

BALANCE



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Volume 1, Issue 4

FEBRUARY— MARCH 2005

CELEBRATING OUR 25TH YEAR

**Why Come to the COSA 2005 Annual Convention
New Orleans ** May 27-30, 2005?**

Newcomers

1. Jump start your recovery! With workshops ranging from tackling your 1st step to setting boundaries, you're sure to get some tools you can use!
2. Need a sponsor? There are lots of COSAs from all over the country that can serve as a guide as you navigate your recovery.
3. Attend meetings every day!
4. Donate art and/or crafts to the silent auction – a fundraiser for COSA NSO.
5. Learn how you – *yes YOU* – can be of service to other COSAs!
6. Treat yourself! How many times do we put off doing things for ourselves to take care of others? This is a great chance to enjoy a vacation in New Orleans, meet new friends, and have fun!

Been around a bit????

1. Be available to newcomers who may enjoy your experience, strength & hope!
2. Get a recovery tune-up! New tools, new friends, re-connect with old

friends...it's all good!

3. Present a program! You don't need to be an expert...you simply have to be willing to share a tool or your experience with others. Need help sorting out if you can do it? Email cosa_convention@yahoo.com and we'll put you in touch with someone who can help!
4. Be a delegate at the annual meeting, or better yet, volunteer to serve on the NSO Board – we really need some help☺
5. A dinner cruise on a paddleboat with friends and/or your partner... what more do you a need???

Did you know the COSA convention is held at the same location as the SAA annual convention? If you have a partner, it's a great way to go on a "supported vacation"! See the sights, get recovery, have support available all the time...it all makes for more fun! What's more – thanks to Carol Ann's initiative - there will be a list of sessions SAA is offering available for COSAs – and vice versa!

- For more information on ***Masks Off!*** the 2005 COSA Annual Convention:

Special points of interest:

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- Women's Retreat Brochure pages 8 & 9
- Literature Order Form pages 10 & 11

Email
cosa_convention@yahoo.com

- Contact Dawn D. at (520) 791-0350
- Download the brochure from the COSA_12_step Yahoo message board.

Who Will Carry The Message?

Many years ago, my husband and I were preparing to leave for the annual conference. I remember sharing with him that I believed it would be the last conference I would attend. I was feeling hopeless. I was feeling disillusioned. Our home groups in both Flint & Saginaw were low in numbers in attendance. No one wanted to commit to the responsibility of trusted servant. No one wanted to commit to the responsibility of treasurer. I really believed I wanted to quit. I didn't want recovery enough to continue as our groups had been in the past year or two.

Yes, I was ready to let the program go and get on with my life!!!! As I write that sentence, I cringe. What does get on with my life mean? I don't know what I thought it meant before recovery. Today, I know getting on with my life can only happen if I continue my recovery process.

I'm sure there were many moments of encouragement and inspiration during the convention, however the statement that hooked me was one made by Pat C. during the Saturday evening dinner. He said, "We are preparing and establishing a place, a safe place for our children and other family members to go when they come to realize they need recovery".

Momentarily, I hated him. I

didn't want to hear that. I love my children more than any other living being in this world. I now realize I love my siblings and their children also. [I wasn't sure of that when I first came into recovery.] Pat C. made me realize that day that I had to quit looking at who wasn't doing what I wanted them to do in our groups and get the focus back on me and continue to do what I needed to do for my recovery. I knew I wanted to become healthy. The bonus to becoming healthy would be that I would be attracting others to COSA. I would not have to promote recovery or COSA. They would be attracted to the change in me. I would also be attracting family members. They would sense my change.

It has been many years since that conference and that message. I am overwhelmed with gratefulness for all that I have experienced in my recovery process. I am overwhelmed with how my recovery has attracted my family and friends to the program. I have nieces who are now active in their recovery process. It was a joy being there to support them through those early difficult times. One of my nieces recently authored a book on recovery. Both she and her husband have their degrees in the field of Psychology. My family is reading their book!!! I feel the changes in a family that originally stood frozen in their belief that nothing was wrong and that Ila was the only poor, pathetic, sick one. For many years, I believed them.

In the past year, a local lady who is also one of my employees, came to me. I knew she was very aware of my history, our news worthy past.

Her opening words were, "How did you get through it?" She then cried as she shared her story. I invited her to the next COSA meeting.

Just a short time ago, we lost a loyal member to one of our Michigan groups. She died very suddenly. Just a few weeks after her death, one of her daughter's admitted herself into a treatment center. When she was released from that center, she came to our meeting. Tears streamed down our eyes as she shared. We were all very aware that her mother's recovery had been passed on. The message was carried.

I am aware that many groups are closing due to lack of attendance. For me, I am aware that two people are a meeting/group. My hope for me is that I remember that numbers are not important. Recovery is. I can experience recovery by sharing with one other person.

I'm so grateful that others carried the message to me. I'm hoping our little groups all over the world are carrying the message of hope to each other and to their families.

Recovery is a lifestyle. I do want to get on with my life. I cannot get on with my life without focus. I lose my focus easily when I am not attending meetings, working the steps or journaling.

Yes, I am so very grateful that someone stayed with the program, kept the meeting doors opened and carried the message to me. Ila D.

Brief Early History of NSO-COSA

In the beginning, various members of independent COSA groups participated in the newly formed NSO SAA Conventions. COSA, as such, remained relatively invisible until the May 1992 SAA Convention in Tucson, AZ.

At which time some of the COSA members asked “Why don’t they (meaning COSA) get more organized?” The fewer than 10 members looked around themselves and realized that “We are they.” Within a period of hours, a steering committee was formed. It would then be known as the National Executive Steering Committee (NESC). Six people from 5 states took on the task of determining if there was enough support from the many independent COSA groups in the U.S and Canada to form what would be known as a National Service Organization (NSO).

In 1993, the NESC held their business meeting at the SAA Convention in Louisville, KY. Any COSA member could attend and would represent their group.

Each group was given 1 vote. A Louisville COSA member presented the information and forms required for incorporation in the state of Kentucky. The incorporation was approved by those present, forms signed, and fees paid. A set of By-laws was adopted at this same meeting and the first Board of Directors was formed.

The first NSO-COSA Convention was held in 1994 in Phoenix, Arizona along side the NSO-SAA Convention. The Executive committee met on Thursday evening. The group registration committee had registered groups that had sent delegates to the business meeting being held on the following day. On that Friday the first NSO-COSA business meeting was held and business decisions made. New officers were in place and board members came aboard.

The concept of a newsletter began in Louisville with a quarterly publication in 1991. The Balance, as it was named, was offered to the NSO-COSA to serve as its national newsletter. Responsibility for the publications has changed hands from time to time and is currently a bi-monthly newsletter utilizing

submissions from board members, groups and general membership that wish to share their experience, strength, and hope.

The conventions, held annually during the Memorial Day weekend in May, continued with Ann Arbor, MI hosting in 1995, Minneapolis, MN hosting in 1996, and Houston, TX hosting in 1997 and so on.

Mid Winter Board meetings began in 1994 via teleconference. With the exceptions of the 1997 when Louisville, KY volunteered to host a midwinter retreat for the board members. As well as the October, 2004 meeting held in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN that celebrated the 25th anniversary of the beginnings of the independent COSA meetings.

(This brief early history was taken from a rough draft piece in the NSO-COSA archives, begun by Jan W. in 1997 and edited by Judi K)

Plea for Input

My vision as editor of the Balance is to have a folder overflowing with articles submitted from the membership from which I can form topics for upcoming issues. For this to happen, I invite every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles that share upcoming events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers etc. Articles that give a voice to your story. As well as your ideas as to what you would like to see in future articles. The Balance is a newsletter for the membership, by the membership. Please send your articles to NewsletterCOSA@aol.com or by snail mail to the NSO-COSA PO Box listed below. Hope to hear from you soon...

NSO-COSA Central Archive

The NSO of COSA is in the process of creating an archive in a central location.

If you have served the NSO-COSA board in any capacity in the past, and have anything that you think would be relevant in our attempt to bring all of the bits and pieces of our past together..

Please contact me at

MyInnerPeace@aol.com for instruction on where to ship it. Thanks for your assistance...

Judi K, NSO Coordinator

WHAT'S HAPPENING

NSO COSA National Convention

Masks Off

Friday May 27– 30, 2005

New Orleans, Louisiana

Balance, the newsletter of the NSO-COSA, is published bi-monthly. The NSO-COSA holds the copyright to the newsletter.

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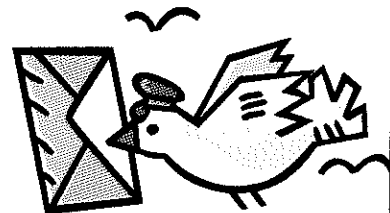
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<http://www.cosa-recovery.org>

http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/COSA_12_STEP/

Email the editor: NewsletterCOSA@aol.com



Group Donations

Houston, TX Monday Night Mtg	\$10.00
Tipp City, OH Pathway 1	\$25.00
Virginia Beach, VA Friday Friends	\$15.00
Mesa, AZ Tuesday Mtg.	\$13.00
Eau Claire, WI Cosa Desert Flowers	\$30.00
Costa Mesa, CA Women's Wed. Mtg.	\$52.04
Buffalo, NY	\$27.00
Dallas, TX	\$61.91
River Ridge, LA	\$50.00

Individual Donations

Colmesneil, TX Designated for Board Expenses	\$200.00
Plymouth, MN	\$ 30.00
Oxford, MI	\$ 50.00
Plymouth, MN	\$ 30.00
Truro, MA	\$ 50.00
Waseca, MN	\$ 10.00

Welcome New Groups

River Valley Area Cosa, AR
East Bay CoSA's Healthy Intimate
Relations Meeting, CA
Women Only Tuesday Mtg
Brisbane Queensland Australia

In Memoriam

Our hearts go out to one of our dedicated NSO board members. Jenny E. a long time COSA member and active member of our NSO board, lost her 43 year old husband, Bob, to death on January 26th, 2005. Jenny, we hope you can feel our love and support wrapped around you during this difficult time.

Jenny still has a young family. If anyone wishes to contribute to her children's education fund, you can do so by sending your donation to the NSO address on your newsletter. Designate that it is for the Jenny E. children's fund. Judi, the NSO coordinator, will see that the donations are forwarded to Jenny.