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# A Step Ahead

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## Hear from a Satisfied Member

### ***Dignity of Choice* Selling Like . . . Veggies!**

The new *Dignity of Choice* pamphlet, approved at the last WSBC, has seen an unprecedented popularity since its publication in June. Nearly 20,000 copies were sold in the first three months.

Here is a letter from one satisfied member:

I recently read the newest OA pamphlet, *Dignity of Choice: Sample Plans of Eating*. At first I was hesitant to read it because upon glancing through it, I saw that it addressed issues such as trigger or binge foods. I must've thought about the salty and crunchy snacks I have consumed, and that's why I didn't want to read the pamphlet. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I sort of knew those foods were a problem for me, but I didn't want to admit it or give them up. I had already given up sugary snacks!

Well, all I can say is that God knew it was time for me to "get off the fence." As I was reading, I think I may have mumbled a prayer to God about "if you can make me willing, I'll try." Sure enough, God heard my prayer. Not long after, I heard myself say, "You know, all I really want is something crunchy with my lunch."

Miracle of miracles, I started eating crunchy veggies



with my lunch instead of the salty, crunchy snacks! I feel freer than I have in a long time. I can only explain it by saying that God orchestrated the whole thing from start to finish.

Thank you for the new pamphlet. Thank you, OA, and thank you, God.

— JML, by email

Order your copy of *Dignity of Choice* from the WSO, item #140, \$.75 each plus \$2.25 shipping for US orders up to \$15. For orders over \$15 or outside the US, contact the WSO or go to [www.oa.org/literature\\_catalog.htm](http://www.oa.org/literature_catalog.htm).

## Many Work to Make Service Possible

### ***Spanish Translations in the Works***

A selection of OA literature translated into Spanish will be available for purchase from the WSO starting in January 2005. The translations will include the book *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* and 15 pamphlets: *To the Newcomer*, *Dignity of Choice*, *Questions and Answers*, *Tools of Recovery*, *Maintaining a Healthy Weight*, *Suggested Meeting Format* and others.

Watch for the new catalog in January 2005 for ordering information. In 2005 the WSO will continue preparing additional Spanish literature for purchase in the future. Many thanks to members from the intergroup in Spain, *Comedores Compulsivos Anonimos en España*, for their invaluable and tireless service providing translations and helping prepare them for printing.



## Deadline Looms

### ***Bylaws Reminder***

Delegates to the 2004 World Service Business Conference (WSBC) adopted a motion affirming that intergroups need to submit to the World Service Office (WSO) by January 1, 2005, intergroup bylaws that conform to OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B. To help intergroups meet this goal, region trustees are reviewing all intergroup bylaws on file at the WSO and will contact intergroups whose bylaws require revision. Intergroups must submit their revised, conforming bylaws by January 1, 2005, to satisfy OA, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VI, Section 2, and to be able to seat delegates at the next WSBC.

Sample Intergroup Bylaws can be downloaded from the OA Web site at [www.oa.org/pdf/SampleBylaws.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdf/SampleBylaws.pdf). This document can help your intergroup ensure its bylaws are in order.

If you have questions regarding your intergroup's bylaws, please contact Lee Redman, member services manager, at [lredman@oa.org](mailto:lredman@oa.org).

**Attention  
Group Secretaries:**  
Please make copies  
of this newsletter to  
share with your group  
members.

## **DATEMINDER**

**IDEA Day**

**International Day**

**Experiencing  
Abstinence**

**November 20**

## Check Your 501(c)(3) Status

Groups and intergroups frequently contact the World Service Office to request the OA tax-exempt number for 501(c)(3) status. We cannot comply with this request because the Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. tax ID number is specifically for the corporation (which includes the Board of Trustees, the World Service Office and the World Service Business Conference). If another entity were to use the ID number, it would jeopardize OA and the other entity (the meeting group). When established, the corporation deliberately excluded the meeting groups and intergroups to protect group autonomy.

Some intergroups do have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and should determine if that status also applies to their affiliated meeting groups. The articles of incorporation for the intergroup contain that information. Many intergroups are unsure if they have current tax-exempt status. The IRS Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), has a special section for charities and nonprofits that includes a list of charitable organizations and downloadable files with information about exemption requirements for charitable organizations and about filing for 501(c)(3) status.

## Share the Effort, Reap the Rewards

Have you ever planned a birthday party for a family member or organized an event for several people? Each event needs planning and preparation and takes time and commitment from beginning to end to make it successful. Doing it alone can make the event seem overwhelming and unmanageable. If you ask others to help, the tasks become easier and more fun.

Many intergroups and regions find working together valuable when sponsoring events in their areas. If one intergroup decides to host a workshop, its planning committee needs several members willing to help. If several intergroups work together, the responsibilities are distributed to each group instead of to individual members. This allows for more ideas, hands and support.

Region Five hosts a convention each year in a different city within the region. In 2003, the event took place in Chicago with the cooperation and support of five intergroups. Region representatives, intergroups and several individual groups met at each assembly to discuss the responsibilities and plans for the convention. They formed a convention committee, which met each month at the convention site.

Each intergroup took responsibility for a different portion of the event, such as hospitality, decorations, publicity, literature and speakers. Intergroups went to their groups and asked for support and participation. With each group or intergroup responsible for only a part of the convention, the participation level increased because people were willing to work together and make the event a success. Success became everyone's responsibility, not just that of one group.

You've heard the sayings "the more the merrier" and "many hands make light work." Working together made most convention tasks



easier and more fun to do. For example, many members who worked on the decorations subcommittee discovered talents and skills they didn't know they had. They got to know each other, learned a different way to do something, shared ideas (program related or not) and enjoyed laughter and good times together.

The Region Five Convention succeeded financially and spiritually. Those who participated in its planning and preparation walked away with a sense of fulfillment knowing they had played a necessary role in making the convention a great event for all. Many members initially expressed fears about assuming their duties, but felt grateful for the support and encouragement they received while performing them, citing feelings of unity, personal growth and renewed fellowship.

When planning your next event, don't assume you have to do it yourself. Seek help from other groups within your area, and even some that are outside the area. The fellowship and unity experienced are too great to miss.

— P.G., Valparaiso, Indiana USA

## Delegate-Support-Fund Deadline

OA is once again offering financial support to intergroups which are unable to send delegates to the World Service Business Conference (WSBC) because of financial difficulties. The Delegate Support Fund is a special allotment donated by members of the Fellowship.

To be considered, please send your Delegate Support Fund application for the WSBC 2005 by November 1, 2004. An application form may be downloaded from the OA Web site at [www.oa.org/ws\\_business\\_conf.html](http://www.oa.org/ws_business_conf.html). Intergroups and National Language Service Boards that have never sent a delegate to WSBC receive priority; those that haven't sent delegates recently receive consideration as well. The guidelines for fund allocation are included on the application form.

## First Conference Mailing Sent

The WSO mailed the first documents for World Service Business Conference (WSBC) 2005 on Monday, September 13, 2004. Except for the Final Conference Report, all documents in the first mailing are available on the OA Web site at [www.oa.org/ws\\_business\\_conf.html](http://www.oa.org/ws_business_conf.html). The mailing included such materials as the 2004 Final Conference Report (distributed to 2004 WSBC delegates and only those service bodies that did not send a representative to WSBC), the delegate registration form and instructions, trustee application forms and instructions, and sample motion/amendment forms.

To purchase the 2004 Final Conference Report, call the WSO literature department at 505-891-2664 or order it online at [www.oa.org/literature\\_catalog.htm](http://www.oa.org/literature_catalog.htm) and reference item #800, \$10 each plus \$2.25 shipping for US orders up to \$15. For orders over \$15 or outside the US, contact the WSO or go to [www.oa.org/literature\\_catalog.htm](http://www.oa.org/literature_catalog.htm).

## Convention Dates Set

The Board of Trustees has approved the 2007 World Service Convention dates. Start planning now for the gala worldwide Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA, August 29–September 1, 2007.

For continuing updates on Convention plans, be sure to check the OA Web site at [www.oa.org/ws\\_convention.html](http://www.oa.org/ws_convention.html).

# What's New from WSO

## *Help for Service Bodies Creating Web Sites*

The Board of Trustees approved a revised and updated set of guidelines for service bodies wishing to create their own Web sites. The guidelines include such topics as:

- What Information Is Contained in a Web Site?
- How Do the Traditions Affect What We Put on Web Sites?
- Unity: Deciding What Goes into a Web Site
- Avoiding Endorsement of Related Facilities or Outside Enterprises; Avoiding Opinions on Outside Issues
- Self-Support on the Internet
- Remaining Non-professional
- Responsibility for Page Content (Web Committee)
- Technical issues

The guidelines are available free from the WSO or by downloading them from OA's Web site at [www.oa.org/pdf/WebGuidelines.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdf/WebGuidelines.pdf).

## *Learn How to Plan a Sponsorship Workshop*

Have you ever noticed that fewer and fewer hands go up when available sponsors are called for in OA meetings? Do you want to sponsor but are afraid because you don't know where to begin or you won't do it right? Imagine finding what you need to know in OA literature!

The tool of sponsorship is critical to those needing sponsors and to those sponsoring. The Board of Trustees recently approved guidelines entitled *Planning a Sponsorship Workshop*. They are now included in the *Twelfth-Step-Within Handbook* and can be downloaded from the OA Web site at [www.oa.org/pdf/SponsorWkshop.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdf/SponsorWkshop.pdf).

The guidelines include:

- Suggested activities for one- or two-hour sessions and half-day and full-day events at meetings, share-a-thons, retreats and conventions
- Workshop tips

- Speaker topics
- Discussion and Q&A topics
- Personal inventory questions related to sponsoring

Don't go another day without giving the gift of yourself to your fellow compulsive eaters. Ensure that every newcomer can leave a meeting with a sponsor.

## *Newcomer Packet Contents Revised*

The board has approved inserting the new *Dignity of Choice* pamphlet into the *Newcomer Packet*. To accommodate the change without affecting the price of the packet, a postcard for a free, two-month *Lifeline* trial subscription will replace the complimentary *Lifeline* now included in each packet.

This change occurs before publication of the 2005 catalog, so to avoid confusion about missing *Lifelines*, please inform your groups that the content of the packet has changed.

## *When Is It Not Enough?*

When is putting away the chairs not enough service?

Arranging the chairs for a meeting and putting them away are always needed acts of service. I am never in the OA program too short or too long a time to reject this type of service. Having a chair to sit on does make for a more comfortable meeting, and everyone can pitch in for a recovery sitdown.

As I travel the OA journey of recovery, I hear a lot about giving service, the importance

of giving service and the wide range of service opportunities. As I continue my recovery from compulsive overeating, I attain new physical, emotional and mental changes, and spiritual enlightenment. I become healthier in these critical aspects of my life. The abundance of gifts I receive from OA points to my willingness to give back to the Fellowship as much as I can.

"Chairs" service is always appropriate and appreciated, but I must not forget the bigger

service picture.

My growth in recovery opens me to an awareness of other vital service opportunities. I have a responsibility to be available and involved in group, intergroup, regional and world service committees, activities and service positions. There are workshops to present, conventions to plan, and assemblies and conferences to attend. There is service for everyone—all kinds of service. Our Fellowship needs the business side of OA to keep us strong, vibrant and ever ready to carry the message of recovery to all who seek help from OA.

Because of the amazing, life-changing recovery I continue to experience in Overeaters Anonymous, I must be cautious about letting too few do too much for so many. Every OA member has a part to play in the bigger service picture.

Let me remember that chairs are for sitting on at meetings; their use is temporary. To achieve permanent recovery, I must put the chairs away, but I must also serve in other ways. Service awaits us all. So, I ask myself, "Am I doing enough service?"

By the way, when was the last time you put the chairs away?

— MB, Canton, Ohio USA



## Web Links

Discover interesting and helpful OA Web-site links in *Web Links*.

■ **Planning a Sponsorship Workshop**—Guidance for groups or intergroups  
[www.oa.org/pdf/SponsorWkshop.pdf](http://www.oa.org/pdf/SponsorWkshop.pdf)

■ **World Service Business Conference**—First mailing for Conference 2005 documents available as PDF files [www.ws\\_business\\_conf.html](http://www.ws_business_conf.html)

■ **IDEA Day**—Help with IDEA Day activities  
[www.oa.org/intergroup\\_region\\_support.html#flyers](http://www.oa.org/intergroup_region_support.html#flyers)

■ **Ask-It Basket**—"We have a meeting that won't allow sharing unless a member is also abstinent from caffeine and nicotine. Can this be considered an OA meeting, and does it violate the Traditions?" [www.ask\\_it\\_basket.html](http://www.ask_it_basket.html)

# Carrying the Message through Public Information (PI)

In 2005, the Board of Trustees (BOT) plans to increase outreach to professional organizations. OA will sponsor a booth at several professional exhibits across the United States. Region Two fully funded its first professional exhibit in 2003 and cofunded others this year. Our experience may answer the following questions OA members may have about this important service.

## **Where does funding for professional exhibits come from?**

Some funding is a collaborative effort of OA entities. The American Medical Women's Association annual meeting in 2004 in San Diego is an excellent illustration. We obtained funds for the exhibit fee and for OA literature from the World Service HIPM Committee, the Public Information Committee and Region Two. The local intergroup paid for shipping the OA booth from the World Service Office (WSO). The San Diego OA Fellowship donated time and talent.

## **What helpful lessons have previous OA exhibitors learned?**

At our booth, we allowed the health-care professionals to select OA materials. We would not recommend this approach unless you have abundant aisle space to avoid traffic congestion. Also, our literature became part of the great "stew" in a conventioneer's bag instead of remaining separate and distinct.

At this conference we played OA's PSAs on a television. They were hard to hear over the din of attendees' voices. At our next convention, where we were in an exhibit hall rather than a hotel area, we looped the tape so it played over and over and used OA's film *OA—It Works* rather than the PSAs. This time the tape was audible.

## **Where do members in the region get information about upcoming exhibits?**

Information can come from a WSO staff member, OA members in the region or attendees at professional meetings where OA has exhibited. Recently, the OA BOT received a list of 16 professional exhibits in the US in 2005. If you know of an upcoming convention, please send the information to your region trustee or the WSO.

## **How much does it cost for a booth, and are reduced rates available?**

Fees vary. For example, the 2005 exhibitor fee for the American Association of Medical Assistants, with approximately 1,000 attendees, is \$200. The exhibitor fee for the American Dental Association is almost \$3,000, with about 40,000

expected. Sometimes reduced rates are available. It is best to allow the Region Trustee to handle the matter and coordinate with the Board of Trustees' chair.

## **Are there special regulations that must be followed at convention sites?**

It's been our experience that large convention centers have specific regulations. Hotel venues also have parameters, but not as stringent.

## **What other types of charges do we need to be aware of?**

It's important to find out what comes as standard booth material (dividers, table, draping, etc.) and what you will be allowed to bring in. Consult the Exhibitor's Manual.

## **Don't unions charge high fees, and if so, must we pay these fees?**

Union fees need to be considered and may be unavoidable in some cases. No one answer fits all. Hiring union help may be right for some OA groups. We told the union about our nonprofit status, and they allowed us to do our own setup, but all OA groups may not receive the same response.

## **Can we have as many volunteers as we want at our booth?**

The Exhibitor's Manual for a larger convention usually limits a 10' x 10' exhibit area (OA's standard booth size) to four complimentary exhibit registrations. We contacted a show management's registration official to explain OA's unique situation of being all volunteer and asked if we could submit a list of volunteers who would assist in varying shifts (usually four hours), not to exceed four people at a time.

## **Can anyone volunteer?**

Since volunteers represent OA to the public, we strongly suggest they manifest recovery on all three levels. We try to have one member at the booth during all shifts who reflects the convention's emphasis, such as a teacher for an education convention.

## **Anything else about volunteers?**

Consider parking. The parking fee at one convention site was \$8 a day with no "in-and-out" privileges. Parking for a volunteer working onsite all day but going offsite for lunch could be \$16 or more. We offered to pay volunteers' transportation and parking expenses. To keep costs down, we encouraged everyone to take public transportation or to carpool.

## **What materials should go into OA envelopes for attendees?**

We used specially printed 9" x 12" white envelopes. On one corner was the OA logo in

red. On the top front were the words "Overeaters Anonymous" in bold red. On the middle front was "Information for the Health Care Professional" in black. "World Service Office" was centered on the bottom in black with the address, telephone and fax numbers, and OA's Web site address. On the reverse side, OA's 15 questions appeared in black.

The reason we did this? From past experience we learned the office staff was throwing away our No. 10 standard envelopes as junk mail. Now our distinctive envelopes are hard to miss!

In addition to a short letter on OA letterhead introducing OA, we gear enclosures for the audience. For example, for health-care professionals we enclose the OA *Courier*; the OA pamphlets *Introducing OA to the Health Care Professional*, *Questions and Answers* and *Many Symptoms, One Solution*. In the future we will include OA's forthcoming *OA Survey*. For local participants, we include our local OA meeting directory/schedule.

## **Any other suggestions?**

In August, volunteers from San Diego's intergroup hosted OA's booth at the National Medical Association's (NMA) annual convention and scientific assembly. Following a trustee's written request, the NMA reduced OA's exhibit fee substantially. World Service funds financed OA's participation, literature distribution and other expenses.\* Generous donations of supplies and printing from local OA members helped, too.

We distributed the *When to Say When* CD, which proved popular. Many exhibitor booths are popular because they have "giveaway" items. Also, we received permission to place OA material at the exhibit where local residents received health screenings. Our experience at this second 2004 exhibition went well. Experience does make a difference!

We'd like to encourage each OA "team" that sponsors or participates in a professional exhibit to create an instruction sheet or manual of what its group did at a particular exhibit. Pass it on—in writing! And please send a copy to the WSO. Let your excellent ideas help others, and let your "lessons learned" spare others.

— A.M., Region Two Trustee

\* *Funding for OA's booth at professional exhibits in the coming year is included in OA Inc.'s 2005 budget. Because monies are limited, not all requests can be granted. Decisions will be made according to criteria established by the Board of Trustees.*

**Attention Intergroups and Service Boards:** Please inform the WSO whenever you have meeting changes to your directory.