



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

July 2005

Major P.I. Projects Underway

The May RSC meeting gave its approval and funding to two major Public Information initiatives, at a total cost of \$5,370.

The first, focused on prisons, involved authorizing \$3,839.09 to purchase a case (28 books) each of basic texts for each of fourteen correctional facilities in New Jersey (392 Basic Texts total). The project, according to the P.I. report, also called for a similar expenditure on the part of the Northern New Jersey region.

The second provided \$1,531.82 for 168 Basic Texts to be distributed along with an information packet to each Drug Court Coordinator, TASC Evaluator and Criminal Judge in the state.

Additional projects are in the works, with the Northern New Jersey region's PI committee responsible for developing a mailing for parole and probation officers and a bus poster project.

Organizational Issues

The recent high level of joint activity by the New Jersey and Northern New Jersey P.I. committees raises some questions that tie into some more general organizational issues.

The two regions operate with a shared services agreement that governs aspects of our joint efforts on the meeting directory, helpline and website. Public Information has not been covered by that agreement, but the current method of proceeding creates many aspects of a shared service committee without even the minimal rules and structure that govern those services that are formally recognized as shared services.

To take one example, the above motions stemmed from a joint meeting of the two regions' Public Information committees in April. They set up some ground rules to their own satisfaction, one of which was: "The funding for each statewide project will be determined in advance as to whether it should be a cost that is divided between the two regions or offset by a similar project (ie: NJ PI mails a packet to the courts and NNJ PI mails a packet to probation and Parole.)"

Better some agreement than none, we suppose, but such agreements are only between the members of two committees neither of which have final authority to commit themselves to anything. Institutionally, there is no structure in place for oversight either by the Shared Services Commit-

tee or indeed by the regions as far as the overall joint planning goes. (For the benefit of the more paranoid among our readership, it should be noted that this is not an accusation of "dope fiend" maneuvering, but just a suggestion that, as with many of our services, the work has outrun the preexisting structure and a new one probably needs to be developed.)

Tracking Results?

These outreach efforts also offer the opportunity to raise another issue that often comes up in N.A. Service. What is the desired result of a particular project and how do we go about attempting to track whether that result is being achieved? We place 56 Basic Texts in each facility in hopes of accomplishing -what, specifically? (And no, "carry the message" is not specific.) A satisfactory result would be-what? And we hope to know if we are accomplishing that result-how? These are useful questions to ask about any project or service, but we rarely seem to ask them in any systematic way.

Convention-related News

As this issue goes to press, the twentieth annual convention has passed into history, and we should have a brief report on it next issue. The site and date for next year's convention have been approved, and it will be held at the Cherry Hill Clarion June 9-11, 2006.

The sometimes contentious issue of dual membership on the Convention Planning Committee and Board of Trustees has been settled (at least for now) by passage at the May region of the following policy: "The Convention Chair and Treasurer are the only two positions from the Convention Planning Committee allowed to sit on both the Board of Trustees and the Convention Planning Committee. All other members may sit on either BOT or Planning Committee, but not both."

A motion was initially brought to the floor to add language on grounds for removal of convention officers and members, to include misappropriation or misuse of funds, misrepresentation to outside parties, (both cases requiring a 2/3 vote) and failure to attend 2 consecutive Planning Committee meetings (automatic at end of second meeting). Due to questions that arose during debate, this was tabled back to the convention Board of Trustees to be reworked and clarified.

Vacancies, Vacancies...

The July RSC will attempt, during elections, to fill the positions of Helpline Liaison, Website Representative, Assistant Secretary, Policy Chair, Assistant Policy, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Public Information chair, and Literature Review Chair. Also on tap will be the (usually routine) confirmation of the Board of Trustees chair and Convention chair for NJRC XXI. On the committee level, the Helpline Committee reported openings for its Chair, Vice-chair, Regional liaison, computer technical member, financial analyst member, answering service liaison, and general committee members (basically everybody). As the committee reports, "Most current members have been serving for 5 to 8 years continuously and are getting burned out. We need new members bringing new ideas and energy."

The website committee also reported itself needing a secretary and a representative from each region. (On a shared service committee set up like this one, the regional reps. are the people really responsible for maintaining communication between the committee and those it serves. Note that the regional liaison position was also open on the helpline committee. This goes a long way to explaining the current dissatisfaction of some members of the Region with communication vis-a-vis the various shared service committees.)

Spanish-speaking Update

The work on updating the Spanish-speaking elements of the Helpline and other services reported last issue is continuing. Angel D. reports that movement is happening on updating the Spanish content on the answering system, and that updating the list of Spanish-speaking volunteers is proceeding.

Outside Activities (not issues)

Its summer, and time to get out and stop whining that we're bored. The South Jersey Area recently conducted a hiking trip in the Delaware Water Gap, and will be hosting the 22nd Powerless in the Pines campout at Bodine Field July 22-24th. The suggested donation is \$10, and you bring everything you need except sand and trees.

The Northwest Area of the Northern NJ region now seems to be sponsoring fairly frequent mountain bike trips, which are posted on the statewide website events schedule.

There seem to be considerably more events in this region than are listed on the website, so if your area has nothing listed there, it might be worth finding out why not. The process for listing events is fairly self-explanatory, and its a good way to spread the word beyond your own area.

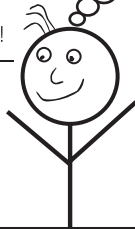
The (mis)Adventures of Nicky Newcomer



What's your understanding of acceptance, Nicky?



I'm just the guy to ask! Its like the book says—



I know how to read, too, Nicky. What's YOUR understanding of acceptance?



Well, my sponsor, whose so awesome you get an extra year clean just from listening to his convention tape, always says—



What we have here is a failure to communicate. I asked for YOUR understanding, my little stick figure friend.



Well, if you're going to be such a literalist, I guess I don't really have an understanding.



Oh well, at least your sponsor and the folks who wrote the book may be getting somewhere.



At least I understand that you annoy me.

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Opinions expressed here are those of individual addicts, not N.A. as a whole.

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www.nanj.org**