

The OA Region 9

NEWSLETTER

An Amazing Assembly and a Cool Convention!



The 2011 Region 9 Assembly & Convention took place in Belgium, on November 23 – 27. The theme was "I Put My Hand in Yours".

The 25 representatives from Region 9 came from: England, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Hungary, Israel, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Iceland, France, South Africa, and Belgium.

Also present were the Region 9 Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Region 9 Trustee, and Parliamentarian.

We had more representatives than usual due to last year's representatives contacting countries who weren't present (twelfth-step-within work!).

Many visitors from Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, France, and Switzerland attended the 3 day assembly. Even non-English speakers were present (the assembly is held in English).

We talked about some of the most important things in OA - becoming/keeping abstinent, giving service, and sponsorship. Strategic Plan - we spoke about Strong Meetings: sponsorship, abstinence, steps & traditions. With Committed Service Bodies, we discussed: finance, website, and translation.

We had several workshops, including the topics of Seventh Tradition (a very funny skit); Translations (extremely informative); Action Plan (interesting); and How to Abstain from Compulsive Overeating One Day at a Time (involved group participation).

Some of the things to do to remain/ become abstinent: surrender, listen, action, step work, traditions, tools, sponsorship, repetition, Higher Power. To make our meeting a school for abstinence: personal example, positive abstinent sharing,

In this Issue

November 2011 saw the annual Region 9 Assembly and Convention, hosted by the Flemish Service Board of Belgium.

This issue of the Newsletter contains articles written by attendants at the Assembly and Convention, where they share their experience of this fantastic event.

There are also reminders of key dates in the Region 9 Calendar, some tips and other content designed to help spread the message of recovery to those throughout the Region.

Feedback is always welcome, so if you have any thoughts or articles for inclusion in future issues, please email Patrick, the Region 9 Secretary, at secretary@oaregion9.org

-The Editorial Team-

 **OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS.**
Region 9



*Embrace the Similarities
Love the Differences
In all our Affairs*

importance of abstinence. The difference between a plan of eating and abstinence: one is a tool and one is what you get.

This past year, Region 9 donations to World Service have increased, but – we are way below the average. We need to increase our 7th Tradition as a region so that we are "self supporting".

We were also reminded of the tent cards (in the OA Region 9 website). We discussed Lifeline – the OA magazine, and the idea of every country in Region 9 to subscribe, translate, and donate back to OA for this wonderful piece of literature. Also, the suggested meeting format on the website has been updated – we need to update our translation of the format in our country.

We voted on Motions concerning word clarification; adding Virtual Service Bodies to the context; regarding visitors to the Region 9 Assembly; adopting into the Region 9 Policies & Procedures Manual "Overeaters Anonymous Region 9 – Assembly Procedures and Suggestions"; complying with WSBC motions (definition of a group...); and for each Region 9 representative to have a minimum of 6 consecutive months of current abstinence.

One motion was defeated – anonymity on the website to be the sole responsibility of that service body presenting Region 9 material. One emergency business motion was passed – Region 9 Translation Loan to become a Translation Fund.

We voted on Region 9 service positions: Region 9 Chair – Susan/ Israel; Secretary – Patrick/England; Treasurer – Isabella/Sweden; and the Trustee was endorsed by R9 – Esti/Israel. We also voted on committee chairs. Worked in committees (Translation, Bylaws, Public Information, Twelfth-Step-Within, Electronic Communications, and Finance).

With the translation committee, they're suggesting that each country translate, at least, 1 piece

of literature per year. Public information committee is suggesting that each country hold a professional health fair.

Twelfth-step-within committee reminded everyone that a Region 9 English speaking sponsor list was started and active.

We had OA meetings on Sponsorship, Literature, and Service.

Voted - the Region 9 Assembly and Convention will take place in 2012: Poland, and in 2013: Israel.

During the assembly, we accomplished a lot, and worked together in such a loving, serene way. Really beautiful.

The assembly was followed by the convention. We had speakers and workshops on the Promises; For Today; First Aid – Newcomers; Plan of Action; I Love Me; Humor in OA; and Sexuality & Steps 6 – 7.

Overall, it was a very productive and enriching assembly and convention, with a lot of sharing and interaction.

Hope to see you all at Region 9 Assembly & Convention next year in Poland!

-Susan, Region 9 Chair

Step, Tradition and Concept for January

Step I

We admitted we were powerless over food - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition I

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OA unity.

Concept I

The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.



I Have Been So Happy For This Service!!



Hi, I'm Giovanna compulsive overeater from Italy.

In November I had the privilege to represent Italy at Region 9 assembly in Vaalbeek (Belgium). I was a green dot, because that was

my first Assembly as a delegate. I was quite frightened by this service, I had many concerns. First of all my English is not perfect and I had the fear not to be capable to do this service.

I was concerned by the great commitment I would have had as well.

I'm the treasurer of the NSB in Italy, we haven't a delegate to Region 9, but I feel responsible toward the fellowship and I thought it could be very important to go to Belgium although the big commitment.

And I have been so happy for this service!!

The feelings I experienced were so great! I met a lot of abstinent, grateful and committed in service people. I saw the steps principles in every person I met. They were so kind, lovely and serene and we worked very

good together. We were very committed, it also was exhausting but we were so happy to work for the fellowship and to give back what we received.

I learned a lot of new things about OA in the world. The most important is that unity helps our recovery!

Also the convention has been very useful and interesting and I enjoyed it very much. The meetings were well structured, the topics very good for my recovery and I learned a lot about humor.

Everything was so rewarding and I'm really grateful for what I brought back home: serenity, peace of mind, the love I received from everybody. Most important for me was to discover that there were many people I had never met and we became so much friend and we felt so comfortable together! We shared the same disease and the same feelings.

I think I received much more than what I have given!

Many thanks to the people that have made the Assembly and convention possible with their work.

Best wishes to everybody,

-Giovanna

Through Love We Can Recover



I am so grateful to my intergroup for giving me this opportunity to give this amazing service.

It was just incredible to be in a room with strong recovery all for the same purpose and the fact that we are from all over region 9 was also incredible.

There were representatives from Israel, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Hungary, Italy, Spain, France, Netherlands, Belgium, South Africa, Poland and the UK. It was really amazing to see so many people.

There were also many visitors who didn't understand english but were there and absorbing the evident recovery. The highlight for me was saying the serenity in so many different languages. I found it overwhelming and as some service to Region 9 I have recorded people saying the serenity prayer in their mother language. I will be making a

podcast for download on region 9 website.

The business was interspersed with some workshops and committee meetings. I was on the 12 step within Committee which is very dear to me having been a suffering compulsive eater inside the rooms and each committee is working on a project between now and the next assembly.

We voted on some bylaw amendments and other business. Although there were people with strong personalities we remembered the principles first.

The end of the business meeting saw each person given a glow bracelet which we all joined together and turned off the lights and just saw a circle of connecting lights and ended with the serenity prayer in English.

The Belgium convention started on Friday evening.

It started with a God box and we all wrote a letter to God. The whole thing was done in 3 languages French Dutch and English. This was then

Followed by lighting of candles where people shared what they wanted the candle to represent. It was a variety of things from the still Coe to family friends in OA and people who have died as a result of this illness. This was very powerful and moving.

We ended the opening with "I put my hand in yours" said around the room followed by serenity prayer in 21 languages.

The weekend was amazing with various workshops and meetings and just general fellowship. The closing ceremony was people sharing how they felt after the weekend and what they were taking back with them, each person then picked a stone which had a message on it. Mine was love and for me that was the theme of the weekend.

Through Love we can recover.....OA loved me till I could love myself.

I am very blessed to be an abstinent member of Overeaters Anonymous.

-Jakki

Strangers from Different Countries Became Friends



I left for Region 9 on my own but arrived at the Assembly venue in Belgium with 7 other delegates, all with the same aim, to serve our Intergroups/Service Boards to the best of our ability. Scary but exciting!

The assembly was held in a very large beautiful old Monastery set in quiet woodland, in which many of us enjoyed taking walks when we needed some 'quiet time'.

This was my 3rd Region 9, although there had been a gap of 4 years and I was still feeling a little nervous but as soon as we went into our first meeting, I saw a few familiar faces and I felt immediately at home and those 4 years disappeared.

I was mentoring two first timers, one of whom had never been to an OA business meeting before and I sat between them during the actual business session. It felt such an honour to be guiding her through the procedure, and she has become another OA friend.

On the Wednesday evening we had our first meeting when we met the Region 9 Board and other delegates, with 16 countries represented and 25 voting members. There were introductions and brief shares from each delegate, when we had the opportunity of sharing any concerns, problems, possible solutions and triumphs of the service bodies we were representing. The Chair Stella gave a general overview of the processes of the Assembly and general preparation for the business to come. There was plenty of time for questions if anyone could not fully understand, sometimes through language difficulties, when the Chair patiently explained until the person understood. There was also a 7th Tradition Workshop and time for everyone to get to know each other.

The actual business took place on the Thursday and Friday interspersed with really enjoyable and informative Workshops and we all joined Committees

such as Finance, P.I., Communications etc. I joined the Bylaws Committee, where we went through the proposals and by-law changes to be voted on during the National Assembly and it will be our responsibility to bring the Region 9 bylaws up to date following the decisions made at the Assembly. Joining the Committees feels quite daunting but as is the OA way, members patiently help each other to understand.

Once again, it felt such an honour to be at Region 9 representing my Service Board and voting on their behalf. There were many opinions and votes didn't always go the way we wanted but everyone accepted the Group Conscience with the usual OA grace.

Each session started and finished with the Serenity Prayer in a different language before being said in English, which was very moving. Somehow, over the

days the strangers from different countries became friends, with warm hugs and you could almost feel the warmth in the room when we stood to hold hands. It was powerful and at times very emotional.

I stayed for the Convention which followed the business section and really enjoyed the Workshops and shares. The opening ceremony with around 80 to 100 members, sitting in seats all around the edges of an enormous beautiful meeting room with each of us lighting a candle from the person

sitting next to us, was magical and a memory which will stay with me forever. It didn't matter that we could not always communicate verbally, sign language and hugs worked!!

It was the most wonderful experience. I travelled home tired but buzzing and full of inspiration, feeling humble that I had been given this opportunity to give service but also to gain so much for my own recovery.

-Pam-



Reach Out!

If you have friends from any Countries that did not send a representative to Assembly and Convention this year, make contact with them. Forward this newsletter to them. Who knows, your effort to make contact might be all they need to come next year!

I Was Amazed and Inspired



12 June 2011, my birthday, was unknowingly made extra special and really memorable by Intergroup, as they announced that I have been chosen to represent my country at the Region 9 assembly.

I was extremely excited, happy and a bit anxious especially after receiving the material (files). I did not understand much, but I just decided to surrender and leave it to my HP.

Two days prior to the assembly was when the nervousness really set in, especially with regard to the 12 hour long aeroplane trip, that I was undertaking alone, to an unknown country, leaving behind the warmth and sunshine, in exchange for the cold freezing climate, that I am unaccustomed to.

It was my first time attending the convention. I was amazed and inspired with the dedication of the fellow OA members engaged in service for the upliftment of OA.

I benefitted tremendously from attending the workshops at the convention. It was interesting to meet such a diverse amount of people, with different backgrounds and cultures yet we were all the same with regards to our disease.

This has been an enlightening and memorable experience of growth love and support that I required in order to remain strong, steadfast and more motivated, on my road and journey of recovery.

I am very grateful to my H.P and to all those who made it possible, including myself for taking the action needed to make this happen. I am forever indebted to thee.

Your humble servant,

- *Firhana*
South Africa

Step/Tradition Study Meetings

Establishing a Step and Tradition Study Meeting is a great way of deepening our experience of the Program. A format can be downloaded from:

www.oa.org/services-for-members/group-support.php

Sponsors

Do you encourage your sponsees to sponsor and take on service positions?

What is Region 9?

Region 9 is one of OA's 10 Regions.

It is composed of countries and territories in Africa, Europe, Middle East and Western Asia. The area of Region 9 covers over 70 million sq. Km and over 100 different countries.

756 OA groups are active in 43 nations.

- In 11 countries there is only one group,
- In 14 countries there are 2 to 4 groups,
- In 10 countries there are 5 to 20 groups,
- In 5 countries there are 21 to 100 groups,
- In 3 countries there are over 100 groups.

Contribute Articles to Your Newsletter

This newsletter can only be created through the editorial contributions from members of the fellowship throughout the Region.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in early March 2012. It will include a Personal Share, Tips, Reminders, Articles from Committees, and lots of other stories to aid your recovery.

Please send your contributions to Patrick at secretary@oaregion9.org by:

Sunday, 19th February
2012



Take Notice of Religious Holidays When Planning Events

It is a good idea to check that the dates of your proposed Event do not conflict with any Religious Holidays - some members may not be able to attend, and you do not want to limit your chance to spread the message of recovery!

Views from R9 Convention 2011 – 'I Put My Hand in Yours'

About 50 of us – at least 21 nationalities gathered together and were welcomed in an opening meeting of all the attendants – we sat in a big circle around a display of lighted candles.

We wrote a letter to our HP – leaving any problems etc. with our HP so we could be fully engaged in the weekend. A box was passed round and our letters 'posted'. We each then lit a candle of our own and one by one went around the room and offered our thoughts to the gathering of why we lit our candle.

It was a wonderfully moving and peaceful session that 'set us up' for a great weekend of recovery and fun. We were all given a tiny notebook to carry with us to each meeting to write notes – great to take away gems we had heard at each meeting and 're-live' our memories after we went home.

Over the next couple of days we were treated to sessions on:

- The Promises
- For Today
- First Aid for Newcomers
- A Workshop on A Plan of Action
- A Workshop on 'I Love me'
- Humour in OA
- Sexuality Steps 6 & 7

There was even plenty of time for meditation and walks together in the lovely woodland around and about the peaceful place we stayed. I will share from a couple of the sessions that I especially enjoyed:

For Today

- Being abstinent is the most important thing in my life.
- Live in the day, - not the doom and gloom of the past or - the fantasies of the future.
- I need that '1/2 Hour all by myself' (in addition to my QT in the morning and evening) - everyday.
- 'When I come home from work in an evening – I just throw off

my jacket & sit down for a while with my HP'.

- As I give to the world – so the world will give to me.
- Every day – going to work is like my first day – as a result of OA I don't have to look for enthusiasm – it just happens.
- Don't 'cuddle' the resentment.
- Need to ask myself each morning 'What is my purpose today?'



- Take the 'Just For Today' card – cut it up into small sections and put them into a box – take out three items each morning at random and try to focus on these – Just for Today.
- If you sit down long enough – God will be able to speak to you.
- Gratitude for the quiet & peace I feel today.
- Just for Today – I choose to speak to my HP and work my program.

First Aid for Newcomers

We were given four simple questions and after thinking and writing for a while – we shared on them.

1. What did you expect at your first OA meeting?
2. What is your main memory or feeling from your first OA meeting?
3. What did you find the hardest about your first OA meeting?
4. What was the best thing that happened at your first OA meeting?

Other small things to share with you

- Self-Seeking – seeking approval from others, seeking appreciation, seeking praise. Doing things for the wrong reasons – to be seen as 'good', to be seen as the best, to be seen as 'in the higher echelons'.
- Trust God, Clean House, And Help Others.
- Pray before my meal, concentrate and focus on my food, thank God for an abstinent meal and my food.
- List The Promises and ask yourself – do you feel them.
- I am enough, I do enough, I have enough
- Sing as if no one is listening; Dance as if no one is watching.

The Convention closed at Sunday lunch time with a gathering of everyone all together.

We once again lit our candles and shared how we had enjoyed our weekend and what emotions we were taking away with us.

It was truly wonderful. If you want to enhance your OA recovery – a Region 9 Convention is the place to do it!

Huge Hug & thank you to my HP, OA and the OA R9 Belgium Convention organising committee – it was great.

- ☺ ☺ XX Anonymous.

Message from the Region 9 Treasurer

Dear OA Fellows,

We had a great Region 9 Assembly and Convention in Belgium, a big thanks to the organizing committee - we were taken care of very well.

During the assembly I have been re-elected as your treasurer and I'm happy to serve the Fellowship for another year. I'm also very excited to work with our new R9 secretary, Patrick, and our new R9 chair, Susan.

At this point, I'd like to thank our former secretary, Karolina, and our former chair, Stella, for their service - it has been wonderful to be on the R9 board with you!

Our banker is still Alison from the UK and we have a new cheque signatory, Pam, also from the UK.

Since our new chair does not live in the UK (where our bank is) we needed an additional person, besides Alison, to sign the cheques. Thank you, Pam, for being willing to do this.

By "opening up" service positions like that, we can encourage all qualified OA members to apply, regardless of where they might live.

During the assembly meetings (business meetings and OA meetings) we collected a 7th Tradition of 386 €.

4 countries received delegate assistance this year: Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and South Africa. It is truly great that we have the possibility to fund delegates - I would like to encourage you to start thinking about sending a delegate to our next assembly in Poland. You'll find information regarding delegate assistance funding

on the R9 website and you'll receive further information during 2012.

I'd like to say thank you to Italy and Iceland for the financial contributions they brought to the assembly.

We had interesting workshops this year; the one on Tradition 7 started out with the "7th Tradition Skit". You can find various skits on the WSO website: <http://www.oa.org/docs.php>. They are great to use during conventions or IG/NSB meetings.

The workshop focused on the importance of being clear and open with a groups's finances and on various things the group/the OA member can do to increase the 7th tradition.

Here are some of the suggestions:

- Use the 7th tradition tent cards at every meeting.
- Suggest a certain amount that ought to be in the basket after every meeting.
- Continuously clarify where the money goes.
- Talk about the importance of sending a representative to IG/NSB meetings
- Have a gratitude week at your meeting where you suggest to put the cost of your last binge in the basket.

Love in Fellowship,

- Isabella
R9 Treasurer

Message from the Region 9 Secretary

I had a wonderful experience attending my first Region 9 Assembly and Convention.

Little did I expect that I would end up being elected as Secretary!

I would like to thank Karolina, the outgoing Secretary, for her outstanding service to the Region over the last two years.

I am especially grateful that she will still be serving the Region as the Chair of the Electronic Communications Committee - so I will still be able to ask her questions when I get stuck!

Being Secretary is a lovely position - as most of the Region communication goes through the Secretary, I get daily contact from

fellows from all over Region 9. It is a joy and a privilege to be able to see the wide-reaching effect this amazing fellowship has on people all around the world.

What does the Secretary do?

The Region 9 Secretary serves a central point of communication throughout the Region - this includes:

- Circulating information that comes to the Region 9 office from inside and outside Region 9

The role also includes:

- Sending out an announcement and deadlines for Translation Assistance Fund

- Sending out the Announcement and Invitation to Assembly
- Collating and Preparing Assembly materials
- Taking and circulating Minutes of the Assembly
- Preparing and circulating the Region 9 Newsletter

It is my role to help you all, so please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or issues throughout the year!

You can contact me at secretary@oaregion9.org

-Patrick
Region 9 Secretary

Tastes of Recovery Beyond my Expectations



The 2011
OA Region
9 Assembly
that was
held in
Belgium in
November

was my first international OA
experience.

In spite of my hesitations due to my limited knowledge of the English language, I finally accepted the challenge to participate as representative of the NSB of Greece (the second one in 28 years), thinking that this new opportunity for service was a gift for my 10th year in OA.

What I was originally expecting were two days of business meetings (focusing on the improvement of guidelines for carrying the OA message) that someone was ought to do.

What I finally found was: two wonderful days of practice of the OA principles of the 12 steps, traditions and concepts, in a unique climate of recovery, mutual respect, love and support, emerging from every attitude and action, that everyone would like to live.

Even before the Assembly, different familiarizing actions like: over than 200 pages of assembly materials (reports, motions, amendments, bylaws, minutes, newsletters), sent by mail

a project of pairs of new and experienced attendants (called mentors and green dots) some clear and friendly information and guidelines and immediate answers to all of my questions (by the organizing committee, the board and the last year Greek representative) had lessened the stress (for the foreign language and the new rep tasks) and gave me a feeling of not being alone.

During the Assembly, the feeling of being with friends who care and work for a common purpose became stronger by: a warm welcome and an ice breaker,

many clarifications about the assembly procedures, given with humor and illustrations familiar recovery meetings and creative workshops between the business sessions, the Serenity prayer in 21 languages the interest and respect for everyone's concerns and ideas

What I brought home after the Assembly:

- A much better understanding of the service in the OA Region 9 of carrying the Recovery message
- The names of the new board officers and committees chairs who will help us this year
- The place and month of the next Assembly: Poland in October 2012

- The decisions about new wording of some articles in the bylaws and the new budget
- My commitment for a new, all year, project of the 12th step within committee
- Some new OA literature for translation
- Many useful ideas about stronger meetings, workshops, translations, 7th tradition, abstinence

Last but not least I would also like to mention:

- My contacts with many new OA abstinent friends (from Scandinavia to South Africa and from the Atlantic to the Middle East) with interesting practice of the program.
- My valuable experience of the most spiritual, tolerant, peaceful and democratic business meeting I have ever been
- My hope to come back next year with many Greek OA abstinent friends

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to the organizers of the region 9, the Flemish Intergroup (who hosted this event and organized an inspiring Convention afterwards) and the Greek NSB who decided to send a delegate to the assembly.

- Vassiliki T

Translation Fund Applications Due February 1

Did you know in 2011 the International Publications/Translations Committee approved more than \$14,000 US in financial assistance for service bodies translating OA literature?

The committee reviews applications and allocates funds at the Board of Trustees meetings in February and August.

The application deadline for the February meeting is February 1, 2012.

To obtain a copy of the Translation Fund Application, go to www.oa.org/pdfs/translation_fund_application.pdf

From our Trustee's Desk

Our Region 9 annual assembly is always a great experience for me. The venue of the Assembly is always a surprise as every year we meet in a different country and a different location. This time it was in La Foresta in Belgium. It was located in a forest and although it was not that far from the capital of Belgium it felt quite remote.

I always look forward to meet my old friends from the Region as well as to get to know new representatives and become their friends. I am sad to realize that many countries do not send representatives to our Assembly and I would like to encourage them to do send a representative, who will bring back a message of recovery and hope to the fellowship in your country and will enrich us with what is done and accomplished by you.

We had a very successful Assembly. We accomplished a lot. Everything was done quietly, respectfully and matter of fact. There were not ego or personality issues. The elections went through smoothly, we discussed the motions in a matter of fact way and took votes to decide.

It was sad to say goodbye to our Region Chair Stella to whom we have to give credit for what has been done in the Region for the last 4 years, for the conduct of this Assembly (it shouldn't be taken for granted, it takes a lot of work and experience to conduct it in such a marvelous way. Thank you Stella).

We welcome our new elected Chair Susan who is already taking the service very seriously and wish her a wonderful time



in this service.

We also welcome our new secretary Patrick and all other board members and representatives who are doing service for the Region.

As the Region Trustee will be proud to report to the Board of Trustees about our Assembly and I encourage you to contact me whenever you have any question concerning the OA program.

Love in service

Esti

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Important Dates

January 10th, 2012

WSBC Mailing #2, including Agenda Questionnaire

April 24th, 2012

Notification of Region 9 Assembly sent out by Secretary - including Application Forms for Delegate Assistance

April 30 - May 5, 2012

World Service Business Conference, Albuquerque

June 24th, 2012

Applications for Delegate Assistance to be returned to Secretary

August 24th, 2012

Assembly Agenda and Materials Mailing

October 24th-28th, 2012

Region 9 Assembly and Convention, Poland

HOLDERS OF REGION 9 SERVICE POSITIONS

Board

Trustee - Esti (Israel)

Chair - Susan (Israel)

Secretary - Patrick (UK)

Treasurer - Isabella (Sweden)

Committee Chairs

Translations - Irenne (Denmark)

Twelfth Step Within - Mette (Denmark)

Public Information - Siobhan (Ireland)

Bylaws - Joanna (UK)

Electronic Communications - Karolina (Sweden)

Other Positions

Banker - Alison (UK)