



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

March 2004

Shared Services Agreement Update

Its that time again. The January Regional meeting was presented with the draft of a proposed updated Shared Services Agreement for the New Jersey and Northern New Jersey regions. The document was tabled so that the Regional Conference Members would have the opportunity to study it prior to the March meeting.

By way of explanation, many of the services that the region is involved in providing are really statewide rather than purely regional services. The statewide meeting directory, the Helpline, and the website are all joint services of the NJ and NNJ regions. Public Information tasks also arise from time to time that require inter-regional coordination.

The Shared Services Agreement sets up the formal mechanism for cooperation between the regions, and sets out who the members of the Shared Services Committee are and how it operates. As reality changes from time to time, the agreement is periodically updated in an effort to deal with that fact. For those seeking more information, ask your RCM for a copy of the agreement, and a more detailed explanation.

Convention Board of Trustees Motion

A motion to change the convention guidelines was also tabled to the March meeting. The motion is as follows:

To change in the NJRSC Convention Guidelines under BOT Eligibility Requirements, that no member of the Planning Committee be eligible to become a member of the BOT, excluding the Treasurer and Convention Chairperson since they automatically become trustees. Intent: To allow BOT business to be conducted without there being a conflict between the Board of Trustees and the Convention Planning Committee.

There was some heated discussion, though not necessarily a great deal of light shed during the time this motion spent on the floor. The Planning Committee chair "took offense" when the phrase "conflict of interest" came up, and the BOT chair and another BOT member seemed unable to agree on what the current composition of the Board of Trustees was.

Not addressed before the motion was tabled was whether it might make sense for reasons other than those brought up, ie, if we want maximum involvement and the broadest base, wouldn't we want each available position held by a different person, rather than having the same people holding multiple commitments?

Memorial Donation Discussed, Accepted

The Region voted by a 7-1 margin to accept an \$880 memorial donation contributed by well-wishers in the name of a recently deceased member of this fellowship, and the secretary was directed to write a letter of thanks.

The vote was preceded by fairly lengthy discussion of various understandings of the Seventh and other Traditions.

Elections and Vacancies

Several positions were filled at the January meeting. Steve R. was elected Meeting List chair and Mickey R. became Public Information chair. Carolyn W. was elected to a seat on the Convention Board of Trustees and Chris H. to the position of Website Representative. Congratulations to all new and returning trusted servants.

The positions of Assistant Secretary, Policy Vice-chair, History and Archive chair and Helpline Representative are open for election. In addition, two positions for BOT members remain open. All of these are one year commitments, and all require two years of clean time, except for the History and Archives position, which requires three.

South Jersey Area Decides Against Convention

At its February meeting the South Jersey Area (Camden and Gloucester counties), voted against a motion that would have committed the area to holding a convention in 2005. There were significant concerns about the magnitude of the commitment and the possible effect on the areas priorities.

Regional H&I Learning Day
Saturday, April 17th
12:00 to 5:00 PM
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
1500 Hooper Avenue
Toms River

For more information, contact:

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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.

SANITY will soon be available for download from the Statewide website. Stay tuned for more info.

Northeast Zonal Forum

The following is a condensation of our RD's report on the Northeast Zonal Forum meeting.

The NEZF met the last weekend in January. This was the first time World Board members had been invited to the NEZF. It is a sign of the changing times that Jane and Tony from the Board had been invited, helpfully participated and were treated pretty much as 'just another addict' in service by the Zonal community.

Revisoning the WSC (World Service Conference)

Jane and Tony from the World Board offered us this way of orienting ourselves to the current service structure of NA.

The old WSC ended in 1998 when, as a result of years of inventory and planning, NA World Services was able to deconstruct a divided-against-itself service structure and generate, in its place, a unified board and budget. At the same time the WSC was envisioned as shifting toward a more cooperative environment.

The Board understands itself as guided by this history and by the vision statement.

What they ask: Look at the fellowship as a whole. Think about where we are going. Think of every recovering addict as an equal participant in NA, Think of development inside and outside the USA as essential to our well-being. Think about active listening and trying to understand each other. Think about learning to lead as well as learning to serve. Think about how we communicate with others in our larger communities. Think about how NA presents itself to others in the present as meaningful to those who haven't yet found recovery.

In this revised world we will still have the CAR. There remain issues we must handle in this way—for instance, structural changes like the recommendation to downsize the Board or do away with the standing committee structure and changes to our literature, like the Sponsorship book and pamphlet or the proposed changes to the personal story section of the Basic Text. But, we must also learn to handle issues through a careful evaluation of project proposals.

We have choices to make. Those choices should be informed by our vision, by our resources, by our sense of need and by our mutual commitment to conscientious work to share the message. As an example, I would like to share the following: The Board and lots of RDs would like to see NA move from an organization that supports itself through the sale of literature to an organization that supports itself mostly through donations. In fact, this is some people's definition of 'self-supporting.' If we find ourselves willing and able to move in that direction, we might someday be able to give away literature rather than charge for it. If we wanted to achieve this result, we could plan for it, then follow the plan we laid out.

Strategic planning is a sound way to make decisions. Instead of being driven by the latest idea, instead of attempting to do everything everyone wants done, strategic planning lets us consider how any particular course of conduct fits into our overall commitments. One addict likened it to a home group decision about how much money the group thinks best to spend on literature. Home group members consider how to use their resources to best carry the message to the community they serve, and choose a path they believe most suitable. This is what the Board wants from this year's WSC participants. We are to consider a range of options for action and determine which collection of endeavors uses our resources to best achieve our overall vision.

Conference Agenda Report

This segment of my report combines Board insight with perspectives shared by other zonal participants.



**Don't Quit
Before the
Miracle
happens**

Northeast Zonal Forum, continued

Motions 1-3: Sponsorship Book, IP and Related Changes

We learned that the Board is considering publishing 'stickies' imprinted with the changes so that we can insert these in our older books instead of having to purchase new books.

We learned that it was possible to separate motions 1 & 2 if a group wished to have one without the other.

Mostly what we learned is reflected in the Basic Text discussion as well. That is, there are lots of people who aren't happy with the current procedures for developing literature. We were told that providing a longer time to complete projects could be used as a method of providing more time for review. We were told that if we didn't want to take added cycles to produce literature, we might be able to elongate the input period and shorten the final review period.

If approved the book will go into production immediately and might be available in as little as six months. It will cost between \$7-10 dollars—probably toward the low end.

It costs approximately \$400,000 to 'produce' a new book.

Motion 4: Basic Text Project

Please refer to the discussion about 1, 2 & 3 for the issue of more input, more opportunities to participate.

In the context of the Basic text there is some confusion about what the opportunities for input would entail. The Board finds it hard to imagine how people could input the actual stories themselves. They plan to issue strict guidelines for the writing of the stories that will dictate the editing of those stories—guidelines like 'no foul language, maybe 'no specific drugs'—and revisions based on adherence to guidelines is understood, but the fact that people might wish to otherwise edit the stories seemed strange to Jane.

Obviously, since it is the Basic Text involved here everyone is proceeding with caution. We were assured that except for the addition of a new preface, no changes to what we now call Book One is in the works.

Motion 5: Reduce Board From 24 To 14-18

Motion 6: Eliminate Standing Committees

The board is convinced there is a good change. They do not see it as determined by the inability of the conference to elect board members. Rather, they see it as the 1st step in changing the original structure. Change was put off for 6 years. The 6 years have past. It is now appropriate to correct for less than optimal design.

Strength or power is not in the numbers, we were told, it lies in the capacity of the board to function effectively. They believe 14 is probably a minimum if diversity of perspective is to be achieved, while 18 is the maximum at which cooperation, coordination can be efficiently accomplished.

Tony & Jane reminded us that the amount of work the board can do is largely a function of the amount of money we have to finance the support provided by the office and our special workers. More board members is not the way to get more projects completed. The way to get more projects

completed is to have enough financial and human resources for the work.

With regard to the standing committees, the most telling statement was that the board had tried working in committees and found that it was creating problems. (I am not sure what problems it was causing, sorry)

Motions 7& 8: Moratorium On Book 1 Basic Text Changes

I think the basic sentiment of the participants at the NEZF is that since there is no process that is happening that these motions are designed to prevent, it is hard to say much in their support.

Motion 9: Make A Chapter 1-10 Basic Text Available

Toni from Buckeye Region was at the NEZF and was able to share how her Region believed the short book—the baby blue—would be useful as a less expensive version of the Basic Text. Others pointed out that an even cheaper substitute might be what I call the big white book—the guide to NA—that has steps, traditions, chapters in it.

Motion 10: Use Lone Star Tradition Workbook To Develop Fellowship Tradition Workbook.

New York also has a similar workbook. I believe it is called Practicing The Principles. They sent it to World hoping to have it serve as input to the development of a Tradition workbook.

Developing a Tradition workbook is not currently listed as a priority project by the Board.

The fact that Lone Star's motion circumvents a process we are all committed to living with and making work was brought up as troubling by some.

Motion 11: Limited Use Of NA Lit On Internet

The Board is willing to work with websites to try an experiment of non linked access to NA lit. Right now we can access lit posted on NA.org by linking.

Motion 14: Reduce Requirement for Election to World Board from 60 to 51%

In opposition: Fear-based motions, like all fear-based actions, are not soundly grounded.

In favor: Simplification and streamlining is a good idea.

Motions 17, 18 & 19: Resolution A Plans To Downsize WSC

Whatever else these motions have engendered, they have also engendered a backlash "Rescind Resolution A" movement. We will hear that motion in new business at WSC.

Maybe many of us are no longer interested in the plans offered in these motions because the changes that have taken place at the WSC along with the growing internationalism of the fellowship lessen the need to downsize or eliminate too dominate USA influence.

Or, maybe the motions are 10 years too early. The fellowship will grow toward the right solution. Meanwhile the experience, strength and hope of US fellowship can contribute in a positive way.

(Motions on which no viewpoints or discussion were reported were omitted from the above—ed.)

Conference Approval Track

Another condensation of a report by our RD, Muk. This report covers the project plan proposals to be offered at WSC 2004 and identifies for each project plan the priority assigned to it by the World Board.

Section One: Proposals With Highest Priority

1. Business Plan Workgroup: This is identified as a top priority, but one that represents 'routine' business, i.e., it is identified as a necessity for ongoing business functions.

The workgroup will operate to implement an individual member contribution portal, an online shopping cart. It will evaluate the current financial reserve policies and financial management policies. It will evaluate the effectiveness of marketing to correction & treatment facilities. It will consider printing alternatives for communities where lit is currently provided close to free of costs. Having set aside the 5% increase in lit prices, it will recommend future changes. It will develop and frame messages that focus on donations paying for services.

Cost \$53,600

2. Basic Text: Assuming Motion 4 is passed this project is identified as an initial priority. The workgroup in charge would: develop a plan for drafting text and soliciting stories by dec 2004; acquire stories, edit them and generate initial draft by dec 2005; finalize draft by July 2006; make available for fellowship review & input from sept 2006-march 2007; publish approval form of text in sept 2007; get WSC approval 2008.

Cost \$119,200

3. Leadership Identification & Development: Like the Basic Text project this is identified as an initializing priority. The purpose of the project is to evaluate current NAWS strategies for identifying and cultivating leaders in the fellowship. The initial part of the project involves coordinated efforts between HRP (Human Resource Panel) and World Board. The project as currently envisioned would have these people consider how face-to-face events and activities can be better utilized to develop leadership skills. It would also involve designing methods for mentoring future leaders, involving people with potential in activities that showcase their strengths and expose them to wider interaction. Finally it would involve developing strategies to build the world pool.

Cost \$44,480

4. NAWS Communication & Publications: This project also gets an initial priority rating from the board. It would involve evaluating and improving the methods by which world services reports to and receives input and feedback from fellowship members and service bodies. It would bring closure to the original communications project.

Cost \$47,360

5. Public Relations Strategy: Another high priority project, this one involves building on the initial efforts of the

PR Roundtables. We want to help addicts find NA in order to help them recover. We have already discovered that our public image needs improvement, that our relationships with treatment and correction facility professionals need improvement. Moving to generate positive results without violating traditions and moving to coordinate PR efforts within the entire NA community are the focus of the project. It is important to note the interface between the PR project and the Service Handbook project that comes next.

Cost \$78,720

6. Service Handbooks: The last two high priority proposals involve Service Handbooks and Materials. The first proposes completing a PI handbook long identified as an important need by the Conference. The Board hopes to have this handbook ready for approval in the next cycle.

Cost \$78,720

7. Service Materials: The purpose of this project is to create new or revise material on service and on other topics concerning NA philosophy to better serve the growing NA community. Topic priorities in order are: giving the newcomer a chance to recover (behavior at meetings/ predatory behavior); availability of NA message regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion (third tradition material). Second rank priorities (not in order): disruptive people at meetings; activities and financial responsibility and other financial issues; revision of existing bulletins; WSC for beginners. Final rank (not in order): common needs; anonymity.

Cost \$40,200

Section One: Proposals With Medium Priority

Defining leadership Qualities in NA \$38,360

Self-Support—new IP to foster donation based fellowship financing \$33,360

Service Structure Relationship & Definition—clarify roles of levels of service \$45,360

Targeted Literature—build a range of literature (youth in recovery/medication in recovery are top priorities/ benefit of service to recovery, spiritual development of members with many years clean are second level priorities)) to meet diverse needs of fellowship \$92,400

Section One: Proposals With Lowest Priority

Capturing Long-Time Members Experience (the history project) \$55,360

Consensus-Based Decision-Making at WSC \$33,360

Fellowship Issue Discussion—facilitate fellowship wide discussion of specific issues \$36,360

Literature Distribution & Convention Workshop \$28,400

Worldwide Workshops-6 workshops in conference cycle/each costs \$30-35,000 total cost \$152,000