

Sanity



March 2007



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

Feature of the Month

NJRSC Website: NANJ.ORG

The NJRSC Website is a tool for the recovering addict, the still-suffering addict, and a good source of information for the traveler or anyone interested in the Fellowship to keep abreast of all Narcotics Anonymous meetings and information.

The Website Committee is comprised of several knowledgeable and dedicated individuals who strive to create a user-friendly site for the average person to be able to access easily and efficiently. The committee is continually striving to improve and update the information pages of the Website.

The Activities page has a constant turn-over of information regarding NA events in the State. However, this information is only as good as the people who provide it. All NA events can be posted on the Website, but first someone needs to take the time to access the site and follow the directions for posting. This page can also be used as a tool for planning events to see if other Areas have already planned an event for that same date.

One can always go to the Statewide Meeting listing page to find a meeting in any area of the State that they might be traveling to. This listing is constantly updated, but as with events, it is essential that someone access the site with a meeting update or new listing in order for it to be posted. The New Jersey Region and North New Jersey Region work together to keep the meeting listings current. Once received, this information is placed on the Website within a day or two. It is an up-to-date listing, rather than the NJ Statewide Meeting Directory, which is only printed every six to nine months.

Locations and directions to Region meetings and Committee meetings are also listed on the Website. Everyone is welcome to attend any Committee meeting.

Please come visit the NJRSC Website at nanj.org. However, keep in mind that in order to keep the listings current, the Website needs the assistance of the people who run the Committees and Group meetings to tell the Website when changes are necessary because the **NJRSC Website is a tool for the recovering addict, the still-suffering addict, and a good source of information.**



NA World Services Bulletin #31 Meeting Attendance Cards

... In recent years, many of our groups have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of people attending an NA meeting with a meeting attendance card of some type. The group is asked to validate that person's attendance by signing the paper, sometimes referred to as a court card. (When we use the terms *meeting attendance card* or *court card* we mean any one of an assortment of signature cards or other papers a person presents for a signature to verify their attendance at an NA meeting.)

Many of these attendance cards came about as tools developed by drug courts to verify the mandatory attendance component of their sentences. ... One of the principal concerns expressed over and over again is whether signing a meeting attendance card conflicts with the guidance expressed in Traditions Six and Ten. We don't believe that it does in principle-though we encourage each group to discuss this question for themselves, just as we have done. The rationale for our thinking is: If a group were to report on members' attendance, their behavior, whether they stay for the whole meeting, their participation or lack thereof, or report somehow on the nature of their recovery, we might say that the line between cooperation and affiliation had been crossed. But, when at the request of people attending our meeting, we simply provide verification of their attendance without any consideration of why they are requesting that verification, we believe that is a reasonable approach that doesn't endorse or affiliate with the requesting agency.

We must remember that our intent here is solely to carry the message; it is not to serve as an agent of, or assistant to, an outside organization. Addicts arrive at the doors of Narcotics Anonymous for a variety of reasons, many times relating to external pressures. Ultimately, their desire to stay in NA will depend on whether or not they have a desire to stop using drugs. Our purpose--to carry the message of recovery from drug addiction--remains the same regardless of the reason(s) a person may

come to our meetings.

Clearly, the Fourth Tradition leaves the final decision to each group as to whether or not to accommodate meeting attendance cards. ...

- Some groups have expressed a frustration and a feeling of being challenged by an influx of people with meeting attendance cards coming to their meetings. Some have gone so far as to tell individuals with these cards that they are not welcome at that group. While we understand the frustration these groups might feel, we would encourage you to avoid such behavior. ...

"NA as a whole has no opinion on drug courts, but drug courts are free to have an opinion about NA. There's nothing in the traditions that prohibits us from cultivating good relationships with local drug courts. We can do this by cooperating with them: Welcoming the newcomers they send us and signing or stamping their court cards, having our PI committee members meet with drug court professionals, and providing those professionals with material that explains our program to the non-member." (The above paragraph has been excerpted from the *NAWS, Inc., Annual Report*, 1 January-30 June 1999, p. 13.)

CONCLUSION Drug courts, meeting attendance cards, and mandated attendance at NA meetings have become a reality of life and can be compatible with our primary purpose. A Narcotics Anonymous group has two basic choices in facing this reality: be proactive, have a plan of action, and then consistently carry through with it; or choose not to validate the attendance cards when they are presented. Ultimately, this is the group's choice to make. We would urge you--when making your decision--to seek the course of action you feel is most likely to help the addict who still suffers. NAWS may be a valuable resource for your group in deciding what is the best course of action. Feel free to contact the World Service Office for assistance. *

* Source: NA World Services Bulletin #31

Letters to the Editor:

Subject: **Know when to hold them
Know when to fold them**



Dear NJRSC:

Like in the Kenny Roger song, the Gambler: "you got to know when to hold them and know when fold them". The same is true for some of our suffering meetings today. I have been in the Fellowship for many years. In the 80's there were very few meetings and they were always full of desperate addicts getting clean. No meeting was ever struggling for trusted servants or in need of support. When it came time to fill a trusted servant position there were 3, 4, or 5 addicts looking to come to take a commitment. Everyone wanted a service commitment because it was the right thing to do as a

part of your recovery. Some meetings even had two people as coffee makers. A position was formed called the GHIR, which was the Group Hospital & Institution Representative because there was willingness everywhere to fill all our positions all the times.

Today, with over 700 meetings in New Jersey, one would hope the same passion and enthusiasm towards commitments would hold true for the Groups, Areas, and Region. There are many announcements being read that groups/meetings are in need of support, cannot fill some of their own positions, or that one or two Addicts are carrying the meeting by doing all the commitments.

The Group has a responsibility to take their own inventory at least once a year to find out if the Group is effectively carrying the message. There are times when addicts show up to meetings where there meeting is struggling or under attended.

Do we need all these meetings today? are open positions or there are only a handful of members at that meeting.

What is even crazier is that there are meetings just down the road on the same night and about the same starting time. Sounds like a coffee pot and a resentment! It is nice to say you started a meeting but sometimes it effects Narcotics Anonymous as a whole when it draws members away other meetings. The image of open positions or low attendance at meetings might make the newcomer or the outsider think the **The Addict** today is very fortunate to have meetings morning, noon, and night; every day of the week. It is a painful thought to close a meeting. Who benefits from this selfish act? Is it the still sick and suffering Addict looking for recovery for their very first time? Please take the time to look at your meeting and reassess its purpose and the need it fills. If it cannot serve its purpose, maybe the meeting should fold or merge with another meeting to create stronger meetings. Remember, what I cannot do alone, we can do together. Anonymous

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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 NA as a whole.

Issues of SANITY can be downloaded from the NJ Statewide Website at **www.nanj.org**

Words of Wisdom:

STEP ONE 'We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.' *

* Basic Text, page 19

Editor: MD