

## **OA South East England Intergroup**

### **World Service Business Conference 2017**

#### ***Final report***

I attended the Overeaters Anonymous 2017 World Service Business Conference (WSBC) as a delegate for OA South and East England Intergroup (SEEIG). The Conference was held 1 – 6 May 2017, at the Embassy Suites Albuquerque Hotel and Spa, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. This was the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual WSBC, and its theme was “Growing OA Unity Worldwide”.

This year there were 186 eligible voters. There were 20 countries present: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, UK, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, USA.

**7<sup>th</sup> tradition:** There was one 7<sup>th</sup> tradition collection, on Friday morning (5 May 2017). The total contributed was \$4,323.68.

#### **An overview of the week:**

**Monday, 1 May:** Workshop on “The Heart of the OA Program Worldwide: The OA Twelve Steps”

**Tuesday, 2 May:** Workshops on “Carrying the Message Worldwide: The Twelve Concepts of OA Service”, “Working in Harmony Worldwide: The OA Twelve Traditions”, “Worldwide Unity Through OA Literature” and “All About Conference (including parliamentary procedure)”

**Wednesday, 3 May:** Forum: Amazing Recovery: Passport to Unity. Region Fellowship, and Literature Q&A

**Thursday, 4 May:** Business Meetings 1 and 2 (introductions, credentials, adoption of standing rules, reports from officers, committees and regions, trustee nominees speeches and Q&A, etc.) Workshops on “Strategic Planning: Keeping OA Strong Worldwide” and “Sponsorship: Growing OA Unity Worldwide”

**Friday, 5 May:** Business Meetings 3 and 4 (trustee elections, new business motions.) Workshop on “Living OA Recovery Worldwide”

**Saturday, 6 May:** Business Meeting 5 (new business motions, committee and workshop summaries). Board of Trustees meeting, Delegates’ dinner/entertainment/presentations.

OA meetings were held throughout the week: early morning, noon, and in the evening. Attending OA meetings whilst I was at WSBC provided me with the recovery boost I needed throughout the week. I also found it helpful to see my fellow trusted servants in the meetings, sharing their experience, strength and hope. It reminded me we were all there, first and foremost, as abstaining compulsive overeaters. Recovery comes first.

This year I served on the reference sub-committee, which met on Thursday evening, Friday early morning and evening. Reference sub-committee (RSC) is made up of delegates from each region who review new business motions. Motions are referred to RSC when they receive three or more proposed amendments. I asked to be considered for this service after sitting in on RSC meetings at last years conference. Personally, I find the process of reviewing the motions very interesting and I was really pleased to have been a part of the process this year (despite the unsociable hours!).

I was also privileged to have been assigned a Green Dot (a first time WSBC delegate) to mentor this year. This was a very rewarding experience, and I am very grateful to my Green Dot, and impressed by her commitment and enthusiasm for service. She really did a great job.

**Committee meeting:** The committee meetings took place from 10.15 to 16.45 on Wednesday 3 May 2017. The WSBC Conference Committees are:

- Bylaws
- Conference-Approved Literature
- Finance
- Professional Outreach
- Public Information
- Region Chairs
- Twelfth Step Within
- Unity with Diversity
- Virtual Services
- Web/Technology
- Young Person'

I was assigned to the Bylaws committee. We sorted the projects and goals of the committee into two subcommittees: one reviewing the policy manual, and the other reviewing the bylaws. I am serving on the bylaw review subcommittee. We also spent some time wrapping up unfinished projects from last year's Bylaws committee. I was involved in the "Glossary Ninjas" project – reviewing the WSBC glossary (included in the binder) which lists and defines common OA business terms.

Overall, I feel I found my niche working on this committee. I really enjoyed the reviewing and wordsmithing, and the sometimes intense discussions that can arise out of a seemingly innocuous word or sentence. It isn't for everyone, but it really made me feel like I was being of use, as I was using my own individual skills and talents to contribute to OA business.

If you or your groups would like any more information about this committee, or any of the other WSBC committees, please get in touch.

### **Literature**

The conference considered three pieces of literature:

- *Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight* (revised)
- *Twelve Concepts of OA Service Pocket Guide*

- *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* (revised)

A Q&A session was held on Wednesday 3 May 2017 where delegates could ask questions about the proposed literature, prior to the deliberation and voting on Thursday 4 May 2017.

The conference seal of approval was granted to the revised *Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight* pamphlet and the revised *Twelve and Twelve*.

The Twelve Concepts pocket guide was defeated. This will return to the committee who drafted it, who will take on the feedback and hopefully submit a revised version for consideration at a future conference.

I'll keep the IG updated as to when the new pamphlet and *Twelve and Twelve* will be available.

### **New Business Motions and Bylaw Amendments**

The consent agenda consisted of New Business Motions E, E and G. (Please refer to the e-mails sent out prior to the February Intergroup meeting for full details of all the motions, or contact me for more information.)

Bylaw Amendment 3, 5 and 6 were pulled from the consent agenda.

The following items were deliberated and voted on individually:

***New Business Motion A:*** to remove an outdated reference to courtesy listings for OA email loops (which previously did not fall under the definition of an OA group, but as of WSBC 2016 do) – **approved.**

***New Business Motion B:*** to establish a policy statement on copyright and ownership of creative works, essentially providing that any work an OA member submits to WSO or WSBC shall then be owned by OA Inc (e.g. articles, pictures, poems etc) – **failed.**

***New Business Motion C:*** to create a tenth tool of Mindfulness – **failed.**

***New Business Motion F:*** to remove reference to booklets from the OA Statement on Approved Literature – **withdrawn.**

***New Business Motion H:*** to amend the “Unity with Diversity” policy to say the fellowship recognises the importance of using a meeting format that uses the OA preamble, OA 12 steps and 12 traditions, and mentions a seventh tradition contribution – **failed.**

***New Business Motion I:*** to amend the reference to courtesy listings for OA email loops – **withdrawn.**

***New Business Motion J:*** to require all motions submitted for consideration at WSBC to include an explanation of how the motion will help carry the message to those who still suffer – **adopted.**

***New Business Motion K:*** to request the Board of Trustees investigate and develop proposals to encourage WSBC to reach its decisions with substantial unanimity; to examine how other Twelve Step fellowships reach the decisions at business meetings; and to examine alternatives to Roberts Rules – **failed.**

**New Business Motion L:** to create a special translations fund – **adopted**.

**New Business Motion M:** to create a committee to consider how the Spanish Language Service Board can be implemented/registered, and to establish how the SLSB will fit into the OA service structure – **adopted with amendment**.

**New Business Motion N:** to create a Sponsorship day to be held annually on the third Saturday in August – **adopted**.

**Bylaw Amendment 1:** to prevent any candidate for election to the Board of Trustees from running for more than one position – **adopted**.

**Bylaw Amendment 2:** to amend the definition of an OA group to include use of a meeting format that includes the OA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the OA preamble – this motion received more than three amendments, and was **referred to RSC**. As this happened on Saturday morning, and there were no further RSC meetings this year, the motion was not progressed or voted on.

**Bylaw Amendment 3:** to remove “religious” as a type of organisation that can receive funds upon the dissolution of OA Inc. – **failed**.

**Bylaw Amendment 4:** to amend the date that Board of Trustee candidates must meet the requirements, from the date of application to the date of election – **failed**.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we didn't finish discussing all the business on the agenda. The following items were not discussed:

- **Bylaw amendment 5 and 6:** changing process for deregistering service bodies which are no longer active.
- **Bylaw amendment 7:** to allow virtual groups to affiliate with a national service board as well as a virtual service board.
- **Bylaw amendment 8:** change WSBC from annual to biennial (every other year).

An item of **Emergency New Business** was accepted by RSC, but as we run out of time during the business meeting, it wasn't deliberated. The Emergency New Business was submitted by a R9 delegate, and concerned the requirement to complete the Licence #1 form to translate OA material that is freely available in English on OA.org. There was a lot of work by R9 delegates throughout the week to raise awareness of this issue and ultimately, whilst the motion wasn't discussed, the Board of Trustees confirmed on Saturday 6 May 2017 that they had found a solution to the problem. I will be forwarding an announcement about this separately.

## **Trustee Elections**

**Region 4** (uncontested) Cyndy L

**Region 7** (uncontested) Karen B

**General Service Trustees** (contested) Ron P and Joanne M were both elected to serve a three year term. Lawrie C was elected to serve a two year term.

## **Forum**

The forum was presented by the Region Chairs committee on Wednesday morning (3 May 2017). This was 2 hours long and the theme was *Amazing Recovery: Passport to Unity*.

Members were allocated places at different tables, seated with delegates and trustees from different regions. Different speakers circulated the tables, briefly sharing their OA story, and the other members at the table would share back (a mini meeting essentially). The twist was that each of the speakers was working their programme either in a different way or from a different vantage point. For example, the speakers I heard at my table included members who: were not native English speakers, were gay, were male, had a non traditional higher power, attended virtual meetings, and had undergone bariatric surgery. This session was really popular, it did a really good job of highlighting all the ways in which we can be diverse, but that we are still unified by our common problem and shared solution.

## **Board of Trustees meeting**

I attended two Board of Trustees meetings. I find it interesting to see how business is conducted at this level. I would encourage future WSBC delegates to observe a BOT meeting whilst at WSBC.

## **Personal Experience**

Attending WSBC this year was quite a different experience to last year, when I was a Green Dot. I felt more engaged in the process this year, more aware of what was going on, and more able to be of service.

It is very useful for me to talk to OA members all over the world about how their Intergroups function, about how they fulfil their primary purpose – to carry the message – and how they promote a culture of service. Attending WSBC reinforced how vital doing service beyond group level has been to my recovery, and how I'm so grateful for all the friends I've made by being involved in this way.

Each one of us has a responsibility to give back to OA, to ensure we are keeping it strong and healthy for our current members, as well as for those who haven't found us yet.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your delegate this year. I am very grateful for the opportunity, and I hope it will make me a more able servant for our Intergroup.

If you would like any more information about WSBC, or anything else I've mentioned in the report, please get in touch on [worldservice@oasouthandeastengland.org.uk](mailto:worldservice@oasouthandeastengland.org.uk)

The final conference report will be available later in the year, and I will forward it for distribution when I receive it.

**Holly A.**

**28 May 2017**