

Final Report of Hosting Committee
SOAR 8 Recovery Convention and Business Assembly
October 13-15, 2017 Miami, Florida
Sponsored by Miami-Dade and the Keys Intergroup

[Assembly and Convention Co-Chair, Andrea Katz](#)

I must admit to having serious initial concerns about bringing a Region 8 Assembly/Convention to Miami. These concerns were rooted in the fear that we would not have enough people to carry out the work involved in such a laborious endeavor. In many ways this concern turned out to be both true AND false.

The convention came off beautifully in my opinion and the feedback we received confirmed this impression. Each committee role was filled by incredibly dedicated and hard-working fellows. Their dedication and sense of responsibility were remarkable. They formed the very backbone of what allowed the convention to function. While many did an outstanding job on the front end of the convention, some of the most strenuous effort came about once the convention opened.

Several committee areas were stretched very thin thereby not allowing for enough rotation of service. This left one or two people without the relief “staff” necessary to allow them to participate in the recovery workshops going on throughout the weekend. Thank goodness though that these very responsible people took hold of their duties and never let go. In particular, the registration chair stayed at the registration desk constantly and much longer than originally anticipated. She did so, however, with extreme efficiency and grace. Similarly the boutique co-chairs rarely left the boutique without one or both remaining on duty.

The co-chairs of the boutique spent months collecting items, sorting, categorizing, packaging and working out a very attractive display which made for one of the most exciting and rewarding boutiques we have ever had. A great deal of informal recovery and fun fellowship went on in the boutique, fostered by these wonderful co-chairs.

Here is something that two people shared with me who had two very different roles in the weekend Convention and Assembly. They were deeply gratified not only by the work they did **but by the way they did it**. They were more pleased with HOW they behaved in a cooperative, calm and loving fashion than the fact that they fulfilled their duties so well. In other words, they were happiest about how they could see recovery working in their lives than any of the tasks at hand.

I think we could do a better job of pulling in people to help in every committee area. It would also be helpful to be mindful in areas where a lot of strenuous work is involved to consider the age and general health of the person volunteering to do that service.

It was helpful that our Co-chair had a lot of prior experience in attending and hosting a number of Conventions and Assemblies. He was well-versed in what was needed and frequently referred to the Hosting Manual and the Vice Chair of Region 8 to assist in coordinating the event. We had a year from getting the bid to the date of the Assembly/Convention and held

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meetings nearly every month to prepare. This lead time was very helpful in planning and ironing out any problems with enough time to spare.

Our Committee Chairs for decorations and boutique were able to visit the space and better plan how they wanted to arrange the decorations and boutique.

Each Chair was autonomous and required only minimal support.

Our decorations were beautiful but perhaps a bit pricier than anticipated. Discussion about budget controls should be a part of the monthly Convention Planning meetings.

Another area which needs to be emphasized to speakers is to focus on the topic they have been assigned. It seems from feedback I received that many speakers told their story without regard to the topic at hand.

I also learned from the Jacksonville final report that a post - Convention wrap up meeting of lessons learned should be conducted right after the convention closes. This is a very good idea, however, fortunately we were able, collectively, to capture our impressions and memories relatively soon after the closing of the convention.

So despite my trepidation, the entire event was a great success and felt very fulfilling and higher powered. It was very gratifying to work with a group of recovering food addicts in coordinating such a powerful and spiritually fulfilling convention. In hindsight, I am very grateful for the opportunity. 😊

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[Program Committee Report](#)

What Went Well:

- Program focused on program basics
- Left 30 mins in between each session which gave people plenty of time to connect with other and for self-care
- Speaker / workshop confirmations
- Program committee printed signs pointing to all of our workshops, meeting rooms and boutique and hospitality which were very helpful. They also printed all the workshop names for each day on a sheet that was taped to the door of the workshop rooms
- People loved the rock toss, blessings theme,

Lessons Learned:

- Speakers dropped at last minute, plan B or backup plan
- Make sure workshop speaker confirmations have first name, last initial and city
- Remind speaker / workshop instructor about timing guidelines ahead of time and putting the workshop guidelines in larger print on the podiums
- Need 2 people for Jeopardy - move to earlier in program
- Don't put yoga right after the craft - space out the "relaxing" items on the agenda. Craft should go at the end of the day so we have time to clean up
- 12 step within needed time to do a skit and a workshop but we didn't know until last minute
- Only 2 people on committee - would work better with 3

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Registration Chair Report

According to our records, there were 190 attendees to the 2017 October SOAR 8 Business Assembly/Recovery Convention.

- 35 Attendees pre- registered via Eventbrite
- 85 Attendees pre-registered via registration forms (paper)
- The total number pre-registered attendees is 120.
- Of the 120 – 47 attended the Business Assembly. The balance (73) registered for the Recovery Convention.

Due to the combination of Business Assembly & Recovery Convention registration form, there was many issues in completing the forms. Also, the Eventbrite website was cumbersome. If an individual was registering for multiple individuals during one session, the website did not clearly provide the ability to list everyone. Instead it showed one person as registered multiply times. Also, it was not clear when an individual was registered as a “green dot” or “mentor”. Both of issues could be related to initial creation of the page. In other words, my mistake.

The other major concern of the registration was the lack of volunteers at the convention desk. The position does require the ability to deal with periods of heavy traffic and the ability to adjust to changing priorities. It was difficult to find willing volunteers.

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Hotel Liaison Report

Fortunately Miami-Dade and The Keys Intergroup made the decision to bid for the fall 2017 Assembly in early summer of 2016, so we had plenty of time to visit hotels and prepare the bid. We've held Assemblies before and one of the lessons learned was to give ourselves plenty of time to prepare a bid. The search narrowed down to two hotels which could meet our needs and price range for rooms. The meals at all the hotels in Miami were expensive and considerably more than the prices suggested in the hosting manual. We chose the airport Marriott in part because it had an airport shuttle but mostly because they seemed the most eager for our business. They responded to calls and requests rapidly and scheduled meetings readily. They sent proposals when they said they would and renegotiated regularly until they offered a proposal we could accept. This might sound trivial, but the fact that they responded so quickly and negotiated so pleasantly suggested they would offer the most reliable service. And our experience is that this assumption proved true.

To get the meeting rooms, board room, hospitality and boutique rooms comped we guaranteed 50 hotel nights and \$7,000. in food and beverage, which we thought would be a stretch. We ended up booking 90 hotel nights and, with the help of donated coffee service, surpassed the food and beverage guarantee.

One of the BIG lessons we had learned was to read the contract more carefully. We knew the prices of the meals included tax and gratuities, so missed the section that said that while the meals individually were inclusive, the \$7,000. guarantee wasn't. That meant we were guaranteeing the 7K plus nine percent tax and twenty-four percent gratuities. In total then our guarantee would be over \$9,600. Even though the contract had already been signed, we told the hotel this was unacceptable. We met with them several times after that, negotiated with the head of sales, the head of events, the general manager. We finally agreed to the 7K guarantee plus the nine percent tax, gratuities included, thus our guarantee became \$7,630. We sold over \$7,400. in meals, and with the addition of member donated coffee service, well surpassed our guarantee, but had we not been able to renegotiate this could've been a real problem. Again, read carefully.

We knew the restaurant at the hotel was not very large and knew from past experience how crowded restaurants get on Friday evenings as representatives and board members rush to make the assembly on time. So we decided to add an optional meal Friday evening. This was originally intended to be a buffet but evolved into a prepared boxed meal. We expected to sell 20-30 of these meals primarily to reps rushing to the assembly, but ended up selling sixty meals. While the food was fresh most found the meals disappointing, complaining that there was no desert (fruit) or coffee after the meal. Frankly, the meal was cheap, by comparison, and intended to be fast, so we expected the disappointment.

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[Hotel Liaison Report \(cont'd\)](#)

The luncheon and banquet dinner though were very well received. We were careful in our discussions with the hotel to tell them how much salad we tend to run through at buffets. Few hotels are prepared for the amount of salad we consume. They were well prepared and the luncheon buffet was fresh and plentiful. The plated dinner Saturday evening was also well received, fresh and served rapidly without being rushed.

One last bit of hotel technology worth mentioning. The convention chair and I were sent a hotel link that enabled us to immediately communicate with the hotel. Thus, we could ask for water stations or coffee stations to be refreshed, for room temperature to be lowered or raised, for chairs to be added to a room, for rooms to be opened or locked with a push of a button on our phones. This meant rapid and efficient service without our having to leave assembly or meeting rooms.

All in all we found the service at the Miami Airport Marriott professional and courteous. They were willing to work with us when we had conflicts and went out of their way to see to it that our event went smoothly. If we were to host again, we would certainly consider returning to this hotel.

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[Greetings and Hospitality Report. Committee Report By Helen Viviand](#)

The greeters wore banners and was located next to the registration desk. We greeted all new arrival and even some strangers. Friday evening and all-day Saturday. We had numerous volunteer available, but we could use more.

The Hospitality room was set up on Friday at 2:00 pm with water, ice, apple, bananas, oranges and ounce packages of almonds as food items. We also had Coloring Books, Puzzles, Play Do and other toys items for our child within

There were tables and chairs for people to rest and visit and there was also a literature table.

The problem with this committee was the hospitality was on tenth floor and greeter on the first. This created too much walking for volunteer to service both area. This committee should be either separated or located closer together.

Financially, we covered expensive and made a little profit. People seems to enjoyed the getaway room. Overall, I felt it was very successful.

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Evaluation Summary Report

Total number received: 19 (10 Business / 9 Recovery)

Business Assembly Evaluations:

Suggestions to improve:

Assembly format - -

Requested Assembly format

SOAR 8 Board's service to you ---

Web / Tech

Hospitality Suite –

Lovely – but small

Didn't stand out – Not welcoming

Boutique was great.

Too far away.

Committee Meeting Rooms –

Hard to hear with the number of committees in the room

A little cold

All met in one room. It got loud.

?? Were there any??

Very good. But too dark.

Luncheon –

Nice having hummus. Enough was provided.Flyer

Friday night dinner was terrible.

Much better than Friday night dinner.

Banquet –

Food was well done. Great job.

Food was great and appreciate no bread or rolls.

Dance/Entertainment –

Super speaker and DJ

Don't care. Don't waste the money.

Didn't stay. Table decorations were (sic) awesome.

Prefer DJ who dances. Like the karaoke option.

Too loud. I'd like something else.

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Evaluation Summary (cont'd)

Flyer –

- Liked that it was designed to be mailed.
- Schedule should be printed on back of registration form.

Do you have a copy of:

- P&P Manual – 3 negatives
- OA Handbook – 4 negatives
- WSO PI Service Manual – 4 negatives / 1 not sure
- WSO HIOM Service Manual – 5 negatives / 2 not sure
- WSO 12th Step Within Handbook – 4 negatives

How can we help you get the ones you don't have?

- Make it free & digital
- Do we need them??
- Just need money.
- Something I can download?
- Email/PDF on website

Do you feel free to contact any SOAR 8 Board Member at anytime?

- All positive responses

Hotel room/cost/service –

- Renting spaces without working bathrooms seems like a bad idea.
- Meeting room and Hospitality/Boutique were too far apart.
- Sound recording quality seemed poor.
- No refrigerator in room
- Overall expensive with parking and meals.
- ..Coffee service was an excellent perk.

Restaurant meals/cost/service –

- Expensive

Add'l comments –

- Loved the speakers
- There was no paper or water on Friday night.
- Pages – No enough. Too slow.
- Friday night dinner – 'snack pack' –too expensive but convenient,
- Minimal number of baskets
- No free wifi

