



# Balance

Newsletter of the National Service Organization of COSA

*Special Double Issue*  
May – August 2002

## *In This Issue*

Report on the Annual Meeting  
7th Step Reflections  
Striving for Balance  
The COSA Resource Guide  
2002-2003 Budget  
*and more ...*

### **Report on the Annual Meeting**

This past Memorial Day weekend the National Service Organization of COSA (NSO COSA) held its Annual Meeting. At these meetings the delegates from groups around the country join our Board of Trustees to continue our work. We had a positive, fruitful gathering this year. Our volunteers gave informative reports of their activities. Also, Ila D. of Michigan, National Coordinator employee, told us of what she has been doing with respect to mailings and keeping our group lists current. I would like to share with you some of the important changes we've made.

### **The New Board**

First of all we have a new slate of board members. I am happy to report that we have eleven trustees this year. Our executive committee is fully in place:

Chair: Ann R. from Texas

Vice Chair: JoAn D. from Washington

Treasurer: Burnet O. from Texas

Secretary: Mavis H. from Pennsylvania

We created three new positions on the Board:  
Inter-Step-Groups Liaison: Bill Y., Kentucky  
Convention Committee Liaison: Kathy D., Texas

Literature Point Person: Sally B., Texas

Other Board Members are:

Christi G., Minnesota, the COSA Connections Coordinator for the Western Region

Jenny E., Ohio, Communications Committee Chair and the COSA Connections Coordinator for the Southeastern Region

Bonnie C., Michigan, our new COSA Connections Coordinator for the Central Region

Claudine P., Texas, who is working on registering our copyrights on some of the existing literature

### **New Literature**

One very changed process is that of literature creation and approval. In the past we have had a literature committee whose mandate was to write and edit new literature to be submitted to the board for approval. This process was not functioning to our satisfaction. Now all new literature is to be generated from our groups.

Any individual may present a piece of literature to their group during the year. If the group feels that piece of literature merits acceptance for conference approval that group accepts the piece. That group then sends a delegate to the next Annual Meeting to present the literature which they support.

At that meeting the recommended piece of literature may accepted on a provisional basis. Our ⇒

Literature Point Person on the Board then has three duties related to any new piece of literature. She or he must inform the greater membership of the existence of this provisional piece via a note in the *Balance*. She or he must immediately review the piece for copyright issues. She or he then works with the author(s) and other interested COSAs to work out any objections to the literature.

There is a specific time frame for this stage of the process. We agreed that the Literature Point Person would receive comments from the membership for 90 days following provisional acceptance. During that time the piece can be purchased from NSO for review.

If at the end of the 90-day period there are still objections, then the time period is extended another 90 days. At the end of this second 90 days (+/- six months) if there is still contention, then the piece of literature will not be approved.

If at the end of either of the 90-day periods the objections are fully worked out, then the piece ↓

### NEW COSA LITERATURE ITEMS

Audiotape 02-1: COSA Keynote Speaker:  
Dan O., San Francisco Convention —  
\$6.00 each

COSA Resource Guide — \$3.00 each

rests until the next annual meeting. At that meeting the literature is accepted.

Our hope is that many of you will write new literature for those who still suffer. We know there is much wisdom out there to share.

### Future Conventions

Our next Annual Meeting and Convention will take place in Portland, Oregon on Memorial Day weekend, May 23-26, 2003. It will be a side-by-side event with Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA). We are in need of volunteers to help get this meeting off the ground. Please contact NSO COSA via mail, email or phone if you would like to volunteer.

NSO COSA will have its 2004 Annual Meeting and Convention in Louisville, Kentucky on⇒

*Put them on your calendar —  
Conventions and Annual Meetings  
2003 Memorial Day Weekend in  
Portland, Oregon!  
2004 Memorial Day Weekend in  
Louisville, Kentucky!*

Memorial Day Weekend. We have invited SAA to have a side-by-side convention with us there. We will proceed with our meeting at that location whether or not they decide to join us.

Please consider hosting a convention in your town for 2005. You may send a delegate from your area to our Annual Meeting in 2003 with information regarding a location and rough cost estimates/availability for rooms, meeting rooms, a banquet, and recreation opportunities.

### Committees

We now have four committees:

Communications  
Outreach  
Finance  
Bylaws

The Outreach committee will now function exclusively to inform the greater world of our existence. We currently have no one to either chair or be on that committee. I hope you will seriously consider this important work. You may contact NSO COSA at our mailing address, by phone or by email via if you are interested.

Our Bylaws committee has not been functioning for the past two years. That committee has been directed to rewrite our current bylaws with the goal of simplifying. We are grateful to have this all new committee in place.

### Financial Issues

NSO COSA has pressing work to do with respect to our status with the IRS. We are currently listed as a private foundation. This requires us to file with the IRS annually. We have not done this. We are not a private foundation. We are a non-profit public foundation. The Chair and Treasurer are working to resolve this problem. We are in need of any expertise (accounting and legal) within our fellowship. Please let us know if you can help us in this ca⇒

capacity via the NSO COSA address, phone number or email address.

Being a part of a vibrant young gathering feels good. People whose own lives are filled with the struggles that co-sex addiction brings are doing amazing work in reaching out to others in the same situation. NSO COSA itself is small, even though we have around 500 people who are involved in working our program of recovery. We need those of you who feel called to share in this rewarding and growth inspiring work. There is a list of volunteer needs posted on the website. Please consider enriching your life and helping others by volunteering.

– Ann R

### How to Contact Us (NSO COSA)

NSO COSA  
P.O.Box 14537  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

1-763-537-6904

info@cosa-recovery.org  
<http://www.cosa-recovery.org>

### 7th Step Reflections

The 7th step is one of those steps that I have much fun with in my recovery. “Humbly asked our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings.” It is easy for me to talk to my Higher Power. It is also pretty easy for me to admit I have shortcomings. What remains challenging for me around this step, however, are the first two words, “Humbly asked ....”

Humility is something that comes to me, usually, after I am pretty battered and bruised by my own will. Thinking and believing that I can fix it or that I know exactly what to do in any given situation still occurs daily for me. I am also pretty certain I know what everyone else should do to handle their daily struggles as well. So, by the time I’ve really gotten my powerlessness and am staring eye to eye with my own character defects, I can be pretty exasperated.⇒

Sometimes this still isn’t enough for me, though. At this point, I am likely to “arrogantly demand” rather than “humbly ask”. There is so much frustration, since I’ve run my gamut of fix-it techniques and all the wounds are still fresh. I want whatever I want now! For me, my relationship with my Higher Power is intimate and open, so at this point I am loudly expressing that I’ve had enough. Take this away, whatever it is and MAKE IT turn out the way I want ... NOW!

Soon after this point, my knees begin to buckle and surrender is right around the corner. Okay, Okay — I am getting it. Humbly asking my Divine Power to remove this defect of my character, that I obviously do not have the ability to control or fix myself, is happening. In these sacred moments, where authentic vulnerability meets the awesome awareness of a Power greater than me, I am moved. Getting it again at a cellular level, that there is a Divine Love that does for me what I am unable to do for myself creates the humility I need to ask for assistance.

There is joy, relief and gratitude in such moments. The Divine Connection reminds me once again that I am not alone. It is great to know that my Higher Power doesn’t have an Ego. I can scream and demand and flail around, and She waits patiently and lovingly for my humble request.

Thank you, Higher Power, for the 7th step.

– Sally B.



### Seventh Step Prayer

*Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.*

*I pray now that you remove my character defects that stand in the way of my usefulness to You.*

*Grant me strength and courage to be open to Your will. Amen*



## WELCOME NEW GROUPS

San Francisco, CA.  
Springfield, MO.  
Lubbock, TX

### *Striving for Balance*

Before recovery I had a difficult relationship with the word “balance”. I didn’t like it, and I couldn’t relate to it — unless you were talking about the seasonings in my food or a piece of music. People recommending a “balanced” lifestyle irritated me; I’d get antsy and superior-feeling and not be able or want to hear a thing. Of course it never occurred to me to question my reaction. Anything I really wanted threw my life into unbalance, and I didn’t question what I wanted. So, having to justify and defend my life I wasn’t going to give balance or balanced people any time; just for good measure I’d attack and judge those balanced people, too. I could stay comfortable where I was if I saw them as way out of touch with their true feelings and passions, afraid to live, boring, conventional, phony and unwilling to know pain.

Of course I couldn’t have set myself up better if I tried, and I had to eat that unsympathetic and ignorant description when I got into recovery. The irony of where my arrogantly unbalanced life led me was overwhelming and depressing, and I remember fighting hard to resist the truth. The frustration and emptiness I began to feel, the self-disgust and stagnation — none of that fit with how I imagined myself, and before recovery I couldn’t deal with it.

Every time a glimmer of truth presented itself I panicked, shutdown and got worse. I didn’t know that my partner was an addict, that I was a co-addict; I didn’t know what addiction was. My knowledge of addiction came from high school health classes — I learned that alcohol and drugs were addictive substances and could kill you. No one ever mentioned sex addiction or relationship addiction; no one ever explained the psychology and the anatomy of addiction — its origins, progression and the downward spiral that eventually kills all vitality, creativity and joy.

As much as I hated at the time to discover how much in common I had with other people, to⇒

begin recovery was a relief; I preferred to know the enemy. I also felt horribly exposed, helpless and lost. I wanted healing, but I didn’t even know what that meant. I didn’t believe the Twelve Promises, and recovery felt so restrictive. I had fantasies of acting out but was just enough out of denial that I couldn’t even do that. Early recovery felt just awful — but even in that confusion, there was some movement, some new direction. I was miserable but I was more alive than I had been. It was a strange and comforting realization.

I was confronted repeatedly with the topics of “Feelings” and “Balance”. They were all over the place! Meetings, conversations, therapy, readings, everywhere. I was uncomfortable of course, and reactive. Feelings — pffff! As if I didn’t have feelings! Balance — oh God, do I have to? Not only did I not have a good understanding of either concept, I had no idea how interrelated they were. I was used to thinking ↓

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*“Having a notion of myself as a passionate, turbulently emotional person (I am musician, an artist! I am all about feelings!) didn’t help ... I learned eventually that I was very selective about my feelings.”*

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of balanced people as not having feelings, remember? Well, feelings seemed easier to deal with first, or so I thought. I didn’t have a problem with feelings, I had a problem with people telling me that I didn’t have my feelings! That was so vexing and irritating to me I could barely stay in meetings and therapy.

Having a notion of myself as a passionate, turbulently emotional person (I am musician, an artist! I am all about feelings!) didn’t help my progress very much. I learned eventually that I was very selective about my feelings. From a very early age I knew how I wanted to appear to the world — this went through various modifications and adjustments as I got older, but I constantly kept tabs on my image and was extremely calculating and conscious of what I projected. Feelings that did not fit, enhance or flatter this image were nixed. That would include feelings like incompetence, jealousy, embarrassment, insecurity, shame or anger — if they came up, I would feel bad, but I wouldn’t name it. I’d quickly stuff it down or distract myself from it. Feelings that were acceptable, non-shaming in⇒

my mind for someone with an artistic temperament — like angst, extreme pain, heartache — were great, and I glorified and warped these all out of proportion and reality. Beyond issues of self-image there were also the feelings I was not allowed to have growing up, and the feelings that were just too scary and painful to have. In any case, I was simply not honest about my feelings. I couldn't name them, feel them, share them or let go of them, and anyone in recovery is familiar with how warped, distorted and chaotic life becomes without those abilities.

Being able to feel and process my feelings today has everything to do with sane and healthy living, being in the present and being in reality. To have a fuller range of feelings is to live a fuller life. I see now how much I limited good feelings before recovery because I was too cynical and cool to have them. Recently, a friend I love walked through her fear to experience paragliding. As I saw her chute coming off the mountain I was so thrilled I started to cry. I was shocked, and I wiped my tears with an inward, "Who are you!?" but I was also thrilled with myself, my new self.

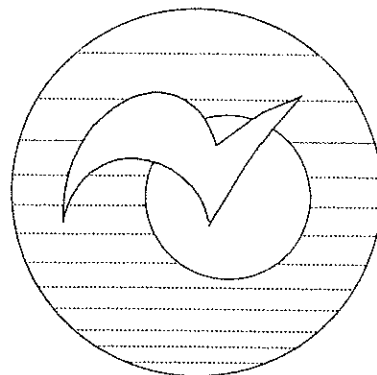
With more and more time in recovery, I began to see that balance was not very far away from this at all — the gifts I was experiencing, the new sense of freedom and joy, the ability to change and grow — things that I love and value! — this was all a part of balance. It is quite a revelation for me, this feeling of comfort and gratitude around the word balance. Today, balance to me means a life made up of conscious choices — choices made from a point of sanity, reality and connectedness to a Higher Power; choices which have a foundation in being honest, being present, and acknowledging my feelings. I have trust in these kinds of choices, which are aligned with my truth, my best interests, and the well-being of those I love.

Often it's difficult for me to make choices. Wants and needs, shoulds and musts, unconscious agendas and sometimes addictive voices all vie for power in my decision-making, but if I work my program I have enough clarity and support to navigate my way through. I do this imperfectly but with much faith and gratitude because it's given me more than I could imagine, and I have something in my life today that I perceive as balance. Imbalance and craziness happen when I refuse to be where I am. Then I push, force, lie and rationalize to get somewhere else, and not only have I not gotten any⇒

where, I've made such a mess I can't see at all where I am. It seems bizarre that I once thought I liked that chaos; an adrenaline rush is nothing compared with real joy.

I believe that everyone inherently strives for balance, even in addictions. I had friends who tried to balance a day of hard work with drinking all night, friends who balanced a day of eating sugar with a day of eating nothing. I would balance a weekend of maniacal sexual acting out with weeks of hermitting away, weeks of procrastination with days of frenzied production. But I don't believe that one has real choices in addiction. There is much striving and yearning, but the addiction makes the choices and chooses to our detriment. Procrastination still seems like a favorite way for my addiction to undermine my serenity and balance, but I see progress, if not perfection! I thank my Higher Power for COSA, recovery, for the opportunity to get well and create my life. I thank *Balance*, the newsletter, for letting me share my reflections.

— Maria L.



## THE COSA RESOURCE GUIDE

At the May COSA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, the Houston Intergroup presented a piece of literature entitled, *COSA Resource Guide*. This piece of literature describes symptoms of the disease, discusses tools of recovery and provides guidance for formally working the Twelve Steps of COSA. The Resource Guide was provisionally accepted by NSO with the intention and expressed commitment to follow the new guidelines for review of this literature. If approved, this piece of literature would be NSO Conference Approved and available for purchase nationally. If not, individual COSA groups can still choose to use it. ⇒

Dialogue, feedback, questions, validations, concerns and other comments about this piece of literature are to be sent to Sally B., literature point person on the Board. The intention in this communication is to open up dialogue and collaboration in order to move towards consensus regarding this new literature.

Currently there is some excitement, support and joy about the new literature. There also exists some disagreement and concern regarding the changes. Since the process for approval is new and the transition of the Balance Newsletter has taken a few months, it is proposed that we extend the discussion from the original 90-day review period (ending August 31, 2002) through the end of September.

Please read and send your thoughts to Sally B., salbart@acninc.net. You are asked to engage in this dialogue in the spirit of collaboration, openness, and compromise, using our tradition of Principles before Personalities as part of our universal commitment to reach out to all recovering COSAs and those still suffering. →

Growing pains and change are party of any dynamic and transforming organization. Let's agree and disagree with grace and focus together on COSA unity and expanding our 12 Step community.

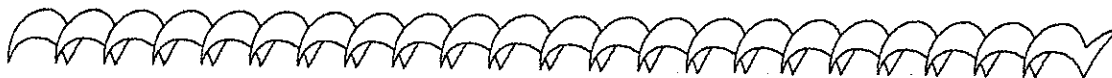
– Sally B.  
salbart@acninc.net

### Prayers

*Thank you. God for my journey. Thank you for the road and for the bumps in the road. Thank you for the cracks in my heart that let the light shine in!*

*Good morning, Divine Universe. Surprise me today! Thank you for the gentle breezes. Thank you for the songs of mockingbirds. Thank you for my grandchild's smile.*

– Burnet O.



### From the New COSA Resource Guide

**STEP EIGHT - Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

The most important way to make amends to ourselves and to others is by changing our behaviors one day at a time.

Reread your 1st and 4th step work. We put ourselves at the top of the list as a powerful affirmation of recognizing how we have been wounded. By doing so, we begin to reclaim our power and affirm our value. We also list all others we have hurt by our behavior and pray for willingness and guidance.

#### Upcoming Retreats

Clarkston, Michigan hosts a retreat twice a year. The next retreat will be held October 4, 5 & 6, 2002. This retreat is a "topic retreat": participants commit themselves to exploring a chosen topic for the entire weekend. The intensity is powerful. The October retreat topic is: What is "it"? "It" will take too much from me. "It" will cause me

to lose friends. What has "it" cost me? What will "it" cost me? On this weekend the group hopes to better determine what "it" is, what "it" takes from us or gives to us.

For more information write to

October Retreat  
P.O. BOX 502  
Mt. Morris, MI 48458

## Transition

The editing and production of this newsletter has been in transition from one group of people to another. We apologize that we missed the May-June issue. To make amends for that omission, we've made this issue a double one. We're soliciting material for future newsletters. Send your thoughts, ideas, writings, drawings either to us directly at burneto@earthlink.net or to the attention of Balance Editor at NSO COSA.

- Maria L.  
- Burnet O.  
burneto@earthlink.net

## Tradition Seven

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

Tucson, AZ group: \$10.00  
Tucson, AZ Sunday group: \$50.00  
Costa Mesa, CA group: \$13.50  
Newport Beach, CA Wed. group: \$9.76  
Conference donation: \$500.00  
Colorado Springs, CO group: \$20.00  
Des Moines, IA Thursday group: \$50.00  
Birch Run, MI individual: \$50.00  
Northville, MI individual: \$80.00  
Minnetonka, MN group: \$20.00  
Minnetonka, MN Sunday group: \$40.00  
Minnesota East Side group: \$15.00  
St. Paul, MN Thurs. evening group: \$40.00  
Pfafftown, NC individual: \$100.00  
Cazenovia, NY individual: \$10.00  
Seattle, WA Wed. night group: \$50.00  
Houston, TX Thursday PM group: \$14.00  
Houston, TX Sunday PM group: \$30.00

Comments received with tradition donations:

"We are grateful for all the service you provide. Thank you and keep up the great work!!"

"Thank you!!! This may sound dramatic and exaggerated, yet I am sure you gave my life back to me. There are others who know what I'm feeling."

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart; I hope my small donation helps. I hope to give more in the future. Maybe we will have group here soon; then we can give even more."

## Approved Budget for 2002-3

Income	
Convention Income	\$1,179
Donations:	
Restricted	\$220
Donations - Other	\$4,900
Total Donations	\$5,120
Literature Income:	
Convention Sales	\$200
Postage & Handling	\$710
Literature Income - Other	\$3,800
Total Literature Income	\$4,710
Newsletter Subscriptions	\$720
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$11,729</b>

Expenses	
Convention Expenses:	
Board Travel	\$500
Deposit	\$500
Printing & Mailing	\$200
Total Convention Expenses	\$1,200
Executive Committee:	
Service Charges & Fees	\$4
Treasurer Bond	\$75
Executive Committee - Other	\$40
Total Executive Committee	\$119
Internet	\$100
Literature Expenses:	
Medallions	\$900
Postage & Handling	\$710
Printing & Photocopying	\$1,000
Tape Reproduction	\$115
Total Literature Expenses	\$2,725
National Coordinator:	
Expenses	\$675
Payment	\$3,600
National Coordinator - Other	\$60
Total National Coordinator	\$4,335
Newsletter Expenses:	
Outreach	\$650
Stipend	\$600
Subscriptions	\$720
Total Newsletter Expenses	\$1,970
Post Office Box	\$80
Teleconferences	\$400
Telephone:	
Volunteer Expenses	\$300
Telephone - Other	\$500
Total Telephone	\$800
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,729</b>