



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Summer Issue

July–August '08

### COSA members share about the 2008 convention

We asked a few COSA members the following questions:

Is this your first time at the COSA convention?

Would you come again next year?

What were the highlights of the convention for you?

How did the Convention help your recovery?

What makes you unique among COSA members?



#### Ben B. - Oakland

Yes, this was my first convention and I am looking forward to next year in Oakland. My convention experience began in the Oakland Airport. I headed to the snack bar for breakfast, but there were no empty tables. I asked a woman with a friendly face if my partner and I could sit at her table. Chatting with her, I discovered we were not only on the same flight to Seattle but that she was also staying at the SeaTac Marriott hotel. My heart started beating faster... what to say next? I decided to just confront my fears and tell her I was going to the COSA convention. It turned out that she was on her way to the COSA convention as well. We had a great conversation about recovery and step work. I made a new out of town COSA friend and I hadn't even left my own city yet. Other highlights of the convention included listening to the COSA convention speeches. I learned a lot from our Friday night COSA speaker. Connie talked about the importance of doing step work. One of her messages really struck a chord. She told us: "Meetings give you relief but the steps give you recovery." That is the key message that I heard in so many different ways at the convention. Recovery is about doing my own step work. My recovery was strengthened by coming home with a commitment to do daily step work. I also appreciated the chance to get the new ISO literature. The new pamphlets on how to Work Step Two and Step Three have been very helpful. The new ISO pamphlet explaining the 12 Traditions is great too. The questions in the 12 Traditions pamphlet helped me have a better understanding of how the program works and how I can help build a stronger recovery community. I am looking forward to "Quaking with Clarity" at the Oakland COSA Convention. I hope we can meet together and remind ourselves that "It's not just their Fault."

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**CONVENTION CDs  
AVAILABLE!**

# THANK YOU!

## 7th Traditions Individuals

<b>NEW YORK NY</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>ANONYMOUS</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>MADISON WI</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>ANONYMOUS</b>	<b>\$ 5</b>

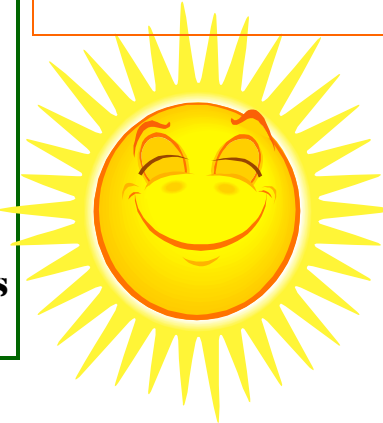
**NEW OPTION FOR GIVING!  
RECURRING DONATIONS\*  
TOTAL FOR 4/20/08-7/6/08  
\$377**

**\*SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS**

## 7th Traditions Groups

<b>CA-04</b>	<b>\$ 45</b>
<b>CA-13</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>MI-06</b>	<b>\$ 24</b>
<b>MN-05</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<b>MN-14</b>	<b>\$ 35</b>
<b>TX-17</b>	<b>\$ 80</b>

**NEW! GROUP NUMBER ASSIGNMENTS  
SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS**



## By the Fellowship, For the Fellowship

We encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that **share your ESH** (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles and announcements that **share upcoming COSA 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.

### WE NEED SUBMISSIONS!!!

Please send your articles to: **COSACopy@yahoo.com**  
or by snail mail to the COSA ISO PO Box listed on the envelope below.

Hope to hear from you soon...



## Tuesday & Thursday Telemeeting's

**Telephone number:**  
**1-906-481-2100 Passcode: 679461**

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific Time (8 Mountain, 9 Central, 10 Eastern)  
Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time (7 Mountain, 8 Central, 9 Eastern)

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

## Contact the ISO of COSA

*Balance, the newsletter of the  
International Service Organization of  
COSA,  
is published six times a year.  
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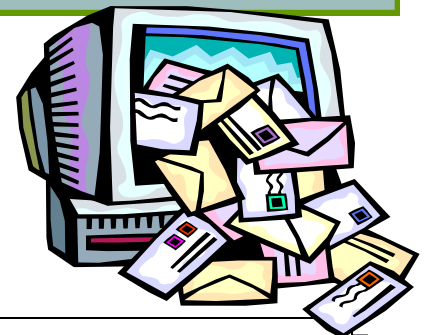
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## COSA members share about the 2008 convention

*Continued from page 1*

### Brian K. New York, NY

This is my first convention. Of course, I will come again next year. I've got to see my gals. The major highlight for me was the fellowship with other COSA members: the shares in the hospitality suite, the giggles during an outing in the city, and JoAn getting the delegates to sing the Beaver song. It was different from what I expected. Before I came to Seattle, I anticipated more tears and less laughter. Being around like-minded people was great for my recovery. I was able to be myself. In my work life, when I am on stage, I feel that I am full of life and can express myself fully. Off stage, I sometimes retreat. Therefore at the convention, I expected that I would isolate myself and retire instead of reaching out. Instead I surprised myself with not being shy and being able to be myself. The convention exceeded my expectations.



### Moshe

Highlights for me were the keynote speakers and the workshop presenters. Hearing stories of experience, hope and strength that help me imagine a personal journey of hope and recovery. My recovery is always expanded and deepened by new awareness and insight. This is what happens at the convention, especially as I get inspiration from fellow COSA members and from the sex addicts' fellowship. Yes! I will be in Oakland at the convention next year.



### Stephanie S.— Scottsdale, AZ

Yes, this was my first conference and Higher Power willing, I will go to the one in Oakland in 2009! As a newcomer to the conference, and someone early in my recovery, the conference provided me with hope and encouragement. I found the workshops most helpful. Not only did I receive knowledge about the 12 Steps or other aspects of recovery, but experienced a sense of "we". My favorite part of the convention were the opening and closing speakers. To start with a story of strength and hope and to end with a story of strength and hope gave me courage to go back to 'real' life. This conference helped my recovery by driving home the feeling that I am not alone in my journey of recovery. Since isolation is something I struggle with, this was very powerful for me. The conference lessened my feelings that something is "wrong" with me, that I am broken, that somehow I didn't "get" life right.

### Laura Z

I liked the workshops that dealt with recollections, step 1, and getting in touch with a Higher Power through a step or as a tool for working a step. I also think the workshops were well planned, on paper they seemed to overlap but each provide me with a core of information that was important. The level of recovery in all the meetings was phenomenal. Attending the delegates meeting and seeing how the program was run, along with the fellowship I felt was wonderful. The entire conference was set up to have a sense of safety to explore feelings. Yes, I will be back- I'll be in Oakland. It helped tremendously in my recovery and it has given me a sense of confidence and clarity about how much I have recovered and the place that I am at regarding the steps. I gained a sense of confidence about the ability to start a meeting in my area in the future. And I had the opportunity to give back by leading a meeting here at the conference. I no longer feel isolated. I feel so much more a part of the program.

### Laura G. - Redwood City, CA

Yes, this was my first COSA convention, and, of course, I plan to come next year. I'd like to be able to go every year. The highlights for me were first, that I got to meet a lot of other people in recovery. I was able to meet with other COSAs as well as with my husband's fellowship, which further supported my recovery and the idea that sex addiction is just a piece of the puzzle in my life and there is a richness in the human spirit that cannot be dampened by sex addiction. I was able to own my recovery by actively participating in it. I really liked being a delegate! And I completely appreciated the teleconference we held for new delegates with the veteran voice as a guide. Thank you! I really, really, really appreciated the hospitality suite. That was great. As far as my uniqueness in COSA is concerned, I am a wave in the ocean, not too unique, and yet I'm an individual wave with sounds and actions of my own in the COSA fellowship.

## STEP SEVEN: HUMBLY ASK GOD TO REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

Doing Step Seven completely changed my life. After becoming entirely ready to let go of all my character defects in Step Six, I embarked on a new journey through Step Seven. I read step seven and thought, what is there to do. It became clear to me that all I had to do was ask God. "Could it be that simple", I thought to myself. Then I looked a little closer and realized that I had to humbly ask my HP. Here was the problem I found. I realized that I do not like to ask for help from anyone. I have had experiences in the past where I have asked for help and was perceived as weak, or I never received the help I asked for. This is where the humility came in. As I worked through the questions that applied to Step Seven, I discovered what humility meant for me. I had to look at myself honestly and say, I am not Connie the Great! I do not have all power to remove these defects. I had been trying to remove them for years with no avail. I had to put my trust in my HP, go to my HP and humbly ask, not just for help, but basically for a miracle. In fact, many miracles judging by the number of character defects on my list. While I was studying Step Seven, I was taught that being humble not only meant that you are not better than others, but also that you are not less than others. Having humility means you do not brag or boast, but it also means you do not put your self down. I had to come to the realization that I am equal to others and that I am as worthy to ask for a miracle from God as any other person. I felt so thankful to find this new insight. It felt freeing to be equal and not have to prove myself to anyone. I just had to be the true authentic me.



I wrote a prayer for each of my character defects. I humbly poured my soul out to my HP in my writings and asked my HP if it be "thy will" to remove them from me. I realized that my part was done and I could let my HP do the rest. I had to stay out of the helping business. I did not have to ask my HP again, remind or get mad at my HP when some defects stayed longer than I would have liked. My HP is like a surgeon. My HP knows what needs to be removed and in what order. Some of my character defects were removed immediately, others are a work in progress. There are still a few big glaring defects that my HP has chosen not to remove for today, but I know HP will when the time is right. I also discovered that my HP didn't remove some defects, but instead put them in a positive light for me. For example, being stubborn in relationships is not good, but being stubborn in my program and going to any lengths to stay sober is good. My HP had a way of turning them into positive traits. The bottom line is once you humbly ask, your HP does all the work. It is really HP's step of action and we are just blessed with miracles. Don't be afraid to humbly ask - it works and you're worth it!

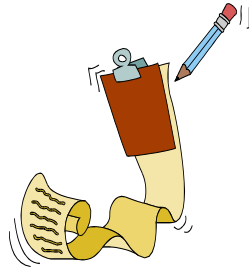
- Connie



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

I will never forget the day I sat down to make my list of those I had harmed. There it was in black and white. There was no denying it now. I was face to face with the reality of my wreckage of the past. All the names of people I had harmed were staring back at me. I remember being so high and mighty about my husband having to make a lot of amends, and now it was my turn. I realized I had a lot of repairing to do in my relationships. It took me a while to become ready and willing to make amends to everyone on my list. I had so many questions about this process. What will I say? Do I have to make the amends in person? How will all these people react to my amends? With the help of my sponsor she walked me through all of my questions.

When I presented my list to my sponsor she said, "You forgot the most important person." She explained I should put myself on the list first. I realized how much I needed to place myself on the list. Through all my years of codependency I had treated myself very poorly. I always put my needs and wants above everyone else's. I spoke unkind words to



myself and professed many hateful statements toward myself. I expected perfection out of myself and berated myself for being unable to achieve it. I thought of all the times I believed lies and denied the truth I was living in. I understood that I had to be first on the list and I had to become willing to forgive myself and make amends before I could proceed down the rest of the list. It was a process, but with much prayer and help from my HP I finally become willing.

With my list in hand I was finally ready to face my mistakes and make the amends I had needed to make for so long. I had fear about the process but I knew others had done this before me and if they could do it so could I. Step Eight is a process, a journey of facing reality head on. It was worth making the list and becoming ready and willing to forgive myself and take responsibility for my actions of the past. Step Eight is the prerequisite for Step Nine; I needed to become willing before I could take the action of making amends. For me willingness was the key to Step Eight and with my HP's help I found the freedom I was seeking.

- Connie

**STEP STUDY QUESTIONS**

*FOR GROUP DISCUSSION  
OR  
PERSONAL REFLECTION*


**Step Seven Questions**

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

**Step Eight Questions**

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

## New Board Members

I am honored to serve on the COSA Board as Vice Chair and look forward to an opportunity to give back in service to the program that literally saved my life, spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally. I am sure I will have a huge learning curve and promise to act like a sponge absorbing all the experience, strength and hope from all of the Board Members. Thank you for your trust in me! Suzanne D.

My name is JoAn D. I am excited to be back on the board after 2 years of focus on self care. I am a Member at Large, and also will be serving on the PI and Literature Committees.



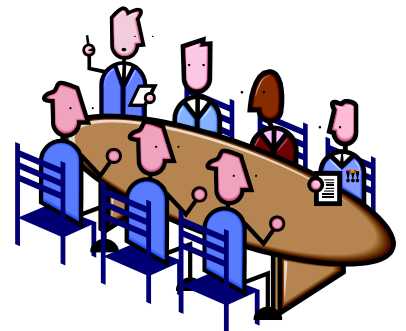
I'm excited and grateful to be this year's trusted servant as the 2009 Oakland ISO of COSA Convention Chair. The last year on the Seattle Convention Committee was the perfect training ground for this service work. I'm thrilled to report that about 20 COSAs have already stepped up to be of service on the 2009 Convention Planning Committee! And we are looking for even more volunteers (the more the merrier). There are no geographic qualifications to be on the convention committee - you can be anywhere in the world and still be of service for what will happen on the ground in Oakland, CA in May 2009! It is my hope that you will experience fun, team spirit, fellowship and growth in your own recovery program by being a part of the planning for "Quaking with Clarity" in Oakland! To get involved, contact me at [kcmes-ser59@aol.com](mailto:kcmes-ser59@aol.com) or call me at 510-703-2560 or call into one of our monthly Convention Committee Conference Calls!

--Kerry M.-New Board Member-

## New Committee Chairs

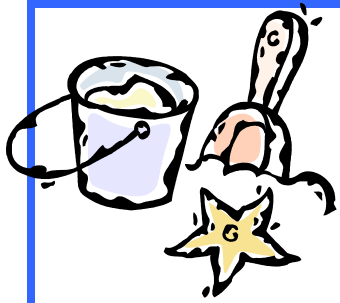
My name is Elaine K. and I am the new Communications Committee Chair. I have been a member of the board for the past two years and the work I have been doing fell under the communications umbrella. The Communications Committee involves the internal communication of the ISO including but not limited to: the structures for the online message boards and telemeetings, telephone hotline, email, mail and COSA Connection Coordinators (CCC's). You may or may not recognize the term CCC and for those that do not, these are the volunteers who help isolated COSA's located in the same area connect with each other. Once I have a better idea of what is in place, speak with the current service workers in the different positions and find out what is needed, I will be brainstorming ideas along with a group of volunteers to find out what can be done to have this section of the ISO work more efficiently. If anyone would like to help in any capacity, has suggestions or ideas, please email me at [weand50@yahoo.com](mailto:weand50@yahoo.com).

Hi - I am Lindy T. and I am the new Literature Committee Chair. Over the last two years I was on the Board as Co-Lit Chair. I learned a lot about the Literature Development process, and I was Articles Coordinator for the Balance Newsletter for ISO. I am very excited to say that we have a new Literature Committee that is eagerly waiting to start editing and reading the wonderful writing of the COSA's in our fellowship. It is an honor to serve this fellowship, and I am grateful to be a part of the 2008 Board. If you have ideas for new pieces of Literature, or comments on our current Literature, please write us at [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com) Thanks!





## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Upcoming Retreat

The 19th Annual Puget Sound Retreat will be held the weekend before Labor Day, August 21-24, on the beautiful and tranquil Key Peninsula.

[www.soundretreat.org](http://www.soundretreat.org)

COSA Helpline 206-706-2602

Serenity on the Sound is a retreat open to all SAA and COSA members, other S-recovery fellowships, and adult family and friends in recovery.

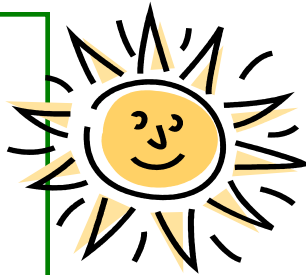
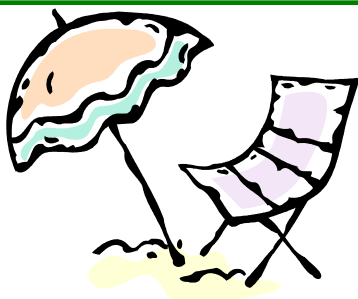
This event is organized & operated in cooperation with the fellowships of SAA & COSA.

### NEW! GROUP NUMBER ASSIGNMENTS

One of the accomplishments last term for the ISO of COSA Central Office was the development of an Access database for maintaining registered COSA group information. This was previously recorded in an Excel spreadsheet which was labor intensive. Joey Z, the Chair of ISO, developed the Access database which has significantly streamlined the record keeping process. With the development of the database ISO initiated the assignment of GROUP NUMBERS to all registered groups. The group number starts with the two letter State abbreviation followed by a number assigned by the program. Your group number will be referenced when the request for group updates goes out this Fall. Please begin using this group number for all group donations and correspondence. With groups referring to themselves some by name, some by day of the week, some by city, the process for keeping the groups straight was not as accurate as it could be. Beginning with this issue of the Balance, group donations will now be listed by their group number. Please contact [iso@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:iso@cosa-recovery.org) if you have any questions related to this change.

ISO of COSA now has the ability to accept **automatic recurring 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition donations.** As part of our Helping Hands Pledge Program, a donation card has been developed. It was introduced at the COSA Convention in Seattle and received a wonderful response. Thank you to all that have signed up. The pledge card is now being put in all orders. You can also contact [iso@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:iso@cosa-recovery.org) to request a pledge card to initiate your donation.

The message on the pledge card states:



### Helping Hands Pledge Program

Please extend your helping hands to the 12 Step program that is helping you. ISO of COSA needs dependable income to do its work. Your monthly contribution provides the foundation we need to support COSA's current members and to reach out to the COSA who still suffers.

Will you help by asking other COSAs to contribute as well?

Remember the 7th Tradition which states: Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

This means that the support of COSA is up to us!





**DELEGATE MEETING SUMMARY**  
International Service Organization of COSA  
Seattle, WA  
23 May 2008

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> in Seattle, the 15th Annual Meeting of the ISO Board, Delegates, and Membership of COSA was held. There were 18 Delegates, 8 Board Members and 4 other COSAs in attendance. After a thoroughly entertaining orientation to Roberta's Rules by JoAn D, we got right to business. We started with the three Goals that the previous years' Delegates had assigned to the ISO Board. The three Goals were: 1) Fundraising (Seventh Tradition), 2) Increase Service Volunteers, and 3) Guidance (tools/techniques) for sustaining lasting and sober COSA meetings. We reviewed the actions taken by the Board over the last year for each of these Goals. Some of the highlights included ISO of COSA's first Fund Drive which raised \$2291.85 (Goal #1), passing a sign up sheet of available Service positions and committees (Goal #2), and Sponsorship booklet available for sale now (Goal #3). After reviewing a list of brainstormed ideas for each Goal, the Delegates were asked to note which items from each Goal they felt they could take back to their home groups for working on at a local level. They were also asked to note which items for each Goal they thought should be led by the Board on an international level.

Mavis, outgoing Vice Chair, presented an overview of the structure of the Communications Committee (ComCom). The ComCom is the committee that includes the CCCs, National Phone Line, Email, Snail Mail, Telemeetings, Online Meetings (Chat and Messaging), and Online Registration Board (COSA\_12\_Step). There has not been anyone chairing this committee for over a year and the current systems of communicating between the various branches of this committee need serious overhauling and updating.

Paula, COSA's only paid employee, shared about the last 10 months since she took the position of ISO's Central Office Coordinator. She shared some of her growing pains and some of her triumphs. Paula shared that she does not have enough hours in a week/month to take care of all that is needed for the Central Office. She also shared that she is saddened by the lack of CCCs to whom to forward the requests for meeting information that she receives from suffering COSAs.

Margie, ISO's Treasurer, updated the Delegates on the current financial situation. At 11 months into the fiscal year, COSA is in the black. But at 11 months not much of the Convention expenses have been captured. Margie shared that COSA now has pledge cards available. With these pledge cards, COSA members can pledge recurring monthly credit card payments to COSA. Margie presented the finalized 2008-2009 ISO budget to the Delegates. A couple of items that were noted as increasing significantly for the coming fiscal year were Paula's salary and Public Information (PI) Outreach. The ISO Budget and Finance Committee proposed increasing our Central Office Coordinator's (Paula) from 40 hours monthly to 50 hours monthly. The PI Committee under the leadership of Ginny L has made incredible advancements in getting out the word of what COSA has to offer to professionals outside of our fellowship. This combined with COSA being voted in as a voting member of Interfellowship Forum (IFF) are the reasons for the increase in the PI Outreach expense category. For those that don't know IFF is a group made up of representatives of all the "S" Fellowships. COSA is the first "Co-S" to be accepted onto this group. Margie shared that,

with the increased # of CDs and Literature for sale and our new pledge cards, that she feels great about the Budget as it is presented to the Delegates. The Board and Delegated approved the 2008-2009 Budget as presented!

Then, the Delegates provided feedback to the Board in relation to the following two questions: What do you see as the most important services that the ISO provides to the fellowship? And what new services would you like to see offered or what existing services to see be strengthened? The responses were filled out on a form that was returned to the Board for future analysis.

We then broke for lunch. For the first time ever, the Board and Delegates were fed in the Hospitality Suite. This was a very exciting development and ISO hopes to be able to offer it again in Oakland.

When we reconvened after lunch, we started with Delegate Business items. There were two items: 1) how to handle the new introduction from Tuesday Night Telemeeting that uses parts of the COSA Preamble, and 2) a small NYC group looking for a larger and sober group to sponsor the NYC meeting.

The two Bylaws changes were approved by Delegates and Board.

We then began listing potential Goals for the ISO for the coming year (2008-2009). There were lots of great ideas generated from the Delegates and Board Members. All Delegates and Board Members were given 3 stickers. Each person had a sticker that was designated as 1<sup>st</sup> Choice, another as 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Choice sticker.

Delegates and Board Members put their stickers on the Goals that best represented what they felt the ISO Board should focus its energies on this coming year. After tallying the votes we had 3 new ISO Goals for 2008-2009. They are: 1) Communications Committee, 2) Guidance (tools/techniques) for sustaining viable, lasting and sober COSA meetings, and 3) Increase Service Volunteers.

Lindy, Literature Committee Co-Chair, walked the Delegates through the approval process of the current pieces of Literature in Development. There were a couple of minor changes that various members of LitCom offered to address before printing for sale. All pieces of Literature in Development were approved by Delegates and Board Members.

It was finally time to elect a new Board for the coming term. After numerous nominations we had a full slate. The Delegates elected the new ISO Board for 2008-2009.

Here is your new ISO Board: **Joey Z** of Baton Rouge, LA (Chair), **Suzanne D** of Reno, NV (Vice-Chair), **Jackie F** of Spring, TX (Secretary), **Margie S** of Richmond, IN (Treasurer), **Elaine K** of Eules, TX (Communications Chair), **Kerry M** of Oakland, CA (Convention Chair), **Lindy T** of Berkeley, CA (Literature Chair), **Ginny L** of Houston, TX (PI Chair), **Lura Lisa W** of New Orleans, LA (Member at Large), **Deborra S** of Bisbee, AZ (Member at Large), **Ann R** of St. Louis, MO (Member at Large), **JoAn D** of Tacoma, WA (Member at Large). **Paula K** is our Central Office Coordinator.

We brainstormed with the Delegates to see what things they liked about being a Delegate and their experience as a Delegate this year as well as what things could use some tweaking to improve future Delegate Meetings. The ISO received great and useful feedback that we will continue to employ in future Delegate Meetings. Hope to see you in Oakland!!

Gratefully Submitted,  
Joey Z, Chair of ISO-COSA

**YEAH US!**