be very nice. Please spread the word among your group members. Anyone registering for the bus tour and only paying \$20 will be asked for the additional \$22 or offered a refund. Sorry for any inconvenience.

I hope to see you at the convention. Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions.

COSAconvention2002@yahoo.com

Tracy

To Contact COSA-NSO:

Write: NSO-COSA,

P O BOX 14537,

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, 55414

NATIONAL COSA PHONE LINE:

763-537-6904

WELCOME!!!WELCOME!!!!WELCOME!!!!

We welcome our new groups. You are now practicing one of the tools. With every new group that forms, we all step forward in our bond of recovery. WELCOME!!!

Plano, TX.

Baton Rouge, LA.

Helotes, TX.

CALL FOR PRESENTORS AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

We are in **GREAT** need of presenters for the National Convention in San Francisco. If you are an active member of COSA, who is looking for sobriety through service, please email your proposals to britteast@hotmail.com or call directly at [206]715-7497. Presenters should of course plan to attend the convention, and should include all pertinent contact information, a title for their presentation, an estimate of the length, and a brief description of their intentions. If you have any questions, please contact me directly. Thanks.

"7th Tradition"

"Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions."

Anchorage, AK., individual-\$20.00

Tucson, grp., AZ.-\$60.00

Granite Bay Grp., CA-\$100.00

Long Beach, CA., Individual-\$4.80

Indpls, Wed eve. Grp, IN.-
\$12.00

Dodge City, KS., Individual-
\$10.50

Northville, MI. Individual-
\$40.00

Mankato Grp, MN.-\$25.00

St Paul Thurs Eve. Grp.-MN-
\$50.00

St.Paul, MN., Individual-
\$5.00

St.Louis Grp.,MO-\$20.00

St Louis Grp.,MO.-\$25.00

Lubbock, TX. Individual-
\$120.00

Houston, Sun. nite Grp.-TX-
\$40.00

Houston, Thurs. p.m. Grp.-
\$20.00

COSA/NSO thanks each of
you for your contributions.

A short note from one group
writes: "We appreciate the
coins & newsletter. We also
hope the donation helps
others in some way."

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BALANCE

NSO-COSA

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR

CALENDAR

Clarkston, MI. Retreat

10/4/02 thru 10/6/02

Write: COSA Retreat

P.O.BOX 502

Mt. Morris MI 48458

National Convention

May 24th-27th

See attached flyer

Announce your retreats & other open events through the newsletter. Someone from another area may be traveling to your area and it would be a great way for them to receive the information and share ideas plus experience recovery with other areas

Last fall I had the opportunity to come to London, England on short notice, for a six month stay. Given as how I have started meetings in the past, I thought I would start COSA in London. I packed my recovery tools in my covered wagon and headed "across the pond". I knew if God wanted me to do this I would have to hit the ground running, with very little time.

However, Jet Lag, getting used to living in an overcrowded metropolitan city, pollution, noise, traffic and living in a hotel for a month took their toll. It took a month to find a house, get settled and feel balanced again. I found healthy AA & Alanon meetings to attend. I toured and had plenty of free time during the week and lots of joy.

In September I began to plan. I ordered and received books, obtained the meeting script, created a mailing list for the "COSA form letter", went to 12-step groups to scout out meeting locations, and prepared to report to COSA/NSO. Everything flowed. BOOM, it was October. I prayed for God to open doors and pave the way. Well, into November I hit brick walls in finding a meeting location. I felt guilty, discouraged, and shamed. I was told "we don't talk about THAT here". In my search for a place, I encountered shaming people and it was hard not to go into my defenses. Sometimes I did.

In December I was affected by the short days [it got dark at 3.30 in the afternoon] and the dreary weather. So I stayed inside, took care of myself, and sewed something I am proud of.

In January my mood lifted and I hit my knees and said to God, please let me know, right now, one way or another, whether to start COSA in London, or to leave it alone. The answer came back—"Not now, later, it's not their time". God also said "go out, tour, have fun".

So I did. I toured, tromped thru castles, fed swans, laughed at geese, studied history and historical costume, made an elizabethan corset and farthingale, petted the neighbor's cat, slipped in mud, watched BBC, got mad at Parliament, and "LIVED" in London. And sewed, sewed, sewed and felt joy.

I still feel kinda, small twinges of bad, sad, and guilt for not completing this mission, but mostly I now think that instead of starting the meeting, I was sent as an advance party to scout out and report back conditions here. I hope that the next COSA pioneer in London can make use of this information and recommendations:

1. British culture makes fun of American style recovery and therapy. AA and Alanon are here, but recovery is on a superficial level, nothing deep. If I had more time, I would approach a treatment center or counselor for meeting space, one who deals with sexual abuse and is not afraid of the issue. I would avoid churches and public libraries, which is where I was shamed/shunned.
2. I would disseminate the "COSA form letter" and pamphlets to mental health professionals, battered women's shelters, London SAA, rape crisis centers, NHS mental health, child protective services, NHS ob/gyn centers, and STD clinics.
3. My "american-ness" slammed doors. I would suggest a London local would have better results in finding space.
4. There is a great need here for a gay men's COSA group.
5. Safety is a prime consideration for an evening meeting. In Houston, one jumps into the car and goes to the meeting. In London, this journey would probably involve a train/tube/bus trip and a walk on city streets. I would recommend a meeting location immediately next to a tube station, centrally located, well populated and well-lit.
6. I considered having early meetings in my home, just to get started, but rejected this idea, for safety reasons.
7. I am not a team player-I have a "lone-ranger" recovery style. In this, I got tired and discouraged. I would lay a better support system and maybe team up with others to share the effort.
8. In my opinion, this country is sicker and the disease is more entrenched here than in America. Whoever begins this will have to start one person at a time, one meeting at a time.
9. If anyone in London would like the gathered materials/information to start a meeting, contact me through COSA and I will be glad to send those to you.
10. I would give the meeting a full year to catch on. This is the proper amount of time, in my experience, for a meeting to catch on. The pioneer who starts this would be prepared to sit alone for many an hour and many a night. Bring a recovery/spiritual book and know that you are doing God's work.
11. In March I return to the States [with my covered wagon]. See you then!

Your scout. Kim S - Houston/London