



Volume 6, Issue 6

Spring Issue

May/June 2011

We're Ready to Launch! - Please join us for the

2011 ISO of COSA National Convention

Houston, Texas May 27–30, 2011

In Houston, it's "All Systems, GO!" as the final countdown approaches for the 2011 ISO of COSA National Convention! We look forward to welcoming you to the world-famous Space City for an amazing convention designed to support and encourage you through your personal journey of recovery. Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/houston2011/index.html> Login: **systems** Password: **houston2011**, to view the registration brochure with detailed information and to register online. Some scholarships are available; see the brochure for information. If you would like to volunteer to help at the convention, have an item(s) to donate for the Silent Auction, or need more information, please email: convention@cosa-recovery.org.

The convention lifts off on Friday, May 27th, with an opening ceremony at 8 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday, the mission continues with a multitude of workshops planned to enhance the wellbeing of the body, mind, and soul. At time of press, these are some of the interactive workshop topics on the Agenda: first step speakers, the Twelve Steps, boundaries, trauma resolution, sobriety, sponsorship, triggers and tools, healthy sexuality, singles/dating, couples' recovery, cross addictions, overcoming shame, breaking the betrayal bond, COSA teens/parents, and more.

There will be opportunities for self-expression through vision boards, art projects, puzzles, and games. Quiet time, rest and reflection will take place in the Meditation Room. The Hospitality Suite will be well equipped for breaks, conversations and snacks. The Bookstore will be filled with COSA literature, convention CD's, and recovery literature. There will also be a Silent Auction, featuring donations from many talented and generous COSA's. We have a joint COSA/SAA banquet with speakers planned for Saturday evening, as well as a COSA luncheon on Sunday and a COSA brunch on Monday that will feature COSA speakers.

We haven't forgotten that having fun is a critical component of a healthy body, mind and soul! We are planning an optional COSA outing, so watch for details to come!

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

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

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Distribution by—

ISO Office Manager

Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

RECURRING

February thru March 2011 \$ 704.23

7TH TRADITION— February—March

\$212.31	TX-41	
\$150	IN-02	
\$76	CA-09	
\$23.05	TX-03	
\$30	NJ-02	
\$851.47	SF Bay Area Intergroup	
\$75	OH-01	
\$51.30	IN-04	
\$50	OR	
\$10	MN	
\$8.60	WI	
		\$ 1,537.73

GRAND TOTAL \$ 2,241.96

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.

Guidelines for Submitting Literature:

<http://www.cosa-recovery.org/literature.html> (scroll down, then click on pdf link)

Please send your articles to COSACopy@yahoo.com or by snail mail to the

COSA ISO
P.O. BOX 79908
Houston, TX 77279-9908

Phone: 866-899-2672
E-mail: info@cosa-recovery.org

We're Ready to Launch!—cont'd. from page 1

The convention will end on Monday, May 30th, with an emphasis on re-entry into our lives post-convention.

Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/houston2011/index.html> Login: **systems**
Password: **houston2011** to view the registration brochure with detailed information and to register online.

The Convention Committee, Houston, Texas

I start getting excited about this time of year as we get closer and closer to convention time. I have been fortunate and have been able to attend a number of conventions and although every one of them has been vastly different, I have laughed, cried, grown, and learned something new at all of them.

I was only in the program about five months when I went to my first convention. I believe that was one of the best gifts my HP has given me. I learned many things but it truly showed me that with hard work and dedication, recovery was possible.

I have made going to the convention a major part of my recovery program and it is as important to me as going to my weekly meeting. Before I go I take a look at what current challenges I'm dealing with and then focus on finding workshops that will help me with that challenge. I remember one of my earlier years where I was still nervous about being around an addict; I challenged myself to go to at least one of the other fellowships open workshops. I went to several of them and now I am able to see them as human beings and not simply as an addict.

I love reconnecting with my COSA brothers and sisters that I haven't seen in a while and meeting some new "relatives" from around the world. There are some definite advantages to having people I am able to call in different time zones when I need someone to talk to and it's too early or late to chat with someone from my local meeting.

What is my favorite part? Every year it's different. It could be a particular workshop, a conversation I have with someone in the hospitality room, meeting someone from a different country whose story is similar to mine, listening to one of the speakers, volunteering during the convention, going to a large COSA meeting, or having an 'aha' moment at any given moment.

I hope you will join me by giving yourself a gift towards your own recovery.

Elaine K.
Fort Worth, TX



NEW MEETINGS

CANADA

- **British Columbia, West Vancouver**

US

- **New Jersey, Glassboro**
- **Texas, McKinney**

www.cosa-recovery.org

website for
meetings in
your area





**Admitted to
God,
to ourselves
and to
another
human
being the
exact
nature of
our wrongs.**

Step Five Share

"Step Five was a huge step for me and, surprisingly, a big relief. After years of being the "strong one" who held it all together, it was great to have permission to admit my faults and the secrets that I had been hiding behind my whole life. I had always been praised for my accomplishments in life and was sought after for sensible advice. It was really hard but also powerful for me to tell another human being about my shortcomings because although I had friends and "best" friends, there were things that no one knew about me. I was ashamed of these secrets. This Step gave me permission to be human, vulnerable and honest. It also gave me permission to have emotions and not try to be perfect.

My boyfriend, who was in recovery when I met him, suggested I come to COSA. This seemed strange to me since he was in recovery already, and I, of course, had my life together, so all would be fine! But I was really wrong. After problems cropped up in the relationship I decided to give COSA a try. I often looked at my boyfriend in wonder. He admitted all of his flaws and showed the world who he really was. At first I thought, "I would never tell anyone any of those things about myself!" But, after working, in tandem, Steps Four and Five with my sponsor, I was shocked to see some of the glaring defects of my self-righteousness, judgement, and self-pity, and how they affected my relationships. I did not like admitting them to myself, but God and my sponsor understood. It was a weight lifted off of me to tell my sponsor about an affair that I had during a marriage a long time ago. I had told no one of this and lived with it a long time. I think I really started to believe my own lie that it never happened! When she asked me if I had ever told my boyfriend, I was shocked that this was something that she suggested I might look at doing. I was resistant to say the least. Then I attended a COSA convention and heard a lot of Step One shares and cried and cried the rest of the day, knowing this would one day be me giving my own story. The shares were so honest, beyond what I ever thought I would own up to, but I realized this was what was next for me. I knew what I needed to do right then. I was terrified to admit the affair to my boyfriend, but went through with it anyway. I felt closer to him than ever for taking the leap of faith to be real and vulnerable.

The openness I gained in working Step Five has become a part of my daily life now. I review my day every night and try to honestly admit what I could have done better or tell my sponsor or a friend anything I did wrong or could have done better. I also try to reach out to more people rather than suffering in silence. My recovery program is about daily honesty and I am grateful to live my life this way now. Thank God for Step Five. Thank God I no longer have to try to be perfect. I feel human for the first time in my life and it feels good!

Lisa

Step Six Share

I am constantly in awe of my higher power's timing. When I got the email reminding me that I had agreed to write this article I thought "What the heck was I thinking when I agreed? I can't think of anything to say regarding this step". Well, I have been none-too-gently reminded of the importance of step six this past week.

I had been in a funk because I had been presented with proof of my addict's acting out again a few weeks ago. I had been unable to process my feelings around it fully because I had been asked to wait for the appointment with our therapists so as to address the situation as constructively as possible. The problem was that everyone's schedules were so non-compatible that the appointment was over a month after the actual event. My character defects run deep, and even after I move past them they can and do resurface. So, I processed my feeling with my meetings and my sponsor, but despite the fact I know better, I stuffed my feelings with my addict and waited for the promised appointment. Of course all of those stuffed feelings started to come out sideways. Hurt and fear turned into anger, disrespect, and distance. This past week my addict and I had an exchange in front of our children where he behaved badly and I responded badly. There was minimal drama, just a calm cruel exchange delivered without emotion. Afterwards all I could think of was, "Who am I turning into? I don't want to be this person. I don't even like this person".

I called my sponsor in hopes of getting some insight. She helped me see that I needed to directly address my feelings with my addict as soon as made sense, using "I" statements to express all of the hurt, fear, and loneliness I was holding inside. We put disrespect, sarcasm, name-calling and raging in my inner circle. And she helped me see that I owed my addict an amends. I have to own that making an amends to my addict, knowing all of his bad behavior was what was triggering me, made making an amends to him something I did NOT feel entirely open to at first. But, she reminded my part is my behavior-period. I want to like me. I want to be at peace with my reactions and actions. So, I asked my higher power to help me let go of my hurt, fear, and anger and to find enough love to see the man behind the addiction and to address my amends to him.

It was an incredibly healing experience. I was able to address my bad behavior and also cleanly express all of those emotions around his acting out that I needed to process. We had a good check in and new boundaries and consequences are in place.

When I become ready to let go and let God, God takes over and amazing things happen. He does things in a gentle loving way with ease that all of my ranting and raving will never do. To this day that confounds me. Becoming ready to let go isn't easy. It requires a true understanding of my part and then a willingness to trust my HP enough try something new.

Diane P.



**Were
entirely
ready to
have God
remove all
these
defects of
character.**

Sober & Sustainable Teleconferences

Is your COSA meeting struggling to attract service volunteers? Are you thinking of starting a new COSA Meeting? Concerned about how to attract and retain COSA newcomers or old timers? Bring your questions and/or your Experience, Strength and Hope about starting and sustaining Sober COSA Meetings.

Upcoming Schedule:

Thursday, May 5th
6:00pm (PST),
7:00pm (MST),
8:00pm (CST),
9:00pm (EST)

Saturday, July 9th
1:00pm (PST),
2:00pm (MST),
3:00pm (CST),
4:00pm (EST)

The Teleconference # is **218-862-1000** and the **Access Code is 1051791#.**

Cost is only whatever your personal long distance carrier charges.

Step Five Questions

1. Do I feel internal resistance to working this Step? What feelings might be causing me to hesitate? What are my fears? My hopes? How might I break through or set aside this resistance?
2. What do I perceive as barriers to trusting my HP? What are some of the ways I can develop trust in my Higher Power?
3. In preparing to admit to another human being, am I ready to admit to myself the exact nature of my wrongs?
4. At an appropriate time, am I able to share with my co-sponsor, sponsor, or another, the exact nature of my wrongs (my Fourth Step)?

Step Six Questions

1. What benefits are there in keeping some of my defects of character?
2. Am I willing to have Higher Power remove ALL my defects of character?
3. If I woke up tomorrow and God had removed all my defects of character, how would I know? Would others know?
4. Am I willing to have God remove all my defects of character in God's own time?

Goal One Committee Report: Increase Service Volunteers

1. The group reviewed the first draft of "Guide to Sponsorship." We plan to compare it to the existing booklet and incorporate suggestions.
2. The group commented on the various meeting formats. It was agreed that they would serve as a good resource for meetings and should be available online. We will look into how to get approval for publishing and uploading resources online. In the meantime, the idea will be proposed at the next ISO of COSA Board meeting.
3. We continue to work on creating a booklet on Intergroups. The value of Intergroups was reiterated. All agreed that such a booklet would be helpful in areas where several meetings exist. One area reported that six new meetings started last year. An Intergroups' Guide could assist in their growth and in their remaining sober and sustainable.
4. The group discussed possible Goal recommendations for the Delegate meeting.

Mila, Goal One Chair

Goal Three Committee Report: COSA Book Development

On March 20th, the Goal 3 Committee sent Part 1 of our year-end report to the Executive Committee for discussion in their meeting of March 21st. The feedback we received was that the report lacked cost details, but otherwise was very thorough.

On March 28th, the committee met for the last time to discuss the responses to Questionnaire items 22-29. Suzanne agreed to summarize cost information from a book entitled *How to Self-Publish*. Carol Ann will incorporate excerpts from Suzanne's summary into the year-end report to the Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Ann R.
Goal 3 Committee Secretary

90 Day Review Announcement

We welcome your input!

COSA Literature in Development for 2010 - 2011

Each year, prior to the convention, proposed literature is made available to everyone in the fellowship for a 90-day review period. We invite members to give us input during this time, in an effort to make our literature as clear and useful as possible, and to ensure that it reflects and serves everyone in our diverse COSA fellowship.

We encourage you to read through the proposed literature carefully and give us your feedback. You will find the *Literature in Development* document in the Delegate section of the Convention website, or you can request it via email from cosacopy@yahoo.com.

Deadline: Please email comments to cosacopy@yahoo.com by May 20 at the latest. Early feedback is appreciated because it helps the Literature Committee with compiling.

The *Literature in Development* for this year will be voted on at the Annual Meeting Friday, May 27, 2011 in Houston, TX preceding our Annual Convention.

We thank you in advance for your help!

Betsy H. for the Literature Committee ISO of COSA Board



New Literature

The Literature Committee of COSA is proud to announce that two new booklets have been completed.

- *Step Five*
- *Using the Twelve Steps to Work through any Conflict*

These are available for purchase online and also at the 2011 COSA Convention in Houston, Texas.

Step Five continues our Step series, and *Using the Twelve Steps to Work through any Conflict* was developed from a workshop presented at the 2009 COSA Convention in Oakland, California.



What if there was only half an ISO?

Well, in a sense, a part is missing.

In COSA recovery, we learn that the only thing we can change is our part.

This year the ISO Board has changed many things—the size and location of the Central Office, the new toll free phone number, and the range of new free services provided to help local groups carry the COSA message. But....

We can't do it without you!

If you have not already done so, please consider including the ISO in your annual charitable giving by making a tax-deductible contribution through the ISO website.

To do your part, simply go to the ISO of COSA homepage at www.COSA-recovery.org and click the *Donate Now!* button.

If each member were to contribute in this way, just think how far we could carry the COSA message together!

In your service,
The ISO Board of Trustees

We're Ready to Launch!—cont'd. from page 3

The annual COSA Convention is a regular part of my recovery program. It is a recovery tool I try to use every year and there are many gifts that attending conventions have given me. A few that come to mind include:

- The opportunity to be in fellowship, in a safe and nurturing environment, with COSAs from around the world. To build my network of COSA friends and mentors.
- Immediate access to invaluable experience, strength, hope and sobriety of fellow COSA men and women I wouldn't normally come in contact with.
- Hope and greater confidence in how to start and help sustain the growth of COSA meetings in my area (we went from one meeting 8 years ago, to now 7 or 8 meetings a week)
- Learned about COSA Intergroups, what they can do and how to start one from COSA's in areas where Intergroups were already in place.
- I first learned about 12-step telemeetings from attending a workshop offered at a convention one year on How to Start a Telemeeting and with the help of other COSA's in my area we had the courage to start the COSA telemeetings.
- Many reminders that we are not alone in our co-addiction, our disease has no geographic or cultural borders.
- Lots of opportunities to practice sober living in my life and relationships with all people. A wonderful opportunity to be of service to fellow COSA's by leading workshops, leading a 12 step meeting, being a temporary sponsor, being a speaker, nominating speakers, offering ESH to others who have the courage to lead workshops.
- Through attending the Annual Meeting of the Delegates at the Convention I have the opportunity to be a part of the solution of how to make our fellowship strong, healthy and able to carry our message of hope to COSA's who are still suffering.
- Exposure to the ISO of COSA Board of Directors and others who are of service to our fellowship on an International level.

The opportunity to practice my Twelfth step to help carry the message by getting involved in the planning and organizing several conventions.

- I found my wonderful sponsor at a COSA convention!

In short, my life is better because of our annual conventions and I look forward to seeing many of you in Houston!

Kerry M.
Oakland, CA

T R A D I T I O N S

Goal Two Committee Report: Fiscal Responsibility

The Goal Two Committee met this month and discussed preliminary plans for a fund raising campaign for the Seventh Tradition. Any funds raised would be used to help the COSA Book project get started.

Submitted by Lindy T. Goal Two Committee member

5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to those who still suffer. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps ourselves.

I am grateful for this Tradition because it keeps things so simple. I can use it in almost any situation, whether it relates to recovery directly or not. If I am having a hard time managing my feelings, or I am getting caught up in other people's agendas, I can stop, get centered, and ask myself, "What is *my* primary purpose in this situation?" Then, anything that isn't related to my primary purpose at that moment, I can set aside. I can give it over to my Higher Power to take care of. This is God working in my life as good orderly direction. This is my serenity.

As it pertains to COSA recovery specifically, again, this tradition keeps things simple. It reminds me not to stray too far into other topics in my sharing, and not to intertwine COSA with my other interests, my work, or special projects, no matter how sincere my motivation. While my COSA recovery complements my recovery in another program, it is best, in my sharing, if I talk about my COSA issues in particular. I don't want to muddy the focus of our meeting in any way, and I wouldn't want to alienate someone in the meeting who doesn't have my other issues. We come to COSA for recovery from COSA issues – only. We may receive a whole lot more, but that is the cherry on top.

I love the second part of this Tradition too, because it reminds me that I can teach and reach others who need recovery most effectively by working on my own recovery. My task is to recover and share what I have learned. When I was early in recovery there were times where I felt so eager to help. That's not a bad thing, but what has surprised me time and again is the fact that I am often able to help the most when I am simply being my recovering self. Something I do, or something I say may provide just the nudge, or just the insight that is needed for that other person to make a change. I can't really cause someone else to recover. All I can do is bring myself to any situation and be open. That other person will do with it what he or she is inspired to do. And if that person truly wants recovery and is willing to work toward it, that's what he or she will get, with Higher Power's help. When I share or I am of service, I don't need to concern myself with the outcome, or take any credit. I simply do the best I can and pass along the precious gift that has been so freely given to me.

Betsy

6. COSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the COSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

This is another Tradition that keeps my focus sharp and simple. As with Tradition Five, it is useful in so many facets of my life, both in and outside of recovery. I can ask myself "Am I getting distracted from my goals?" "Am I juggling too much?" "Have I spread myself too thin to accomplish what I set out to do?" I have a big heart, enthusiasm for life, and I enjoy being helpful, so I can easily find myself taking on too much. All this does is leave me feeling tired and like I'm not giving enough attention to anything in my life, particularly the people who are important to me, and the things I enjoy doing. In this way, Tradition Six helps me practice self-care. It reminds me to return to the basics and prioritize. As it relates to my group and the fellowship, it helps us keep our true purpose clear and foremost in our minds.

This Tradition protects us from unnecessary complications, controversies, and entanglements. It is a relief that no one in my meetings is trying to persuade me to patronize any certain business, join any religious congregation, or attend therapy sessions at any one counselling center. All of these things may be helpful and positive, but in the meeting context they may cloud what we are trying to accomplish.

Individually, I can give suggestions, but when I do, I am speaking for myself only, not for my COSA group or for COSA as a whole. For example, I may have found an organization that provides excellent therapeutic services for S and COSA issues. I may want to share about their offerings with others in my group. Or, I may have found another Twelve Step program that helps me with something specific that is not a COSA issue, and feel there may be fellow COSAs who would benefit from knowing about it. My sharing resources with others is fine, but I need to do this *outside* of the meeting time, and I ought never to display outside literature alongside COSA literature. No matter how effective or great the outside enterprise, and no matter how good my intentions, the boundaries need to be clear.

COSA addresses recovery from COSA issues using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It's that simple, and in order to continue being effective, it needs to stay that way. We want the COSA recovery environment to be as safe, inclusive, and as distraction-free as possible. This tradition ensures that our message of recovery is strong and clear.

Betsy



COSA Telemeetings

www.cosacall.com

**Phone Number:
1-218-862-6420**

Passcode: 679461

Mondays
Step/Tradition Study
9:00am (PT)
(10MT, 11 CT, Noon ET)

Mondays
Recovery Tools for Emotional
Sobriety
5:00pm (PT)
(6 MT, 7 CT, 8 ET)

Tuesdays,
7:00pm (PT)
(8 MT, 9 CT, 10 ET)

Wednesdays,
4:00pm (PT)
(5 MT, 6 CT, 7 ET)

Thursdays,
6:00pm (PT)
(7 MT, 8 CT, 9 ET)

Men's Only COSA Mtg.
Sunday
10:00am (PT)
(11am MT, 12noon CT, 1:00
pm ET)

NOTE: check with
www.cosacall.com for a new
Europe call on Tuesdays as
well as a COSA Parents
Telemeeting on Wednesdays