



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Summer Issue

July-August 2009

International voices from the Oakland CA Convention May 09



This was my second COSA convention. The number one highlight for me was to see my sponsor. I met her last year at the convention in Seattle where she helped me with some step work; I felt deeply supported through that process and asked her to sponsor me. We then continued to meet over the phone after the convention. It was wonderful to see her again in person after a year of weekly phone meetings.

Another highlight was the banquet, and the gathering of recovering sex addicts and COSAs in the same room. In my family of origin, I was surrounded with sex addicts, co-sex addicts and co-dependents. For me, the banquet was like being surrounded by members of my family, with the main difference that we could talk about these things. This was a real gift. I grew up with this family disease. I am a victim of child sexual abuse and there were many unhealthy sexual behaviors going on in my family while growing up, but we did not talk about it. The fact that we could share our stories and bring them in the open, and that we were all in recovery made me feel very safe. It gave me hope. Even if my family of origin never gets well, at the banquet, I felt that I was healing my wounds by interacting with this big surrogate family in recovery.

I also loved hanging out at the hospitality suite and interacting with other COSAs who have also healed from very painful experiences - much joy was shared in that hospitality room.

I plan to attend the convention next year in Albuquerque. I need to do my homework and prepare for the COSA convention 2012 in Vancouver. I am thrilled that we won the bid for 2012 and excited to being a part of it. I am looking forward to growing the COSA community locally. Going to the convention inspired me to start a new local meeting, and to get more involved in general.

Louise - Vancouver, Canada

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Volume 6, Issue 1

7th Traditions Individuals

Baton Rouge, LA	\$ 10.00
New Albany, IN	\$ 10.00
San Jose, CA	\$ 2.00
Total	\$ 22.00



Recurring Donations
Total for
5/03/09-6/29/09
\$386

7th Traditions Groups

CA-09	\$ 69.56
IN-04	\$ 95.60
MN-04	\$ 37.00
MN-11	\$ 20.00
OH-02	\$160.00
OH-04	\$ 15.00
TOTAL	\$397.16



COSA Telemeeting's
www.cosacall.com

Telephone number:

1-906-481-2100 Passcode: 679461

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

Beginning July 15th:
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time
(4 Pacific, 5 Mountain, 6 Central)

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

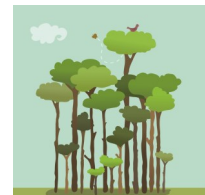
Welcome NEW COSA Groups!

AZ-08

CA-23

OH-05

NEW TELEMEETING
WEDNESDAY
7:00 p.m. Eastern Time
See page 9 for more info



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. 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 COSA ISO PO Box listed on the envelope below.

Contact the ISO of COSA

Balance, the newsletter of the International Service Organization of COSA, is published six times a year. The ISO holds the copyright to the newsletter.

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This was my second convention. In previous years in COSA I had heard about conventions, however I didn't know what they were and I was worried about anonymity. Last year, when the convention was in Seattle, it was so close to home, that I decided to give it a try. My home group is the Tuesday telemeeting and going to Seattle was wonderful because it gave me an opportunity to meet the telemeeting people in person. It reinforced my trust that this was a safe environment for me to share my experiences. Trust is often something that comes bit by bit, especially over the phone. At the convention, the personal connection was very healing.

The main difference between this year at the convention in Oakland and last year in Seattle was my level of comfort. I remember last year, when attending the joint banquet with members of both fellowships, I was somewhat nervous. This year, I did not even have second thoughts about it. I had a high level of comfort.

One of my favorite parts was the workshop on how to use the Twelve Steps in 20 minutes to confront any problem. It deepened my understanding of the Steps, and how they applied to me, rather than using them as my qualifier. I also learned that I could already use all 12 steps of the program in this manner, even though I have not formally worked through all my steps with a sponsor. I also liked the workshop on the "tool kit in case of emergency;" I carry it in my car. It is something that I can share with friends and do not have to hide as it relates to life in general and not specifically to sex addiction.

We were three COSA members from British Columbia this year attending the conference. Going to the convention gave us motivation to start a face-to-face meeting again, even if it is only on a monthly basis.

I am planning to attend the convention next year in Albuquerque. I will be involved in the registration committee. By having some presence on the convention committee, I hope to become more familiar with the process to begin preparation for the convention that will take place in my home town of Vancouver, Canada in 2012.

Yvonne - Vancouver, Canada



This is my first convention and I am very excited to be here.

I have been in COSA for six months. Therefore, the fellowship as a whole is still fairly new to me, not only the convention. I am here as the result of a true Higher Power moment. I saw a cheap airfare advertised for a trip from Sydney to California. I booked my flight without even asking my boss first for the time off. This is how important coming here was to me. When I first started in COSA, there were no face-to-face meetings in Sydney. The Tuesday telemeeting coincided with my lunch time. I would sneak out of work and call in from a public phone booth, I needed this program so much. This is such a blessing to get to meet people face to face.

Among the highlights was the speaker Peg, and overall the fellowship with other COSAs in the hospitality suite. I attended the workshop on sexual anorexia and this was very confronting to me. I still need to process my response to this workshop.

We started a face to face meeting in Sydney, and three of us attended the COSA convention in Oakland. We got lots of COSA literature and CDs of speakers and workshops to bring back to Sydney. We coordinated our efforts to cover attendance to all workshops and events, to be able to bring as much information as possible back to Australia.

Cecile - Sydney, Australia

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International voices from the Oakland CA Convention May 09

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Q: Would you come again next year?

A: Absolutely I love American recovery -- very uplifting.

Q: What were the highlights of the convention for you?

A: The highlights were hearing the identification, the stories of other COSA's, the comfort in the Hospitality suite, the Gratitude Bar, doing service, meeting people whom I have heard on the tele meeting. The whole atmosphere of being with other COSA's helped me to understand that I am not alone in my disease.

Q: How does the convention help your recovery?

A: The convention helped inspire me to move on with my step work and to really take care of me.

Q: What was the most enjoyable moment for you at the convention?

A: Feeling so loved and welcomed. Meeting my sponsor, grand-sponsor, great grand-sponsor, meeting people with whom I have had telephone and/or email contact.

Q: What was the most insightful moment for you at the convention?

A: That this is my core issue and that I can recover and be happy. And to forgive the sex addict.

Q: How could the convention be improved in the future?

A: Being a newcomer more COSA stories would have been great. I really enjoyed listening to the speakers at brunch & lunch.

Q: Anything else you would like to share?

A: I would like to thank the committee for their support with our scholarships, and everyone who made our stay at the hotel a convention we will not forget.

We are all inspired to help our COSA fellowship in Australia. We are committed to our recovery and carrying the message.

Angie - Sydney, Australia

The most touching moments are the speakers from both fellowships. Last night the other program's speaker touched me in a dramatic way. The COSA speaker, Eric S., was brilliant and dynamic. He talked about codependency with such humor and detail that I was amazed! Brian's dancing workshop was a favorite, too. I came seeking sobriety, serenity and peace and found all three.

Alessandro B.



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When I came from Canada to Oakland, I did not know about the COSA convention even though I am in COSA; I was simply accompanying my husband to the convention for his own recovery program. My local COSA meeting no longer exists, and I had replaced it with attending 12-step meetings in another fellowship. I was happily surprised when I found out that the COSA convention was taking place simultaneously. Even though I was registered as a guest of my partner for his fellowship, I was still able to attend

all COSA events that were open to both fellowships. By coming here, I also learned about the COSA telemeetings. I definitely plan to call in to those meetings upon my return to Canada.

I particularly enjoyed the workshop on resolving conflicts by using the steps, led by Albert A. I also was very much impressed by the format of the Healthy Intimate Relationships meetings, open to COSA partners. It was great to hear the shares of couples working recovery simultaneously. This and the convention as a whole brought a lot of compassion to me.

I was anxious coming here, but the event has exceeded all my expectations. It provided me knowledge, understanding and honesty. I realized that my inner circle was not big enough, particularly when I heard Eric speaking at the banquet.

Above all, I felt that there was a silent understanding among all fellows, and that even before we started to share, there were no words needed to feel connected. I had numerous open-heart interactions with people.

I am thinking about possibly being involved when the COSA convention comes to Vancouver, Canada in 2012.

S.R., British Columbia, Canada

This was my first convention and this was a wonderful experience. Very helpful! I've felt better about my life and my situation in the weeks since the convention. It felt good to me too that my husband attended the convention for his recovery program at the same time. It was good for both ourselves and our marriage to be there.

The highlight for me was to see the sheer number of COSAs who could relate to me. It felt very comforting. Hearing from people with a lot of recovery was very healing and inspiring for me. I appreciated meeting new people one on one. The nice upstairs lounge on the 21st floor with a view of the San Francisco bay made those interactions particularly

enjoyable.

I also got a lot out of hearing the speaker of my husband's fellowship at the joined banquet.

Overall, I felt that the people around me were more alive than people in the outside world. It seems that people who have gone through some pain are the ones who live to the fullest, experiencing God and all that life has to offer. It may seem odd to say, but in many ways I am grateful for this experience.

Katie A.
Los Gatos, CA



**DELEGATE MEETING SUMMARY**

International Service Organization of COSA
Oakland, CA
22 May 2009

On May 22nd in Oakland, the 16th Annual Meeting of the ISO Board, Delegates, and Membership of COSA was held. There were 22 Delegates, 10 Board Members and 5 other COSAs in attendance.

After a thoroughly entertaining orientation to Roberta's Rules by JoAn D and Christi, 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) Communications Committee, 2) Guidance (tools/techniques) for sustaining lasting and sober COSA meetings, 3) Increase Service Volunteers. The progress and accomplishments for each goal over the last year was shared with the Delegates. Elaine updated everyone on the progress of the Communications Committee and what still needed to be completed. Kerry shared the data that came from the "Sustaining and Sober" questionnaire that was completed at the Seattle Convention. And Ann shared the current Service Volunteers needs.

Next we moved to the 2009-2010 Budget Approval portion of the agenda. Margie, our treasurer, made observations about highlighted items on the budget. She entertained Q & A from members and discussed an upcoming Chart of Accounts. The Board and Delegates approved the 2009-2010 Budget as presented!

Then, the Delegates provided written 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 collected and kept for future analysis.

Joey shared last year's responses. 22 forms were received last year. The most frequent comments were about Communications, Support Structure, Literature Development & Sales, and Outreach. In response, Joey challenged each COSA board member to attend a meeting outside their geographical area and to give feedback on the experience. He also mailed out requests to renew memberships to old groups and emailed numerous times to member groups with emails on file. We added Outreach-priced literature and lowered prices for literature beginning with the Convention this year, and worked on ISO structure and development via Organizational Charts for each committee and job descriptions for each Chair. The bottom line was that the majority of responses from last year were noted and acted upon.

JoAn reported on the development of the Nominating Committee. It is now active year-round. It has helped develop job descriptions for all Board positions and organizational charts for the ISO Board and committees.

Paula, COSA's only paid employee, highlighted her primary activities. When asked if salary and hours were adequate to cover her workload, Paula answered "no." A motion was approved for the Board to research an ISO Board Coordinator endowment fund to increase monies for salary. It was suggested to add "Automatic Bill Pay/Draft" as an option on the Pledge cards.

Joey reported the results of a Literature Pricing sub-committee. This committee was created this year in response to the request from COSA members to have more affordable literature. The subcommittee reviewed the production costs for pamphlets and booklets. Joey announced that prices for pamphlets were lowered to \$0.75 and booklets to \$2.50. A Simple Newcomer packet consisting of 4 pamphlets, each on a different color of paper is \$1.00. These prices are lowered for the Oakland Convention and continuing IF sales and 7th Tradition donations increase. Kerry noted that with these literature related changes a philosophical shift is taking place with a move from literature being a profit center to more focus on 7th Tradition. The three Bylaws changes proposed were approved by Delegates and Board.

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Before we broke for lunch, we did the drawing for the Convention registration refund for registering as a Delegate by February 15th. The winner was Velma! Then we gave a “free CD certificate” to the six delegates who registered early.

We then broke for lunch. The Board and Delegates were fed in the Hospitality Suite. It was great to be able to enjoy fellowship with fellow COSAs.

When we reconvened after lunch, there were two submitted Delegate Business items: 1) request that a “COSA book” be written and published, and 2) request that a COSA book be published using all the information from the COSA community that is already published and available from BALANCE articles, online and telemeeting sources and a call for new submissions.

We then began listing potential Goals for the ISO for the coming year (2009-2010). Delegates proposed new goals for the fellowship and then the ISO Board also presented suggested goals. Proposals were grouped into larger categories and then delegates and Board Members voted on the different categories. 3 new ISO Goals for 2009-2010. The 3 Goals are: 1) Increase Service Volunteers, 2) Increase Financial Revenues/Responsibility, and 3) Create a task force to research the feasibility of a COSA book. Lindy, Literature Committee Chair, walked the Delegates through the approval process of the current pieces of Literature in Development. 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. With the nomination process developed this year by the ISO Board, we had an amazing slate of nominees. The Delegates elected the new ISO Board for 2009-2010: **Joey Z** of Baton Rouge, LA (Chair), **Carol Ann R** of Houston, TX (Secretary), **Margie S** of Richmond, IN (Treasurer), **Ann R** of St. Paul, MN (Convention Chair), **Brian K** of New York, NY (Member at Large), **Elaine K** of Keller, TX (Communications Chair), **Georgia K** of Carson City, NV (Member at Large), **Ginger H** of Point Richmond, CA (Member at Large), **Jackie F** of Tyler, TX (Member at Large), **JoAn D** of Tacoma, WA (Nomination Chair), **Katherine F** of Houston, TX (Member at Large), **Kerry M** of Oakland, CA (Member at Large), **Kerstin H** of Albany, CA (Member at Large), **Lindy T** of Berkeley, CA (Literature Chair), **Lura Lisa W** of New Orleans, LA (PI Chair), **Mila T** of Piedmont, CA (Member at Large), **Suzanne R** of Reno, NV (Member at Large). **Paula K** remains our Central Office Coordinator.

This year to be more fiscally responsible the Board implemented a new distribution system for the Delegate Packet. All forms and documents mailed in the past were available for download from the Convention website. The Delegates provided feedback on the new Delegate Packet process and ways to improve it next year.

Hope to see you in Albuquerque!!

Gratefully Submitted,
Joey Z, Chair of ISO-COSA



INTERVIEWS WITH NEW BOARD MEMBERS

WELCOME

I feel really proud and honored to be elected to be on the ISO of COSA Board! I look forward to working with the people on the Board because I've gotten to know them over the years through working on the Convention and by being a Delegate four times.

Watching the Board over the years I've seen it grow and develop. My own understanding of what the Board actually does for all of us has developed. I've come to appreciate the process of maturing by watching and understanding the Board as a process that is parallel with my own growth. I feel that if I can do service that supports my personal development and sobriety, that service will be most beneficial for the fellowship as a whole.

- Kerstin
New Board Member



I am very excited and grateful to be a new Board member! A lot of the current Board members are acquaintances and friends; I'm in good, healthy supportive company. As my goal for right now, I want to be involved with the Public Information Committee. This is a very exciting time for COSA to get the message out! I am also reading *Roberta's Rules*.

- Carol Ann R. Houston, TX
New Board Member
Secretary

I feel honored and excited about being on the Board, but because I have no Board experience, I'll watch and learn and get more comfortable. Then I'll probably feel confident to work into it. COSA is very important to me. I'm a strong believer in service work. Working on the Board will ensure my emotional and spiritual recovery!

- Georgia is from Carson City, NV
New Board Member



Convention By The Numbers

Continued on page 9



Number of Attendees (new record)	109
Silent Auction Income	\$3,465
New Recurring Donation Cards Received	9
Monthly Increase for Recurring Donations (new & updates)	\$129

INTERVIEWS WITH NEW BOARD MEMBERS

WELCOME

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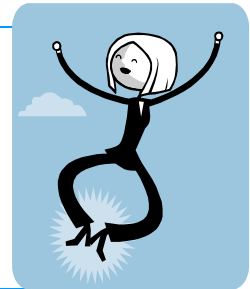
I accepted my Board nomination because I have always been impressed by the level of recovery on the Board. I feel like it is a good opportunity for me to learn even more.

I want to be instrumental in helping COSA grow.

- Brian K
New Board Member

My feelings on being a new Board member: I am feeling excitement, joy, pride and even a little fear. My hope and goals are to live my recovery tools throughout my duration on the Board, always being my authentic self.

- Katherine F. - Houston, TX
New Board Member



I've decided to join the Board because I need to learn how to "play well with others," after a lifetime of isolating. After being the Facilities Chair for the Convention, I realized that it was a positive experience for me, and being of service was working for me. Being a new member of the Board I am considering joining a task force for the feasibility of a COSA book.

- Ginger
New Board Member



I am looking forward to be of service to COSA, to get to know other Board members who have a lot of sobriety, to share what I can about diversity. I am feeling hopeful.

- Mila, Oakland, CA
New Board Member



New COSA Telemeeting to Begin Wednesday, July 15th

The new Wednesday night COSA telemeeting will be at 7:00 pm Eastern Time. It will have the same phone number and access code as the current Tuesday and Thursday night telemeetings. Please be aware, these numbers are subject to change and you are encouraged to check the website at www.cosacall.com for current information.

The Wednesday telemeeting will focus on COSA Tools.

Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove all these defects of character

The key here for me is “humbly asking God.” It’s a reminder that I am not expected to make grand changes in myself, all by myself. I don’t need to force anything. Since I am putting this transformation in God’s hands, I don’t have to worry. Change will come about in God’s time, not through any demands or efforts to rush on my part. I can simply ask my HP to help me let go of the things that I have discovered that I am clinging to, the things that are holding me back. Then I can relax, remain willing, and leave the methods and the timing up to God.

- Betsy H. Irvine, CA



In taking this step, I gave myself the gift of looking at how I had already been changed in working the steps leading to Step Seven. I discovered, to my delight, that I had already been changed tremendously. I discovered that I had let go of a lot of my attempts to control the people around me. I may not have always acted like it, but I had come to believe that other people are responsible for themselves.

Before recovery, I had always kept a white-knuckle grip on the steering wheel of life. I felt that if I didn’t hold that wheel tight, all hell would break loose. In recovery, I have learned that I can relax my grip, even take my hands entirely off the wheel sometimes. Because the fact is that I’m not driving life. My belief that I was steering was just a delusion. All I had to do was let go. I didn’t have to figure out that I was deluded; I didn’t have to figure out anything. I just had to listen and trust

enough to try it for a moment. When I could let go for a moment and still be safe, then I could let go for longer. I didn’t have to take any giant steps.

I’ve heard it said that discipline is remembering what you want. I can look around the circle at a COSA meeting and see women whose recovery I admire. I can say to myself, “I want that kind of recovery, too. Working the Steps did it for them, so I’ll do that, too.” I can also look around the circle and say to myself, “yes, I have come a long way.”

- Sharon G, Costa Mesa, CA



Defective Convention CDs

Some CDs sold at the 2009 Oakland Convention were defective. If you purchased a defective CD, please contact the ISO to request a replacement.

Email: iso@cosa-recovery.org

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT WWW.COSA-RECOVERY.ORG

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.



At the beginning of my recovery, I had a list of *others who harmed me*, and was pretty sure of the ways in which *they* needed to change. I've learned, though, that while it is important to recognize and honor my hurt feelings, if I stay focused on the shortcomings of others, I lose touch with myself and any power I have to change; I stay stuck in the problem.

I have harmed people in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Some of my harmful acts are obvious, such as cheating on my ex-boyfriend, lying to my friends, and turning people against my former boss at work. Yet I also harmed people when I *thought* I was being noble, or helpful or

cooperative... or at least I may have *appeared* helpful and kind. For instance, I prided myself on being calm in my relationship, especially when the recovering addict was having a hard time. On the outside, I seemed steady, strong, and comforting. Inside, though, I was nursing feelings of martyrdom and superiority; I was silently hyper-critical, focusing on what he was or wasn't doing, whether or not he was working a good program, or if he was being sensitive enough to me. I harmed him, not by yelling and screaming but by this smoldering scorn and judgment. Even though I didn't tell him what I was thinking, I'm sure he could sense it. I wasn't allowing him the dignity of his own recovery process. I wasn't giving him a chance to participate in a partnership with me because I wasn't telling him what was going on with me. In fact, the more I focused on him, the less I was even aware of my own issues. I've come to view this as abusive to him and destructive to both of us. I am willing to make amends, both in words and in actions.

My name goes on this Step 8 list, too. I realize now just how much I have harmed myself. By obsessing on sex addicts and whether they find me attractive, by comparing myself to others and shaming myself for falling short, I lost sight of myself. I neglected the development of my intellect, my interests, and my life. I denied my feelings, worked myself to exhaustion, judged myself harshly, endangered my health, squandered my time and squelched my own dreams. Would I want someone else to treat him or herself this way? Never. I don't have to beat myself up for beating myself up, but I want to be willing to make living amends to myself. In fact, I can start now by treating myself with gentleness.

- Anonymous, Circle of Hope meeting, CA

STEP STUDY QUESTIONS: FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Seven Questions

- What does humility mean to me as a recovering co-addict/codependent? 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?
- In what ways can I show my Higher Power on an ongoing basis that I am humbly asking for my defects of character to be removed?
- How do my shortcomings cause me to feel? How do I feel when I catch myself participating in these shortcomings yet one more time, even though I'm ready to be free of them.

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?
- Does my name go on this list?
- What recovery tools can I use if I start to get down on myself as I work on this step?