

## **Our Stories Disclose Third Edition Committee**

### **Final Report**

#### **Overview from the Chair**

The OSD3 Committee was formed in 2017 to prepare a motion to produce an updated edition of the History of Western Washington Area72. The motion was approved at the October 2018 Assembly, and we started pre-sales of the Third Edition (OSD3) that very evening. The committee met monthly, originally in person, then, after the pandemic, our meetings were virtual via Zoom.

This report will provide an overview of efforts, problems, and solutions incurred during production and recommendations for producing the next edition of Our Stories Disclose....

**DATA COLLECTION:** Jim F. has provided a report (attached) detailing exactly how he went about collecting stories and updates from Groups and Districts. We had set a deadline of December 31, 2019 to receive the Group and District information. The majority of members submitted their stories in a timely manner.

The Committee had decided to include stories from the Hispanic Groups and Districts in both Spanish and English. We had help from the Hispanic community in translating their stories from Spanish to English, saving the cost of professional translation.

We had enthusiastic response to our requests for Group Histories. We found that we had over 400 new groups formed in the 20 years since publication of the Second Edition of Our Stories Disclose.

**COST QUOTES:** Karla L. has provided a report (attached) describing the process for requesting quotes. The Committee obtained quotes for publishing a two-volume (each book consisting of approximately 350 pages) boxed set, and the initial quotes received appeared to include all the requirements we requested. Later, an AA member who had experience in the industry, Ben D., joined the Committee and helped us to understand the publishing quotes process.

These initial quotes helped form the basis for our price point of \$15.00 per set, which is what we used for the pre-sales to fund the publication of the books.

Based on what we knew at the time, we felt that 1500 pre-sales would be enough to make the project self-supporting with the idea of ultimately printing 3,000 sets.

**MARKETING:** From October 2018 (when the motion was approved) throughout 2019, the Committee had representation at almost every Area event as well as presentations to many Districts at their District meetings. Mary N. designed and created several tri-fold boards which aided our presentations by providing order forms, group history forms, and a Frequently Asked Questions sheet (all in both Spanish and English). As Chair, I made a lot of these presentations along with help from other Committee members.

We held a contest for the cover design and received many entries. The winner was selected at the 2019 Assembly. We prepared sample copies of each submitted design, and asked the Assembly attendees to choose which they liked best by placing their vote in a receptacle in front of each design. The winner was calculated Saturday night, and announced at the Spiritual Breakfast on Sunday morning. The winner received a free set of books.

We had one issue with a Group that submitted a design after the deadline, which was not included in the voting process, but, overall, everyone was happy with the final decision.

We ran a trivia contest, based on stories in Our Stories Disclose... Second Edition, in the Area Newsletter. Jim F. would find an interesting bit of trivia, include it in the article, and the first person to respond with the correct answer would receive a free set of Our Stories Disclose...Third Edition. We had minimal responses, and only two winners.

In 2020, the pandemic hit, seriously limiting our in-person contact with potential buyers. We then changed our marketing strategy to rely on web sales through the Area Website. While not as effective as in-person, we did very well with web sales.

We resumed making presentations (primarily at Area Events) in the following years. We stopped pre-sales once we were ready to submit the manuscript to the publisher.

We fell short of our original goal of 1500 pre-sales, ending with just over 1300 orders. The pandemic definitely affected our efforts in marketing. The in-person presentations seemed to be far more effective.

**EDITING:** Denis F. was the Chair of the Editing Committee. He, along with Mary N., Anita S., Adina M., and several other members served on the Editing Committee (report from Denis and Mary attached). Editing is a painstaking process, and we had the right people doing the right job.

We learned that there can be serious difficulty in moving between softwares. Even using different versions of the same software (e.g. Microsoft Word) can cause anomalies and strange characters to appear in the manuscript. In our case, we needed to transfer a Word document to a PDF. This created a huge number of anomalies, including random paragraph indents, hyphens where no hyphen existed previously, and just plain weird characters. Denis and I went through the entire manuscript (over 1,000 pages) word by word to make corrections. Mary then entered our corrections into the version of Word on her computer and converted it to a publisher recommended PDF, which provided consistency in the final document.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** We were fortunate to have Rob M., a professional graphic designer, take responsibility for putting the books into a format acceptable to the publisher. His report is attached. Rob's work was not simply a copy/paste exercise...he had to check for anomalies created when working between software programs. As explained in the editing section, these anomalies occurred when switching from Microsoft Word to InDesign, as well as when converting to PDF formatting. Rob also maintained the files of pictures of the oldest meeting in each district, which we intended to include in the published book. We did not include the photos and maps for each district because it would have resulted in an unmanageable page count for the book. As explained elsewhere in this report, those photos and maps will be converted to a PowerPoint presentation for the Area Website, under the Archives tab.

We started this project with a trial version of InDesign, but the free trial ran out before we completed all the revisions, so we had to purchase a full version. Ultimately, we did not use InDesign for the final manuscript, due to the time-consuming re-editing required.

This position worked closely with the Editing Team, to make sure that all team members were well-informed and to track the progress of the manuscript. As

Chair, my only involvement in graphic design was to make sure that Rob had the resources to fulfill his responsibilities.

**ACCOUNTING:** Tari B.'s report is attached. In 2018, I met with the Area Treasurer to set up the use of Square to collect sales, and I met with the Webmaster to set up Web sales through Stripe. Over 3 rotations, the Committee and I worked with different Treasurers, receiving different support/instruction. As an Ad Hoc Committee, we had no budget. Our only source of funding was pre-sales. As Chair, I did not submit any travel expenses for reimbursement, because we had no set budget for it. Any money for reimbursement would have reduced the amount of pre-sale money received.

We did have some expenses, such as the tri-fold boards for marketing, and the purchase of a license for Adobe In-Design (graphic design software used for publishing, a standard for publishers). We had been using a free trial version of the Adobe software, but the trial ran out before we could complete the manuscript. Additionally, Stripe and Square had fees which were taken from each sale.

Pre-sales were recorded in two apps – Square and Stripe. Our Committee used the Square app when making presentations. Sales from the Area Website were recorded in Stripe. We had difficulty in exporting the information from Square and Stripe into an Excel spreadsheet. Some information did not export (in some cases, addresses, Districts or number of copies purchased did not export), which required us to go back and manually re-enter the information into the Excel spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet would provide the basis for our distribution efforts.

**WRITING:** Writing the new chapters about the Area Assemblies and Area Standing Committees fell under the Editing Subcommittee (report attached). In cases where someone volunteered to write a portion of the book and didn't follow through, the Editor took the responsibility on himself to complete the work. This was an enormous job, but fortunately, a rare occurrence. My participation in writing was to write the Afterword.

In addition to writing, we had maps and photos that we wanted to add to the book(s). Unfortunately, we were not able to include them in the published books due to page count limitations. We decided that the maps and photos would be posted on the Area Website as a companion piece to the physical book. Mary N. prepared a Power Point Presentation to post on the Website. Not only does this acknowledge the efforts of those who prepared the maps and took the photos of the oldest Group in each district, it hopefully helps to spur interest in our History.

**PUBLISHING:** Once we had completed the final editing of both volumes, we requested a final quote from the company that appeared to offer the best pricing. The final manuscript proved to be over 500 pages per volume, and we changed the order from 3,000 sets to 2,000 sets, due to having less than our goal of 1500 pre-sales. This changed the pricing considerably. In addition, we were unaware that each volume would be priced separately by the publisher, and that the sleeve for holding the two books would be outsourced at a cost of an additional \$9,000. We opted not to order the sleeves.

When we realized we did not have the funds necessary to achieve our goal of being self-supporting, I (and other members of the Committee) worked with the Area Treasurer, Derek S. to ensure that we could publish the books with the Area's financial assistance. With Derek's support, we were able to order 2,000 sets. Derek also worked with the publisher to negotiate the terms of the contract. Although the Area Treasurer was not an official member of the Our Stories Disclose Committee, I have asked him to provide a report on his involvement with the financing of the publication (attached).

The Copyright for Our Stories Disclose...Second Edition was processed while the writing of this edition was happening. The copyright for the third edition will now be applied for when the 2nd edition copyright is granted.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Previous Our Stories Disclose Committees stored the published books at their homes, or at the Archives Repository. No one on the Committee had the space available to hold pallets of books, and the Repository did not have enough room to store our order.

We learned that the Area was seeking storage space for their Sound equipment, and we asked them to help us out. Through the Finance Committee, we jointly obtained storage space that would meet both our needs. While the Sound

equipment would take up much less space than the pallets of books, we both needed a climate-controlled environment and a convenient location. This was beneficial for all of us, and the space needed for the books would decrease over time, as books were distributed or sold, so the Area could reduce the space required, thereby reducing the cost of the space. The Area could also use new sales of Our Stories Disclose... to offset the cost of the storage space.

Phil K. and Jim F. coordinated distribution of the pre-sales to their rightful owners. Within a month of receiving the published order, we had distributed about 50% of the pre-sales. More detail about the distribution process can be found in Jim F.'s report (attached). As Chair, my participation in the distribution process was to offer a suggested model, which Jim and Phil fine-tuned into a working plan.

**HANDOFF:** Once the books were delivered, and the distribution of pre-sales completed, we had to decide which Area Committee would be handling new sales. The Archives Committee accepted the responsibility, and since the Area Archivist (Mary N.) worked on both Committees, it made for a seamless transition.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:** These recommendations are offered from our experience, in order that any future Our Stories Disclose Committee avoid the pitfalls we had.

1. Ad Hoc Committee status: An Ad Hoc Committee is formed to perform a specific task. Generally, there is no budget, and not necessarily a lot of oversight. I suggest that any future Committee be a hybrid of Ad Hoc and Steering Committee. This would allow for budgeting for expenses, as well as oversight of the Committee by Area Officers. Area support is critical to this effort, since this is the only Committee in the Area to actually produce a physical deliverable (books).
2. Staffing: We are all volunteers, but many among us have specific talents gained from experience in our professions that we can bring to the project. We were lucky to have had both a graphic design professional and a publishing professional to work with us. Their professional experience guided us. Our publishing liaison moved away from Western Washington and was not able to attend meetings very often. I suggest that the member who has this skill be someone local who is readily available.

3. I have no idea what kind of software will be available at the time of the next edition, but I recommend that any future Committee make sure that their manuscript is prepared in the best possible format to meet the publisher's standards. We spent a lot of time fixing errors created through software incompatibilities. This means the next committee should immediately establish a relationship with the next publisher.
4. Life happens. We had originally set a completion date of 2021, which seemed reasonable in 2018 (previous versions took 4 years). Then the pandemic happened in 2020, and in 2021 we faced supply chain shortages resulting from the pandemic, thus once again extending our completion date. The software incompatibilities extended our projected editing time. My recommendation would be to keep the publication date flexible, in order to allow life to happen as it will.

It was an honor and pleasure to chair this Committee over the last five years. We worked through all the obstacles (even a pandemic!) presented to us, and I have never worked with a finer group of people, all dedicated to preserving the History of Western Washington Area 72. I am also grateful to Courtney S., a member of the Committee who served as Acting Chairperson when I had some medical issues over several months in 2018.

Carol H.