



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

July 2004

Fund Flow

The May RSC sent an \$8,200 contribution to N.A. World Services, following an identical contribution in March, and bringing the total contribution for 2004 thus far to \$16,600. This left \$17,406.62 in the bank as of 5/15.

As in March, there was some discussion as to whether this was prudent, but the motion passed unanimously and none of those questioning the size of the contribution were among the voting members.

NJRC19 A Success

We had the opportunity to spend part of a Saturday at the 19th Annual New Jersey Convention, and while final numbers were not yet available as this went to press, the affair seems likely to have finished well in the black. By noon Saturday, total registration already exceeded the previous year's total, and by all accounts the banquet was well-attended.

Apropos of nothing, our favorite workshop of those we attended was that of the *Too Young to Die* group from Ocean Area, who provided very straightforward presentations with a minimum of theatrics. (*ie*, they spoke about as they would have without the microphone.)

In terms of programming, we still seemed to have a number of time slots in which we had workshops going in only half the available rooms. There would seem to be considerable room available to expand the number of slots run by areas or groups.

Regional Delegate Position Open

One result of the World Service Conference was the election of our Regional Delegate, Muk, to the World Board. This necessitated her resignation as RD at the May region. (We offer the appropriate combination of congratulations and condolences. Thus the RD and RD Alternate positions are open for election at the July meeting. Additionally, the positions of Public Information chair, Policy Chair and Vice-chair, Assistant Secretary, and a member of the Convention Board of Trustees are up for election. The position of Convention Chair is also scheduled for election, but barring some unusual controversy this is generally a matter of approving the person elected at the Convention's election meeting.

May Elections/Other Business

The May RSC elected Ted T. as Regional Secretary, and Debbie L. as Statewide Helpline Representative. Congratulations and best wishes to both over the next year.

A motion passed unanimously to pay our printer \$4,118.10 for the Summer printing of the Meeting Directory. Another motion, to pay \$250 for internet access service for the service workshops at the convention also passed unanimously.

The State of our Services

Culling through the reports of our Chair and Vice-chair, it appears that we could (and should) be doing a vastly better job of communication and work at both the regional and area levels.

The chair's May report focused largely on communication, including an example in his personal experience from some months ago, where in spite of his presence at an ASC meeting, the area was placed in the position of voting on a regional motion based entirely on incorrect information due to a procedural ruling that only their RCM could provide them with information, even if that person had none. Both the region and its member areas have the perennial problem of following a policy interpretation "out the window," often in defiance of the most basic common sense. Greater attention to what we are trying to accomplish and whether we are helping or hindering ourselves in that effort would come in handy here.

The vice-chairs report indicates that our PI efforts are in their more-usual-than-not state of chaos, and that the bulk of needed positions on the Shared Services Helpline committee remain vacant.

Public Information has always had difficulty in creating and maintaining a stable committee structure, both at the Regional level and in most of the areas. The pattern has been that the election of an extremely active member sometimes leads to a flurry of activity for a year, but that no institutional continuity ever develops. The basic requirements for us to be able to claim that we are doing effective PI work would be functioning committees at the area level, to respond to inquiries, and a few reliable speakers to give presentations as needed. Even this minimal level of effectiveness has been a rare exception for at least a decade. (*continued*)

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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.

**Issues of SANITY can be downloaded from the statewide website,
[www,nanj.org](http://www.nanj.org)**

Powerless in the Pines

That most basic and ancient of NA campouts in New Jersey is upon us again. On the last weekend of July, the usual suspects will convene at Bodine Field. Cost is ten bucks. Nothing but the bonfire is provided.



The State of our Services, continued

As the vice-chair points out, part of this is the dual problem we have throughout our structure: "There are not enough people involved in service, and those that are involved in service are too distracted to communicate with others, except perhaps their running buddies."

Another problem is that we often don't get people for whom building any kind of a functioning committee is any kind of a priority. After all, the more important it is to us to do things as we personally think best, the less involvement by others we want. Throughout the state, our structure is riddled with one person "committees" and with service bodies who provide no direction to them.

If we ever want to have an actual "system" in place, rather than merely "filling" a chair position, and then abrogating all further responsibility, a great deal more attention needs to be devoted to finding and recruiting moderately level-headed people who are willing to do rather prosaic, ongoing work, rather than burning themselves out on one or another spectacular and ego-gratifying project of their own choosing. These, alas, are often not the people who put themselves forward to fill working commitments, and they are often the very people who have misgivings about involvement in the structure due to our past (and to some extent present) tendency toward controversialism for its own sake.

Step Four, a Brief Ramble

"Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies."—Nietzsche

Back in the day they used to say, with reference to the second and third steps, that "the only thing you need to know about God is that you're not him." It sometimes seems that we could equally well say about the fourth step: "The only thing you need to know about who you are is that you don't already know."

Certainly for me, the hardest part of the process was not the acquiring of new knowledge, but becoming willing to abandon the already existing pseudo "knowledge."

I arrived at the fourth step believing two big howlers, the first being that I actually wanted to know who I really was (not entirely true.) The second was that I already generally knew who I was, and that this would thus be a rather simple exercise (even less true.)

What I actually had going was a deep-rooted attachment to a fictional "me" created by my own imagination, and a correspondingly fictional version of "the world" to which the imaginary "me" related.

As I wrote, I grew gradually more and more amazed at how automatically I edited reality to make it fit the preconceived notion of who I was. By the time I had completed that first inventory and proceeded to the next step, some of the bigger lies I'd been telling myself had been broken apart and replaced with something a bit more accurate, but not to such an extent that the job could be pronounced complete. Nor can it be pronounced complete today. The capacity for self-delusion seems to be infinite, and as more obvious self-deceptions are cleared away, the ego seems inclined to get trickier and replace them with progressively more subtle ones.

So the job can probably never be finished. But, as I've found since I got here, the fact that the job is by definition "undoable" doesn't mean that I don't need to do it. The undoable jobs are, if anything, even more important than the doable ones.