

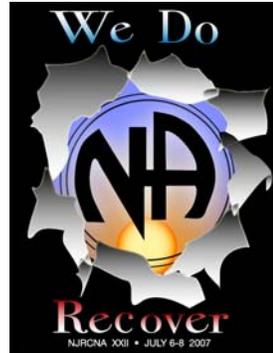
# Sanity

Newsletter of the New Jersey Region



July 2007

NA UNITY  
Alive and well!



## NJ Region Convention History

**Kudos to the convention committee.** Let us put another feather in the cap of the Regional Convention Committee for a job well done!

**NJRCNA XXII** was an awesome success. In 2007 the convention was once again held at the Hilton Hotel in East Brunswick. As usual, everyone received a warm welcome from the **Hug Squad** when they entered the building and any other time they needed a hug. NA love was abundant! Recovery was abundant!

The Convention Committee's hard work resulted in a series of wonderful speakers and workshops. Not enough can be said about the speakers. The choices of speakers were so diverse that it was difficult to choose who you wanted to hear. The message of recovery was in the air. The opening speaker, the main speaker and the closing speaker all held the room's attention and lived up to the convention's theme of WE DO RECOVER!

The entertainment also earned points. For those who needed to let loose, on Friday evening there was a dance with a fabulous band. The comics at the Saturday evening Comedy Show filled the room with laughter and enjoyment.

Attendance far surpassed expectations. In years past, attendance ran between 800 and 950. In 2007, Convention attendance was in excess of 1400 recovering addicts.

During the Cleantime Countdown, the time ran from 25 years clean to less than 24 hours clean. The total Cleantime for those who entered their time in the computer, totaled 3,063 years.

The goal of the convention committee was to hold the best ever convention and it appears that they attained success! **Kudos to the convention committee.**

During the 1980's, there were very few conventions and people would travel across the country to attend them. The first NJ Regional

**Success of today's Regional Convention** is a culmination of years of dedicated service by a multitude of volunteers whose purpose has been to carry the message of recovery.

The journey to hold a 'Unity Day' began as an idea in June 1984 after a group of addicts attended the Fifth East Coast Convention held in Townsend, Maryland, at Yale University where the motto was 'Jail to Yale'. After attending this convention, several recovering addicts got together seeking other volunteers who might be interested in creating a Unity Day in New Jersey.

At that time, the State of New Jersey had only one Region called New Jersey Region. The group of volunteers held a meeting in Nutley and enthusiastically expanded the project that they called Unity Overnight, which eventually turned into a Convention. They sold T-shirts to raise funds for the convention expenses. Fundraiser events were held to make money for the convention. No Seventh Tradition money has ever been used to pay for any convention expenses.

The first convention was held in 1986 in Asbury Park at the Berkeley Carteret Hotel on the weekend after the World Service Conference in California. At the Conference, changes to the Fellowship were discussed to allow Narcotics Anonymous to stand on its own rather than attached to the coattails of Alcoholic Anonymous. This World Service information was the major topic of discussion at the first convention helping to open the door to NA's standing as a Fellowship on its own.

The first convention was an overwhelming success in Asbury Park and shortly thereafter meetings were started in that City with meetings throughout the County soon following

convention was so successful that the committee decided to hold another convention the following year. Unfortunately, the second convention was plagued with a series of misfortunes, one of which dealt with racial issues that were completely unfounded. These issues caused the Chair to resign leaving a struggling committee to hold the convention together. There were also issues of noise and vandalism at the hotel that made NA unwelcome. Things needed to change.

With pleasant and unpleasant experiences under their belt, the committee decided to regroup, clean up, and start over with a positive attitude. They formed a Convention Corporation and a Board of Trustees and a third convention was once again successfully held in Asbury Park.

The Board of Trustees developed a bid process to decide where the conventions would be held. When the bid process was in its infancy and the committee was learning about selection, there was an issue with selecting a location in north New Jersey vs. a location in central New Jersey and because of the way it was handled, North New Jersey decided to break away from New Jersey Region and became North New Jersey Region.

At the first convention, during the Cleantime Countdown, two people stood up with less than 24 hours clean. They came back to the second convention and stood up with one year clean. They are still clean today, which is a testament to **the success of today's Regional convention.**

## WORKSHOPPING

AT THE CONVENTION

Website

[www.nanj.org](http://www.nanj.org)



Although the Website Committee has a full membership of dedicated individuals, the New Jersey Region Website Workshop, held by the Website Chair, was sparsely attended.

The Chair explained that the NJ Regional Website is designed to be viewer-friendly and is a wealth of information for all addicts. A current listing of Statewide meetings can be found. This is particularly informational to the traveling addict seeking a meeting while on the road.

The Website also lists NA activities and events throughout the State, committee information and

Helpline list. There is a Helpline cleantime requirement of one year to be placed on the Phoneline listing.

service information. The next Website Committee meeting will be held on August 18, 2007, at 10:00 AM at Knights of Columbus in Edison. All are invited.

## WORKSHOPPING

AT THE CONVENTION

Helpline



**The primary purpose of the Helpline is to direct the sick and suffering addict to a meeting.**

There are two primary access telephone numbers in New Jersey to access contact information.

The origin of the Helpline began many years ago with an answering machine in a recovering addict's closet. The 800 number was obtained in 1985 to be utilized by people looking for help who do not have money. The committee wanted people to be able to find Narcotics Anonymous for free.

When the calls to the answering machine outgrew the closet, an answering service took over. In those days, cost rates were low. However, in 1997 the service raised the rates considerably. At that time, the number of calls averaged 3,500 to 4,500 per month and the committee started to investigate using a semi-automatic system. On August 3, 1998, a local 732 number was implemented with a semi-automatic service that has two systems to take the calls so that there is always a back-up service.

The automated system that receives all calls allows the caller go through an automated system using menu prompts. At the end, they get to speak to a live person who will provide telephone numbers of three gender-specific volunteers.

When the Helpline service began, the cost was \$35,000 per year because all calls had to go through an answering service. When it was automated, reducing the calls to the answering service, the cost was drastically reduced.

The Helpline averages 24,000 calls per month to this line and the 800 number and today costs the Fellowship approximately \$13,000 annually.

It is important that the Helpline telephone numbers be kept current and should be updated every few months. There are workshops held to guide the volunteers through Helpline service. Once a person is workshopped, they can be placed on the

commitment that must be taken very seriously because there are times when it might interfere with other activities in our lives. However, once we accept the commitment, we must fulfill it and learn that we have to say 'no' to anything else that comes up on the particular day of our commitment. The people in these facilities depend on, and look forward to, H & I

However, each Area Service might have a different requirement.

In updating and confirming the Helpline volunteers, they are called individually and if they do not respond within a week, they are removed from the list. When contact is made, they must verify that they are remaining clean, attending meetings, and abiding by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA. They must also provide the committee with their zip code because the Helpline numbers are given to the callers by zip code.

Helpline volunteers will receive a list of Guidelines and Do's and Don'ts for being on the Helpline listing. They must also be willing to make everyone in their household aware that they are on the Helpline and instruct the household members on how to deal with potential telephone calls.

Any voicemail messages must be clear and precise because, as a Helpline call recipient, you are a representative of Narcotics Anonymous. There are times when the call you receive needs to be directed to Public Information or Hospitals and Institutions, so these telephone contact numbers should be kept by the phone. People may be calling from one area code, but actually live in another, so a current meeting list must be immediately accessible.

No Helpline member is to give advice or act as counselors. All contact must be handled in a caring, loving and kind manner and occasionally it might be necessary to instruct the person on the other end of the phone to dial 911.

**The primary purpose of the Helpline is to direct the sick and suffering addict to a meeting.**

## WORKSHOPPING

AT THE CONVENTION

### Hospitals & Institutions



**The responsibility of Hospitals and Institutions is very important.** The H & I panel members go into jails and institutions to pass the message of hope to the men and women who cannot get out to meetings and let them know that when they leave the facility they will have a place to go. Service on an H & I panel has no greater reward than when we see a recovering addict at a meeting and they say 'thank you'.

Accepting a position on an H & I panel is a

must have read the Do's and Don'ts. Speakers need to have a clear message because we represent NA as a whole.

The presentation that H & I brings into a facility is a representation of an NA meeting. It shows people that they will have a place to go when

bringing in a regularly scheduled presentation. NA cannot let them down. In some instances, an H & I presentation is the first message of recovery and hope that these people hear.

In order to be eligible to enter a jail, members of the panel are subject to background checks. This is not so in other facilities. Clearance after a background check varies depending on any offenses that the panel members might have had in the past. Some members are unable to obtain clearance.

The H & I Committee has Guidelines that the panel members must follow. In addition, different facilities and jails also have their own guidelines. Some of these standard guidelines include: no jewelry, no cigarettes, no money, no chewing gum, or to never give out telephone numbers.

The H & I Committee Guidelines include:

1. Structure: The NA Guidelines that are in the Handbook indicate that the group structure is to carry the message of Area Service as an H & I subcommittee. It is recommended that each Homegroup have a member who is part of the H & I panel. A trusted panel of four or five people takes an H & I presentation into a facility.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of H & I is to go into places where people cannot get out to go to meetings. It is not to go to schools or facilities that can take their people to meetings. Appropriate dress is important because H & I panel members must represent NA as a whole so that people can relate to them and feel that they are in a 'comfort zone'.
3. Message: H & I passes the message that once people leave the facility they will have a place to go to seek recovery. H & I gives them hope.

In taking the message into facilities, the panel members of H & I must work together in the spirit of unity. If the chair of the panel cannot make it to a commitment, other members must take over because they must get to the facility at all costs.

Speakers who go into facilities should be screened, must be dressed appropriately, and

## WORKSHOPPING

AT THE CONVENTION

### Public Information

**The goal of Public Information is to inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous**

and to let them know that help is available for the still suffering addict through the Fellowship.

Public Information (PI) does not go into facilities to give presentations to addicts. PI goes into facilities to present information to the staff, informing them of the services of Narcotics Anonymous. They tell them



they leave the facility. **Therefore, the responsibility of Hospitals and Institutions is very important.**

## AT THE CONVENTION Regional Delegates



**Regional Delegates carry the conscience of Region.** They attend World Service for a four-day meeting every two years when the Conference Agenda Report (CAR) is presented. The Regional Delegate (RD) and Regional Delegate Alternate (RDA) hold workshops on the CAR for any group who is interested in learning about the content of the document so that they can take the information back to their Groups for a Group conscience. The next CAR is due out in November 2007.

The RD and RDA also attend the Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference of Narcotics Anonymous (MARLCNA) each February, which is a learning conference of workshops on various topics. Everyone is welcome to attend MARLCNA.

The Northeast Zonal Forum meets every six months in a different location in the northeast. The last topic at the Zonal Forum was the Area Planning Tool. The next topic will be Regional Insurance. The RD and RDA attend these forums to bring information back to Region on the specific topics.

World Service has a World Pool where people can submit resumes to that will put them in a pool to hold positions or participate in workgroups. August 31, 2007 is the deadline for the World Pool. [www.naws.org](http://www.naws.org)

Anyone interested in holding a position at NA World Service must first obtain from their Area Service a recommendation, which is taken to Regional Service where a nomination to World Service will be made.

So, the next time you have any questions or need any information on any NA related issue, seek out the RD or RDA because chances are they will have the answer because **Regional Delegates carry the conscience of Region.**

Editor: MD

of the availability of meetings and that Hospitals and Institutions can bring weekly presentations into their facilities.

In addition, Public Information places literature in schools, hospitals, and facilities. Schools are of particular mention because the youth are very vulnerable and are easy pray for drug dealers. Educating children as early as possible is important, as the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

Public Information can also place posters with the NA Helpline telephone number on them in public places. In some areas, billboards have been used and in one area there are signboards on busses with the Helpline number.

Drug Court Judges are sent literature, meeting lists, information, and Basic Texts to introduce them to Narcotics Anonymous.

PI projects should be designed to fit the needs of the community because **the goal of Public Information is to inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous**

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Send input and articles to:

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Please put 'Sanity' in the subject line.

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.nani.org](http://www.nani.org)

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**Words of Wisdom:**

**Register early for NJRCNA XXIII**