

The following writings are from some of the OA'ers in the central Jersey area who attended the World Service Convention this past Labor Day Weekend (August 30-Sept. 2, 2007) in Philadelphia, PA.

*What did I learn this weekend at the World Convention?*

1. *God is in charge.*
2. *I'm not alone.*
3. *Perfect food for many OA'ers isn't the goal.*
4. *Be a good listener.*
5. *Don't quit program.*
6. *Most people peak & valley in the program.*
7. *People are people wherever they're from.*
8. *I've never heard God mentioned as much as meetings.*
9. *I'm still one bite away.*
10. *I still dislike elevators.*

*I did a lot of one on one talking this weekend. It's amazing how we all go through the same stuff. And it's amazing how easily people can smile. All they need are some encouragement, a smile, and a hug. I complimented a woman on her jacket and we talked for over an hour. It doesn't take much to make a new friend.*

*Bobbi, Perth Amboy, N.J.*

If I could live at a World Service Convention, I'd be abstinent forever. Unfortunately, I had to come home. The weekend was very powerful to say the least. There was an abundance of hope and inspiration in every room and I found this to be very exciting. It seemed like every other speaker had been in the rooms for 10-30 years and I looked into the future and saw myself as one of them in the decades to follow. Their lives had been changed in so many beautiful ways, which made it clear that an abstinent life is the only life to have.

Many things were discussed over the weekend and I was thankful that so many people chose to give service. I left with the realization that if I hope to be like these people, I need to give service too. I should follow their example. So, this is what I have committed to do. I'm going to take a service position in my home group. Hopefully by doing so, I'll be one step closer to an abstinent life and finding the happiness and health that I saw in so many others over the weekend in Philadelphia.

Chris G., East Brunswick, N.J.

This was the first World Service Convention I've ever attended. It was very energizing! There were attendees from Germany, New Zealand, Austria, Sweden, Panama, Israel and Iceland to name a few. Talk about going to any lengths...literally!

There was a sing-a-long in the Grand Opening ceremony that took well known tunes and changed the lyrics to be OA-related. Just imagine over 1,000 Fellows singing and dancing...and we were just getting started!

There were many Workshops to choose from. In between Workshops there was a constant hum of Marathons and General Sessions.

The shares were so powerful and inspiring. I couldn't be everywhere but I am planning on purchasing cassette tapes for anything I missed or just need to hear again and again.

The Saturday night banquet and dance gave us all a formal opportunity to gather socially. The abstinent meal was wonderful and the dance floor was so crowded I considered it a crowning achievement to actually move from the surrounding carpet to the actual parquet dance floor!

I found the hotel accommodations to be exceptional. We were within walking distance to everything: historic sites, shopping, Chinatown and a wide variety of eating establishments capable of providing abstinent choices.

The level of service at the hotel was extraordinary. For example, the hotel had run out of microwaves for the rooms and rather than put me on a waiting list for the next available microwave, the hotel went to the local department store, purchased a microwave, rolled it into my room (still in its original box) and set it up for me. Now THAT'S service!

God Willing, ODAT, I'm looking forward to the World Service Convention in 2010 in Los Angeles!

Kathy G., Colonia, N.J.

Bonnie from NJIOA sent out e-mail while she was away at the convention. It was easy to pick up on her enthusiasm and enjoyment of the events.

Wow! What a weekend. It was so much fun! Not like a retreat, more like a huge party given by your best friends for your best friends. I went to the noon time HOW meeting and found so many people from around the states (one from Germany) that do what I do. Not all consider themselves following a disciplined HOW "format" but they weigh and measure and work the tools wherever they come from. So many of them NEVER were at a face to face HOW meeting. At 4 o'clock, I was to lead a one hour marathon on HOW (didn't know if it would be on the schedule or not, that was why we asked for the noon time meetings) so what to do in the hour? I qualified and the topic I choose was what does the HOW concept mean to me? It was attended by about 15 of us,, as the marathon schedule never made it onto the written schedule that was given out, so most people had no idea what the topics every hour on the hour would be! Quick change for the banquet and off we went...52 tables were filled in the ballroom for dinner and not one extra dinner ticket was left to be had. We had a trivia game (if you are going to the retreat this weekend in northern NJ do NOT give out the answers as I had no idea that they would be doing it again, as they did at world service..The fellowship gave out an award to a person who has carried the message of OA and done so much to attract people to program (had to be a nonmember) and this year it went to Liz Bailey with her 50 plus years of sobriety and her story of early OA relying on AA speakers. It was awesome followed by a DJ and a packed dance floor...I do mean packed! We went to hang out in the lobby for a while and went upstairs about midnight, but not before having a pajama party. Carl and his harem, what a sight! This morning we had breakfast in the room, followed by the closing (Allen B was the key note speaker) and then the serenity prayer was recited by different people in various languages including sign. There were three people who traveled from Iceland...and I balk about an hour to a meeting! After the closing we packed and poor Carl went to get the car, only to find that the lot was closed on Sunday and we couldn't get it out. Thank God for a husband who doesn't freak out, we rented a car and off we went..we will return to give the lot owners a piece of our mind when they open tomorrow or Tuesday. There were absolutely no signs posted that it would be closed on Sunday...so, I am going through snail mail, email and preparing for next weeks retreat. I wish you all the joy in recovery that I feel and celebrate it with abstinence!

Bonnie, Fairlawn, N.J.

I attended the Friday and Saturday programs only. One of the highlights for me was the "Men in OA" workshop. It was amazing to hear 200+ men booming out the Serenity prayer. The speakers were heartfelt and the sharing afterwards was of a depth I don't often hear from men in program.

The writing workshop on honesty was very emotional. Several people were moved to share deeply held truths about themselves. This had an incredible effect on the entire room. The last exercise of the workshop was to go around the room and in one word share honestly how you felt at that moment. It was a humbling experience.

The self image/sexuality workshop was fantastic. The room was packed. The speakers were funny and sincere. The sharing following the speakers was great. A woman involved with the planning of the workshop shared that the response to this workshop shows that men and women want to talk about this subject and encouraged everyone to encourage their Intergroup and local meetings to plan similar workshops.

I had a great time and will try to attend the whole convention next time.

Chris F., Colonia, N.J.

*What did I get out of the World Service Convention? I got the whole concept of our weakness being our strength. I saw folks from all walks of life all sharing a common bond (our disease). I saw the importance of persons coming together be it in our meeting rooms or in a 1,200 persons convention and in all of this I saw Higher Power working through the service so many gave so willingly. I found new friendships from folks half way around the world, even if our language was different we understood that our disease spoke one language and Higher Power could be our translator through acceptance and love of one another.*

Nancie, Linden, N.J.

