



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

September 2003

Treasury Guidelines—still

The treasury guidelines tabled from the May region to the July JAC meeting were tabled again for further tweaking at the September JAC meeting.

The Money Trail

The July meeting voted to contribute \$5,200 to world services, bringing the year to date total to \$15,800. The only other direct financial motion was to reimburse the Regional Delegate–Alternate \$47.28 for cost overruns on the June GSR assembly.

18th Annual Convention Results

The convention BOT reported a drop of about 250 registrations from the previous year, and a roughly \$7,000 loss on NJRC XVIII. It looked as if closing the books on previous years' conventions would yield about \$9,000, sufficient to provide the seed money for NJRC XIX. This continues a trend of declining participation in the regional convention, and raises questions about investing the amount of time, money and controversy that the care and feeding of this annual party seems to require.

Various Motions

A motion to allow the PI subcommittee meeting to be held before the RSC meeting, from 11AM to 1PM failed due to conflict with frequent workshops and JAC meetings held before the RSC meeting. The PO Box in Atlantic City has been replaced by one in Trenton, for greater centrality, but the AC P.O. Box will be kept open through September of 2004, to receive mail from those unaware of the new address.

A motion was passed to ask the website committee to begin the process of assigning a section of the website for pdfs of the newsletter. This would enable interested parties to simply download an electronic copy of *Sanity* from the website rather than having the newsletter maintain a mailing list and sending attachments in response to requests.

Elections and Vacancies

The July RSC filled the following positions: Roger W. was elected treasurer, and Troy T. Assistant Treasurer. Michael H. is the H&I chair and Steve C. is Lit. Review chair. Jean G. chairs the Convention Board of Trustees, and Nancy C. is its

treasurer. Congratulations to all the new and back for another round trusted servants.

Numerous positions are open as of the September meeting. These include: Regional Chair and Vice-chair, Regional Delegate and Alternate, History and Archives Chair, Newsletter Chair, Public Information Chair, Assistant Secretary and Assistant Policy chair.

The Permanent Reorganization Reorganizes

Readers may recall from the July issue that the Minnesota region had submitted a proposal to reorganize the WSC by implementing portions of Resolution A. The Minnesota motions have now been substantially altered, and rolled into a single motion. They have also morphed into a two-phased “looking into” and then “doing” approach. This happened too near publication time for us to analyze the new variant here. There seems to be other Resolution A action, with one region wanting to rescind the resolution itself.

Electing World Board Members

Since the creation of the World Board, one of the more amusing sideshows has been the consistent “failure” to fill all the seats available on the Board. At each conference, a sufficient number of candidates bearing the Human Resource Panel Seal of Approval fail to get 60% of the vote to leave the board short of its theoretical full complement.

The board itself sees no need to be filled to its existing maximum size, and is in fact proposing to reduce the maximum size at the '04 WSC. Some members, however, blame a shortage of board members for almost every perceived failure of World Services.

This seems to be leading to a variety of possible proposals for tinkering with the election process, ranging from “lowering the bar” again from the 60% requirement, (already lowered from two-thirds to 60% with no noticeable effect), to virtually directing RDs to vote for candidates whether they have confidence in them or not.

Perhaps part of the problem is the continued willingness of some to delude themselves into believing that an inevitably political process can be depoliticized to such an extent that the formal resume becomes the only relevant consideration. It seems unlikely that the process can be automated to that extent.

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Sanity is published every two months as a service of the New Jersey region for its groups and members. Input and articles are welcome on all recovery-related topics. Opinions expressed here are those of individual addicts, not N.A. as a whole.

Members interested in receiving an electronic copy in PDF format should send e-mail to Sanity at bob115@earthlink.net with the phrase SUBSCRIBE SANITY in the message header.

Powerless and Unmanageable—a First Step Perspective

Those two key words, “powerless” and “unmanageable”, are the points at which many an early attempt to come to grips with the first step comes up short. Even those among us who fairly quickly come to understand that we can’t use drugs successfully often skip over the other half of this double whammy, which is that the person we are also can’t successfully *not* use. If it were simply a matter of saying “that’s not working well, I guess I won’t do it,” there would really be no need for a Program in the first place. AS Greg P. used to say, if the phrase “using against your will,” makes any sense to you in the first place, you’re probably one of us.

My efforts not to use, pre-N.A., all came to nothing on the fact that the person I was routinely behaved in ways that led to sufficient pain and confusion that the drugs again became the only answer. The fact that they weren’t a good answer did nothing to change the fact that they were the only one I had. So—I arrived in N.A. as a person who based his actions on fear, pain and confusion. And action based on fear, pain and confusion leads inevitably to more fear, pain and confusion. This is the meaning of that annoying phrase, current in some corners of the fellowship, “The person you are will use again.”

Unmanageability was a difficult concept for me, which is odd when one considers that I sometimes had to find out what state or town I was in when I came to. I was eventually willing to concede that things weren’t all that thoroughly under my control when using, but I really didn’t see why this was a problem when I wasn’t. The Basic Text mentions the foolishness of the thought that “When I get my life together, I can handle drugs.”, but doesn’t devote much space to the equally fruitless “Once I’m not using, my life will automatically be together.”

Once I was clean for awhile, I could usually come up with some fairly “rational” plan to gratify a given desire or avoid a fearful thing once the desire or fear arose. Thus, things for awhile had the illusion of manageability. What I didn’t see was that I had no control over the arising of the desires and fears in the first place. Impulses arose for various reasons programmed into me, and I had no knowledge of where they came from, no control over how or when they arose, and seemingly no choice but to try to arrange reality in accordance with them when they did manifest.

Much to my annoyance, I learned that the bulk of my most important thinking was done unconsciously, and that I generally worked for my mind, rather than having it work for me. It was largely the process by which I developed the impulses that pushed and pulled me in certain directions that controlled what kind of a life I had at any given time, and I not only couldn’t “manage” that process, I was rarely even aware of what it was doing until I was halfway into taking action.

Once this realization comes, the road toward becoming aware of our own motives and habit energy starts looking like the only one that offers some prospect of hope, and some of the succeeding steps are, among other things, a practical program for accomplishing exactly that.

Like many of us, I came to realize that I lived in a self-made prison built of my own delusions, impulses and unexamined feelings and beliefs. Worse yet, I’d become so used to it that I identified with the prison and thought that it was me.

Fortunately, it is possible to become conscious of the prison, and to develop the ability to actually live a free and happy life. This is a large part of the point of the steps, worked by whatever method.