

How GreySheeters Anonymous World Services Was Started and Our Mission  
New York GreySheet Round-Up, Oct. 13-14, 2007 (by Kay H.)

- I. Name, Mantra, abstinence date
- II. Purpose of our presentation: our need for GSA and GREYSHEETERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES
- III. The Survey and its mandate,
- IV. Letter to OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE, response of OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE
- V. Decision to form GREYSHEETERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES and its Board: Initial focus to have a Conference
- VI. Our Mission
- VII. 2002: OA's challenge and threat and our response
- VIII. Lead in to Accomplishments

The purpose of our presentation today is to inform all GreySheeters of the history, the mission, and the accomplishments of the GreySheeters Anonymous World Services and its Board and to present our problems, our need for a conference and to ask for your help and support.

Recently, I was making a 5 day silent retreat and was inspired to write my thoughts on the need for GreySheeters Anonymous and the GreySheeters Anonymous World Service Board. This is what I wrote:

GreySheeters are without a home in Overeaters Anonymous. Overeaters Anonymous World Service refuses to allow us to use the GreySheet which is our life line. Overeaters Anonymous World Service refuses our membership as long as we hold on to the GreySheet. A GreySheet group within Overeaters Anonymous is an anomaly: we deviate from their rules, and are therefore rejected. We can have no leadership from Overeaters Anonymous. Our groups cannot look to Overeaters Anonymous Intergroups and World Service for help. No matter how agreeably Overeaters Anonymous in certain places works with Greysheeters, Overeaters Anonymous World Service does not.

Therefore we need our own group, our own Intergroups, and our own World Service. Without these we become just a bunch of individuals without cohesiveness and without the safety of traditions to guide us. We become selfish individualists interested only in our own abstinence. We need to reach beyond this stage in order to grow as a group, to offer hope to suffering compulsive overeaters, and to live out Step Twelve. In order to do this we must take the steps necessary to establish Intergroups in our areas, to have Group Service representatives for our meetings, and to really model ourselves on Alcoholics Anonymous. Before we can have a real, representative Conference of GreySheeters Anonymous, we need to do this kind of footwork.

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The reason I was thinking about this at the retreat is that I had been preparing for this talk by reading all the minutes of the GreySheeters Anonymous World Services Board meetings since the beginning. I was so impressed by the hard work of so many GreySheeters and frustrated to learn that people had been trying to form a conference for GreySheeters Anonymous for so long without success. I was praying about this because this program is my lifeline. My GreySheet abstinence gives me a life, a wonderful, full life free of slavery to food. I want to do all I can to protect my GreySheet abstinence and that means forming a community who supports my abstinence by doing what I do. I will try to condense the history of GreySheeters Anonymous and its World Services Board.

A survey was distributed at the Sixth Annual New York GreySheet Round-Up in 1996 as well as mailed to Shades of Grey newsletter subscribers, to the E-Mail GreyNet, at meetings and to out-of-towners. A total of 211 surveys were returned and tallied by committee members. The survey was developed and disseminated by the Volunteer Committee Exploring the Possibility of Forming a GreySheet Intergroup. This group of volunteers had been meeting for over a year. The mandate from this survey was clear. Our membership wanted GreySheet to have an Intergroup. They wanted our Intergroup to provide many services.

With this mandate given by our membership, a GreySheet Intergroup Formation Committee began meeting in New York. The application to register as an Intergroup was sent to the Overeaters Anonymous World Service Office. On March 3, 1998, we received a detailed letter regarding OA's requirements. Basically we were told that the only way we could become an Intergroup with OA would be to GIVE UP OUR FOOD PLAN!

In the Summer 1998 issue of Shades of Grey it was reported that "based upon the OA letter, the results of the 1996 survey of the GreySheet Community at large and its mandate, GreySheet Community was incorporated on April 7, 1998 as GreySheeters Anonymous World Services, Inc., a distinctly separate Twelve Step program organized as a non-profit organization. Its corporate purpose is as follows:

GreySheeters Anonymous World Services, Inc. is a Twelve Step fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem by helping others world-wide to recover from compulsive overeating, by following the Cambridge GreySheet plan of eating without exception, and by exploring together the utilization of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous in arresting compulsive eating.

Our primary purpose is to stay abstinent from compulsive overeating, and to carry the

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message in order to help other compulsive overeaters achieve abstinence.

The letter from OA clearly delineates the obvious differences in the approach our communities have to our common problem - compulsive overeating - while stating reasons that make it inappropriate to seek any further affiliation with Overeaters Anonymous.

The officers of the first GreySheeters Anonymous World Services Board were elected: Marvin, Chairperson; Penny, Vice Chairperson; Mona, Secretary; Eden, Assistant Secretary; and Ari, Treasurer. Others who served on this first Board were Linda Lee, Cheryl and Geri. These people and many others who have worked hard for the formation of GSA and GREYSHEETERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES are still with us and deserve a round of applause for their vision and their years of hard work!

In September of 1999, Conference Members Meetings composed of Group Service Representatives, Trustees and the staff of Shades of Grey began meeting. They worked on a GSA Conference Charter based on the AA Conference Charter. One of the early goals was the formation of a GSA World Service Conference so that we could have an elected Board and receive our mandate from our GSA groups through Group Service Representatives to Intergroup Representatives as in AA.

In January and in February of 2002, GreySheeters Anonymous World Services Board received a letter from OA World Service saying that on our website we were infringing on OA's copyright to the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and Meetings Formats as well as the GreySheet Food Plan (which OA called Plan A—never GreySheet). They demanded that we remove these materials from our website and no longer distribute them. They also demanded that we remove any inference to affiliation with OA. They requested that GSA develop our own food plan and copyright such plan under a name other than GreySheet. The GREYSHEETERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES Board voted to remove all references to OA from the website and added a disclaimer to the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions stating our permission from AA.

In 2005, Victor F. chaired the Conference Committee giving many hours of work. They put out a survey, tallied the results, and prepared a detailed plan of action for implementation of a GSA WS Conference. This talk is a result of the inertia faced by this committee in implementing the formation of a Conference. We are asking you to register your groups and to form Intergroups so we can have our own service conference.

Do we want to go back to the days before we had our own organization? Do we want to

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exist as the step-child of OA? I, for one, do NOT! GREYSHEETERS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES has in only 9 short years accomplished SO MUCH! Grainne will tell you of these accomplishments.