

Draft Motions for Discussion and Decision by the Delegates' Assembly

A. That the Congress select six to ten LifeRing participants to an Expansion Committee, charged with drafting a set of proposed Bylaws Amendments to expand the organization's leadership ranks. The Expansion Committee is to publish a proposed draft within six months. The draft is to be circulated widely among LifeRing participants, and to form the basis for a discussion in which every LifeRing participant has the opportunity to be heard. After revising the draft in the light of the membership discussion, the Expansion Committee is to present the proposed Bylaws Amendments to the 2010 Congress for a vote. — Proposed by Marty N.

Please submit other proposals to the LifeRing Service Center, service@lifering.org or 1-800-811-4142 asap.

Elections for the Board of Directors

Candidates for the Board of Directors must be in recovery from a substance addiction, at least 21 years old, and have at least two years clean and sober. (Bylaws § 6.5) Board terms run for three years. (§ 6.2) There is no limit on the number of terms a Board member may serve. The Board meets face-to-face once a year directly after the Delegates' Assembly. Thereafter, the Board meets monthly on the second Sunday, except August and December, using an online chat room at www.lifering.org. Online meetings usually begin at 6 pm Pacific Time.

This year the terms of three members of the Board of Directors are expiring: Chet Gardiner, Owen Poole, and Carola Ziermann.

The Bylaws currently do not spell out a procedure for nominating Board members, and are silent on the matter of election campaigns, speeches, etc. The manner of balloting is left open. At past Congresses, nominations were made orally at the Delegates' Assembly. There was no campaigning or speechmaking. Voting was by secret paper ballot. If you are interested in becoming a Board member, please notify the LifeRing Service Center, service@lifering.org or 1-800-811-4142 as early as possible.

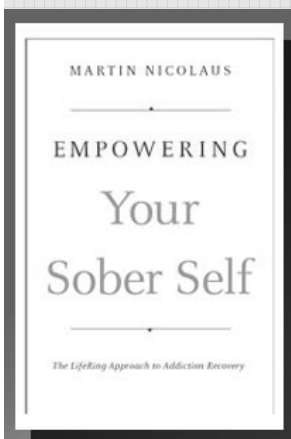


Rules of Procedure

The Bylaws provide generally that "Robert's Rules of Order shall apply to the procedures of the Congress to the extent they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with procedural rules the Congress may adopt." §5.10. In practice, past Congresses have run on a consensus-building model, and parliamentary maneuvering (point of order, point of personal privilege, etc.) has been absent.

FYI

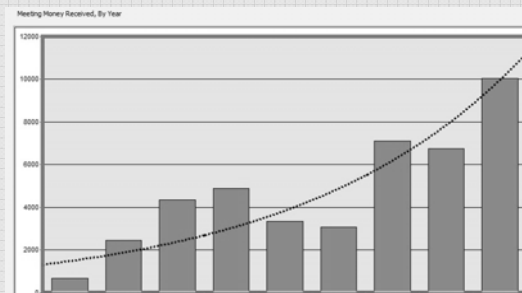
New Book. By the time of the Expo, nearly every bookstore in the English-speaking world will have copies of *Empowering Your Sober Self—The LifeRing Approach to Addiction Recovery*. Advance readers, including some very prominent names in the addiction treatment profession, are giving the book high marks, and the keynote review in *Library Journal* rated it "highly recommended." You may encounter some new faces at your meeting sent by the book, and you may see a demand for reading circles based on the book. Please encourage people to buy the book directly from LifeRing Press, online at www.lifering.com, and not from the online megastores. Our price is actually lower than amazon.com, and we will ship just as fast. Best of all, when you buy from LifeRing Press, you help support LifeRing.



Two Front Doors. On the net the only way to get to the LifeRing home page used to be www.unhooked.com. Now you can get to the same place either via unhooked.com or by typing www.lifering.org. We've been advised that making our web address identical to the organization name is important to newcomers. We'll use lifering.org more and more in our literature, but we'll keep unhooked.com for the indefinite future. Also look for LifeRing on Facebook.

Great Support. Despite the hard times, LifeRing participants and friends responded generously to our year-end appeal for financial support. We were facing a cash flow deficit but ended the year in the black. Both individual donations and donations in the meeting basket set all-time records.

We're still operating on a shoestring, but it's a longer string and a bigger shoe.



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- Provisional Agenda for the Delegates' Assembly
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- Outline of a proposal for organizational expansion
- Draft motion(s) for discussion and decision
- Board of Directors elections
- Rules of procedure

Why 'Expo'?

LifeRing convenor Craig O. noticed last year that some people were hesitant to attend the event because the name "Congress" implied a political meeting, and they weren't "into politics." Good point! So we looked for a name that would highlight the wide open public nature of the event. The event is a kind of showcase for some of our achievements. So, "Expo" it is. Do you like it?

2009 LifeRing Expo and Congress

DELEGATE'S BRIEFING

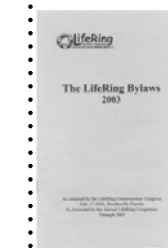
Published by the LifeRing Service Center in preparation for the 2009 LifeRing Congress

The LifeRing Congress, a/k/a Delegates' Assembly, meets on Sunday morning, May 10, 2009, in the Mafly Conference Center, Herrick Hospital, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. This is the same location as the Saturday workshops. Coffee and pastry will be provided.

The name of the whole weekend's event has been changed from Congress to Expo. See *Why Expo*, below. But the Sunday morning part of the program remains the Congress, same as always. The Congress agenda is also unchanged: reports, discussion, motions, elections. See *Agenda*, below.

Anyone is welcome to participate in the Saturday Expo events. But to participate fully in the Sunday morning Congress, you must be a Delegate. Non-delegates may participate in the Congress by making reports and joining in the discussion, see next page. But only Delegates can vote.

How do you become a Delegate? Each meeting, face-to-face or online, is entitled to one Delegate. Any procedure that meeting participants agree is fair and democratic is valid for choosing the Delegate. The Delegate often is, but need not be, the convenor. Each LifeRing participant has one vote to cast. If a



Useful Reading Before the Session:

LifeRing Bylaws

The Bylaws are the ground rules of our democratic internal process. They're only 12 pages and they're written in big type and in plain English. You'll be a more informed and more effective participant if you know your Bylaws. Available free to delegates.

person participates in more than one meeting, they get to choose in which meeting to cast their vote. For details on the Delegate selection procedure, read the Bylaws at Section 5; it's short and clear.

As soon as you have become your meeting's Delegate, please notify the LifeRing Service Center promptly; email service@lifering.org or call 1-800-811-4142.

Provisional Agenda for the Delegates' Assembly (LifeRing Congress)

- 8:30 a.m. Report from the Board of Directors, including Financial Report
- 9:00 a.m. Reports from the Meetings
 - See "Ideas for giving a report on your meeting" on the next page
 - See also "Meeting reports from non-delegates" on the next page
- Approx 11:00 a.m. Discussion and Decision of Motions
 - See outline of Preliminary Proposal for Organizational Expansion, inside
- Approx 11:30 a.m. Elections to Board of Directors
- Noon at the latest: Adjournment
- Directly following Adjournment: Board of Directors' Meeting

Normally the Delegates' Assembly is open to all LifeRing participants and guests, but the Assembly has the power to restrict participation and/or attendance at the gathering to Delegates only. All LifeRing participants are invited to sit in on the Board of Directors' meeting and to speak during the open comment period, except if the Board is discussing personnel matters, at which time the meeting may be closed.

At the Delegates' Assembly:

Ideas for Presenting a Report on Your Meeting

The major agenda item is hearing reports from the meetings. There is no required format for a meeting report. Here are some ideas of topics that might go into a meeting report:

- The day, time, and geographical location (or url) of the meeting.
- History of the meeting: who was the founding convenor, how long has it been in existence, what other locations did it used to meet at before its current location, if any. How many different members have been convenors of this meeting?
- What kind of place or facility or webserver hosts the meeting? Is this a good location or are there problems with it? Are there other recovery meetings in the same time slot at the same location?
- Does the meeting have a special public that it serves? For example, women only, LGBT, prisoners, dual diagnosis, etc.
- About how many people have attended the meeting on the average during the past year? Is attendance growing, holding, or shrinking; how many men, how many women, the approximate age spread. In an online group: how many different countries and states of the US are represented?
- About how many people who attend the meeting are regulars? About how many people tend to show up only once or a few times?
- What range of sobriety times are represented? About how many people have more than six months clean and sober? About how many people have more than one year, more than two years? Do you have a lot of people who need attendance sheets signed (f2f)? Do you have a lot of people who are court-ordered? Do you have a lot of people who also attend 12-step meetings?
- Do you use sign-up sheets (f2f)? Do you circulate member phone lists and email lists? About what percentage of the participants in a face meeting also participate in LifeRing online? About what percentage of the participants in an online meeting also participate in an f2f LifeRing meeting?

- What range of "drugs of choice" are represented?
- What opening statement does the meeting use, if any? Who usually reads it?
- Is LifeRing literature normally displayed at the meeting? Does the meeting have a supply of pamphlets and books to give out, lend, and sell? If online, is there a regular reminder or referral to LifeRing literature? How does the meeting treat newcomers?
- What is the usual meeting format? Do you use the "How Was Your Week" format? Do you use a topic, and if so, how do you select it? How do you handle crosstalk? Do you ask people to say how long they've been clean and sober? Do you usually applaud them when they state their sober time? What do you do to mark the close of the meeting?
- Has the meeting experienced any particular problems, issues, challenges, events, or victories? For example, has it been flooded with Salvation Army folks, has there been a problem with disruptive individuals, have counselors or students monitored the meeting, has it had good word of mouth from referral sources, have any of its members distinguished themselves in the world, have people met and got married in the meeting, etc. etc.
- What if anything does the meeting do to get out the word about its existence? Do members speak to audiences, do you post flyers or signs around your meeting place, etc. What kind of relations does the meeting have with referral sources such as treatment professionals, counselors, etc.? Does the meeting have any contacts with media?
- Does the meeting normally pass the basket? How does the meeting handle the money it collects and what expenditures, if any, has the meeting encountered? Does the meeting contribute to the Service Center?
- Does the meeting hold any social events such as going out to a restaurant after the meeting, or going to movies or on outings together?
- Does the meeting maintain contacts with other LifeRing meetings? Does the convenor attend convenor workshops? Do participants in this meeting also attend other LifeRing meetings?



Outline of a Proposal for Organizational Expansion

When the 24 founding members met in Brooksville, Florida, to write the constitution of LifeRing—the Bylaws—we wanted to keep the organization as flat as possible and to minimize leadership roles. That's why the Bylaws provides only for the three officers that the law requires corporations to have: CEO, Secretary, and Treasurer. On the whole, this lean and mean structure served us well in the early period. Now, however, it threatens to become an obstacle to growth. We have a growing number of LifeRing participants who actually play leadership roles, take responsibility, perform service above and beyond the ordinary, make sacrifices, take personal risks, stand as role models for others — and there are no slots in the organizational structure for them to occupy. As an organization, we are growing at the base (and we may experience an accelerated growth in the coming period), and we need to grow in the leadership ranks to keep pace.

My proposal is that we launch an immediate discussion, beginning at this Congress, of ways to reorganize ourselves so as to expand the ranks of LifeRing leadership. It would not be fair to adopt a wholesale reorganization at this year's Congress — short notice, not enough time to reflect and discuss — but it would not be prudent to wait too long, either. I will make a motion at this Congress to appoint an Expansion Committee to study the issues and to draft a set of proposed Bylaws amendments for wide membership discussion during the year and for a vote at the 2010 Congress.

By way of getting the ball rolling, an expanded leadership structure might include these elements:

- Create 8 or 10 or more regional vice-presidents with responsibility in defined geographic areas
- Create vice-presidents with responsibility for public relations, fundraising, data management, meeting support, and website development
- Create an executive council composed of the regional vice-presidents and the other officers
- Create the post of chairperson of the Board
- Expand the Board of Directors from 9 to 11

By expanding the leadership ranks, we will assure the future of the organization after the founding generation fades away. The basic concepts of LifeRing are strong and vital. We need to adapt the organizational structure to keep them alive and growing. - *Marty N.*

Meeting Reports From Non-Delegates

To ensure the widest possible sharing of information and experience, the Delegates' Assembly also encourages participation by **non-delegate reporters**. For example:

- The convenor of a meeting in a special setting where no delegate election is possible is also an officer or a member of the LifeRing Board of Directors, and therefore automatically a delegate already. This convenor can give a report on the meeting as a non-delegate reporter.
- A convenor convenes two meetings. One of the meetings does not have a delegate present. The convenor reports on one meeting as its delegate, and on the other meeting as a non-delegate reporter.
- A meeting was formed too recently to qualify to send a delegate. Anyone present who participates in that meeting or has other knowledge about it may present a report on the meeting as a non-delegate reporter.
- A meeting is represented at the Congress by its delegate, but a non-delegate participant in the meeting wants to present additional information about it, or has a different viewpoint than the delegate. That person may present a report as a non-delegate reporter.