



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

May 2004

Fund Flow

After considerable discussion, the March region sent a contribution of \$8,200 to N.A. world services. The January meeting had sent only our \$200/region mandated minimum.

Confusion this time centered on whether to follow policy and donate pretty much everything above our (hefty) prudent reserve and suggested operating balance, or to additionally attempt to guess at future expenses and effectively create an "even more prudent" reserve.

While the discussion was animated, the consensus was eventually that we could easily afford to contribute the \$8200, and the motion to do so passed unanimously. After doing so, the region was left with a balance exceeding \$16,000 at close of business.

20th NJ Convention to be Statewide?

The Convention Board of Trustees reported that the Northern New Jersey Region had expressed considerable interest in making the 2005 Convention, which would be NJRC20, a statewide affair, and that some preliminary work had already been done towards making this possible.

For those interested in history, this has not been the case since the creation of the Northern Region, which took place at least in part due to conflicts over site location for the regional conventions. For several years there was a Northern New Jersey regional convention, but that ceased to exist a few years ago. The two regions provide the bulk of their actual services in cooperation with one another. The Helpline, the Statewide meeting directory and the website are not purely services of this region but are provided cooperatively between the two.

But enough background! The region unanimously passed a motion giving the BOT a vote of confidence to proceed with plans to "investigate the possibilities" of a joint convention.

But First—

Region wouldn't be region without periodically tying itself in procedural knots, and we are delighted to report that this was again accomplished in March.

In the course of chatting about the above convention possibility during discussion of the BOT report, it was

realized that we still had, lying around on the parliamentary table, another convention related motion awaiting its "day in the sun."

This was the motion made awhile back to disband the convention after this year's event, which had been tabled to the July region to see if less radical measures might suffice.

It was determined that a motion to do anything at all regarding NJRC20 would be out of order as long as a motion remained on the table to fold up the tent after NJRC19. This was now dealt with by suspending the rules, bringing the tabled motion up ahead of the business portion of the meeting and defeating it. There was at least as much discussion of the procedural mechanics as of the merits or lack thereof of the motion itself.

Convention Oversight Discussed

One of the noisier periods of the March meeting occurred during the discussion of a motion to require the planning committee chair to include in each report to the region the following info.:

- 1) Number of registrants,
- 2) Number of room nights reserved.
- 3) Balance of prudent reserve.
- 4) Accounting of all expenditures for any or all convention activities from (sic) any/all purchases.
- 5) Total funds in Convention Committee accounts.

On the face of it, this seems a plausible request, as long as the region was willing to keep in mind how meaningless room and registration figures are until very close to the convention.

The way the debate developed, however, turned swiftly unpleasant, with some proponents of the motion sounding as if they thought the convention committee was trying to hide its financial state. (No actual evidence of anything of the kind was actually produced. People sometimes get carried away on the wings of their own rhetoric.)

The upshot of all this was that the motion failed on a 2-4-1 vote, but the Planning Committee chair, who seemed to have no objections to the motion but only to the nature of the discussion, was of the opinion that it might well be a good idea to start routinely including the information anyway.

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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 ofSANITY can be downloaded from the statewide website, [www,nanj.org](http://www.nanj.org)

Positions Filled and Open

The March meeting elected Edward Z., the RCM for South Jersey Area, to the Convention Board of Trustees. Eric E. was elected to the long neglected position of History and Archives chair.

Congratulations and best wishes to the new trusted servants.

The following positions are open for election at the May meeting: Secretary and Assistant Secretary, Policy Chair and Vice-chair, State Helpline Rep. and one member of the BOT.

The position of convention chair was also listed. This is normally a matter of the Region approving the person elected at the convention.

N.A. Survives Another WSC

As the merry month of May began, the biennial shindig in California was winding to a close, and at the end of the event Narcotics Anonymous still seemed to be as functional as ever. Our Regional Delegate has posted two very lengthy reports, written as the Conference was in progress, to the website. Interested members are encouraged to look those over for a pretty detailed account, not only of the results, but of the process leading to the results.

We (your editor and his cats) are still trying to figure out how to distill the main results into a coherent page or two that will be reasonably understandable at a glance. That article will hopefully appear in the July issue.

But this is not that article! This is just a random and arbitrary rambling through some of the more or less high points, coupled with a few digressions.

Fundamentally, we had few surprises. The basic motions proposed by the Board passed, some with amendments. The regional motions met with their by now predictable demises by various margins, though it appears that some of them functioned well as vehicles for discussion.

So—the Basic Text project will be moving forward, and we'll soon have a shiny new sponsorship booklet on the literature tables. The Board members voting rights were (once again) not rescinded, and we decided (once again) to neither put out a reduced cost version of Book 1 of the Basic Text nor to put in place various moratoriums on changes to same.

The Lone Star motion to push their Tradition Working Guides into the literature development process failed, though some opined that the idea of Tradition Working Guides in and of itself would be really spiffy. (Why? Asks one of my cats.)

The election process seems to have gone swimmingly, with all the board members one might hope for elected. A great deal of time seems to have been spent discussing the nature of the process, but a full report on this must be deferred until a date to be named later.

Digression 1: Given the lack of violent disagreement between the Board and the RDs, there was considerable kicking around of the term “rubber stamp” on listservs like NA Admin. But is it perhaps possible that the bulk of the board and the bulk of the Regional Delegates are simply in agreement on most of the issues? Is there some reason why this would automatically be a dreadful thing? For all the “collegiality” of recent years, the *official* mechanism of the conference has changed less than one might think, and the traditional methods of oppositional politics are there if people were motivated sufficiently to use them.

Digression 2: (where you stand depends on where you sit.) One of the more interesting pieces my youngest cat read after the WSC was by a lad from Minnesota who had been among the most bitter in his criticism of the Board's long statement on the non-necessity of Resolution A. In this piece he mentioned that what the board did on that was really the same as what they did in recommending scrapping the standing committee system. (In both cases deciding not to implement a previously mandated Conference decision.) But he had been quite angry about the one and not the other, because he happened to agree with the reasoning in the one case and not the other.

Digression 3: This confused one of my cats greatly. A major reason given for not moving forward on the consensus based decision making front was that it requires good communication, which has yet to be achieved. Raising the brow of her one good eye, she asked: “But don't *all* forms of collective decision making require good communication? Doesn't this really mean that you shouldn't be making any decisions at all?” In response, I was able only to drag out the old Emersonian chestnut; “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds.” (To be on the new service version of our medallions.)