



Balance

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Summer Issue

July ~ August '06

Do We Have Room For Men in Our Fellowship?

"Hi, my name is Joey Z and I am a recovering co-sex addict. My COSA story began at the age of 13 when I was molested by a man in our church. At the time I thought I was a willing participant. The molestation went on for a while. When I got brave enough to say no, he said if I wasn't going to do it, he would get my 10 year old brother to do it. So the molestation continued. It ended when my family moved when I was 15 years old."

This is how I began my part of the Sunday Banquet, at the National COSA Convention in Indianapolis, entitled *Closing the Black Holes for Enhanced Healing*. The Black Hole that I discussed closing to enhance healing was concerning cities and towns around the country that do not have a COSA face-to-face meeting open for co-sex addict men.

I shared my experience of attending my first COSA meeting about an hour from my hometown.

"It was an incredible experience, they shared their most intimate pain and incredible recovery. Afterwards, the contact person explained that their meeting was closed and for women only. They had taken a group conscience to allow me to come to that meeting. Even though the group approved for me to attend that meeting, I would not be welcomed back. Can you imagine what that was like? It felt like I was given a glimpse into this healing place only to have the door slammed in my face and told I was not good enough. Moments before I had been basking in this loving and caring environment. And now I was shut out!"

I was fortunate because a couple of partner's of local SAAs and myself had decided to start our own COSA meeting.

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- 7th Step Prayer *~ by Mare W*
- 7th & 8th Step Questions
- More Announcements

In every Issue:

- 7th Traditions
- Literature Order form
~new!~



THANK YOU



Give your COSA friends *Balance* Gift subscriptions to celebrate COSA Anniversaries, Birthdays, or other special occasions! It will be sure to bring the sunlight of recovery to their life the whole year through!!

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Precious COSA's \$ 5.00
San Francisco Sat a.m. \$200.00
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7th Traditions Individual

Individual \$100.00

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*SPREAD SOME SUNSHINE!
GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF
Balance
TO A COSA FRIEND!
See Literature Order form for details!*

By the Fellowship, for the Fellowship!



A shared vision of those who work on the production of the Balance is to have a folder overflowing with articles submitted from the membership, which can be used as topics for upcoming issues. For this to happen, we encourage 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. We also would love to hear your ideas for 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:

COSACopy@yahoo.com

or by snail mail to the NSO-COSA PO Box listed on the envelope below.



Hope to hear from you soon...

Contact the NSO of COSA

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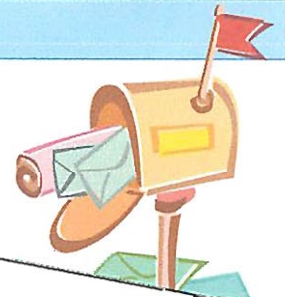
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WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, INDY WAS A WINNER!

~ Interviews by Lindy T.

The convention in Indianapolis was filled with opportunities for cultivating our own recovery, fellowship, and fun. There were so many chances for feeding our souls — from finding that nugget of insight during a workshop, to discovering that being a delegate at the annual meeting can actually be fun! One of our new contributing service workers for the Balance offered to interview convention attendees to ask a few key questions — we hope that reading the responses will bring back some good memories for those of you who attended, and inspire those of you who did not to join us next year in MN!

What were the highlights of the Convention?

Being a delegate from Louisville! It went smoothly. The process [of decision making] went great. The Red, Yellow, and Green signs were good. I thought it was going to be boring.

And both speakers— Carol Ann shared her story about her family and growing up. Knowing what an SAA woman has gone through— her ups and downs— and working her program.

JoAn— Hearing all the craziness about her husband. Being committed to working her program, and getting so much support— It was so powerful! I just wanted to embrace her. It was so nice that she shared that it was her birthday.

What was your favorite Workshop/s?

The Spirituality of 12 Steps, with Chris, and COSA "I Can't -G-D can, Drop it in!" with JoAn D. She shared the story of a bully in school. She wrote down his name, and put it in the can... I put in "I am loved by G-D"

Would you come to the next Convention?

I would definitely come to the next convention!

What were the highlights of the convention for you?

I liked the Double Winners meetings. I felt like I could tell all of the story: all the things that I am struggling with.

-PAMELA FROM KENTUCKY

What was your favorite workshop/s?

The Second Step workshops (both sessions) with Mavis— I got practical information regarding how to work the step, and also some information on the First Step.

What was your experience as a man attending the conference?

It was slightly intimidating— I was outnumbered. I

had some fear around the possibility of anger directed at me, but that was not the case at all. It was a very loving/accepting atmosphere!

Would you return to the Conference next year?

Yes, it jump starts my recovery. All the varied experiences with the people was a highlight.

I liked that Christi and the COSAs from MN had magnets and flyers for us to take back to our home meetings for next year's conference.

-DM FROM DENVER CO

What were the Highlights of the Convention for you?

The speakers were phenomenal at the Sat. Night Banquet. They were very powerful, and made me turn and look at myself. The Monday morning Breakfast with Ila and Ginny really brought my own personal character defects in to the light where I am not seen too often in a safe way. The exercise made me vulnerable, but in a good way.

What were the Workshops/meetings that you liked?

I liked the COSA Resentment workshop and the 'Healing of Wounds' workshop with Donna. Both of the workshops were very helpful.

I had a chance to have a lot of fellowship at the conference, and got quite a few opportunities to meet new people.

Would you come to the next convention?

Yes, most definitely!!!

-KAREN FROM OHIO

What was a Highlight of the convention for you?

The opportunity to be with everybody (as well as SAA's) ... So much is possible! It was a great opportunity to look at many aspects of recovery.

Favorite Workshops/Meetings-

I liked hearing everyone's experience. I liked feeling like "I am not alone" ... The friendship, the camaraderie, the warmth.... I liked the Double Winner Meeting. I wish that we can open more meetings in our area. I also liked the Resentment Workshop and the Conflict Resolution Workshop.

Would you come back next year?

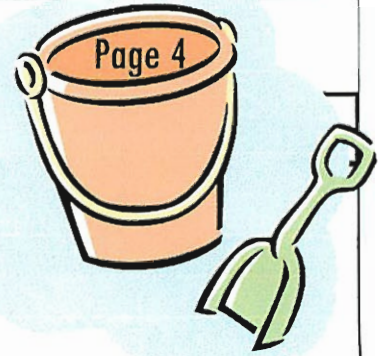
I would come back next year!!

-DBK FROM CALIFORNIA

What were the highlights of the Convention for you?

(Convention Interviews, Continued on page 4)





NEWS from Indianapolis ~By Joey Z.

I want to let you all know that you missed out on an *awesome* convention in Indianapolis last month! Yes, I am rubbing it in, but I am not exaggerating. I hope I can inspire some of you to start hiding those pennies today so you can plan to meet us face-to-face next year in Minneapolis!

The speakers' banquet was especially awesome. CDs of the COSA speaker will be available for sale on the website next week.

During the Annual Meeting for Delegates, the NSO Board shared some of its accomplishments since last years' Convention:

First, they completed the application to change the name of our service organization from National Service Organization of COSA to *International* Service Organization of COSA, so they will not be the NSO but the ISO from now on. They will start changing the name on our literature and in the Balance and on the websites.

Second, they unveiled the new upgraded website. Besides adding some new content, like COSA Men and information for Professionals, they added a new, dynamic set of navigational tools to move around the website effortlessly. If you haven't visited www.cosa-recovery.com lately, take a look!! The website team will be unveiling a couple more upgrades over the coming year. The next upgrade will be an online store at which you will be able to purchase COSA Literature, Medallions, and Audio Tapes with your credit card via PayPal. The Website team needs volunteers.

Third, the delegates fully accepted the NEWLY REVISED versions of all the new literature that was published in the Balance and in the all-groups Special Mailing, including the pages that were created for the main COSA website, the COSA telemeeting website, as well as the online message boards (COSA_12_Step and COSA_Step_Work), with the exception of a couple of pieces:

--They accepted the Twelve Concepts with Questions pamphlet on a TRIAL basis, meaning the accept it AND they want all of us to accept it again after a year of experience using it. The recommendation is that it be made available now. They ask the COSA Groups and service boards to put it to use this year and for the ISO to continue to invite feedback from the Fellowship on it.

--They Provisionally Accepted the COSA Sobriety booklet, to be offered this year, asking that ISO incorporate the San Francisco COSA circles worksheet for next year's edition.

(Continued on page 8)

(Convention Interviews, Continued from page 3)

My first experience was positive. I had a few trepidations, like "how many men would there be here?"

But, I didn't feel uncomfortable, even when I was once the only man in a workshop.

What were your favorite workshops?

The Telemeeting workshop was a highlight. This will give me the opportunity to attend a COSA meeting. I also liked "Letting Go of Resentments," and the COSA 2nd Step workshop.

The Men's COSA Meeting had the largest number of attendees yet!

What about the possibility of coming to the Conference next year?

We have already talked about coming next year!!

-JIM FROM TENNESSEE

**This was Jim's first face-to-face COSA experience!*

What were the Highlights of the Convention for you?

The best thing was the fellowship, the 'live' contact with

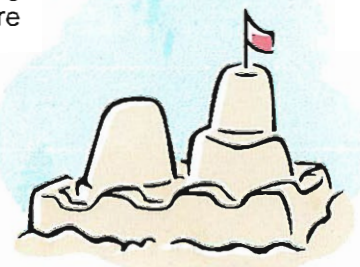
people that have worked so hard. Also, time with 'old' friends was great, too. There were many wonderful private and public moments. The Delegate Meeting went very smoothly and I was impressed with the way we all worked together.

What were your favorite workshops?

I really loved the Resentment Workshop (COSA) . It opened a door that needed to be opened with the resentments that I had for my x-girlfriend. I worked out my resentment by writing a letter on my way home from the convention. Also, I enjoyed giving the Voices of Growth (the COSA Telemeeting workshop). I liked also the opening COSA meeting because of the great shares. The Saturday Night COSA and SAA speakers were very inspirational.

Would you come back to the Convention next year?

Definitely! If there was another one tomorrow, I



COSA VOICES STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Step Seven has just seven words—the shortest in the twelve steps. Those seven words however, pack a great deal of punch. The key words in this step for me are “humbly” and “asked.” Humility has been difficult because pride—way too often—gets in the way. I also have confused low self-esteem with humility and have since come to realize that true humility can only come from a position of personal strength. When working this step I was asked the question—“Am I ready to ask God to remove my defects?” To this question I still answer a tentative yes—my fear being that if I allow God to take away ALL my character defects—will there be anything left???



The second difficult word in this step is “asked.” To ask God to take away my character defects means that I must fully surrender to my Higher Power. This means I must believe that the Higher Power always has my best interest at heart. The order of the steps is no coincidence—if I find that asking becomes too much I must return to step six and become “entirely ready” all over again.

My personal experience has shown me that the Higher Power always shows up when I have asked. I have found that the only thing that truly limits God’s potential in my life is me. I trust you will find the necessary humility and surrender to work this short but powerful step.

~ Margie S. Indiana

A COSA SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

“Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

God, it's me.

I have come to the place where I can run no farther.

To the place where you are.

And I am in no mood tonight to do this. I am tired and lonely and short of cash and long on self-hatred.

I stand here humbly, numbly in the silence and ask your love to enfold and embolden me.

You know my shortcomings, my fears, my achievements, my murkiness,

My walls, my wallowing, my hallowing others' names,

My losing it all over the place, my mindlessness, my pitiful pockets of saved miseries.

Please come into the dark places of my lies, into the pain of my addictions.

Please forgive me the thousand times I did not show up for life, for myself, for those whom you gave me, for you.

Please set me free that I may stand on solid ground.

Please turn my flaws into flowers by the light of your Presence.

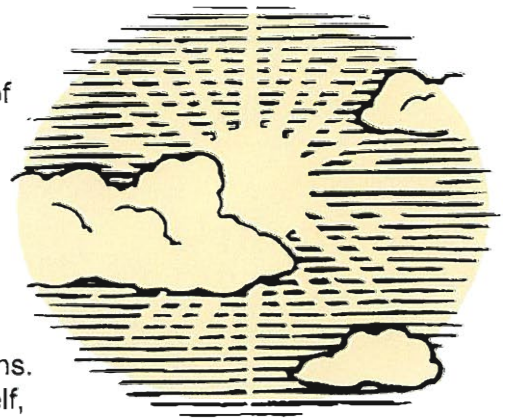
We stand together in this place surrounded by the wreckage of my life—and its lights.

Your know how little hope I have in this process. You know what belief I have in you.

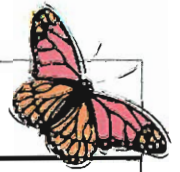
In your hands I am.

We have laughed and cried together and argued together and held one another in the darkness.

Please find me again, and heal my brokenness.



~ Mare W.



MEN IN COSA, continued

In Indianapolis I shared about going to the Dallas Convention and hearing about a metropolitan city in Texas that had many weekly meetings and none were open to men. Since the Dallas Convention, I have heard of other metropolitan areas that do not have meetings that are available for COSA Men to attend. So I joined the NSO Board to have a male presence in the COSA Fellowship. And after serving in several different roles on the NSO Board, I was elected in Indianapolis by the Delegates to be the new Chair of the NSO (soon to be ISO) Board.

But I was not speaking on that Sunday as the Chair, I was speaking as a recovering co-sex addict man. I spent a little time and challenged my fellow COSAs in that room. I shared that,

“By not allowing COSA men into meetings they were breaking with the Traditions. The 3rd Tradition states that the only requirement for membership in COSA is that our lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. I know that if I would attend your local face-to-face that I would heal and grow. And the 3rd Tradition says that I should be allowed to do that. But I also bring some of these same positive benefits to you with sharing my Experience, Strength and Hope. We walk the same road. We recover together.”

“One of the greatest gifts of this program happened while I was working my 1st Step. I came to understand that what happened to me when I was 13 was not my fault. For over 20 years, I took full responsibility for all of it. But now I am able to put it down and that feels awesome. Thank you COSA!! As my story clearly shows, my life has been

(Continued on page 7)

~ STEP EIGHT ~

*MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED
AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL*

Unlike Step Seven, which involves more attitude than action, Step Eight involves both attitude AND action. The action is making a list, the attitude, a willingness to make amends. Interestingly, making a list is how Step Four begins and hopefully any persons harmed that were missed in Step Four will be included now. When working this step, I was challenged to include— anyone with whom I felt any discomfort.

I organized the list into five columns; the first column was the person harmed, secondly my relationship to them, thirdly, the harm done. The fourth column was the reason for my amends, and lastly my willingness to make the amends necessary to restore the relationship. With the help of my sponsor I was able to put myself at the top of the list. The dis-ease of co-dependence doesn't allow for that type of self-examination or self-care. My self-inflicted harm came by

means of resentments and unforgiving spirit towards those whom I felt had harmed me.

The second entry on my list was God. How had I harmed my relationship with God?? I had diminished my Higher Power's influence in my life every time I took matters into my own hands and refused to give God control over my life and the lives of my loved ones. This discovery has been truly life-changing.

With this new knowledge must come the second part of this step and that is the willingness to make amends. My impatience wanted to skip this part and go directly to Step Nine— action always seems “to get more done” than attitude. I am daily learning that this is not the case and that changed actions come through a changed heart.

~ Margie S., Indiana





(Men in COSA, Continued from page 6)

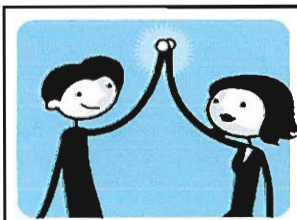
affected by compulsive sexual behavior. Not to let me in to a meeting in your town would be a direct violation of the 3rd Tradition. In addition, the 5th Tradition states, "Each group has but one primary purpose... to carry its message to THOSE who still suffer". It does not say carry its message ONLY to those WOMEN who still suffer.

I concluded my comments in Indianapolis with,

"I would like to charge each of you to go back to your home meetings and intergroups and ask if the new Chair of COSA would be allowed to attend. If I were in your town and wanted or needed to go to a meeting would there be one for me? I understand the need for women's only meetings and I support them as long as there is also at least one meeting open to COSA men in your area.



And yet I realize that my very election – the first male Chair of COSA – and the things I have said today will cause some discomfort and challenges to some of you. My




We grow so much together!

intention, however, is only to help lead and to help our Fellowship – which means each of us – to grow and continue healing. Can that happen with men in your meetings? Absolutely! Just ask some of the women who have been on the path with men for many years. *We grow so much together!* One thing that continues to amaze me on my recovery journey is how often, when we stop, pray, are honest and share, we do the "next right thing." I know that deep in our hearts we know it's the right thing to let any co-sex addict with a desire into our meetings. Let's go home, and talk about this, and pray and share and take steps in the direction of doing the "next right thing." Let us keep growing

together! My name is Joey Z. My life has been affected by compulsive sexual behavior, and my life continues to be affected. I have a desire to heal and grow. I need the COSA Fellowship. Is there a meeting available in your town for COSA men?"




~ Gratefully, Joey Z



*Hear Ye,
Hear Ye,
Calling all COSA
Angels!*

Please consider submitting a contribution of writing to the Balance. We all have ES&H to share.



(Indy News. Continued from page 4)

--They held off on fully accepting the Spirituality in COSA pamphlet because the copy that had incorporated the suggested changes went missing, so they could not review and accept them! We will publish the full pamphlet for 90-day review to the fellowship sometime this year. Your feedback has all been used and it is still welcomed! (The Mutual Respect and Spirituality of COSA statement was provisionally accepted in New Orleans, is still provisionally accepted, and so it can continue to be used in Groups and online.)

Fourth, ISO unveiled the new COSA literature. ISO edited it to include all the fellowship-wide feedback we received, and we printed and sold special preview convention editions of most pieces. They are beautiful! We will soon have them available for sale on the COSA website in their completed First Editions.

Fifth, several more new pieces of COSA literature were submitted this year for consideration from COSA Groups. These pieces will be reviewed for any copyright issues, and published via Special Mailing for the 90-day fellowship-wide comment and review, then formally considered for acceptance at next year's annual international service meeting, which is always held on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend. Next year we will meet in Minneapolis!

The delegates reviewed the activities of the NSO Board this past year, and issued their directives for the new ISO Board's focus, to channel the growth of the fellowship in those ways this new term. Elections were held.

I have been elected as the new CHAIR of the ISO of COSA. The theme for the Sunday COSA Banquet was "Closing the Black Holes for Enhanced Healing". I was one of the speakers for the COSA Sunday Banquet. ~~That Banquet~~ and a couple of the other sessions are available on tape. The ISO Board is looking into transferring all the cassette recordings to CDs sometime this year and welcomes volunteers.

Mavis was elected as the new Vice-Chair of the ISO. Mavis will continue as Literature Chair and I will continue as Website Coordinator. We will both continue as Online Coordinators. Cindy B. will continue as Treasurer; Jackie B. is the new Secretary. The position of Communications Chair is open. JoAn D. continues as Public Information Chair, Inter-Fellowship Liaison and Nominating Chair. Margie and Lindy are the new Balance Articles Coordinators; Christi G. will continue as Balance Design Coordinator, and serve as a Convention 2007 Liaison to ISO. And, we have an additional 5 new Members-at-large on the Board.

Thank you all for your participation in COSA. My hope for us all in the coming term is a newfound way of life that leads us to clarity of mind, lightness of heart and fullness of spirit.

Gratefully,

~ Joey Z, Chair;
International Service Organization of COSA

~ STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~

STEPS SEVEN AND EIGHT QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Seven Questions:

How do I see myself when I look at myself with eyes of humility?
How does this Step inspire Surrender?
What am I learning about asking for help?

Step Eight Questions:

Who might help me decide whether I caused harm or not?
What does willingness mean to me?
What does amending mean? How is that different than apologizing?
Am I willing to make this cleaning up of my side of the street a real priority?

– *More Last Minute Announcements* –



- ≈ The ISO Name Change is Official; COSA's service organization is now The International Service Organization of COSA
- ≈ Our new ISO Coordinator is Emilah Dawn (and our name change means that we changed the title of that position from National Coordinator.) She will say hi to all in the next issue.
- ≈ The new ISO Office is being set up in Albuquerque, NM!
- ≈ New Literature will be available August 1st. Please note that literature prices now more accurately reflect our costs. As the ISO fulfills its directives from your delegates, it will pass any savings on to you, our membership. See the new order form on page 11!
- ≈ Our website www.cosa-recovery.org will have the new features of a shopping cart and a PayPal payment option.
- ≈ Our PayPal link is already live to accept your Individual or Group's 7th Tradition donations to ISO.
- ≈ Aside from their full schedule of workshops and events, this year's Puget Sound retreat in cooperation with Lakewood COSA Group and COSA's online service board, will host a literature work group for a Sponsorship pamphlet. (See the announcement of the retreat on page 10.)
- ≈ A few small member suggestions had been overlooked in the convention editions of the new literature; the presses are being updated for corrections. Please email any concerns to cosacopy@yahoo.com
- ≈ COSA Telemeetings are expanding! In addition to two topic meetings weekly, COSA is proud to announce a weekly telemeeting for COSA Double Winners, and a weekly telemeeting for COSA Parents. Check cosacall.com for details and our new expanded schedule!
- ≈ The ISO is working on creating a uniform policy for Groups about making copies of the Balance and of COSA Literature. We would appreciate any comments about this emailed to COsAcopy@yahoo.com
- ≈ Thank You!