

# The 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual World Service Business Conference

April 25-29, 2023

***Concepts of Service: The Heart of Fellowship***

## TUESDAY, APRIL 25

**REGISTRATION:** Every delegate received a packet and a binder that included the schedule for the conference and all the information we would need to participate. There were 400+ pages in this binder. The Board of Trustees (BOT) also inserted their letter to the Fellowship from February 25, 2023 entitled ***Embracing Our Differences*** into the packet. This letter basically is encouraging our members to accept all the varied ways our members work the 12 Steps, including what (OA approved) literature they draw upon. Another term for this came up in discussions at this year's Conference: "program diversity". The BOT specifically discouraged members from suggesting that "OA material isn't good enough". They ended the letter with the following: "As an inclusive Fellowship, we embrace all our differences. Please join us in this recommitment to inclusivity – it is a great act of love, one our Fellowship needs and deserves."

I then went to the "All About Conference Workshop". They said about 180+ had registered, but some had to drop out due to family or health issues. All of the information is in our binders, questions were asked and answered.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

**LITERATURE Q&A:** This meeting allows delegates to ask questions about the literature being presented at the Conference. By asking questions through this process, the delegates can prepare to vote on the literature when it is presented at the business meeting. The literature being presented at Conference is the result of many hours of work by delegates who volunteered on the Conference-Approved Literature Committee (CALC). The volunteers developed, reviewed and voted on the literature. Now, WSCB delegates, as representatives of the OA

group conscience, are asked to vote on the literature.

### **DIVERSE VOICES: A COMMON SOLUTION ("A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery".)**

This literature will have a regular Index and an additional "Diversity Index". The following was written as an introduction to this pamphlet by the CALC. "If a member wants to hear voices similar to their own, there is an index that identifies stories with a common thread. However, all members are encouraged to read stories other than those representing their own experiences. In this way, we look for connections as we develop compassion." The committee shared that sometimes members have been silenced in their shares by other members who misapply the concept of outside issues. They stated that OA as a Fellowship and a corporation does not take a stand on social issues. It does not lend its name to any social issue, no matter how worthy it might appear. They went on to say that outside issues do affect our members on an individual basis. Anything that drives a person to abuse food in order to deal with strong emotions is an *inside* issue and should be respected within our rooms. This would include discrimination (or other issues r/t LGBTQ+) that drives a person to the food. Leonie's note: One of the stories in this new pamphlet illustrates this point. During Covid, an African American OA member was sharing at a meeting about her feelings and experiences r/t the death of George Floyd. She was told by another member that what she was sharing about was "an outside issue". In the same time period, many people were sharing about their experiences and feelings r/t Covid. They were not told that Covid was an outside issue.

The presenters of the meeting said OA has historically been a fellowship of straight, white, Christian women. They wanted to represent our more diverse fellowship. They wanted diverse people to see themselves and feel welcome. They also wanted to educate the current Fellowship so we may understand and be more welcoming to all. They wanted to honor how diverse we are, to help us have compassion.

One delegate pointed out that under the ***Diversity Index***, one of the categories

was "Mental Health Conditions/Neurodivergence". The delegate said that they fell under the neurodiverse category and historically "my people were put into mental institutions". The delegate objected to the two categories being together. It was determined by the panel that they would edit the literature draft to separate the two conditions. Another question asked why 8 stories about program diversity were deleted from the prior pamphlet edition. They said that "program diversity" is not currently represented. The answer was that it is a "different movement" to have respect for how one works their program. It is not the focus of this piece of literature. Another question was "why delete our history with removing old stories?" The answer was "length". It is already a lot of stories. Another asked whether it would be a book or a pamphlet. De De DeMoss said that it would be an executive decision (BOT). She said it basically is "too small for a book and too big for a pamphlet".

**YOUNG PERSONS COMMITTEE MEETING**, morning and afternoon: As a delegate, we were asked to write down our preference for which WSBC Committee (PI/PO, Twelfth Step Within, Unity with Diversity, Young People's, Bylaws) we wanted to be on, from 1-5. My first choice was Young People's. I didn't know what I had to offer this committee but thought maybe I could learn something by joining. Bryan(delegate co-chair) and Barb. K.(trustee co-chair) co-chaired the morning and afternoon meetings. The question was asked about the specific age range OA considered to be Young People's. The answer was 18-30. Barb said she believed it really should be 18-40. Bryan said that if you joined OA in this age range (18-30) that you qualified for this category even if you were now much older! This made many of us chuckle as most of the Young People's Committee members present appeared to be 60+ years old. Out of 30+ members present, there were probably half a dozen actual young people. We spent the entire morning session going around and introducing ourselves. We were asked to share on the following questions: 1) What experience with service do I have in OA? 2) What experience did I have as a young person with an eating disorder? 3) What would I have needed when I got here? I came into OA at age 29 so this was all very interesting to me. Many of us shared that we had loved ones who were younger and could benefit from OA. Some things I heard that stood out to me: That young people

need to hear about OA, whether from word-of-mouth, advertisements, or social media etc. Someone shared the need for identification when a young person comes into OA; for fellows to share about their struggles with the different aspect of the disease (binging, bulimia, exercise bulimia, anorexia etc.). Another shared about her joining OA when she had small children and spoke of the need to make OA face-to-face meetings child-friendly by allowing mothers with babes in arms to attend or possibly offering babysitting services. Another spoke of her isolation and loneliness when she joined OA and the need for fellowship opportunities.

*One of the actual young people in the meeting shared how they really appreciated hearing from old-timers in OA and how valuable that was but that they yearned to share their recovery journey with other young people who were on the same journey.* This resonated with me and reminded me of how there were so many young people in OA when I joined in 1988. I began to go to coffee with them after meetings and to socialize with them. This helped me feel supported and heard by my peers at that time in my life. It helped me to stay in the program. The afternoon session was spent brainstorming in small groups on what we could focus on as a committee in the coming year. We came up with a few subcommittees that we plan to form.

**MEET THE MAKER:** I spoke with the maker of the motion from Greece about Bylaw Amendment Proposal 14. I also asked questions about Proposal 13, they are on a similar topic but with opposite directives.

**The Spirit of Service Workshop:** We heard from 2 excellent speakers speaking on ***The Twelve Concepts of OA Service.*** Cyndy L. shared her personal experience with trying not to control the outcome of GC meetings she was involved in. She spoke of how she had to learn that she was to speak up and voice her opinion, but whatever the GC decided she had to accept with humility keeping in mind the importance of our Tradition 1. She talked about how service helped her so much. She was able to bring her specific talents to OA, to help in whatever way she could. She talked about her personal struggle to not try to act like she knows all the answers on any given issue. She spoke of Concept 4 and experiences with herself and others who were shunned at times for speaking their truth. She

encouraged all in OA to enter service and GC decisions with an open mind, treating all around us with respect especially when opinions vary.

Adele, from Israel, shared about her experiences in giving service. She focused on Concept 4 "The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process." *She said that she never felt like she was seen or heard as a child. In OA she learned we all have a voice and what each of us thinks is important. She said the "CON" is often even more important for us to hear than the "PRO".* She spoke a lot about the value of teamwork and all the rewards it brings.

People in the workshop shared after the speakers. Of note: One delegate who resides in CA, but is representing her homeland of Iran. She spoke emotionally about the struggles of her people back home getting literature in their language and having a voice in OA. She expressed gratitude for being present as a voice for her people. She then interpreted for her fellow delegate who actually lives in Iran. He thanked OA profusely for saving his life (lost 100#) and for allowing him to be at the Conference. Another delegate from Quebec shared emotionally about how it is still hard for her people (French- speaking) to get literature translations and to feel "a part of ". She acknowledged all the progress made but said there is more work to be done.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023**

**176 Eligible Voters**

Business Meeting 1 opened with the Serenity Prayer in Greek (by a delegate from Greece). The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous (OA) were read. Readings from The Twelve Concepts of OA Service: **Concept 1 (Unity)** -*The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.* **Concept 2(Conscience)** - *The OA groups have delegated to World Service Business conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus, World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.* **Concept 3 (Trust)** – *The right of decision, based on trust, makes effective leadership possible.* The delegates were asked to set aside our personal feelings in exchange for HP's will for OA – to keep OA alive

and well. Delegates needed to trust trustees and trustees needed to trust delegates. *The speaker said “once I take my personality out of the equation, I am more able to focus on principles. We listen, pray and discuss. Faith is not jumping from Point A to Point B - faith is jumping from point A!”*

It was noted that there were two interpreters present for Spanish- speaking delegates present.

**\*Bylaw Amendment Proposal #8 was withdrawn by the maker.**

**Conference Standing Rules:** An amendment was proposed to strike the words “or chewing gum” from “***there will be no smoking, eating, or chewing gum in the business meetings...***” One of the Cons to this was a delegate who said they witnessed another delegate have a “neurological reaction” to seeing someone chewing gum and that person had to leave the meeting. This amendment was voted down. A second amendment to the Standing Rules was to add to the above “***except for medical purposes***” i.e. medicine. This received a Yes vote. The Standing Rules were then adopted as amended.

**Parade of Motions:** All motions were announced along with the number of amendments (to the amendment), if any, were submitted. Any motion that had more than two amendments submitted would automatically go to the **Reference Subcommittee (RSC)**. The RSC is a subcommittee of the WSBC Bylaws Committee. It is composed of two members from each region. Its task is to deal with motions when more than one motion addresses the same policy or bylaw; when there is confusion or serious questions about a motion; or when the chair requests the committee to look into a motion. This happens before the motion comes to the floor. It also addresses any motion that receives more than two amendments to it when brought before the delegation. The RSC tries to combine motions; clarify motions, and/or make recommendations. All delegates are welcome to observe the whole process and to offer input.

**Consent Agenda:** These are motions voted on as a block without discussion or debate. The motions are chosen by the Chair of the BOT and deemed uncontroversial. Any delegate can object to a single motion being on the Consent

Agenda and it will then be pulled. A few motions were pulled. The Consent Agenda was adopted as amended (New Business Proposals D, G, H, J, L, N, O, Q, R, and Bylaw Amendment Proposals 2 and 3).

**Chair Report:** Judy H. will be stepping down as chair after this conference. The new chair of BOT will be voted in at their meeting Saturday afternoon. In her report, Judy said that the BOT was adjusting to working within the new board structure adopted last year. We no longer have region trustees and general service trustees. In the past regions would nominate a trustee to serve their region (region trustee). Now, trustees are assigned as liaison to a specific region (not necessarily the region they represent). Now, all trustee nominations must come from the region. Regions are thus encouraged to nominate more than one person, if possible – even those from another region. We currently have 17 trustees but only 13 positions filled. She encouraged the delegates to consider taking the necessary steps to qualify for the BOT. A question was asked if WSBC was subsidized by OA. She said that OA usually has a loss of about \$US50,000/year at WSBC. This year, delegate registration was increased to help with this.

**Treasurers Report:** Meg M. Treasurer, BOT. In her report she made a point about how much she used to spend on binge foods. She wrote down the price of specific food/drink items in 1960 and compared them with the price today. She also included money spent on “weight loss clinics”. One example given was a candy bar (\$0.10 - \$2.00). Then she wrote **“Now I look at what my contribution level matches. Am I stuck in the 1960’s, or do I meet today’s costs?”**. There are two main revenue streams for OA: contributions and literature sales. For 2022, contributions were US\$970,001, literature was, US\$461,456, and digital and audiobooks were US\$142,842. Beth said that with Covid and online meetings requiring no rent, donations were higher in 2021. She cited contributing factors as being the drop in the economy, return to face-to face-meetings and related expenses among others. A question was asked whether OA receives many large donations i.e. bequeaths, special donations. The answer is no, not many. Does OA pay for the expenses of a trustee? Yes.

**The Managing Director's Report:** Sarah Armstrong. She reported that 2022 ended with an unaudited net loss of US\$251,532.52. This balances our net gain in 2021. The two main reasons for this are 1) there was a penalty of US\$101,168 resulting from cancelling our contract with the hotel for our planned face-to-face WSBC 2022 and 2) there was a loss on our investments of US\$185,024.02. These were both unusual items and do not indicate any long-term financial concerns for Overeaters Anonymous, World Service.

In 2022, the Find a Meeting page on oa.org was updated to include time zone improvements, multi-language search expansions, language and special-focus service board participation form options, language and special-focus service board search functionality improvement and much more. In 2022, the number of OA meetings worldwide, including virtual meetings, averaged 6,467 in over seventy-five countries, with 339 service bodies (including region offices). In 2018 and 2022, the number of meetings was 6,209 and 6,566 respectively. The *WSO News Bulletin* had 12,450 subscribers as of the close of 2022, a 31 percent increase over December 2021.

OA literature has been translated or is in the process of being translated into more than thirty languages. More than forty digital documents of translated OA literature have been added to the WSO archives since WSBC 2022, with the greatest number of contributions being in the French (Canadian), Italian, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish languages. The original version of *Where Do I Start?* (pamphlet) has been translated into 19 languages: Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, Chinese, Finnish, French (Canadian), Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Mongolian, Norwegian, Persian, Portuguese (Brazil), Romanian, Serbian, Spanish, UK English, and Zulu. OA has more than US\$85,600 to support groups in translating OA literature, and the International Publications and Translations Committee is actively seeking opportunities to support OA groups in translating OA literature. In 2022, the committee granted more than US\$11,300 to four national service boards for the translation of OA literature and materials.

Oa.org (OA website) saw an average 59,000 visitors per month last year, including monthly averages of 10,000 visitors taking the OA Quiz (our Fifteen Questions),

40,000 visitors using Find a Meeting, and 11,000 downloads from our Document Library. In July 2022, the website saw a remarkable 35 percent increase in traffic that has persisted ever since. This jump is the result of improvements to our public awareness efforts.

In 2022, OA's Facebook page grew by 8.7% to 15,850 followers. Our Instagram page grew by 27.6 percent to 5,375 followers.

A question was asked of Sarah if our online books are losing revenue. She replied yes, there are infringement issues.

**Region Reports, 1-10 plus the Virtual Region Report:** Reports given by Trustee Liaison to each Region. Minimal questions were asked by the delegates.

**Board-Approved Literature Committee Report:** Barb K., Trustee Chair. No questions asked.

**Board Reference Manual Committee Report:** Beth B. Trustee Chair. No questions asked.

**Conference Planning Committee Report:** Karen B., Trustee Chair. Question was asked as to the manner/location of the next WSBC. *In 2024, we will have a virtual observation available for the entire conference but it will be face-to-face.* The rationale is that hybrid conferences are a logistical challenge. Making sure that all delegates are heard and have the opportunity to fully participate is paramount. *However, financially as well as realistically, the number of days of a hybrid conference cannot be extended to the timeframes that we use for a virtual conference.* Delegates who attend in-person already take valuable vacation time to travel to and participate in the various business meetings and workshops that comprise WSBC. A virtual participant would have to be available on their computer up to ten hours each day to fully participate in all the business sessions (seven hours of formal business and up to three hours to observe and participate in the Reference Subcommittee sessions). This doesn't include the daily OA meetings. *The committee came to the conclusion that in order to achieve an informed group conscience, we would hold one more face-to-face Conference*

***with full virtual observation and would report on the resulting responses at WSBC 2025, which will be held virtually.***

**Delegate Support Fund Committee Report:** Meg M. Trustee Chair. There is US\$34,800 in the fund, US\$7,490 was spent to financially support delegates attending this year's WSBC. A question was asked if there is anything being done to reach out to those who may need help, especially in underrepresented countries? The answer was that yes, the committee responds to requests coming in through the regions. A comment was made that there seems to be "a disconnect" with the amount of money spent and the amount of money needed to alleviate the obstructions many delegates face getting to WSBC. Meg responded by saying the Intergroups/Regions are doing some of the paying.

**Internal Information Committee Report:** Bob L. Trustee Chair. This committee reviewed OA member *Lifeline* submissions for lifeline.oa.org, which included written, audio, and visual creations by members. In January 2023, voice recordings of the Brown Book appendices were added to this website. They reviewed and updated the *Suggested Lifeline Meeting Format*, which was posted to oa.org and lifeline.oa.org in 2022. No questions were asked.

**International Publications/Translations Committee Report:** Dora P. Trustee Chair. A question/comment was asked about the money that is available to assist in translations but that many people do not know that they can ask for financial help. Dora agreed and replied that we all need to work to get the word out. Another question asked if we could add Google translate on the website oa.org. Dora shared that she had tried to translate something r/t compulsive overeating and "the translation was horrible!"

**Literature Review Committee Report:** Neva S. Trustee Chair. A question was asked whether there was any follow up on discussions on the use of the outside quotations in our *For Today* book. Neva said that the committee decided to wait until the review is due (all OA publications are reviewed every 10 years). Another question was asked concerning the *OA Handbook*, written for land-based intergroups, when is up for review? Neva said it is currently being reviewed.

**One Piece Literature Ad Hoc Committee Report:** Meg M. Trustee Cochair. This committee submitted a motion (passed) to the board to approve and distribute a letter titled “Embracing Our Differences” to the Fellowship, highlighting the inclusivity of the Unity with Diversity policy and the acceptance and use of all OA-approved literature. They wrote a skit to illustrate both the importance of members and groups being free to choose any OA-approved literature and the benefits of using all OA-approved literature. This skit was performed at the dinner/dance at WSBC 2023. No questions were asked.

**Public Awareness/Professional Tradeshows Committee Report:** Sandra M., Trustee Chair. There is a new OA PSA (Public Service Announcement) in the works. The committee continues to focus on Google ads (US\$4,000/month) and successfully expanding OA’s global reach. The committee is in the process of determining the future proposed geographic scope and age range to target for the benefit of making best use of their funds. Through the end of January 2023, there were six requests for funds. US\$8,014.11 was used for outreach in 2022. There is US\$10,724.34 left in the fund. Please share this funding opportunity with your service bodies should they need financial assistance to participate in health fairs.

**Realignment/Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee Report:** Emilia I., Trustee Chair. The committee chose members that would reflect a broad representation of all regions. They brainstormed and came up with various ideas. Some examples are: Merge two of the North American Regions, split Region Nine into two regions, setup sub-regions within regions and create a service position to help each country, especially with language diversity/necessity. Despite all of the ideas, the committee could not agree on a workable solution (yet).

**Strategic Planning Committee Report:** Karen B., Trustee Chair. A report was not in the binder but Karen gave a verbal report. She said that after Covid closed down so many face-to-face meetings, meetings went Virtual. As we go back into face-to-face meetings, the committee looked at the question “What is the purpose of the Virtual Region?” It was not meant to disparage the Virtual Region but sought to clarify. There are questions concerning meetings that are now

virtual but affiliate with a land-based intergroup or service body.

**Website Review Committee:** BJ J., Trustee Chair. This committee focused on returning the Events Calendar to the OA website, launching *Lifeline* on lifeline.oa.org and staying informed on our translations resources. The national flags on the landing page are to direct the newcomer who does not read or understand English to a service board website in their language and translate our website information, available in 37 languages.

**Zoom Bombing Ad Hoc Committee Report:** Lee R., Trustee Chair. They published a new document that can be found on oa.org *Videoconference Meeting Training and Security/Preventative Measures*. One question asked if the committee had considered removing the term “bombing” and also re-form the committee (it has been disbanded). Lee responded that they did not like the term “bombing” but it was what was being used predominantly at the time. *Lee said that the new “deep fake” issue is being looked at now.*

**Bylaws Committee Report:** Bob L., Trustee Cochair. This committee submitted a huge number of proposals for the Conference this year. They did a lot of work! No questions asked.

**Conference-Approved Literature Committee Report:** Neva S. Trustee Cochair. They submitted two manuscripts for the WSBC to vote on. No questions.

**Public Information/Professional Outreach Committee Report:** Sandra M., Trustee Cochair. A Medical Professionals Subcommittee created a sample letter to be sent to medical and healthcare students and medical professionals to ask if OA information can be sent and/or to offer to be a part of a panel or presentation about the solution OA provides in a classroom setting. This letter is in the approval process currently. This is one amongst other projects they worked on. No questions.

**Region Chairs Committee Report:** (All Region Chairs and the Virtual Chair). No questions asked.

**Twelfth Step Within Committee Report:** Lee R., Trustee Cochair. All three

subcommittees worked on material that was sent to the Materials Approval Committee (BOT). **Sponsorship:** planned for a flyer and a document but was unable to finalize the projects. A workshop was hosted by our Brazilian group and had two speakers, one from Brazil and one from the USA. Simultaneous interpretation during the meeting made it very special. **Each One Reach One:** made a card with suggestions on what to say when reaching out to missing members. **Make Face to Face Awesome Again:** worked on a document of ideas to encourage meetings to meet face-to-face again.

**Unity With Diversity Committee Report:** Beth B., trustee Cochair. The question was asked if an example could be given as to how an OA member has been “shut down” (told what they were sharing was an outside issue) in the middle of sharing in a meeting. The example Beth gave was an OA member who was sharing about their fears for their family due to their race (in their country).

**Young People’s Committee Report:** Barb K., trustee Cochair. No questions asked.

**Trustee Nominee Speeches:** Beverly M. (Oregon), Betty J. (BJ – Colorado), Gary D. (Florida), Lee R. (Texas), Meg M. (Minnesota), Michael K. (Colorado). There were questions asked of all the trustee nominees. All of them were asked what they would do to increase the number of underrepresented populations in OA. There were various answers but most of them included in their answer that they wanted to hear from diverse people within OA with suggestions. One of the nominees said that OA is competing with other 12-step food programs. One comment made to a nominee was that it was a good thing that a young person (her) would be representing OA as a trustee. The nominee thanked her, but told her that she was 62 years old! Michael K. introduced himself as “abstaining and maintaining for 47 years”. There was a moment of levity when a former trustee got up to the podium and told Michael that she was going to (pay him back) ask the same question he asked of her when she was nominated: “If you were a dog, what kind of dog would you be as a trustee?” He answered her, “A German Shepherd! Because we are protective, we love our own, and don’t come trying to bother me!”

**Proposed Literature Motion A-a: *Diverse Voices: A Common Solution*.** If accepted, this pamphlet will replace our current pamphlet *A Common Solution: Diversity and Recovery*. The motion for this piece of literature was presented after the Conference-Approved Literature Committee made a couple revisions. We voted on the literature as presented, no amendments were allowed.

**PRO:** Many people with diverse backgrounds could not see themselves in OA's published stories. Our purpose is to welcome and support the underrepresented populations in OA. "We don't have another year (for some to experience lack of welcome or acceptance). This new piece of literature is not perfect as there are "diversities within diversities" but it is needed and can be added to in the future.

**CON:** This piece of literature is good but it is not ready to publish. It left our four stories about "program diversity". This literature is rife with omissions. It needs a definition of Compulsive Overeater/Anorexia and what the solution is.

**VOTE: Yes - 126, No - 43.**

**MOTION ADOPTED.**

**Proposed Literature Motion A-b: *Sponsorship in OA: Guiding Others Into Recovery*.** If accepted, this piece of literature would replace "A Guide for Sponsors: *Why, when, and how to be an OA Sponsor*".

**PRO:** The Conference-Approved Literature Committee was asked 3 years ago to update/revise the old pamphlet. The committee tried to rewrite it with an emphasis on the idea that there are many different ways to sponsor. What works for you and your sponsor is ok.

**CON:** The main point was that this piece of literature left out the *30 Questions* that is included in our current pamphlet. A person from the Virtual Region said that during Covid, they used the *30 Questions* as a guide in sponsoring people online. One person said to bring it back next year and add the *30 Questions*.

**VOTE: Yes - 86, No - 78 The vote was close.**

**MOTION DEFEATED.**

**New Business Proposal A:** Three amendments were submitted so it was referred to the Reference Subcommittee (RSC).

**Thursday Night Workshops: (1) Encouraging Service in OA. (2) Q&A on the Concepts.** There was a speaker who shared his story and how he became involved in service. There were three skits put on by some of the Region Chairs about service. We broke up into small groups and shared from a list of questions r/t service in OA. **Here are some of the comments that stood out to me:** Encourage service by hosting a convention – get lots of volunteers. PI/PO helps to get people into the front door (of OA), 12<sup>th</sup> Step Within helps to keep them from going out the back door. If you want to own your program, give service. One person shared that they were asked to do service at their very first OA meeting. Service in recovery saves our life. Being willing to say yes before knowing what it will be like. Seeing something in another that they don't see in themselves (suggest a service position to another fellow). Suit up and show up. I have to pray before each IG meeting! There were some personal shares as well. One share I will remember - she said that she felt discouraged and loss of hope, “we end a meeting with a poem instead of a prayer. I feel like we are kicking God out of OA”.

**Friday, April 28, 2023**

**\* 174 Voting Delegates**

**New Business Proposal B:** Combined four articles in our current WSCB Policy Manual relating to OA's public communications policy. It removed redundancy and made it relevant to current practice. This was non-controversial, there were no Cons.

**VOTE - MOTION ADOPTED**

**Board of Trustees:** Results from the trustee election were announced. All the nominees were voted in: Beverly M., BJ J., Gary D., Lee R., Meg M., and Michael K.

**New Business Proposal A:** The RSC presented a substitute Motion A. This proposal would create a policy to avoid the use of acronyms and abbreviations (where possible) in all OA official documents and communications. The acronym for Overeaters Anonymous, “OA” and OA literature would be exempt. **CON:** They objected to excluding literature. It is difficult to comprehend/translate acronyms in OA literature. **PRO:** It would cost an enormous amount of money to go back and make changes in all our literature.

**VOTE AMENDED MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal C:** The RSC presented a substitute motion that changed some of the wording. This proposal would allow service bodies to obtain permission to translate and/or print OA literature using the current licensing process. **PRO:** It was said that this motion would change nothing in the actual process. **CON:** Even minor changes in the wording of policies make it hard for non-English speakers.

**VOTE – MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal D:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. It removes physical addresses from the Final Conference Report delegate contact list.

**New Business Proposal E:** This motion redefined the group definitions for open and closed meetings. This was sent to the RSC.

**New Business Proposal F:** This proposal would change the Unity with Diversity Policy wording to be gender neutral (remove “he/she”). There was a whole lot of controversy on this one! There were lots of Pros focusing on using inclusive language. Many of the Cons expressed the grammatically incorrect pairing of a singular word with a plural word i.e. “allowing any *member* to share *their* experience, strength, and hope.....”. One person said that this is not purely a

matter of grammar, it is about inclusion. Again, concerns about translating the English to other languages. In the end, there were three amendments (to this proposal) submitted so this proposal was sent to the RSC.

**New Business Proposal G:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This rescinds the general service trustee job description – housekeeping proposal as we no longer have a general service trustee.

**New Business Proposal H:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This removes the Delegate Support Fund Mailing requirement since the application and letter are now on oa.org.

**New Business Proposal I:** This proposal would remove the word “special” from “special-focus” meetings. And to remove the list of special-topic meetings from the policies and cite the location where they are available. This proposal had more than 2 amendments submitted so it was referred to the RSC.

**New Business Proposal J:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This removed dated reference to delegate registration fee.

**New Business Proposal K:** This proposal had been pulled from the Consent Agenda. This proposal would rescind the policy that the WSO provides service bodies with website templates. The intent of this proposal was to remove the requirement that WSO manage website templates since it has never done this. The WSO has never maintained websites. WSO has no time or manpower to do this. **PRO:** There is no reason why Regions couldn’t share their templates with WSO, i.e. make all the resources available to the worldwide Fellowship. **CON:** With so many Virtual meetings, WSO should be a resource at a time when we need it more. There were more Pros and Cons followed by

questions/suggestions. *Finally, there was a Point of Order saying that all suggestions are out of order because the service of providing templates was not available.* The chair agreed and we voted. **VOTE MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal L:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This moved the Twelfth Step Within Day policy to the Events Policy.

**New Business Proposal M:** This increased the cap on annual individual OA donations from \$US5,000 to \$US7,500. One member asked why we had to have limits. The answer was that because we are self-supporting, we might come to depend on members who give too much. Also, they might want something in return. The chair pointed out that in OA, members can give automatic regular contributions. **VOTE: MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal N:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This allows Conference committee reports to be submitted four weeks after WSBC.

**New Business Proposal O:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. This rescinds the policy to implement and register a Spanish speaking language service board. The policy has been completed.

**New Business Proposal P:** This proposed to remove a policy that has been fulfilled. The policy had established an ad-hoc committee to research the best means and costs of improving OA's "front door" on our website. The maker of the motion said that it was researched and discovered that it cost too much. It was decided to spend the money elsewhere. **VOTE: MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal Q:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. It rescinded the Google Custom Search nonprofit status application. The policy is completed.

**New Business Proposal R:** This was voted in on the Consent Agenda. It removes the list of specific groups in the Diverse Voices Policy.

**New Business Proposal S:** This proposal would have OA recovery chips sold from years 1-50. Currently, chips are sold 1-20, 25, 30, 35 and 40. It appeared the costs would be too high to create new chips for every single year up to 50. An **amendment to the motion** was submitted and adopted. This would add two new chips to what is currently available: year 45 and 50. **VOTE AMENDED MOTION ADOPTED.**

**New Business Proposals T and U:** These two motions both related to OA approved literature. They were sent to the RSC.

**\*A 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition was collected at this point to represent the entire Convention. \$US2,457.75 was collected.**

**\* Bylaw Amendment Proposals 5, 6, 8 and 9 withdrawn.**

**New Business Proposal V:** This proposal sought to establish a digital lending library that would provide equal access to the most essential OA literature. Some of the **Pros** shared about how this would be the virtual equivalent of a face-to-face meeting providing group-owned literature for a newcomer to read during a literature meeting. They would have digital access to the literature during a virtual meeting. This would be for a limited period of time. One of the **Cons** said “if you spoon feed a Compulsive Overeater you will kill them!” Also, issues of

costs. *There were a few amendments submitted with the last of these asking that this amendment be referred to the BOT rather than the RSC. It was agreed upon to vote on this last amendment.* VOTE AMENDED MOTION ADOPTED

**New Business Proposal E:** The RSC presented a substitute motion. The intent of the original motion was to redefine the definition of open and closed meeting to make them easier to understand. It also added the definition of focus meeting and topic meeting. The substitute motion deleted some words and replaced them with new words/phrases for the sake of clarity. Still there was a lot of controversy. One point that was made was that visitors would go to our Find a Meeting and see the word “closed” to describe the type of meeting and then think that the meeting was now defunct. It was asked if we could “split the motion” i.e. discuss and vote on 2 separate parts of the substitute motion. This was voted in. **Substitute Motion Part A:** **This changed the meaning of open meeting to “Meeting with visitors (Open)” and closed meeting to “Meeting without visitors (Closed).** VOTE SUBSTITUTE MOTION E – PART A ADOPTED

**Substitute Motion Part B:** The original motion added “Specific” to *Focus Meeting*. It also added “Specific” to *Topic Meeting*. There was mild controversy over this surrounding leaving the word “Special” out of the original motion. One **Pro** said that the word “special” had been used to oppress him in his life. A **Con** said that some like the word “special”. VOTE SUBSTITUTE MOTION E –PART B ADOPTED

**New Business Proposal F:** The RSC presented an amendment to the Motion. The original motion read “allowing any member to share ~~his or her~~their experience strength, and hope in meetings.....” The **amended motion read “allowing members to share their experience, strength, and hope”.** One **Con** said that the rewritten motion sidesteps the bigger issue of acknowledging people with gender issues. One **Pro** said that the use of the word “members” feels more inclusive and it avoids “*the emotion and conflict I feel in this room*”.

**FRIDAY EVENING WORKSHOP (FORUM): SERVICE, THE HEART OF FELLOWSHIP**

This was a very cool workshop! It was the most attended workshop in the entire conference. After it was over, I heard many delegates express their appreciation for it. The format of the forum seemed to help engage everyone. They presented a “slideshow” of *The Twelve Concepts of OA Service*. They said that it would also be made available to the general OA membership on oa.org. It can be used by meetings or service bodies to put on their own workshop. For each Concept, they connected its meaning to the corresponding Step and Tradition. They followed this with a Summary of the Concept. They had every person present read one page from the presentation (they were brief). After each Concept, the room was opened up to sharing on that specific Concept. After attending this forum, I understood the Concepts better and they felt more relevant to me in my service within OA. Here are some of the comments I heard.

**Concept 1:** I try to draw out the introverts in the room. They often have the greatest wisdom. I have to work on *not* sharing every thought!

**Concept 2:** If we knew the will of our service bodies, we could just send in the vote. Why come to WSBC if not to hear varied opinions.

**Concept 3:** I can *do* this (be a *trusted* servant) with God’s help. Delegation: Electing a trusted servant permits delegates (to WSBC) the freedom to exercise their own judgement.

**Concept 4:** Each member has a voice – direct discussion and voting at the local level or indirect via entrusting an elected delegate or trustee to participate in other service board meetings.

**Concept 5:** We all feel like we need/want to be heard. Even if what I want to change is not voted in. As a Fellowship, we are willing to quibble in support of OA.

**Concept 6: (concerns the Board of Trustees):** We don't just put a body into a position, we elect competence.

**Concept 7:** The trustees have "legal authority" and the WSBC has "moral authority". The BOT accepts the responsibility to carry out decisions made by the WSBC and the delegates of the WSBC trust in the BOT to do so.

**Concept 8:** The day-to-day management of the WSO is assigned to a skilled and experienced professional (paid) – the managing director.

**Concept 9:** Some jobs may only require willingness to help. Other jobs may require certain skills. We are not professionals – I do the *best* I can!

**Concept 10:** Duplication of efforts is avoided.

**Concept 11:** The use of outside help or internal, member-supported committees is important to the overall health of our Fellowship.

**Concept 12:** These Concepts are ideals that support the principles found within them as well as the Steps and Traditions and provide guidelines (*Selflessness, Realism, Representation, Dialogue, Compassion, Respect*) for the growth that recovery brings.

**\*The 12 Steps provide spiritual guidance for personal recovery. The 12 Traditions provide spiritual guidance for group unity. The Twelve Concepts provide spiritual guidance for working together in service.**

**Saturday, April 29, 2023                            171 Voting Members**

It was announced that all 5 business meetings were interpreted in Spanish!

**\*Bylaw Amendment Proposal #15 withdrawn.**

**New Business Proposal I:** (refer to page 17 of this report). The RSC presented an amended motion that added the word “specific” before *focus meetings*.

**VOTE      AMENDED MOTION ADOPTED**

**New Business Proposal T:** The RSC presented an amended motion but had no recommendation. The original motion removed AA Conference-approved literature from the *Statement on Approved (OA) Literature*. They added “the current edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*”. **The substitute motion added to the original motion “and the AA book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*”.** This substitute motion was wildly controversial. There were lots of questions after the Pros and Cons. We ran out of time as a long line of delegates waited to be heard. **Pros:** The question has come up for many years as to why an organization as old as OA still relies on outside literature in our approved literature. There is a perception by some in OA that only AA literature is valued within OA. 60 years ago we had no OA literature, we currently have a treasure trove. When we talk about alcohol, we confuse the message to the newcomer. **Cons:** The biggest issue is how this will split the fellowship. There are people who use only AA literature. It is not a solution to ban something, *in countries where English is not the spoken language, translated AA literature is used until translated OA material is available*. One delegate got up and said that the words from the AA 12x12 “...the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands” saved his life.

In the questions that followed, a few things stood out to me. Decades ago, apparently AA sent a letter to OA requesting that OA work on getting our own literature. What OA literature is ready for translation? Do we have plans to translate OA literature outside our two main books? If we remove the “all AA literature” we will be removing our history. Rozanne started OA in her kitchen in California but our program (the 12 steps) *came from AA*. It is all documented in the AA book *Coming of Age*. If you don’t know where you came from, you don’t know where you are going.

**VOTE 68 - FOR, 90 – AGAINST**

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION DEFEATED**

**New Business Proposal U:** The RSC made no recommendation, had no amended motion. The original motion added the following to our *Statement on Approved Literature* “Although groups may choose to focus on one piece of OA- approved literature, individuals and groups are encouraged to use any and all OA-approved literature. **Pros:** I hear people belittle OA literature. We have been encouraged by AA to use our literature. **Cons:** This is not talking about belittling, it is encouraging OA literature. Tradition 11 is attraction not promotion, this interferes with group autonomy, does not contribute to unity. If my group is reading from AA approved literature, this motion feels like we are being told we are “doing it wrong”.

One of the questions asked was concerning the letter the BOT sent recently to the Fellowship *Embracing Our Differences*; “does this include not denigrating AA-approved literature?” The answer was yes. Another asked for clarification if the purpose of this motion was to gently address rogue behavior (those who denigrate OA literature) that violates our Traditions? Yes.

**VOTE 103 – FOR 54 – AGAINST**

**MOTION ADOPTED**

**\*Bylaw Amendment Proposals #1 and #10 withdrawn**

**Bylaw Amendment Proposal 4:** This motion removes the word “special” from special –focus service boards. The word “special” can be seen as “more than” or “less than”. **An amended motion added the word “specific” to “focus service boards”.** This was non-controversial. **VOTE AMENDED MOTION ADOPTED**

**\*The RSC did not consider Motions 13 & 14. The following 2 motions were the most difficult to understand as they affected many countries outside of the USA and the Virtual Region. They both pertained to intergroups that affiliate with a national service board and which Region they then affiliate with. They were**

**basically the polar opposite of one another. There was not much time to devote to these proposals. There was much confusion amongst the delegates. There was a lot of passion/emotion from proponents of both proposals. Request for saying the Serenity Prayer happened multiple times.**

**Bylaw Amendment Proposal 13:** This would give intergroups affiliated with a national service board (NSB) the choice of affiliating with the national service board's region *or choose to remain in the currently assigned region*. An amended motion to change the word "assigned" to "registered" was submitted, discussed Pro and Con and then withdrawn. We then went back to the main motion. **Pros:** Freedom of choice. If one chooses to make a bad decision, they are allowed to do this. Intergroups want to go to the Region of their choice. **Cons:** This motion is an improvement on current policy, but there is more to consider in Proposal 14. Why not stay with the region the national service board affiliates with? We (largely affects Regions 8, 9, and 10) lose representation.

**\*An amendment to the motion submitted to defer this proposal to the BOT.**  
**Pros:** Most of you don't understand what a national service board does! Both Proposals (13 &14) are total opposites. There are complex issues involved that Conference delegates are not aware of i.e. money and legal issues. **Cons:** The BOT has already discussed and reviewed these proposals. They need us to *make a decision*. Sending it to the BOT is diverting the inverted pyramid of our service structure.

Through the questions, it was revealed that there is a mechanism already in place that allows an intergroup to affiliate with a different region (permission of the board of both regions) **VOTE AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION DEFEATED.**

**Back to the main motion (BAP 13):** There is a motion to suspend 13 for now and hear from 14. **This was passed.**

**Bylaw Amendment Proposal 14:** This would have intergroups affiliating with a national service board (NSB) affiliate with the NSB's region. **Pro:** NSB's are a legal entity. They do many things like translate literature, support websites and Google search in their own language. There is a difference between affiliation and

participation. Affiliation addresses legal, cultural, financial and other basic needs. **Participation:** one can participate with other regions and get what you need there. The delegate representing Iran said that when their intergroup comes to the NSB, the NSB gets all of their resources from the NSB's region. This delegate said that she lives in the US and if she started a new group, it would affiliate with her (geographic) intergroup and region, "but I can *participate* in the region of my homeland Iran". **Cons:** My intergroup wants to connect with a NSB *and* the Virtual Region. We need both of them as the Virtual Region helps us with technology whereas this help is hard to get from NSB. The chair of the Virtual Region said she could look out upon the delegates and see 50 faces she personally helped to train in technological matters. She said they also have capability to deal with legal issues. We are not competing with other regions, we are all in this together.

**\*It was voted on to extend business meeting by 30 minutes.**

**A motion was made to have a vote: those in favor of 13 and those in favor of 14. Whichever proposal had the majority would then be voted on.**

**VOTE: Proposal 13 80- Yes Proposal 14 56 – Yes (Proposal 14 defeated)**

**VOTE: Proposal 13 - 2/3 voted in favor. AMENDMENT 13 ADOPTED**

The Unity with Diversity Committee then distributed a survey for those who wished to participate. This contained questions that were very personal in nature i.e. physical health conditions, do you have depression or other mental illness, questions about sexual preference, sex, gender identification, race and religion, atheist/agnostic? as well as age and disease related questions (anorexia, 100#, Bulimia, overeater, bariatric surgery, years in recover etc.). A delegate near me said they were very offended by this survey. The Unity with Diversity plans to present this survey every year and keep track of the results. This survey will be an internal document.

**The Conference closed with a green dot ceremony (first time in-person since**

**2019 –yay!), thanks to all the volunteers and planners, followed by the Serenity Prayer in Swedish.**

**Fourteen different countries were represented at this year's conference: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, England, Greece, Iran, Israel, Italy, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, and USA.**

**Saturday night dinner/speaker/dance:** The new members of the BOT were introduced. The speaker was one of the trustees whose term is now complete. I was very touched by her story. She said that when she first arrived in OA (decades ago) she was the only Jewish person in meetings. As she did higher level service she encountered more Jews. She said that seeing herself in other OA's "identification" was important to her. To me, this seemed to illustrate the reason for OA's quest to attract and welcome underrepresented populations. She shared about learning about the sudden death of her husband while she was at the Conference 6 years ago. She said her OA fellows around her helped her through that day. Her continued service in OA has helped her in adjusting to her new life without her husband. She has already lined up a new service position with her region. She said "I'm not going anywhere!" The dance was very fun with high energy. I hadn't planned on dancing but ended up dancing for hours with all my new OA friends. I was sore for days after. I wanted to mention that it was sweet to meet the other delegates from Region 3. We sat together in all the business meetings. Region 3 paid for a very nice meal we shared together on one of the nights. Another thing was that I served as a mentor to one of the green dots (first WSBC). In her words, we became "fast friends". She was a blessing to me. On a final note, unfortunately, at least one person had to leave the convention due to Covid. After the convention, we received word from WSO that more people came down with Covid, either during or upon leaving the Conference.

Thank you for allowing me to do this wonderful service.

With gratitude, Leonie W.

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