Impressions of Region 9 Assembly

I've only been in OA since March 2017, however after attending the OAGB Assembly in 2017 and being an Intergroup representative for my home meeting, I knew how much knowledge, experience, strength and hope there is in the room, it would not be option not to go.

However, before the Region 9 Assembly, I was mentally exhausted and over worked from my day job and really didn’t want to go to the Assembly - I seriously thought about not attending and going home to sleep. These were my thoughts on the eve of the Assembly. However, I had faith and knew my HP wanted me there.

The Region 9 Assembly was simply awesome. Anyone who is serious about recovery needs to attend these Assembly’s. There are no words that can describe the experience of being surrounded by so much fellowship, love, care, humility and passion of OA and recovery. It would be like trying to describe the feeling of watching your favorite sports team at a national stadium winning the cup or the emotion of a powerful Broadway play.

The experience, strength and hope was more than I could have ever dreamed of. Meeting so many fellows from around Region 9 and gaining an insight into the unique challenges they have with things such translations. The love, fun and fellowship in the room was extraordinary.

The conversations that took place outside of the meetings were equally incredible. Listening to people sharing not in their mother tongue was extremely humbling. Hearing the Serenity Prayer in Hebrew, Icelandic, Swedish, Welsh, Afrikaans and many more was deeply spiritual.

For me, the essence was building bridges and fellowship across borders and languages and understanding that we all have a commonality, a common purpose - this disease. This illness is not confined to one village, town or city, it is a global disease and Region 9 strives to reach everyone, no matter what country, language or religion.

Learning more about OA and the importance of service, at any level, was so clear to me. If we don't give service, whatever service that is, there is no fellowship, there is no recovery. There is no OA.

I feel extremely humbled to have been part of such an incredible two and a half days and I felt so incredibly grateful to be there. Being there gave me renewed strength and focus.

Yours in fellowship
Darren
London Region 9 Assembly

When I heard that the Region 9 Assembly was being hosted in the UK, where I live, I was wildly excited. The opportunity to meet so many compulsive overeaters from around the world and to see how this level of Overeaters Anonymous worked was irresistible. I had an image in my head of a mini United Nations of compulsive overeaters coming together to celebrate recovery and to further the work of our fellowship carrying the message across so many countries.

The reality was on a smaller scale than in my romantic imaginings. But it was apparent that those who were in attendance had a passion for recovery and a commitment to share this. I also experienced in that room the same fellowship and unconditional love and acceptance that I've found in every single OA meeting I've ever walked into.

I was nervous going in, but it was great, as a first-time delegate to have an assigned mentor on hand to answer my questions. I was very fortunate that everyone in the room could speak English to a lesser or greater extent because that is the only language that I can speak. But it didn't matter that in some instances we struggled a little to communicate, it didn't matter where we were from, how we looked, how we dressed, how we spoke. All that mattered, what bonded us, was that we were compulsive overeaters, in recovery, with a job to do, to help carry the message to those suffering compulsive eater, where ever they might be in this vast Region 9.

My eyes were opened. I take for granted the enormous amount of OA literature available to me in English, that I can read at any time. I take for granted that there will be meetings in my home town. I take for granted that I have a phone signal that enables me to call my sponsor and other fellows in recovery, even that I have a sponsor, that I have a phone, that I have fellows that I can see and talk to on a regular basis. And even if I can't physically get to a meeting, I still have the internet so I can take part in WhatsApp meetings. I have everything I need, and more, at my disposal to work this programme. I'm now aware that I'm one of the lucky, privileged few.

At the Assembly, I heard about countries that have very little of our literature. I heard about the difficulty in finding translators for certain languages. I heard that the still suffering compulsive overeater can be isolated, even in Europe. Elsewhere they may have little or no resources to even search for the solution on offer.

The message is there, but there are so many people that it doesn't yet reach. Thankfully I also heard experience, strength and hope in the room. In just that single room of less than 30 delegates there was almost 300 years of abstinence. I heard how our WhatsApp meetings have 1000 members from across the world, not just from Region 9. I heard a desire to not just encourage and strengthen our existing meetings but also the hope that more work can be done to further carry the message to those that have so few resources.

And so, I'm grateful to my Intergroup for electing me to represent them at the Assembly, for the delegate assistance from Region 9 that helped to cover the cost of my attendance and also for the opportunity to now serve the Assembly in this vital work over the next two years.

With love in fellowship
Bea
Devon and Cornwall Intergroup
Why attend a Region 9 Assembly?

A story of Connection and Recovery

When I found OA, 16 years ago, in 2002, both Region 9 and OA in Greece were already 20 years old. But my group didn't have any connection with them. It was a small meeting per week, in its first -five years old-steps, with poor attendance and abstinence and strong feelings of uniqueness and separation, which were maintained by language barriers and concerns like “I am in OA only for losing weight. Why should I be interested in OA's beyond my group, my area, my country? Administration and bureaucracy issues are not for me. I am not ambitious.”

Live contacts with R9, through R9 trustees and/or officers visiting our city or country and our representatives attending R9 assemblies, have been two catalysts who changed this situation and opened a new recovery road for my group and for me.

During ten visits (nine real and one virtual) in nineteen years, from 1999 until 2018, the R9 trusted servants (Hulda, Kathleen, Esti, Stella, Susan and Bob) not only
- explained us the meaning of three fold recovery,
- guided us through the OA principles in the OA 12&12
- presented us the reversed pyramid of OA service structure,
- offered us workshops concerning the traditions, the concepts and the sponsorship
- presented us different resources and ways for carrying the message (after the third visit in 2007 we created the first OA website in Greek)
- helped us to connect with OA’s in Athens and establish the Greek NSB in 2008
- but also
- they offered us inspiring examples of amazing serenity and recovery, in all our common moments: when eating, speaking, sharing, choosing public transports, buying food or presents, resolving moments of tension.

- We wanted what they had! We became willing to do what they were doing.

After the fourth trustee's visit, at least one Greek representative attended each R9 assembly from 2010 until 2018 and after the seventh trustee's visit we found the courage to host a R9 assembly and convention in Greece in 2014. Members from my group in Thessaloniki attended R9, five times, in 2011, 12,13,14 and 2018. Through these connections
- We learned new ways for conducting OA business and meetings.
- We discovered new approaches for working the 12 steps and practicing the OA principles in all our affairs
- We began to feel “we” and not “they and we” for OA's beyond our place and found the courage to ask for help when needed.
- In Thessaloniki there are now eight groups per week, including the first OA group for men in Greece.
- We experienced many actions to carry the message in media, public libraries, hospitals
- We created our local Thessaloniki intergroup in 2017
- We limited language and distance barriers: We found the courage to send a delegate at WSBC in 2017 and 2018. We experienced ways for including non greek speaking OA’s visitors in our meetings. We experienced hybrid mixed meetings (land based and telephone).

My personal recovery itinerary is similar to my group's openness and connection itinerary. After a few weeks of isolation at my meeting (focusing to my “weight problem”) I became happy discovering OA as a whole and OA solutions, beyond my group, through the oa.org, translation service and connections. In six months I lost 20 kilos and maintained healthy weight more than fifteen years, with enthusiastic service at the local and national level.

The 36th R9 assembly in London was my fourth R9 assembly (three as representative of greek service bodies and one as observer) and my sixth international attendance (I was two times delegate at WSBC). Serving at the international level has been a demanding but rewarding experience for me.

Facing personal -distance, language, culture, technology, health, age-challenges and being open to other people’s approaches, enhances my abstinence and recovery, allows me to leave out my comfort zones and makes me more creative about my eating and my live.

Participating in international OA activities, with wonderful abstinent OA fellows, gives me the same emotion and feelings of gratitude that I have when I admire an international scientific project or an international orchestra, where excellent soloists bring together their particular abilities creating harmony for their common purpose.

Thank you, OA for the new music in my life!

Vasiliki
Thessaloniki
IG Greece Representative
Dear members of OA

My participation in the Region 9 Assembly has been a very useful experience for me. By this I mean that watching over 20 delegates deal with business, with incredible peace and tranquility, that was so important for our Fellowship issues, made me realize:

1. How big a role has been played by abstinence, not only in physical recovery but also in the emotional and mental state.
2. In particular, how democratically the different opinions are expressed in order to move motions through to amendments.
3. How important is the participation of each and every one of us for better and effective representation in the ASSEMBLY.
4. How wonderful it is to feel a member of a multinational delegation listening, watching and sharing Hope with members from all over the WORLD.

5. How important the moments we shared are, either by dining together or by participating in groups of committees or regular sharing groups.

In conclusion, this service of representing my country of Greece in the Region 9 Assembly, was a living example of recovery and strengthening of the ties of all the members and the countries that make up the Region. Therefore, I would strongly suggest to each member to seek this very useful experience by applying for service positions at whatever level they wish.

Gratefully yours

Dimitris B
Rep9 OA of Greece

I am Emilia and I am a compulsive overeater.

Last September 2018, I took part in the 37th Assembly of Region 9 held in London. It was my first time, and I was a green dot (newcomer) and before entering that room, I was very anxious because I did not know what could have happened and if I would be able to represent my country. However, to my big surprise, it has been a positive and inspiring experience. I could give service with so many people coming from different countries, sharing the same programme of recovery and all this has given me an amazing energy.

We planned activities, laid the foundation for new projects, built bridges to be connected for a common purpose: to carry the message. It was a considerable challenge. Twelve countries were represented. We overcame the linguistic barriers using three codes: English, the OA language and Love. We had in our eyes so much joy in giving service and we only knew that we could have done, just for today, to the best of our abilities.

Then, the Convention organized by the local intergroup, took place. The participation of many fellows who spent hours and hours travelling from distant countries, helped me to open my eyes and made me understand that we are not alone, that there are many fellows around the world; that we are part of something wider and that we may share our experience, hope and strength to carry the message.

So one thing struck me deeply about this: I can recover from the disease of compulsive eating, from my obsessions, from my fears, from my defects of character, only if work the programme, going through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and with the help of our tools.

Thanks to Region 9 and the Italian NSB that gave me the chance to give service and live these unforgettable moments.

Emilia, COE
R9 Representative
Dear Fellows,

I was asked to write a piece on my experience of my presence at the Region 9 Assembly in London. Gratefully, I can say that I have been a Region 9 Rep since 2017 and my first Assembly was in Iceland and it was an amazing experience. I have been part of OA for three decades and this was the first time I got to be part the OA community on a greater scale.

Honestly, I was pretty scared to put myself forward to become the Dutch Region 9 rep, I do like traveling. However, due to my personal circumstances and the fact that I had trouble finding a paying job; for me it was a great way to be part of something greater and to use my time towards something useful.

When I went the first time, the whole process of putting myself forward at the Intergroup meeting, thinking two other fellows would be putting themselves forward and not thinking it would be a option; to ending up being the only one raising my hand, made me really anxious. Being chosen, preparing with my buddy, and going to Iceland was a very stressful process in the sense of having to do new things, being accountable to the job, getting out there, meeting new fellows, going out of the comfort zone of my house, my surroundings. I must admit I used to be someone that was very adventurous but somewhere along the ride I became someone who likes to be at home.

My second time now, being part of the London Assembly, was also not a regular process, as due to helping another fellow in recovery I thought I was not able to go but hearing six days before the Assembly that I was able to do attend, was pretty great but also stressful. In hindsight, this experience brought me so much, like feeling part of, and being out of my comfort zone again is actually the same thing that used to prevent me to being a part of my own life. I learned to trust God, (my phone broke just before I left, and needing apps during my trip); taking the bus instead of a very expensive taxi; and having my phone work for just two minutes, so enough to connect with a fellow at the venue, were signs of God and to trust the process.

Service is a very very important part of my recovery. As service helps me to stay out of my head and get into my life. Service in our local meetings and also intergroup is very important to keep the message alive and also the need for going out of my comfort zone and working with others, as an antidote to isolation and my head constantly saying, I can’t do it or I am not good enough to do it. Our former R9 Trustee has a wonderful quote ‘We can do anything, but we can’t do everything’.

I was very fortunate to have a friend in fellowship who was able to come with me as a buddy and join me on this regional trip, we worked together and had so much fun.

Being in recovery the most important part is to share my experience, whether it is locally or within the Region. I have a disease of isolation, and the only way out is being part of service groups and learning how to deal with myself within service groups and to learn about my talents and gifts.

Working together with other fellows is such an amazing experience first for the fellowship and also of building self confidence and pride of being part of something awesome.

I want everyone to be part of this cool group of people, to challenge yourself to do something that seems anxious but that is so cool to experience. This job has given me so much, fun, fear, gratitude, angst, recovery... Don’t hesitate... join us at Region 9, you will have blast.

Hilde v G (Dutch Region 9 Rep)
Region 9 review

My name is Emma, a compulsive overeater, living in the Netherlands but originally from the UK. Travelling always excites me, which is one of the reasons I have always wanted to represent my country, but also to see a bigger picture in OA, a fellow friend asked if I would be her buddy to travel to London. In the Netherlands we are lucky enough to send two representatives, I was happy to join her and so we brought it to our national intergroup, I was voted in and excited to be going to London my home town.

I was emailed the binder, which I needed to read before I arrived at region 9 Assembly. This was difficult for me as I’m not used to sitting still for a long time and reading something that I didn’t have too much understanding about, lol. Anyway I did my best. Travelling to the UK went well, I took plenty of time and consciously thought about where I should keep my passport and travel info. I’m used to relying on my husband for this kind of stuff but now I was doing it alone, (well sort of).

I was warmly welcomed by the OA liaison rep, she showed me to my room and then showed me around the grounds and explained where we would meet at 5.00 pm. I went for a walk and enjoyed an hour of sunshine before the start of the Assembly. I felt at ease as I knew a few friendly faces from the Dutch assembly a few years prior. I was amazed and impressed to see all the representatives from so many different countries in region 9.

Down to business, I was feeling a little overwhelmed and insecure not really understanding very much of what was going on, I was buddied up with another fellow and asked for help when I needed it. I had good contact with another fellow who was also confused and didn’t have a clue what she was doing there, we assured each other that more would be revealed. As the assembly went on I began to relax and started to enjoy the experience and enjoy being around other recovering COEs. Just to summarise things up, at the beginning of the Assembly my head was saying no no no, and by the end it was saying yes yes yes.

I would highly recommend every country in R9 to send an OA rep when possible, my recovery has had a real-boost of OA energy and I’m always overwhelmed with all the love that we have for each other in the OA rooms.

Yours in recovery

Emma
How Assembly Strengthened my Recovery

Let me begin by qualifying my membership in Overeaters Anonymous. I came into the rooms in July 2015 at 83kg. My HP lovingly relieved me of 23 kgs which my HP has helped me on to maintain for the last year.

In February of this year (2018), the members of my Intergroup in Johannesburg nominated me to represent South Africa at the 2018 Assembly and Convention in London. I was shocked, I was thrilled and I was terrified. As a control freak, I don’t enjoy walking into unknown situations and everything about this was unknown.

The seven months leading up to Assembly were emotionally fraught as I was required to manage not only affordable air tickets and visas, but egos and character defects both my own and others. I will not dwell on this period, suffice to say that I prayed a lot (which is good), I cried at times (which was cathartic) and I grew emotionally and spiritually (which was a gift although it was painful). I also stayed abstinent, and thank goodness I did, otherwise I could not have successfully navigated this challenging time effectively, and without creating too much damage.

Cut to September 25th, 2018, the first day of Assembly. My entrée into Green Dot representation (all newcomers had green dots on their name tags).

My introduction to Assembly began before the first session with hugs from people that I only knew through WhatsApp. People whom I had never met face to face seemed so happy to see me, so grateful that I was participating in an event that makes our organization stronger. I smiled at the irony. They were grateful to me for my contribution and all I felt was gratitude for the incredible opportunity to strengthen my recovery, the opportunity to remind myself that I am not alone anymore, the reminder that there are people who understand me on a profound level, some of whom do not even speak the same language as me.

Like a sane Meal Plan, the sessions and discussions had clear beginnings and endings. Discussion around by-law amendments were subject to strict timeframes. And rather than feeling constricting, these boundaries created a sense of safety and self-respect. Tradition Two speaks about members of OA being trusted servants. This was no more apparent than in the fact that Green dots and old timers were invited to offer their opinion for and against amendments. There were no superstars and every vote counted.

The Assembly was a huge learning curve for me, and the first day felt like a first swimming lesson. I kept going under, fearing I might never breathe again and then at the ‘final hour’ being pulled back up by my Mentor, a member of the board, another Green Dot. Their hands and words held love and acceptance and they encouraged me to just keep ‘kicking and breathing’. This love reaped its rewards and by the end of Day One, I was attempting a few ‘strokes’, some questions, a comment here and there. By the second day, I began to find my voice. Every question I asked, no matter how simplistic, was met with respect. Every comment I offered was listened to and considered, not necessarily accepted, but considered, which left me feeling both humbled and valued.

I was also humbled and inspired by my non-English speaking fellows who managed to keep their heads above water even though the sessions were all conducted in English. I was moved by a Translation Workshop that sensitized myself and my fellow English speakers to issues of language and recovery particularly as it related to the literature, and I was inspired by those fellows who tirelessly worked to help non-English speaking countries translate the literature.
In a Service with Sanity workshop, I was reminded why I do service at the group and Intergroup level. I was reminded that the health of Overeaters Anonymous, through wise by-laws, an accountable Treasurer and Banker, a Board that works tirelessly, and Trustees that guard the implementation of the Traditions and Concepts, ensures the sustainability of my recovery and helps me to spread the message to other compulsive overeaters. I recognized that I am a small thread in a large and intricate picture or tapestry, but I am a necessary thread. We, as fellows, are all essential threads in this beautiful tapestry and nowhere was that more apparent in the exhaustive service I witnessed over the five days of Assembly and Convention.

From a physical perspective, I was exposed to recovery that I never believed was possible, members who have lost 100’s of pounds and spend a lot of time smiling and sharing their recovery with whoever will listen.

If you would ask me to describe the Assembly and Convention in one word, I would say ‘Love’. It was there in abundance and it renewed my faith, not only in this lifesaving programme but, if I may venture to say, in humankind itself. God was there, in everything. This short article is a modest thank you to all those who served at the Assembly and Convention, those who sat at the registration table, those who worked with the kitchen staff of the retreat, those who stood outside and greeted people, those who manned the literature table, those who wrote shares and organized quizzes, those who gave endless hugs and smiles, those who recorded the minutes of the Assembly, those who collected votes.

To all of you I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Together we do get better.

Reflections on a first Region 9 Assembly

I am filled with admiration for anyone with fluency in a second language. Personally, I can stumble through a few Italian phrases and can make myself understood in a German supermarket - but to be able to express the level of honesty and heart-felt sentiment of an OA share in another language, is beyond me. When I arrived at the convention and heard people being so open and articulate in English, I was humbled.

The phrase ‘you are not alone anymore’, took on new meaning as I sat amongst fellows who meet every week in some little dark basement of a church, or recovery center, or damp community room in what might be an unfashionable part of town - coming together just like me and my group - to share and learn and listen in whatever language, to other’s experience, strength and hope.

We all have those days where something is much more fun than going to a meeting - especially when the weather is bad or the train is late or some life task is left undone, but we drag ourselves to those places in Rome, Vienna, Tel Aviv, Oslo, Bergen, Paris, Athens, Amsterdam and so on, and we do the same things and together we recover.

The serenity prayer is known and recited in all our meetings in all our languages, and at the Assembly we shared it in every language represented, and a few who were not. Ultimately, we all spoke it together in our native tongue, and rather than the result being cacophonous - there was music in it, the sentiment rising above the initial discord.

In a large assembly of individuals, there are inevitably things which need to be overcome, and this Assembly was no exception. At no time however, did I feel that the spirit of the group was overshadowed by the practicalities of organizing disparate food plans, facilitating transport or things just not being perfect. There was a quiet determination from all the delegates to put principles before personalities and to strengthen our sense of community by co-operating in accordance with the traditions.

There are names and faces and people who I met on this weekend who will have changed my life forever in some small way, simply by allowing me to be there and participate in this recovery experience.

I am grateful.

Lisa D.
Hi, I’m Irene, a compulsive over-eater and sugar addict, representing the IG of Austria at the London 2018 Assembly of Region 9. I’ve been in OA since 1993 but had dropped out of the program for more than 10 years until coming back in 2014. This is the first time that I attended such a large business assembly and I wasn’t sure of what to expect. Reading through the binder I felt overwhelmed by all the new notions and procedures. I’m grateful now to my sponsor who helped me to alleviate my fears and to trust the process and my Higher Power, just for today, just for now.

I must say, that once I could surrender my fears (of not being able to cope, of being a failure) to my HP and try to live one moment at a time, I looked forward to the experience and became curious.

Serving at the Assembly was a marvelous experience on so many levels. I was very grateful to have been assigned a mentor who was there for me and whom I could contact with any questions. That really made my coming there so much easier as we travelled together to the venue, meeting two other OA friends in the bus. So from the very beginning I never felt isolated or alone (unless I chose to be). We received a very warm welcome at the Kairos Centre this peaceful old convent that was our “home” for the next few days.

To be honest, the business days were fairly long but the agenda had been well prepared and everything was very much structured. We were working in an atmosphere of great kindness and clarity, careful to acknowledge that there was a majority of newcomers to the Assembly. We were a lot of “green dots”, so Francene, David and Alexandra (our board members) were especially patient with us all.

The procedures were well explained and a lot of things that I had found difficult to understand started to make sense. It was actually very interesting to be part of the decision making process: decisions that will shape the way OA operates. Like allowing a virtual service body (WhatsApp groups) to participate in Region 9 Assembly even if they are affiliated with the Virtual Region. Getting to understand more about the Region 9 Budget and the prudent reserve.

We also grouped together in committees, with different focus, to explore ways in which to strengthen OA as a whole and to pass on the message of recovery. Many great and enthusiastic ideas were born and are being worked on until the next Assembly. I very much enjoyed listening to the Serenity Prayer in all the different languages present. It was so interesting to exchange with other OA fellows and learn about their challenges and how OA is present in so many countries around the world. Different languages but again a common problem and purpose that connects us!

Big thanks to our dedicated board members, to our Chair, Francene, our Region 9 trustee, Bob, and to Anne who was such a terrific liaison “mother” with Kairos Center, watching over our needs.

I’ll look forward to seeing people again in Rome in 2019!!

Irene

IG Austria
Feelings and Thoughts about Assembly

My name is Marina and I’m a compulsive overeater from Germany. I went for the first time as a representative to the R9 Assembly when I had three years of abstinence. I decided a couple of weeks before to join the Assembly. The OA fellow, who is responsible for the international services in Germany, told me about the Assembly in London and she encouraged me to join and experience OA at the Region level. I was curious about the event and looked forward to spending time with OA members from other countries and to experience a professional business meeting.

The communication with the chair Francene was excellent. She helped me a lot. She was patient and replied to all my emails immediately. At first, I got a single room in the neighborhood next to the main venue and would change to the Assembly venue one week before because somebody canceled. I wasn’t sure if I really want to be five days with another fellow in one room. So I talked to the chair Francine and she encouraged me to move to the main venue, as she said that its common in OA to share rooms and that I would be more involved in the community. She was right!

The time with my roommate was brilliant. It was very easy to communicate with her. She was an experienced OA Member and an ex-Trustee of the Region 9. I asked her lot of questions regarding any kind of topic, and we had a great time together. Don’t want to swap this amazing experience with the advantages of a single room, as the first meeting started some representatives next to me hadn’t arrived yet.

I only knew two representatives having had some advance communication with the chair Francene and the Trustee Bob via email. I was sitting in this hall and started to ask myself “why I’m here?” I couldn’t answer this question.

I couldn’t really follow the event because I suddenly felt uncomfortable, not belonging to this group and I didn’t want to stay any longer at the Assembly. I realized that there are about 100 places where I would rather be than in this room. I thought about not applying for the financial support from the German board, which I wanted to do when I got back to Germany. I looked at the agenda and thought, “when could be a good possibility to skip a session?” I couldn’t understand what was my purpose to join the Assembly. Every thought that I had was about me. I was captured in my brain with my diseased mind-again!

I shared my thoughts with another fellow, who was also as a green dot (the first time at the Assembly) and they had exactly the same feelings and thoughts. She suggested to concentrate on other things. She reached out her hand and told me that we will do this together. Through the communication with her I felt connected to my Higher Power again and could trust that everything is as it should be.

On the second day I tried to concentrate on the topics, follow the discussions and to be present. After hours, I recognized that it costs me a lot of energy to follow because English is my third language! I still had the questions inside me “what I’m doing
here?” I slowly started to connect to those who were sitting next to me at my table and this allowed me to ask them questions. The seating order was well-thought-out because all the green dots were sitting next to experienced representatives.

The workshops were really helpful to me and gave me a better view of the role of Region 9. I could adopt a lot of things from them and I learnt how to get along with difficult topics in business meetings. The idea to have workshops in between made the day more doable for me. In a smaller group I was not afraid to say or do something wrong and so was able to participate more.

I appreciated the two minutes meditation time before the sessions started. To say the serenity prayer in different languages was such a great idea, so that everybody of every country got a voice. I will also adopt for our business meetings in Germany, the part of celebrating and the counting of the abstinence years of all those present.

I didn’t understand everything when the discussions were about bylaws. Also, the long discussion about the budget was not very clear for me. I felt that I’m not contributing to the Assembly because I’m not arguing on the topics. I wasn’t sure if I deserve a place on this table as a representative of my country. But by the end of the second day, I realized that there is no other place in this city which could make me happier than to sit in this hall with these other OA fellows. I didn’t want to go shopping, sightseeing or looking for adventures, which I had wanted to do on the first day.

I’m very grateful to get the chance to experience this Assembly. To see other people contributing in service in OA, to care about other people, and that after couple of days, I felt magic in this room. All the board members did a fantastic job. I was inspired by the people who were open-minded. I got the chance to talk to recovered OA members who have decades of abstinence, which is not common in Germany.

To be in a room with so many recovered OA members inspired me. It is my pleasure to carry this clarity and serenity back to my country. I got a high boost of recovery through this Assembly and the inspiration for doing service. It could be just a smile or maybe the serenity which a representative could contribute. I learned that I can also step back and receive lot of inspiration by listening and following the structures. My lesson to learn was to enjoy while being passive and not to feel uncomfortable. Different people are passionate about different topics.

Thanks for this amazing experience!

Marina,
German-Berlin Representative at Region 9 Assembly

Service at Region 9

Wow is a good word for me to describe my experience going to region 9. My first response when asked if I would like to go was one of fear, a feeling I face each time I do a different service. My thoughts that tell me I can’t do it, I won’t be good enough, someone else will do it.

My previous service positions have always taught me something about myself and have helped me to stay well and feel part of our fellowship. I was guided into service by my sponsor and was often taken along to intergroup to observe what went on, then came the time for me to take my turn doing service there. Region 9 became an option for me for which I am grateful. The old thoughts came back but then I was contacted by someone from the board by email which I thought was really nice, I was told I had been given a mentor to help me and answer any questions I had, this helped so much to be prepared for what was going to happen, my questions were answered with supportive reassurance.

On arrival to the assembly I was shown to my seat and was placed by the side of my mentor, I felt a little apprehensive but as people started to introduce themselves the bond of C.O.E and the loving smiles put me at ease, it was no longer me and them we were together working for the good of OA.

Each part of the business was explained as we went along and I found it very interesting. Listening to people from other countries that were just like me was inspiring. My hope is that anyone reading this who can do service but think like I did, will then give it a go. I am so grateful I did this service. Like the food I can’t do this on my own but together we can do our part, WOW!

Pam
Notes on the Region 9 Assembly in October

I feel enormously privileged to have attended the Region 9 Assembly in London in September. This was my second Assembly which meant I felt more relaxed and knowledgeable and knew more people than last year which helped my enjoyment of it.

For me the most powerful message to come out of the Assembly was that of ‘Unity with Diversity’. More than at any other time in my four plus years in OA I experienced the strength of that diversity.

Of course, it was there in the representatives from all over Region 9 and the many languages that were spoken during the event. This was very obviously diversity and was inspiring and humbling. I felt particularly humbled by the effort everyone made to speak English when it was not their first or maybe even second language.

I also felt so grateful for all the literature I have access to simply because English is my first language. So many of our fellows in OA Region 9 don’t have the good fortune to read all the literature in their native language. And yet, there we were, gathered in London, working hard to hear the message and share the message and take the message to the still suffering compulsive eater. Each of us and were unified in that desire to spread the word.

I also experienced the diversity of ways in which people approach their programme and find their recovery. I heard it in people’s contributions during the Assembly and in the shares during the Convention, the theme of which was ‘It works--it really does.’ As always it was enormously inspiring to hear stories and helpful to get ideas.

Two particular things resonated for me. Over and over I kept hearing the message that each of us does our recovery in our own way with the experience, strength and hope of others to help. I have a tendency to ‘compare and despair’ when it comes to whether my programme, my abstinence, my service, etc. are good enough. I think I may now have heard often enough over that weekend to believe that there are many ways to recover and I just need to follow my way whilst being open to learn from others.

The second thing I really appreciated was hearing the stories of a number of fellows who suffer with overeating, anorexia and bulimia, all of them. My story is one solely of overeating so hearing these other stories was both interesting and thought provoking and really underlined for me how we all have to approach our recovery from our compulsive food behaviours in different ways.

By its very nature an OA Region 9 Assembly and Convention contains much diversity. I am deeply inspired by the unity which is also part of that diversity and am very pleased to be part of this region and proud of what we do. Thanks to all for the experience.

Bien chères Amies OA,
bien chers Amis OA,


Début octobre 2018, j’ai reçu un e-mail de notre General Officer, David, m’invitant à rédiger un témoignage personnel sur mon expérience en tant que Rep’.

Vous imaginez bien que depuis ce moment-là, je n’ai eu de cesse d’ébaucher de nombreux projets de récit, les lisant et les réécrivant dans ma tête, encore et encore ;) Et puis ce dimanche matin, j’ai entendu ma PS me répéter gentiment les mots du programme, en ces termes :

« Patricia, reste simple, applique les principes du programme, sois honnête et humble, relate ton expérience telle que tu l’as vécue, partage l’enseignement qui t’a été transmis et explique comment cela sert ton rétablissement. »

Alors « let’s go » 😊

Il y a quasiment une année jour pour jour, j’ai participé à ma première assemblée de la région 9, à Reykjavik
Sharing my experience: It works! It really does!

After two years in OA, I had the chance to attend the Assembly of R9 in Roehampton, London 26-28/9/18. It was a unique experience which helped me a lot in all three levels.

It is very clear to me now, that I definitely need my team; my team needs its IG and IGs their NSB and these the WSCB because we all are ONE, with common problems but the same aim. I only need to focus on that! The solutions to all my problems can be found in OA program.

Quel cadeau que celui d’avoir pu participer à cette assemblée, être en contact avec tant d’amies et d’amis OA abstinents, venant de tant de pays différents et marchant tous sur le même chemin, celui du rétablissement que le programme des Douze Étapes et des Douze Traditions des OA nous offre.

Je témoigne ici ma plus profonde gratitude à OA dans son ensemble ainsi qu’à la « grande PS » pour m’avoir permis de vivre exactement l’expérience que j’avais à vivre. Je me réjouis de vous rencontrer l’année prochaine dans le cadre de l’assemblée de notre région 9, pour partager de nouvelles expériences magnifiques et voir la promesse des OA se réaliser une fois encore :
« Main dans la main, faisons ensemble ce que nous n’avons jamais pu réussir tout seul. Plus jamais nous ne perdrons espoir, car nous ne comptons plus sur notre volonté défaillante. A partir de maintenant, nous travaillons ensemble.Main dans la main, nous formons une chaîne qui trouve sa force dans une puissance plus grande que la nôtre. Et dans cette chaîne, nous attendent une compassion et un amour plus doux que tout ce que nous avions pu imaginer. »

De tout cœur, bonnes 24 heures ♥

Patricia, outremangeuse compulsive
Représentante de l’Intergroupe Suisse romande à la « R9 Assembly 2018 » à Londres
I met lovely people, exchanged experiences, questions, difficulties, hope and strength.

I heard and loved:
“\textit{I can’t help myself, but I can help you. You cannot help yourself, but you can help me.}”
“\textit{I need sincerity for my insincerity.}”
“\textit{Anytime is the proper time for a new beginning.}”
“\textit{When I give service, I carry the message. Why carrying the message? It’s gratitude in action.}”
“\textit{OA program is not for those who needs it, or those who wants it, but for those who works it.}”

It works. It really does!

Many, many thanks to my IG who trusted and gave me the privilege to represent, people who helped me with registration procedures, my sponsor for her support, the hosting team, the board members and anyone who helped on that Assembly. Very grateful!

Most of all, very grateful to my HP who led me on that journey and traveled with me.

\textbf{Sophia Pl., IG Peloponnesus, Greece}