

CHAIRS REPORT TO THE REGION OF Region Chairs Committee (RCC) Meeting (2nd Meeting 2011) and joint Board of Trustees (BOT) with Region Chairs Committee (RCC) and Thu 18th Aug – Sun 21st Aug 2011 Albuquerque - USA

Introduction: - The various meetings were held at the Sheraton Uptown in Albuquerque New Mexico in USA. The Board of Trustees (BOT) (ten Region Trustees and six General Service Trustees) as well as the Region Chairs (10) and some of the staff from OA World Service Office (WSO) were all present at some or all of the meetings.

The purpose of this 2nd meeting for the Region Chairs is in summary - to discuss how we can best carry the message of OA in our Regions, to consider any concerns we may have and try to support each other in carrying the message and resolving those concerns and also to work on the OA strategic plan of how we carry the message as a fellowship. We obviously had a specific agenda ahead of time so that we encompassed these issues with specific tasks.

I attended:-

- Region Chairs Committee (RCC) Meetings
- Region Chairs Committee (RCC) & Board of Trustees (BOT) Joint Meeting
- Strategic Operations Planning meeting

I shared a room with Esti our Trustee and once again this was extremely valuable in exchanging ideas for our forthcoming assembly and issues that arise in our region, etc.

Important things to share with you:-

Abstinence

The main focus in all the work that the RCC does together continues to be that we concentrate everything we do and plan to do on Abstinence with a capital A and our primary purpose (Tradition 5 'Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers').

Please keep in mind the new definition of Abstinence as agreed at the WSBC earlier this year:-

WSBC 2011 - 'Statement on Abstinence and Recovery

'Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviours while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.'

I heard lots of feedback about this – it appears that it has been very well received by the fellowship. Some small comments that I think are useful and thus pass on to you:-

- 'the inclusion of 'healthy body weight' is an opportunity for me to look at my own weight – not at yours',
- 'weight range – I am happier at the bottom of my weight range but am aware that others of similar build can be just as happy and healthy at a slightly higher weight – it isn't for me to judge what is best for them',
- 'abstinence is – a decision, commitment and action'.
- 'it's best to stick to a regular date for weighing myself'.

Please continue to focus on abstinence and its attainment in your meetings and workshops.

The Region Chairs Committee (RCC) Goals – Abstinence, Primary purpose, Spreading awareness of the criteria for abstinence requirements and Continuity within the RCC.

In doing this the RCC (of which as your Chair I am a member) are currently engaged in and are continuing to work on :-

- WSBC 2012 - Organising the Wednesday Forum. We worked on a topic and questions etc. during our meeting and thankfully we are well on our way. The forum this coming year is entitled - 'Conceptualizing Principles!' (the content is a surprise) – do make sure your delegate to WSBC attends – it promises to be fun as well as have great recovery content to take back to your service body. Arrangements will continue by email and at the 3rd RCC meeting in November.
- WSBC 2012 - Allocation and contact of Mentors & 'Green Dots'. We are working on a list of suggested items for the Mentor to speak to the Green Dot about.
- RCC handbook - The Region Chairs have completed their work on a handbook/ manual to assist current and future Region Chairs with their work. However, we will continue to update this as the need arises. We also have our own Website which we post ideas that we share with each other. This is accessible by Region Chairs and Board of Trustee members.
- Region Budget comparisons – this is a summary which compares each regions budget – so that we could help each other see how each region uses its financial resources in the course of spreading the message.
- Service Structure Tent Cards - We discussed the progress on the Region tent cards. – I was happy to report

that R9 looked at this at the 2010 assembly. The tent card is on our R9 website – do translate it and ask the groups to display it on their meeting tables. I will bring examples of the other Regions tent cards to the R9 Assembly in November to show what is happening around the world.

- Mentoring each other as Region Chairs. There are 10 Region Chairs – one from each region. When they come onto the RCC committee (elected as a Region Chair) they are new and need assistance – we do this by each being allocated a mentor. This year 5 of the region chairs will be rotating out and as a result some remaining region chairs will be mentoring more than one new member in the coming year.

RCC Operations Section of the Strategic Plan

The overall goal of all of us in OA is to have plenty of Abstinent Members in our meetings – in order to be able to do this - the ‘Strategic Plan’ for OA was developed a few years ago and has been worked on in segments ever since – by BOT members, RCC members and delegates to the WSBC.

At all levels we are asked in our service bodies –

How does what we are doing help the person in the meeting get well. – Become abstinent.

A Strategic Plan sounds like a very business-like term, - we are not a business but we are ‘in the business of carrying the OA message’ and a Strategic Plan will keep us focused in our journey to help OA to grow and to ensure that we all keep focused on the responsibility pledge:

“When anyone, anywhere reaches out their hand, I want the hand of OA to be there, and for this I am responsible”

The Strategic Plan has four main goals which filter into each service level as well as us individuals and in turn into an Operations Plan – i.e. the section where we actually decide what we are physically going to do & who will be assigned to do it.

You may have seen the OA Bicycle – we all need to bear in mind that the Abstinent member is driving it – the Bicycle rolls on & on. Our HP, The Steps, The Traditions etc. each have a role to play – we in the fellowship all are parties to it and we all have assigned tasks to do – these will mainly be done in committees rather than leaving things to individuals but we each need to take our part in that work – the RCC included.

The joint RCC & BOT meeting discussed and considered the suggestions made by the delegates to the WSBC last April and also came up with some more ideas to further our plans. The ideas from the WSBC delegates were all excellent. We looked at how to implement them and to the practicalities behind them. The tasks now agreed have now been included in an up to date Strategic Plan. A workshop is planned in our R9 Assembly in November to look at this and consider what tasks you would like your service bodies to implement.

R9 Activities - I reported the following regarding our Region to the BOT:-

- R9 board and committee chairs have begun holding meetings via Skype and in the main these are going well and having the affect that we feel more connected and that sometimes business conducted is much simpler than by email – e.g. just before I left for Albuquerque – Karolina – our Secretary, Isabella – our Treasurer and myself held a meeting via Skype and considered the applications for representatives attendance at the R9 Assembly in 2011 in Belgium. We were able to do this much quicker and more efficiently than by email.
- The R9 Assembly in 2011 will have workshops on :-
 - a) Translations
 - b) How to abstain from Compulsive Overeating which will include the new tool Action Plan & Newcomer Meetings Packet.
 - c) Strategic Plan and
 - d) 7th Tradition which will look at R9 Finances as well as OA Inc. and also have a demonstration on translation of the R9 Service Structure Tent Card.

Delegates to future OA World Service Business Conferences – good news – The Materials / Binder will be available electronically ahead of time.

For those members that will represent our region at WSBC in 2012 and on – you will be pleased to note that the Conference materials – i.e. ‘the binder’ will be available electronically before the conference begins. Discussion took place regarding the travel time and jet lag etc. and how it affects our region as well as some of the others that travel a long way and cross time zones. I was delighted with this decision for our region – but it was popular with everyone. Your delegates will now be able to read the binder before the conference and consider any aspects that they feel is important and thus make a more constructive contribution to WSBC.

Details have yet to be worked out as to how this will be administered.

LIFELINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

I need to report to you that the number of subscriptions is once again still going down (10% over the last year). We discussed this and the following is relevant:-

- WSO conducted a survey which considered the reasons for this and in the main – the reasons that were given were that either Lifeline was purchased by the members meeting / other members and then passed around so the member didn't feel the need to subscribe or that it was simply that the member intended to subscribe but had forgotten i.e. procrastination.
- Lifeline continues to run at a large deficit (although this has decreased since the subscription was raised).
- If we as a fellowship want to continue to have Lifeline – then we need to subscribe to it. The number of Lifeline subscriptions that are needed for it to be fully self - supporting is 7800 print subscriptions.
- Consideration is being given for the magazine to go fully electronic as well as apps to be developed.
- Consideration was given to the number of Lifeline reps. Out of 6740 meetings – we have only 244 Lifeline reps! Does your meeting know what a Lifeline rep is and do they have one? If your meeting does not have a Lifeline Rep – please go on the www.oa.org website and download the table top display and information – please ask someone in your meeting to do this valuable service.
- The BOT & RCC agreed that we should reach for the best possible scenario – i.e. that ALL Service Bodies have a Lifeline Rep and that ALL OA Board of Trustee Members & Region Chairs also be a Lifeline Rep. – Watch this space!
- All a Lifeline rep needs to do is speak enthusiastically about Lifeline and how it has enhanced their recovery.
- Whilst our region is challenged by the fact that for a large part of it speaks other languages than English and Lifeline thus needs translating for them – we do have a lot of English speakers.
- Some questions you could perhaps take in group conscience :-
- A) If I am an OA member and I read Lifeline and yet do not subscribe to it (if I can afford it) – then I am being fully self- supporting (Tradition 7)?
- B) Do you write articles for Lifeline?
- C) Do you ask your Sponsees to subscribe?
- D) Has your service body considered buying an extra subscription and then donating it to a doctor's surgery (Step 12 & Tradition 5)?
- E) Do you circulate the Weekly Email version that we forward on to you?
- F) If you are one of the procrastinators on subscription - why not sign up for yourself now or a friend?
- G) If your service body is translating Lifeline and then circulating it – is there a way for your readers to pay some contribution towards Lifeline support? Should we be suggesting to these service bodies that they collect some funds for such readership and send them to the R9 banker? Perhaps we should set up a line item of income which is matched by a line item of expenditure in our R9 budget? All funds received into the R9 funds from Lifeline income (i.e. translated versions) would be shown as a separate line item of income and matched by an expenditure line and thus be paid to WSO specifically towards Lifeline.
Perhaps our Finance Committee could consider this in November?

Misc.:-

R8 Assembly in Colombia As you are aware – the 3rd meeting of the RCC Committee is being held in Colombia this year in South America. This is part of Region 8 and the main language is Spanish. I will attend on your behalf. In the past R8 have always held their assemblies in the 'Florida' part of their region – which is English speaking and in the very Southern tip of the Northern United States continent.

The decision was made to hold their assembly this time in Colombia in order to be more inclusive in carrying the OA message in that region. Doing so has raised some difficulties with regard to language and finances.

The R8 Chair raised awareness of these difficulties and discussions took place as to whether our regions needed to be re-aligned or somehow allocated differently. Various suggestions and discussions took place.

No doubt the discussions will continue until we find an acceptable solution.

While I am attending the R8 assembly I will be speaking to the representatives and will cover as much as I can of a workshop on translations. Esti (our R9 Trustee) & I discussed the sorts of things I should include and I will also check this with the R8 Board. I will let you know how things went when I see you in November.

OA.Org Website

WSO staff are working on translation of the website into French. A volunteer from Canada is assisting with this and the BOT & WSO were hoping to get a further volunteer from France – however as yet this post has not been filled. Do you have a possible volunteer amongst your service body or group?

Translation of part of the Tools pamphlet

Work has started on translation into French.

Electronic versions of our OA Literature.

Sales in kindle format of some of our books are going well. We have sold 1464 of our daily reader 'For Today' and 1928 of our book OA 12 Steps & 12 Traditions.

WSBC – 1yr abstinence requirement –

In my report to you from WSBC I explained that it was reported to the RCC / BOT that the 1 year abstinence requirement was not being adhered to. Concern was expressed that some members are not being honest about their abstinence when registering and attending WSBC. This necessitated a change to the Standing rules for WSBC to take account of this.

Amendment to Standing Rules. To the effect :- *'Delegates are expected to abstain from voting on any WSBC motions if they do not at time of voting have the 1 year abstinence requirement unless a delegate has received permission for an exception in qualifications as per OA Inc. Bylaws sub part B Art X Section 3 C1'*.

Please raise this point with your delegates and the officer of your service body that will sign the registration form for the delegate.

WSBC Committees

The ideal scenario is to have representation from all regions on each of the committees and a balanced number on each committee.

If you are attending WSBC in 2012 (and in the future) please sign up ahead of time for a committee and please try to ask your service body and yourself to be flexible in the circumstances where some committees are over - subscribed and others lacking in numbers and representation from our region. It is important that R9 takes part in the full group conscience of OA and where possible we have representation on each of the WSBC Committees.

Financial Matters to report to you

Contributions etc. Down. In the first six months of this financial year (Jan – Jun):-

Contributions from the fellowship are down by 9%

Sales of Literature are down by 7.5% and

Lifeline subscriptions are down by 10%.

This is somewhat different than the picture that I reported back to you after WSBC which looked at the finances for the last complete financial year to 31 Dec 2010. Contributions etc. may pick up in the second half of the year - sometimes it is difficult to predict a pattern.

Delegate Support Fund operated by WSO.

In 2010 the fund was \$10000 and all of these funds were allocated and spent on supporting service bodies attending WSBC.

Last year we had 19 applications totalling over \$18000.

Currently we only have just over \$4000 in the fund to allocate.

R9 contribution to WSBC. In the past any contribution that was passed onto OA Inc. from R9 was done as a general contribution to the general funds – not into any specific fund such as this one. Should we be adding another line item to our budget for this?

R9 members have had support from this fund many times.

I will ask the Finance Committee and R9 reps to discuss this at our assembly in November.

Once again it was a full and packed few days for all present.

I am now in my second term and fourth year as Region Chair – the job gets more familiar as time goes by.

I thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to trying to help implement the tasks agreed.

A little something to share with you:-

On my return flight from Albuquerque a lady sat beside me who took up part of my seat.

My initial reaction was how to introduce the reason for my visit to Albuquerque. However, the lady was not inclined to chat!

I thought for a little while and considered starting to work on my report to you. So I took out my papers hoping that the agenda or something would have the name 'Overeaters Anonymous' wrote on it. I did not have any OA cards on me! (Memo to self!).

The only thing I could find was the wonderful coloured flyer produced by R8 for their assembly in Colombia! So I began writing my notes and made sure the flyer was sitting on the top of my pile the whole time. I also wriggled and moved the flyer several times. I hope she saw it!

I was / am grateful for:-

My abstinence, OA, my size, the fact that I wasn't resentful that she was occupying part of my seat – and of course for that lovely flyer!

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Kind Regards –

Stella

Stella C (Region 9 Chair)