

## Susan M's WSBC 2024 Report to Region 5

I am grateful to Region 5 for sending me as a Region 5 delegate to World Service Business Conference (WSBC) 2024.

### My experience

Being at WSBC is a world class experience! It is bucket list worthy, whether you are ready to be a delegate, willing to volunteer, or simply want to be a visitor. Besides experiencing the efficiency of Parliamentary Procedure and seeing so much work getting done for OA, there are wonderful workshops and OA meetings. Where else do you get to rub elbows with so many people who have decades of OA recovery? The level of honesty and vulnerability is superb. There are endless opportunities to grow and use the principles of the program. This is an experience you don't want to miss.

I was impressed with the pre-conference material and training this year. There was a secure private website for delegates with access to everything we needed to get ready. The preparation trick for me is to start early to get through all the materials and seek answers to my questions.

The theme for this year's Business Conference was "We ALL Belong: Welcome to OA!" We are indeed a diverse group of people who are bonded in special ways due to our common problems with food, the solution we find in the Twelve Steps of OA, and the principles of our program. OA is our home, our "safe place where we find and learn what love, acceptance, and forgiveness is." (Conference Planning Committee Report) This theme was evident in the workshops offered as well as throughout the business sessions.

Some of the issues dealt with at WSBC are controversial and emotions can run high. What an opportunity to practice the principles of our program! I love that in OA group conscience meetings (and WSBC is simply a worldwide GC) we get to hear everyone's voice. When we understand others' opinions, we frequently find that the minority voice actually speaks what is best for OA as a whole! It is so good to make informed decisions, especially in such important matters. When a discussion starts to get heated, it is common for someone to request we all say the Serenity Prayer, which has a calming effect. Once the vote is final, the loving relationships continue among our fellows.

### Some statistics (participation and 7<sup>th</sup> tradition):

- This year we had 188 eligible voters representing 21 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United States, and Wales.
- These voters also represented 14 languages: Danish, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian, and Welsh. Sessions frequently started with the opening prayer being said in a language other than

English before the body said it in English. One workshop had the closing shared in all these languages plus Russian, in honor of the delegate who could not get a visa!

- Thirty-five states of the USA were represented: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
- Non-delegate volunteers did service as pages, door monitors, and members of the Conference Support Committee. There were 23 such volunteers (including 5 from out of state).
- Professional participants included 4 World Service Office (WSO) staff members and our parliamentarian.
- The Seventh Tradition collection taken during the Friday afternoon Business Meeting yielded \$9411 in US dollars plus \$20 in Australian dollars.

I was asked to serve on the Minutes Review Committee, helping to verify the statistics in the final report. (This helped me pay closer attention to these details.)

Conference Committees met on Wednesday afternoon. I am a member of the Bylaws Committee and the Restructure Bylaws Subcommittee, on which I will continue to serve until the next WSBC. The Restructure Bylaws Subcommittee is working on two projects: Standing Rules for online conferences (informed by Roberts Rules, Appendix A) and indexing or restructuring the WSBC Policy Manual.

I also served on the Reference Subcommittee of the Bylaws Committee, which is where controversial or redundant motions are reimagined before going (or returning) to the conference to be voted on. We had orientation Thursday morning, met twice Thursday evening and twice on Friday. We addressed 8 proposals. There was no Emergency New Business.

There were five Business Sessions, meeting Thursday and Friday (both morning and afternoon) and Saturday morning.

#### Workshops, forum, information session, and meetings:

- Workshop: All About Conference (Tuesday evening)
  - This was a training/refresher about conference logistics, deadlines, and what resources are available.
- Literature Questions and Answers (Wednesday morning)
  - This was a chance to get more information about the literature to be voted on, which was the *OA Handbook*.
- Forum: Building Bridges to Recovery (Wednesday morning)
  - Eye/heart opening vulnerable sharing and discussions about a variety of situations that might be deterrents to finding recovery for someone who needs our program, how it would feel to be in those situations, and how one might overcome them. This was a wonderful boost to empathy and compassion.

- Workshop: Everything You Ever Wanted to Learn About Our Service Structure
  - Interesting historical facts about OA were shared.
  - We are currently in 79 countries.
  - We currently have:
    - 297 Intergroups
    - 15 National Service Boards
    - 11 Regions
    - 3 Language Service Boards
    - 2 Specific Focus Service Boards
  - The purpose and distinction of each type of service body was explained.
  - The distinction between affiliation and participation was also explained.
- Seventeen OA meetings were scheduled over 6 days.
  - I was able to participate in 4 of them. They were amazing.
- Workshops I missed due to scheduling conflicts:
  - Workshop: Our Uniqueness Is an Asset (Thursday evening)
  - Workshop: Tough Questions (Friday evening)

The new parliamentarian shared about meeting misconceptions:

- Meetings are not designed to pass out information. (Meetings are designed to make decisions.)
- Other common misconceptions discussed involved parliamentary procedures.

I attended the Saturday open BOT meeting. Officers were elected. Barb K, the Region 5 Trustee Liaison, was elected First Vice Chair. New Trustees were paired with Mentors.

Between dinner and dancing Saturday evening, 3 outgoing trustees shared their journeys in OA service.

Make plans now to attend the next OA World Service Convention August 21-23, 2025 at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld in Orlando, FL, with the theme “Walking in the Sunlight Together”. This is another world class experience you don’t want to miss!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Some highlights from pre-conference reports:**

- From the Board of Trustees Chair:
  - The WSO staff has had some personnel changes this last year. Sarah Armstrong retired after 24 years of service as controller (17 years) and then managing director (7 years). Dan Sandweiss is the new Managing Director. Over 30% of our 12 professionals have served OA for more than 20 years!
  - There is a new Contribution Portal that allows us much more direct control.
  - Rising costs, fewer contributions, and decreased literature sales have contributed to gaps in the budget. Please continue to help us be self-supporting.

- There is a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Story “OA Has Your Back”.
- From the Managing Director:
  - Two Audio books are distributed via Audible, Amazon, and Apple Books: *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition* and *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*
  - E-books:
    - All OA books, except workbooks, are available as e-books via Amazon (Kindle), Barnes & Noble (Nook), and Apple Books.
    - The four e-workbooks are available as downloadable PDFs from the OA bookstore.
    - One manual and 10 pamphlets are available as e-books, the newest releases are *When Should I Refer Someone to Overeaters Anonymous?* and *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual*.
  - Print on Demand books sold via Amazon are *A New Beginning: Stories of Recovery from Relapse, OA Twelve and Twelve, Second Edition Large Print*, and *Lifeline Sampler*.
  - No OA literature is available in all formats. To purchase OA literature, go to bookstore.oa.org. Links to third-party vendors authorized to sell OA literature (from whom OA receives royalties) are on the product pages.
  - OA trademarks may be used by registered OA groups and service bodies with written permission. The registration mark must be shown, and the group number must be printed directly beneath the OA trademark to distinguish the material from that originating from OA, Inc. For information, go to the Logo Request form in the oa.org Document Library.
  - There are specific guidelines for sharing OA copyrighted materials. Information may be found in the oa.org Document Library: Board of Trustees’ letter, Sharing OA-Copyright Material Electronically, dated February 26, 2022, and the Reprint Request form.
  - If you see infringements of OA copyrights, contact the WSO at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org) with the subject line “Infringement”.
- From the Regions:
  - Region One’s board positions include 2 vice chairs and 2 Members at Large (who assist other board members, besides specific limited duties). The intergroup chairs meet via videoconferencing monthly. The region has offered intergroup funds for targeted Facebook ads.
  - Region Two’s board includes a Publications Coordinator and an Events Coordinator.
  - Region Three’s board includes a Digital Content Coordinator.
  - Region Four is closing, effective June 1, 2024. (At least 7 of Region 4’s 13 intergroups will be joining Region 5. These new-to-us intergroups are in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and North Dakota.)
  - Region Six’s board includes a Coordinator and a Web and Publications Coordinator. This region has regular video forums (10 each year) with intergroup

chairs and other trusted servants. (I have participated in 2 of these so far and have found them very helpful.)

- Region Seven’s board has a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary. They host Region Seven Roundtable Discussions on various topics every third Tuesday at 7 pm ET.
- Region Eight’s board positions include a Parliamentarian.
- Region Nine’s board includes a Communication Officer.
- Region Ten’s board includes a Minute/Note-Taker (the secretary position is vacant), and the past Chair.
- The Virtual Region’s board includes a Data Coordinator and a Digital Coordinator. Among other events, the virtual region has been offering fifteen-week Step-study workshops, plus Steps One, Two, and Three workshops based on the thirty questions in *A Guide for Sponsors*.
- The Delegate Support Fund Committee administers funds that are available to help service bodies that otherwise could not send delegates to WSBC.
- The Digital Download Ad Hoc Committee came to the conclusion that a digital lending library is beyond OA’s resources, financial and human, and does not seem to be a viable option to carry the message.
- From the Internal Information Committee:
  - The “Suggested *Lifeline* Meeting Format” has been updated.
  - Voice recordings of the *Overeaters Anonymous* appendices have been added to [lifeline.oa.org](http://lifeline.oa.org), along with various submissions including written audio and visual creations by members
  - The *A Step Ahead* publication was changed from a quarterly PDF to an online multiple-post format.
- The International Publications/Translations Committee is doing amazing work to help spread the message worldwide.
- From the Public Awareness/Professional Tradeshows Committee
  - Check out the PIPO Resource page on [oa.org](http://oa.org)!
  - There is a new Press Kit in the works, to be available soon.
  - There are GIFs available to service bodies on the PIPO page of [oa.org](http://oa.org).
  - There is a fund available to defray the cost for Service Bodies to participate in professional tradeshows.
- The Strategic Planning Committee is focusing on the three most pressing topics: Diversity, Service, and Sponsorship.
- From the Public Information/Professional Outreach Committee
  - There are new posters with QR codes available for purchase in the OA bookstore.
  - A letter to Medical Professionals-in-Training is now available from [oa.org](http://oa.org).
  - The new *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual* is now available for sale in the OA Bookstore.
  - Other exciting projects are in the works!
- The Twelfth Step Within (TSW) Committee has created a project that is awaiting approval. It includes 4 slideshow presentations with embedded links that take the user directly to various workshops, checklists, fliers, and other tools on [oa.org](http://oa.org) to assist with

encouraging service, preventing relapse, reaching out, and sponsoring. The product also includes a video demonstrating how to search for TSW resources on oa.org.

- The Unity with Diversity Committee
  - Their Diversity Workshops using “Tough Questions” were very well-received and are being submitted to be made available at oa.org.
  - They distributed a “welcome quiz”, a group inventory to determine how welcoming a group is (or isn’t).
  - Ideas were shared for strategically placing OA ads to target underrepresented communities.
- The Young People’s Committee has created a letter (which is also a great PIPO tool): “Assisting Staff Responsible for Student Well-being at Higher Education Institutions”.

## Business Sessions I-V

- The Standing Rules were adopted with eleven amendments.
- Trustee elections were held.
  - All 6 nominees were elected.
    - Cindy C from Region 1
    - Robert (Bob) F from Region 6
    - Emilia I from Region 9
    - Cyndy L from Region 4
    - Susan M from Region 10
    - Laurie O from Region 3
  - There are 4 more openings. Applications for trustee appointees are being accepted until June 14.
- The *OA Handbook for Members, Groups, and Service Bodies* was granted the Conference Seal of Approval.
- Using the lettering/numbering system from the Agenda Questionnaire, here is the outcome of each proposal: (The new wording for each adopted motion will be included in the Minutes which will be posted in September.)
  - (A) Removing “weight” from the definition of abstinence (Defeated)
  - (B) Changing how the Fellowship is invited to open BOT meetings during WSBC (Adopted on the Consent Agenda)
  - (C) Simplifying the term limits of delegates (Adopted)
  - (D) Avoid scheduling WSBC and other meeting during major holidays (Reworded and amended to be more generic (not just religious) holidays (Adopted as amended)
  - (E) Allow meetings that meet multiple times per week to register under one meeting number. (Referred to the BOT)
  - (1 & 14) Two-year rotation for how to hold WSBC—in person vs virtually (Elements of these motions were combined and the new motion was adopted)
  - (2) Updating qualifications for Trustee nominees (“within the last seven years” was struck, and the motion was adopted as amended)
  - (3) Lowering the requirements for changing the Steps and Traditions (Defeated)
  - (4) Removing gender pronouns for God in the Steps (Withdrawn)

- (5) Removing gender pronouns for God in Tradition 2 (Withdrawn)
- (6) Updating service body registration (Adopted on the Consent Agenda)
- (7) Allowing the BOT to designate a manner or method for holding WSBC (Adopted on the Consent Agenda)
- (8) Updating the process for nomination of trustees (Adopted)
- (9) Setting a lifetime term limit on trustees (Defeated)
- (10) Updating who may speak at WSBC (Adopted)
- (11) Changing the time constraints for selecting delegates and alternates (Adopted on the Consent Agenda)
- (12) Updating how service bodies are given notice of WSBC (Adopted on the Consent Agenda)
- (13) Updating who may submit proposals (Adopted)
- (15) Allowing the BOT to hold WSBC virtually besides in emergencies (Adopted)
- (16) Updating how Trustees Liaisons are assigned to Regions (Adopted)
- The Conference unanimously endorsed a statement to be distributed to the fellowship in support of the Rainbow (LGBTQ+) Specific-Focus Service Board, which had received vicious emails from individual OA members—behavior not reflecting the love and tolerance of recovery. If you or your group has not yet seen it, you can find it at <https://oa.org/news/statement-of-support-for-the-rainbow-lgbtq-specific-focus-service-board-endorsed-by-188-trusted-servants/?news-category=0&page=0>.

## For more information

There is a summary of WSBC 2024 business at <https://oa.org/news/delegates-get-the-job-done-at-world-service-business-conference-2024/?news-category=0&page=0>, and the WSBC Wrap-up Report can be found at <https://media.oa.org/app/uploads/2024/05/05162328/wrap-up-report-wsbc-2024-1.pdf>.

The WSBC 2024 Final Conference Report will be posted on oa.org in September.

There is so much more that I could write about! Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Yours in recovery,

Susan M :-)

[susan.m.oa@gmail.com](mailto:susan.m.oa@gmail.com)

847-710-8823

## **\*\*Important Warning\*\***

Please make sure you do not use non-public domain images on flyers, social media, websites, etc. without permission. Such infringements precipitate expensive suits against OA, Inc. (\$2500 per image).

If you have used such images, remove them immediately!