

An ABC Committee Report to The ACA WSO Board of Trustees

The ABC Committee coordinates the efforts of planning the Annual Business Conference and the ACA World Convention.

The Report for April, 2019

Submitted by Jim R., the ABC Committee Chair, May 11, 2019

HIGHLIGHTS FOR April:

- THE DELEGATE BINDER – Materials to be included were received and Sweden for a printing; The Binder contents were collated 2 days before the ABC, and inserted into the Binder the day before.
- THE AGENDA – Final version of the Agenda was created mid-April.
- THE ABC / AWC – The successful production of the ABC and AWC was the achievement for April. The Swedish Host Committee did the heavy lifting. They made the events look effortless. Fredrick and his team lived up to their reputations of competence and professionalism.

SINCE THE ABC: A review of the various facets of the ABC and AWC is underway. This began with both a large meeting of WSO affiliated planners and Board members, as well as small group and 1 on 1 interviews of local volunteers and attendees. The results are offered below. More comments, including valuable insights from more Host Committee members are expected.

RECOMMENDATIONS: To be offered in Committee.

DELEGATE BINDER

By April 8th, the final pieces of reports and supportive materials arrived for inclusion the Binder. The 2018 Minutes and the Treasurer's Report did not easily fit into the formatted document, so they were added as separate documents at the rear of the Binder. Additional 'handouts' were part of the package that was sent off to Sweden to be published.

The Binder is linked here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EHcfFeDAozMSeAAHzUI0PaDEX1Lpr6Tv/view?usp=sharing>

To view the 2018 ABC Minutes, use this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13d9Dew8LRnonPagQP4d55-aaTkCg8nrW/view?usp=sharing>

The Treasurer's Report may be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xnnGsFnUr8PZid7HUtc_sZR9ryalu5zN/view?usp=sharing

THE AGENDA

By mid-April, the ABC Agenda was being fashioned. Special consideration was given to the participation of the remote voters, primarily in North America. The Agenda reflected the time zone differences and moved the more participatory elements – proposals and special presentations – toward the end of each business meeting day. This called for splitting the presentation of committee reports into both mornings.

The indication of 'breaks' were removed from the agenda so that we would not be constricted by an imposed timetable.

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The unexpected consequence of this arrangement provided an easier and more understandable approach to proposals and motions on Day 2, having had an experience of the process on the day before.

THE ABC

On site preparation for the Conference and Convention began a few days before the events. The printed materials, with the help of valued volunteers, were assembled into Delegate Binders. Additionally, we purchased colored card stock paper for Delegates to print their names on and to use as a tented name-plate at their seat. We also got paper plates and markers to use as voting paddles. Each Delegates name and group number, taken from the registration list, was preprinted on the plate.

NOTE: There were walk in Delegates, more than expected, so that we did not have a Binder for each person. Same for the plate/paddles, although more were readily purchased. (Thanks Jody)

Generally speaking, the ABC went very smoothly. The addition this year of a Timer – Ann, from Texas – was very helpful. Each day ended on time and the proceedings went smoothly and orderly, despite the inability to get delegates to return promptly from lunch and breaks.

A summary of the proceedings, including the results of the proposal discussions and voting may be found at: <https://acawso.org/2019/05/04/2019-aca-annual-business-conference-summary/>

Here is the summary:

Ballot Proposal 9: Adopt a Diversity Statement for ACA.

Action: ABC delegates voted to adopt the following diversity statement: “ACA is an inclusive organization and open to all affected by family dysfunction. We strive to create an atmosphere that reflects the diverse communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to be their full, authentic selves.”

Ballot Proposal 7: Approve a Proposed Mission Statement for ACA.

Action: ABC delegates voted to create a working group to review the original draft mission statement, and revise it to address wording concerns expressed by delegates. A revised version will be resubmitted for consideration at the 2020 ABC.

Literature Committee motion: that the delegates approve a proposed meeting safety card drafted by the Addressing Predatory Behavior working group.

Action: After extensive discussion, ABC delegates approved the following motion—that the Addressing Predatory Behavior working group convene at least two open discussion sessions, available to all volunteers, and revise proposed literature about victimizing behavior inside and outside ACA meetings. Following WSO board approval, the revised literature will be made available to the fellowship by September 2019, so that groups can test it and provide feedback to WSO. The working group and Literature Committee will incorporate fellowship suggestions as needed, and bring a final document back to the 2020 ABC for Conference approval.

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Trustee ratification: Delegates ratified the following trustees for WSO board service: Bill D., Carole C., Charlie H., David McB., Erin D., Jim B., Majbrit M., Miles C., Pat H., Rich R.

WSO board officers: The new WSO trustee officers were announced to the delegates: Charlie H., chair; David McB., vice chair; Pat H., treasurer; and Miles C., secretary.

The AWC

The AWC also saw walk-in attendees. There were fewer printed programs than were needed. The workshops were offered on a wide variety of topics. Rooms were filled to capacity. Consecutive ACA meetings were offered in Swedish with real time translations into English. And the opportunity to host a meeting in your own language was offered.

The WSO event unveiled the Swedish translation of the Yellow Step Workbook. They were offered for sale along with other literature selections. Adjoining the merchandise table was a table of information about Southeast Florida, the site of the 2020 ABC/AWC and a table for information about the WSO and the various opportunities to do service, such as committee work.

For comments and questions, please write to Jim R., at abc@adultchildren.org.

The 2019 ABC/AWC Review

For the ACA World Service Organization

Overview

The following report is the product of interviews that took place in Sweden, upon conclusion of the ACA World Convention. The purpose of compiling this report is to offer guidance for planning and producing future events. While the OPPM instructs that the review include insights from key event planners, additional participants – volunteers, presenters and attendees – were included.

Each person was asked for both positive aspects and those that could use improvements. There was a meeting/interview with 9 persons, basically from the Board; 2 groups of 3 participants; 1 interview with 2 people; and 3 interviews, one-on-one. The smaller groups generated fuller concepts. After the participants were asked to confirm their individual responses and to offer additional thoughts, the responses were organized by topic.

The objective of this survey was to generate observations – good, as well as challenging. Generating solutions may come at a later date.

The Participants

| | |
|------------|---|
| Alex | 4 yrs in ACA |
| Andreas | Newcomer Has done service at other conventions/ recording |
| Anita | some Conference experience |
| Bill D. | WSO Trustee |
| Carole | WSO Trustee |
| Charlie H. | WSO Trustee and Chair of the Board |

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|----------------|--|
| Christoph | 1st Conference; volunteer |
| Christopher S. | 5 mo. in ACA |
| David | 11 yrs ACA Involved with Swedish translations; Swedish Intergroup Chair |
| Erin D. | WSO Trustee |
| Fredrik | Chair, Host Committee |
| Greg | Chair of the Nominating Committee, WSO |
| Gloria D. | WSO Special Worker |
| Jan | 2 yrs in ACA / 31 in recovery Conference Delegate - 2nd time |
| Jim B. | WSO Trustee / Webservant |
| Jim R. | ABC Committee Chair 6 yrs in ACA |
| Jody | ABC Delegate; WSO Committee participant |
| Madelen | 2 yrs in ACA / 19 in 12-Step recovery Events experience; Reservations / presenter |
| Majbrit | WSO Trustee |
| Mary Jo | Former WSO Trustee and Chair |
| Miles C. | WSO Trustee and Secretary |
| Nina | Host Comm (Programming) 20 yrs of recovery; translations and other service |
| Pat H. | WSO Trustee and Treasurer |

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General Observations

A very positive experience. The host committee worked and functioned, well despite great distances across Sweden. Teleconferences brought people together with a measured agenda and almost everyone stayed in the committee until the event.

I liked the atmosphere of appreciative camaraderie that was engendered. There was an eagerness to participate, and lots of empowerment.

I love how well the Swedish team worked. The host committee was on point. Good registration numbers at the AWC.

Predatory behavior was reported during the ABC AWC.

Very easy to participate given the gentle nature of the program.

I liked the unexpected cultural exchanges.

A healthy ability to participate was nurtured.

The AV team did a great job.

The host committee was very responsible and Fredrik was very available.

I appreciated the calmness of the interactions between the host committee and the U.S organizers. They were efficient and accountable. It was easy to consult with Fred and the team.

Communications were sometimes vague. Clearer demands from the Board would be appreciated. Perhaps a list of the 'have-to's'.

Registration

I suggest placing more focus on the newcomer. The 'dot' system on our name tags - with green for willing sponsors, and red for hopeful sponcees was great. Perhaps a yellow dot could be used to indicate a newcomer.

I liked the dot System for sponsoring. Since newcomers can be awkward and shy, I would suggest a sponsorship Workshop - 'Connecting the Dots'.

With the hotel booked, provide assistance with finding alternative lodging. Better explain the public transportation system.

The name tags were great, and moving the row of numbers upward would make it easier to attach the tags.

Registration. Fully complete the online registration form before releasing. Do not release in stages. Offer better instructions and have a stricter method.

The Venue

There were challenges for people with disabilities, for example there were many stairs, and elevators were difficult to find. The main convention room was in another building.

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It would be nice to include a map of floor plan in the program and to have it available at the registration area. Let's have water on the dais for the presenters.

Having to go outside the hotel to get to the Palisade room was a negative.

IMPORTANT: Find out early about any restrictions for decorations. No nails and no tape on the walls may be something that needs to be worked around.

I liked having the merchandise and Book Sales positioned with the WSO Service table at a prominent crossroads (hub). It's good to have a person who was identified at the ABC manning the WSO Service table.

Good facilities. The hotel was nicely compartmentalized.

It tended to be warm - cooler rooms might be better.

Could use more clarity on room arrangements and an understanding of who is in charge. More consideration of egress - for safety.

Technological connections, such as translation apps and other such things, could be explored pre-conference. The venue had internet challenges.

The volunteer (registration) "Center" became a hub where questions would be answered. Perhaps make it even better with up-to-the-minute information.

The layout of the hotel was very convenient. I liked having registration as a central hub for information.

Work out the wayfinding far in advance. Signage should be moved to above eye level so that the signs are not blocked by people.

The trains and transportation were very accessible to travel beyond The Arena area. All the same, the events were well contained within the hotel.

I liked how contained the entire event was - within the hotel.

There is a need for more information. About the site - what happens where.

Volunteering

The Registration volunteers could be better prepared with scenarios enacted during a training session. Meal purchases in particular.

Great for newcomers to do service and a 'Guidelines for Service' would be welcomed. This guideline would include description and location of the various individual volunteer opportunities. The general guidelines would also convey the spirit of service.

Create volunteer opportunities (and workshops) for non-English speakers.

The ABC

Robert's Rules may be outdated. Focusing on Robert's Rules creates unneeded stress and confusion. I really liked how Charlie facilitated the discussion on the Predatory Behavior Statement as an alternate approach.

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Robert's Rules created confusion. People were cut off from participating. Newcomers were confused by the process and terminology.

I liked the introduction of the Stop Sign to halt the proceedings of the ABC.

I would like to see that the Diversity Statement working group, (a motion with a second), which was referred to the Board, doesn't disappear.

We could better enforce having two lines at the microphones for people who want to speak.

We could create clear guidelines as to who could speak at the ABC.

The remote voting experience was great. There was total support from The Local web persons.

Interactions with the remote voters could be improved. We could add a visual component - video conference. Cues are needed for who and when people speak or vote. We could have a timer on the screen.

The responsibility for the technical coordination and operation of the entire two days is **too much for any one person.**

The host committee's technical assistant was very capable, especially with on-site sound monitoring.

While the delegate training was good, visual elements on screen would add to the training program.

We need to be reminded to avoid assumptions. It would be best to have people line up at microphones in order to comment at the ABC. It would also be helpful to have an audio link from a remote delegates.

Create soft covered binders, for less bulk. Have the table of contents reflect the order of business.

Create delegate training lesson modules that must be completed as a prerequisite for voting. Modules could include reading the minutes, reviewing the ballots, reading committee reports, and Robert's Rules.

We should discuss proposals before they become motions.

We could stress not repeating the points that are made at the ABC.

Clarity. Create a clear registration process. It is important to know the number of delegates in the room.

Reduce the size of the binder. Perhaps remove the OPPM section. The prior minutes could also be found online.

Review the Ballot Proposal Process. Perhaps create a system where groups submit through their Intergroup and through a WSO Committee to arrive on the ABC agenda.

The AWC and Programming

Programming for the AWC should be brought before the Host Committee, as well as the Board.

There was a good flow from the speaker, to the entertainment, to the final banquet.

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Please include 10-15 minute pauses between the different program points – workshops, seminars, etc., to give people time to change locations and to talk to friends along the way, as it happens.

I liked the dot System for sponsoring. Since newcomers can be awkward and shy, I would suggest a sponsorship Workshop - 'Connecting the Dots'.

The workshops created great ambience. Please consider dance/conscious movement of some sort... ACA and dance/body work/conscious movement is a good combination. ACA works a lot with emotions that are stuck in the body. Liberating dance, e.g. 5 Rhythms or other conscious movement practices work with freeing up the physical correspondence of the emotions.

NOTE: I would like information about the opportunity for leading workshops, initially focusing on the Spiritual Song Journey workshop that I lead at the AWC in Sweden, and eventually other workshops as well. This goes both for next year's AWC in Florida and other ACA related events.

The leaders were very knowledgeable. And they had a strong base in the traditions.

Suggestion: create Zone leaders – volunteers who would be overseeing a defined space. Stagger meeting times and allow for more time between workshops, so as to cover the distances.

More 'playtime' could be included in the programming. Perhaps specialized, like in our 'Swedish night', activities like yoga and Dance/Movement.

We could be better prepared for last-minute program additions and changes.

NOTE: A world convention phone / email list would be appreciated.

Have Zoom recordings translated and downloadable.

Have standby presenter ready for those programs that may drop out.

Enjoyed the "Workshop" experience, which is somewhat new to Sweden.

I enjoyed the creative, arts-and-crafts play space.

NOTE: as a performer, a single stage manager would be desirable; with clear cues as to getting off and on the stage. Originally, I was skeptical about the split room audience, with half in the dining room. In terms of performance, it's good to have people close to the stage. The person in charge should know about entertainment planning. Better yet - include the performers in the planning.

Create standardized announcements to be read at the start of each Workshop.

Meeting manuals (for workshops and meetings) would be helpful. And I would suggest a standardized public relations statement.

Great programming group. Balanced (male / female) and inclusive, with a strong recovery message. Speakers had a range of years of recovery. (Note: Only two had 5 yrs or less – important to make a responsible choice when asking members with little time)

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The local programming group had a stable core of very experienced members providing example for newer members.

I suggest providing guiding recommendations when selecting Chairs of Host committees based on abilities (e.g. leadership, accountability, administrative, reliable, recovery and similar qualities). There was little guidance in this area.

Brief, bullet-pointed written guidance on procedures, in the form of a handbook with tabs for each committee, would be welcomed.

Meals

Booking meals and buying it online could be organized better. People, mostly local, expected to be able to purchase meals and Banquet tickets - at the event, but they were sold out. Perhaps provide an alternative Banquet for persons who are uninterested or late or unable to get into the banquet.

Tacking on a vegan option to a banquet is a sorry experience. Might I suggest an entirely vegan banquet where everyone is vegan for a night. With a vegan chef a fabulous meal could be made. Raw vegan desserts are a treat not to be missed!

Personal Revelations

I learned a lot about myself through the process of answering emails about volunteering and registration. I learned through interactions, while sending apologies. All in service.

I loved having breakthroughs in my personal recovery. Also the international flavor and aspect of the convention. The food was excellent and Fredrik and his Team made everyone feel very special.

I liked making connections with the attendees.

The programming was terrific.

Liked including other 12-step programs.

I responded to the loving parenting found in the Board members presentations. Great experience, strength and hope.

NOTE: it would be great to create a recorded repository of Old Timers stories.

I enjoyed witnessing the love that was generated.

THE FACT THAT THE AMERICANS CAME WAS THE BEST. *Sweden loves you, <3 <3 <3*

Initial Discussions

While the objective of this endeavor was to identify various aspects of the events – recognizing what was done well and those facets that could be improved – the large group meeting did toss around some ideas, some solutions, that could be incorporated into next years events. Solutions though are most likely to be identified and implemented by the incoming Host Committee and the leaders of the ABC Committee/WSO Event Planner, in particular the ABC Committee Chair, Erin D. and the Delegate Training Subcommittee Chair, Chris.

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Safety

Safety was a hot topic for this year's convention. Our discussion briefly touched on some ways to support personal safety. We also discussed briefly the ways in which workshop leaders could more responsibly handle participants becoming upset by the situations of revisited trauma.

One suggestion was to create a 'Healing Center' within the AWC Venue. The specifics were not filled in completely, but there were some general descriptions offered:

- a Meditative Space – perhaps offering soothing music; aromatherapy; calming lighting
- an Aggression Space – a place where attendees can throw/ hit/ tear/ bang
- a temporary Sponsor – available to talk to

(There was discussion of having a Therapist/Counselor on hand, but it was considered beyond the scope of what we do, and that there could be some liability involved.)

On the topic of safety, concern was raised regarding therapeutic workshops that have as a focus Inner Child exploration and Trauma work. There appears to be a potential for stirring up great emotions in the participants. There was concern around how the workshop attendees were left after such an experience. Professional therapists are very careful to leave enough time at the close of a session for people to regain composure. This may not have been considered in Sweden.

The questions that are raised may be rather practical. Is there a maximum number of participants? Does this type of workshop require more time? Does the facilitator have to meet any qualifications? Are assistants required, per number of attendees? It may be wise for the Program Committee to address these questions.

Robert's Rules

Discussion turned to the means by which our business is conducted. The Business Conference Chair raised the possibility of drafting our own version of rules, which our organization might follow. These rules would be informed, on one hand, by whatever may be gleaned from the BRB and Robert's Rules, and on the other hand, by common practices that are employed currently at the meeting level. Whatever is adopted, a training module would be developed to inform delegates of how the ABC will be conducted.

Delegate Training

There was mention of conducting a program post-ABC, which would focus on the Delegate Binder as text for learning more about WSO and the workings of the ABC. This might inspire and support both involvement in WSO as well as general consciousness of the Organization.

Another idea was to schedule time within the weekend to introduce the work of the various Committees and to offer a Service workshop.