

The Lone Star



CoDA Courier



Volume XIII
Issue II

A Publication of Texas State CoDA Assembly

April, May, June
2003

Inspiration Corner :

“Our deepest fear is *not* that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, *not* our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, “Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?” Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel unsure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us. IT IS WITHIN EVERYONE. As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

-1994, Nelson Mandella.

Surrender By Barb B.

My dear Heavenly Father, I surrender all that is mine to you, all that is old and all that is new. My heart feels so heavy with memories of her love and laughter, her kindness and her smile, if only she could have stayed with me longer, for

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Fear and Twelve Step Service By Karen G

Have you ever been asked to do service work and had this fear in the pit of your stomach? Afraid you might not do it "right?" I remember the first time I chaired a meeting, I was terrified I wouldn't do it "right." I had the directions, but was afraid I might leave something out or not do it in the "right" order or some other faux pas. I did it anyway. Each time I chaired, the fear subsided, the desire for perfection subsided, and change within me slowly occurred

The first CoDA convention I went to was in Estes Park, Colorado, I was really excited and looking forward to it. I had moved from Louisiana to Texas about seven months before that, and there was no meeting in my new city. I felt isolated and alone. I missed my CoDA group. When I got to the convention, I saw all of these people so excited to see each other and hugging and laughing and talking. I didn't know anyone. No one from Louisiana had come. No one was hugging me and happy to see me. Did that bring up some childhood issues? You bet. I experienced some great sharing and attended some wonderful workshops. I also experienced some very painful emotions for some of that weekend-especially at the sharing at the end. I felt so "outside." Did I share this with anyone there?--no. I was too afraid to show my hurt and be vulnerable. Out

of that pain came growth. I had joined an e-mail sharing group with CoDA before the convention and I got to meet people from the group. Once I was home and not in the middle of my feelings, I was able to share about my pain with them and acknowledge it. I grew. I made some connections with some of the Texas members and I learned about the Texas State Assembly. I met people that I still am in contact with today.

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just a little while. My tears flow like that of a rainfall with my thoughts of her, each yesterday, today and tomorrow, **thus I surrender to you all of my sorrow.** Every day as I would awake, each beat of my heart would hurt and ache. The sponge was saturated, heavy and dense, it would not wring, and as hard as I tried I could not sing. I became overflowed with sadness and distress as the tolerance within me became less and less. How I survived I can not ascertain, **thus I surrender to you all of my pain.** My being had become one of confusion and disorder, my head was spinning, I was backed into a corner. My mask was falling, I could no longer hide, oh, the tightness of that knot I felt inside. My voice was trembling and my flesh was shaking with the flow of each tear, **thus I surrender to you all of my fear.** I didn't know what to do or where to turn, all I knew was my heart did yearn. Then my angel from heaven cried out to me, "The Lord is my Shepherd"; I knew then, that's where I should be. I heeded and listened, I knew I must, **thus I surrender to you all of my trust.** The time had come for my wings to spread, by Your grace and love I was led. As I began my journey in search of reverence and inner peace, Your power and wisdom flooded me and gave me the strength to cut loose those strings that I was destined to release. It was difficult and frightening for me; afraid the bonds would be broken forever, with which I could not cope, **thus I surrender to you all of my hope.** The flames surrounded me, I was standing at the center of the fire; I lifted my hands and began reaching out for all that I desire. I yelled out to You; could You hear my voice? Dear God please hear me for You are my choice. It's You who can lead me toward my true self and wholeness, where I can find serenity and purpose. My voidness and my soul, it's You who can fill, **thus I surrender to you all of my will.** Reflecting on the

scars of each rock and stone, I had come to know I could not exist alone; and I'm grateful for the wounds that you have since sewn. I thank You for each and every experience You have given me because it has brought me to where I am today, and I know it is You who has shown me the way. Through Your glory and might I walk through my darkness and into Your light. Directing my own destiny, I never could and I no longer can; as it is not I who knows Your plan. My essence and my fate I am eager to share, I now become willing to put myself in Your care. I turn over to You both my joys and my strife, **thus I surrender to you all of my life.**

Fear and Twelve Step Service
Continued from page 1

The first time I went to the Texas State Assembly in Houston, I was very nervous. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know if I would have a good time or not. I could have stayed home and stayed the same. Instead, I decided to stretch a bit and go outside of my comfort zone. I'm really glad I did as it has led to many wonderful experiences and friendships. Each new experience brings some fear to me--fear of change and fear of failure. The fear is about me. Will I be able to adapt? To cope? To accept the change? Will I like the change? And with change, come opportunities as well.

The first time I was asked to chair a National Committee, I felt some of that same fear I felt when I chaired a meeting for the first time. What if I did it "wrong?" What if I totally messed up and failed? For some reason that I still don't understand completely today, I agreed to do it. I hadn't been a part of the committee for very long and I really didn't know how things worked, I didn't have the connections of the previous chair so there were parts of it that first year that were pretty frustrating. When it came time to go to Conference, I didn't

"failure." I hadn't accomplished any where near what my predecessor had accomplished. They were going to be disappointed in me. Why go only to be rejected? I finally decided going was the right thing to do, and that I didn't know what was going to happen. I had fear about what would happen but I was also projecting big time. To my amazement, people clapped when I finished my report. They were happy I was there. Not one person told me what a horrible job I did. My experience at the Conference was nothing like what I had expected. I had been seeing myself through my childhood filters, and I realized I had way more expectations and negative feelings for myself than anyone else did.

It's really easy for me to isolate and withdraw. That's part of my old coping mechanisms. I realized at the last CoDA retreat, I have a real fear of people getting to know me because I feel vulnerable, and the messages I got as a child were that vulnerability was dangerous. I also realized that the danger wasn't my imagination--it was dangerous to be vulnerable as there was a good chance that people in my immediate and extended family would attack me, and I didn't have the skills to protect myself. I took all the emotions they dumped and absorbed them as truth. I feel sad at that thought today. I spent a lot of my life in fear of people getting to know me and hiding who I was. CoDA and therapy have made me aware of these things over time. Service work has given me opportunities to practice new healthier behaviors in a safe environment that doesn't affect my livelihood or relationships. Through these opportunities, I have grown. I haven't always done it perfectly and I didn't need to do it perfectly. I just needed to do something different. Nothing changes if nothing changes. Getting out and interacting with people I didn't know very well stretched me. I also had some great benefits.

It was a bit tricky to some extent. I had to get some healing before I was in a place to do service work and yet, doing service work took me outside of myself, brought me in contact with healthier people, and gave me opportunities to learn and practice new behaviors, including setting boundaries for myself, learning to speak with honesty and diplomacy, gaining greater understanding of the negative filters I saw myself through, and feeling a part of something bigger than myself. All of these awareness's and lessons would have taken me much longer, if ever, to learn if I only attended meetings. I know it can be hard to find the time to do service work. I also know that I have gained so much more than I ever would have imagined. I use the skills I've gained from this work in my everyday life. I've made friends around the country and even in other countries. If I had let my fears keep me from accepting the opportunities Higher Power brought my way, life would not be as full as it is today.

Service work is the life blood of a Twelve Step Program. It is also, in my opinion, the life blood of personal recovery. If Higher Power draws you to do service work or Higher Power speaks through someone else and an opportunity to do service work (as small as chairing a meeting, attending the State Assembly as your group representative, or as big as being a delegate at the National Service Conference) is brought to you, please remember, growth is in steps. Some codependents come in to this program not able to say "no." Learning to say no, there is a tendency to say no to everything early on. The ability to evaluate available time, set boundaries, make and keep a commitment in a healthy way, ask for help if it's needed, among other things--all of these things are good recovery skills as well as valuable life lessons. Asked to do service work? Feel some fear? Take baby steps, feel the fear, muddle through, and grow. Higher Power is with you all the way.

National News

By Karen G.

David L. announced that the National Fellowship Service Manual can be downloaded from the CoDA web site. It is very helpful for every meeting to have this valuable resource.

There were seven Texas attendees at the 2002 National Service Conference in Baltimore (Becky, Ernie, Beverly, Wallace, Karen, David, and Rosemary). Ernie presented a report of the work done at Conference. The Texas state issue (asking the National Literature Committee to examine the Newcomers Handbook with the idea of revising/updating it), was returned by the National Literature Committee for further clarification as to what Texas would like to see. If anyone has any ideas on this, please contact Della B.

Two officers rotated off of the National Board: Rosemary D., and Curtis F. Sheila H. was asked to fill the open Trustee position and she agreed to a one-year term. Sheila H., Evie S. and Karen G. ran for Trustees at the Conference and were elected. The first order of business for the new Board was to find a fifth Trustee, and David L. in Houston graciously agreed to a one year term. A change to the bylaws passed. The change states that the National Service Conference can only be held in the U.S. now.

The National Literature Committee is compiling a CoDA Meditation book. So far they have 78 submissions. The goal is 500. If you're interested in submitting one, go to <http://www.codependents.org/helpwant.html> for more information and the link to the submittal form.

An Ad Hoc Committee was elected to examine the relationship between National CoDA and CoDA World Services.

The Web Team is working on translating the CoDA web page into Spanish. This should be helpful to many Texans.

Alternate Delegates for NSC 2003 (which will be in Seattle, Washington in September) are: John D., Gayle T., David H., Jeff D., WesW, & Wallace E.

National Income:

7th Tradition Contributions	\$17,844.77
Interest Income	7319.48
CoDA Book	21,337.53
CoDA Literature Royalties	<u>34,702.56</u>
	\$81,204.34

Texas Newsletter

Judy C. resigned. Thanks for a great job. Wes W. volunteered to be the new editor. If any one is interested in receiving the newsletter by e-mail please contact Wes@WesWDallas@Aol.Com or LoneStarCourier@Aol.Com

Group Conscience— "What Makes CoDA Work" for Me by Charles D.

Group Conscience has been extremely important in my recovery. I credit it for being my spiritual connection with other codependents, and CoDA as a whole. These served as a surrogate Higher Power until I found that spiritual connection for myself, also.

What I find written about Group conscience is in our Second Tradition: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving higher power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." In practice, this is interpreted to mean that a Group Conscience vote of a 2/3 majority can override decisions, even those made by the International CoDA Board. Group Conscience is powerful.

As important as Group Conscience is to the workings of CoDA, I find very little written about it. It remains largely undefined. And, as such, is part of that magical/mystical body of intuitive knowledge—know to me as, "What makes CoDA work." To me, Group Conscience is divided into two parts. The first part of the Group Conscience process incorporates the expressed concerns of individual CoDA members into a consensus for the group. This part of the process begins at Group Conscience Meetings. It is extended into committee meetings and service boards set up by the group to serve the Group Conscience.

It is through this part of the Group Conscience process that I become a part of “something greater than self.” This is my recovery in action. I am taking an active role in expressing my needs and wants appropriately. This is action taken by me to see that my own needs are met. I believe that this is what it means to become “responsible and accountable” for myself.

If the concerns I expressed are the same as concerns expressed by others in the group, then I receive the important validation that “what I am” and “what I feel” are not unique. And if there is a consensus of opinion among those present, then my concerns become a part of the Group Conscience. This incorporation of “a part of me” into “something greater than self” is the basis for my spiritual connection with CoDA.

The second part of the Group Conscience process incorporates the local CoDA Group Conscience into a larger Group Conscience. The group elects a person to represent their Group Conscience to other CoDA groups. The CoDA Community Service Group elects a person to represent their collected Group conscience to their State CoDA Organization. The State CoDA elects two persons to represent their Group Conscience at International CoDA.

When my local CoDA groups take action to take care of their own expressed needs, they become responsible for themselves. This is our Traditions in action. It is our Fourth Tradition that is our basis for group autonomy and groups being governed by their own group conscience. The Long Form of our Fourth Tradition states, in part, “With respect to its own affairs, each CoDA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience...”

In acting and interacting with other CoDA groups, the local Group Conscience becomes a part of a larger Group Conscience. This is where the rest of our Fourth Tradition becomes

important, “But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect CoDA as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the National Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.”

When I participate in the larger group conscience by expressing the needs of my local group to the Community Service Group, and taking those concerns back to my own group, I become integrated with the process, itself. I am now a PART of the PROCESS. At its best, this is a moving “spiritual” experience. At its worst, it is another lesson in control that my Higher Power has provided for me.

My experience in CoDA has been to serve as a “trusted servant” at each of these steps in the Group Conscience process. At every step, I am less concerned that “MY will be done.” I give up more of my control and accept guidance from my Higher Power. That is a large part of my spiritual progress in CoDA, which I call my “spiritual awakening.”

Common Sense seems to be the rule for the New Mail Guidelines adopted at the Spring Session of the Texas State Assembly.

Guidelines for using the mailing list: By Dan W.

1. Inclusion on the mailing list is voluntary. If a member requests that his/her name be removed, CoDA Texas will comply with the request as promptly as possible.
2. When mailing to members, CoDA Texas will use their first name and the first letter of their last name.
3. Envelopes will not have the words codependent(s), CoDA, or Codependents Anonymous printed or written on them. Recommended procedure is to either have a member name and address in the return address, or simply a P.O. Box/Street address

with city, state or zip without the organization name.

4. Care will be taken that information in the envelope with the words codependent(s), CoDA and Codependents Anonymous is not legible through the envelope.

5. The mailing list may never be used for non-CoDA purposes. If there is a question on this subject, the officers may determine the best course of action.

6. The officers of Texas CoDA will select a person(s) to maintain the mailing list, subject to the guidance of the officers. It is best if that person understands and appreciates CoDA's guidelines regarding anonymity.

7. The person maintaining the mailing list will not provide a copy of the mailing list or labels to anyone without authorization of the officers.

8. When a mailing is being prepared, a printed copy of the labels will be provided to the person doing the mailing following authorization from the officers.

9. Since the mailing list is being maintained in Microsoft Access, it is available as an electronic file. This file may not be provided to anyone without authorization of the officers in order to maintain the anonymity of the members.

10. The words codependent, CoDA and Codependents Anonymous will not appear in the subject line or return address of E-Mail.

11. Inclusion on the E-Mail list is optional. A member may request that their name be removed from the E-Mail address.

12. Verification will be obtained from the members that they want to be included. Sometimes people provide work E-Mail addresses and they do not want CoDA materials sent to that E-Address.

13. The E-Mail list is complementary to our mailing list, but since many people still do not have E-Mail, it is not intended to replace the use of regular mail for the dissemination of CoDA information, news and invitations.

Guidelines Continued from page 4

14. When using the E-Mail distribution list, the "blind carbon copy" (BCC) feature will be used to hide the names of recipients in order to maintain anonymity of members.

15. Members will be cautioned that while we'll do everything we can to maintain their anonymity; there is always a chance with email that their anonymity may be compromised.

2003 Texas State Assembly

The Texas State CoDA Assembly is held every November. This year, members in San Antonio & Austin are sponsoring the assembly, and you're invited!

If you haven't been to an assembly before, you may be wondering what to expect. This is the general format. Participants who arrive on Friday night get together for fellowship, and there may be a CoDA meeting. Saturday morning, our state organization holds a meeting and members present reports about Texas CoDA and national CoDA. It's interesting to attend and find out what's going on around the state and nation. Saturday afternoon, there are workshops. After dinner on Saturday night, there's a Speaker's Meeting. Sunday morning, there is a wonderful Spirituality meeting before members head for home.

The state assembly is a great opportunity to meet members from other cities, see recovery in action, and enjoy the warmth of CoDA fellowship with others. Won't you please join us?

Texas State CoDA Assembly
Austin, Texas

November 7, 8, 9, 2003

(Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday)
Clarion Inn & Suites Conf. Center
2200 South Interregional Hwy 35
Austin, Texas

512-444-0561 / 1-800-434-7378

Website: www.clarion-hotel.com or
www.austexhotel.com

Email: info@clarion-hotel.com or
info@austexhotel.com

Room Rate: \$65 single; \$70 double if you mention "CoDA Group."

Reservations need to be made by October 28th to get the CoDA rate, Complimentary continental breakfast 6:30 am until 10:00 am.

Shuttle available from airport free of charge to Hotel, just dial the hotel symbol at the Airport house phone for details; Shuttle to the airport is free only at 7 am. and 9 am.

Want to offer a Workshop? Contact Della B. for information at 512-243-0884 or email dbarnet1@ix.netcom.com

Registration fee: \$ 30.00. (Includes Lunch Saturday) Please make check payable to **Texas CoDA** or pay at the door, please send check to: P.O. Box 12565, Dallas TX 75225-0565 *Make sure to include your Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code, Phone Number and Email if you have one.*

17th CoDA
National Service Conference
September 16 - 20, 2003
Seattle, Washington

Embassy Suites
Seattle-Tacoma International Airport
15920 W. Valley Highway.
Seattle, WA. 98188-5547
1-800-EMBASSY or 425-227-8844

Upon Your Arrival at the Seattle Airport...

There is FREE shuttle transportation from the airport to the Embassy Suites. For pick up, contact the hotel using the free "Courtesy" phone at the airport.

For those driving:

Contact the hotel for a map and directions to the hotel., Free parking provided.

Want to share a room?

Visit the "[Room Sharing Request List](#) ." at www.codependents.org

Support our fellowship. Come to Seattle and participate in discussions, subcommittees, and activities designed to provide direction and support at the local and national levels.

Conference Charges (US \$) - Trustee or Director = \$50, Delegate = \$50, Alt. Delegate = \$50, Committee Member = \$25, Observer = \$0. Meal charges, where appropriate, are found on the Registration Form. Complete the Registration Form, and make the check payable to NSC 2003. There is a **\$5.00 (US) Late Fee** for forms postmarked after August 17, 2003.

Questions about registration? - Call Laurel H. at (301) 390-8196 or email her at lhbicks43@comcast.net

Hotel Reservations Contact the Embassy Suites to make a reservation.

Their phone numbers are **1-800-EMBASSY or 425-227-8844**. Mention the CoDA Service Conference, and that you were given the special code, "**C O D**," to obtain the following rates:

- 1 or 2 people per room costs a total of \$109.00 per night plus 12.4% tax.

- 3 people per room (1 person sleeping on a sofa bed) costs \$124.00 per night plus 12.4% tax..

- 4 people per room (2 people sleeping on a sofa bed) costs \$139.00 per night plus 12.4% tax.

Free "Cook to Order" breakfast and "Manager's Reception" are available. Ask the hotel for details. **Reservations must be made before September 2nd to get the special rates.** More info. can be obtained by calling the hotel.

Want to work on a Committee?

Service Structure Committee, (SSC)
Outreach Committee
National Literature Committee, (NLC)
National Service Conference (NSC)
Co-NNections Committee
National Convention Committee
Finance Committee
Institutions, Teens & Issues, (ITI)

Questions about the Conference? - Call Ann R. at (301) 627-6424 or E-Mail her at aregist@erols.com.

Service Opportunities

Texas State Level:

Texas Web Page

Texas CoDA would like to develop a web page and we are looking for volunteers. Please e-mail Karen G. at kkg1456@yahoo.com if you are interested in assisting us.

Service Opportunities

National Level:

Writers. No Experience Necessary

We need your recovery thoughts, stories, poetry for Co-NNections Online.
Contact : Co-NNections On-Line

Outreach Committee

If

you want to do National service work, have a computer, and like e-mail, we have a volunteer position for you answering coda.usa.nsc.outreach@usa.net e-mail. We are basically the "customer service" branch of CoDA. We get a lot of e-mails (~100-110/month on average) and we need people who can communicate and will follow through on a commitment.

This work has been tremendously rewarding--by carrying the message to the codependent who still suffers and in the sense of the personal growth we have experienced and the joy of working with healthy people with good boundaries. We are open to discussion and ideas for improving the system.

National Literature Committee

The National Literature Committee is currently working several pieces of literature. If you would like to help, please contact the committee for more information. CONTACT: Literature Committee.

Writers For Meditation Book.

Do you have experiences surrounding working the steps or using the traditions that would help other codependents? Write down your thoughts in the form of a short meditation and send them in to us for use in our new In This Moment meditation book.

Please see our Meditation Book guidelines ([HTML](#) or [PDF](#)) for details on how to submit your writings. ([Assignment of Copyright form](#))
CONTACT: [Literature Committee](#).

I.T.I. Committee needs Help!

(Issues, Teens and Institutions)

We are looking for CoDA volunteers to help support outreach in Hospitals and Institutions (H&I). If you have some time and are willing to support CoDA at the national level please send an e-mail to the e-mail address: coda.usa.nsc.outreach@usa.net.

Prisons are a part of H&I CoDA and there is a real need to carry the message to inmates in the system. If you feel this is service work you are willing to perform please send an e-mail to the above outreach address.

Anyone going into a prison will be required to provide information for a background check, being finger printed is a requirement also.

The third area in need of support is CoDA Teens, we do not have enough teen meetings. To build a teen meeting it takes two people, a man and a woman to provide the kind of safe environment needed for the members. Service work with teens also requires a background check.

Please don't let these requirements prevent you from volunteering for service work in these areas. Giving service back to the program is a great way to jump-start your own recovery

program. There is no better way to grow in CoDA than to give service. I have worked with the prison system and found it very rewarding. I feel I received much more than I gave. Ramona P. ITI Committee Chairperson.

Chat Room

We have received numerous requests asking if CoDA has a chat room. We received approval from the CoDA Board of Trustees to set up a CoDA chat room, abiding by the Twelve Steps and Traditions of CoDA. We are looking for volunteers who know how to set up and/or run a chat room. If you are interested, contact coda.usa.nsc.outreach@usa.net for more discussion.

What Kind of things would you like to see in our Paper?

Would you like to announce the date on which you celebrate Your CoDA Birthday? And Tell what CoDA has meant to you in your own words.

Please if you have Ideas or Suggestions please Contact: Wes W. at:

WesWDallas@Aol.com or LoneStarCourier@Aol.Com

"God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change...
The courage to change the one I can...
And the wisdom to know it's ME!"
Anonymous

