



Roll, Fund Flow, Roll—

After yet another discussion of the meaning of the concepts of prudent reserve and working capital balance, the RSC amazed itself by doing for the first time what policy would seem to indicate that it always does, and actually passing a motion to contribute all funds above the target working capital balance. This led to a contribution of \$8,439.22, bringing the year-to-date total to somewhat in excess of \$36,000.

History and Archives Move Approved

The September region approved a motion made previously to move the archives to a temperature-controlled facility, in order to prevent the continuing deterioration of some of the materials stored there. The full annual cost is \$587, not a huge amount more than the previous facility.

The new History and Archives chair seems to have hit the ground running after some years of the position being vacant. (See his article on p3.) Those interested in helping to track down material or assist in preserving the record of our past should contact him.

Meeting List Sales

The question of bulk sales of the Statewide meeting directory outside the fellowship arose at the September region, and it arose in a couple of possibly contradictory ways. In the course of the meeting list report, it was mentioned that there had been a rather large bulk sale to one institution. This led to one of those discussions that's half-way to being a workshop. The possibility was raised that large bulk orders might not be desirable, due to the likelihood of facilities developing a large stock of obsolete meeting lists. (For the benefit of the uninitiated, we print a new directory roughly every six months, and there always a significant number of meeting deletions, additions, and time changes. When an institution works from a large stockpile, it may be continuing to use an increasingly inaccurate list even a year to a year and a half after it became history.)

There was no motion related to this particular issue, but the general view of those who were saying anything seemed to be that large bulk orders should probably not be encouraged.

Later in the business session, a financial motion was made to alter meeting directory pricing for bulk sales outside the fellowship in the direction of making them cheaper. (which would actually seem to be a way of *encouraging* large bulk orders.)

We presently charge 50 cents per list for non-N.A. orders of meeting lists, and about 19.61 cents (cost) +shipping, if any, for orders from within N.A.

The motion made (and tabled for further consideration) would change the policy on outside sales to do bulk orders of one thousand copies or more at cost +shipping. The general point as stated in the intent was "to make meeting lists more available and less costly to the still suffering addicts." Perhaps a factual connection will be made in later discussion if the motion returns to the floor in something like its present form, but it was not made during the September discussion. (ie, we heard no evidence of any institutions saying they wanted more lists but were unable to acquire them because of pricing issues. And realistically, institutions for whom this was an issue probably wouldn't be acquiring their lists thousands at a time in any case.)

Food fight! Food fight!

While questions about the pricing of meeting directories, improving the Archives and meeting our fiscal obligations may be interesting to some, it is not these issues that truly engage the deepest passions and evoke the strongest emotions in the members of the New Jersey Regional Service Conference. No, young Jedi, that honor is reserved for the most sacred of all issues: *The Free lunch*.

A brief historical background: In the dim and misty past, and your editor dates himself by admitting to remember it, the region took a fairly long lunch break and members headed to nearby restaurants. (RSC meetings begin at about 1pm, and generally end by sixish or so these days, though a particularly contentious session can drag on somewhat longer.) Getting a quorum of voting members back from the off-site lunch often seemed to take forever.

And so the following tradition developed (this is tradition as in a body of common practice developed over time, not tradition as in 12 things that aren't steps or concepts). The hosting area obtains food for the day, the basket gets passed among the region's members, and the remaining cost, if any,

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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

Food fight, cont.

is paid by the regional treasury.

Some intrepid member realized that this means that some fraction of the bimonthly lunch is actually not being paid for by those consuming it, but by the (lets all gasp in unison here), seventh tradition contributions of the areas.

Those who found this undesirable proposed a policy motion to change the method of payment to the following: Instead of paying towards the food for the meeting at which it was passed, the basket contribution of the Region members would establish the food fund for the *following* region. \$100 collected, \$100 worth of food next meeting, etc.

After some amusingly heated argument, the motion predictably went down in flames. (The voting members were, after all, voting on ending a subsidy that applied to themselves.)

More interesting than the vote were the arguments. Supporters of the motion seemed to operate from the assumption that providing food at a service meeting is never a valid use of seventh tradition funds, although, like most service bodies, the region has always paid for lodging and food for those who travel on its business. Some opponents headed straight for the other extreme, and launched the entitlement argument based on "Don't you know how hard I work." In the hallway arguments, levels of moral outrage were achieved that one more commonly associates with Auschwitz than with a ham and cheese sandwich and potato salad.

From the editorial corner, it would seem to boil down to this: If one believes that the length of the meeting, plus the travel time, makes the provision of some sort of lunch useful, then this would seem to be a legitimate cost of service, assuming that you are one who believes that such expenditures are ever justified.

Not everyone does believe that this is ever justified, however, and they might point out that most folks know how to pack a sack lunch.

For those who may feel that this is largely a question of members freeloading off the fellowship, however, we will add this. Generally, when people take service commitments, they find that in addition to the time, they also end up covering a lot of out of pocket costs without seeking reimbursement. When one begins a year of a service commitment, there may be some question as to *how much* money they will lose as a result, but there is no question of turning a profit on the deal. Every area can be assured that their RCM will still manage to be personally in the red overall, even if they do pay less than full cost for their hoagie six times a year.

Positions filled and open

The following positions were filled at the September meeting. Mike H. became H&I chair, Bob M (yet again. If you'll take this position, I'll personally cover you for six hoagies during the year) was elected newsletter chair, Jason G. as assistant policy chair, Mickey R. as Public Information chair, and Steve R. as treasurer of the Board of Trustees. Best wishes to all the new and reenlisting trusted servants.

Our general membership does not yet seem to have realized how lucrative and perk-ridden (sarcasm intended) these positions are, as there are, as usual, a number yet to be filled. On tap for the November region are the positions of Vice-chair, Assistant Secretary, Regional Delegate and Literature Review chair.

The positions of vice-chair and lit. review chair require 2 years clean time, that of assistant secretary 1 year, and Regional Delegate 5 years.

Food for Thought

(For those who still have an appetite for this issue after your editor has flogged it to death, here is a further contribution from one of our members who has experienced the pleasures of the host area role.—ed.)

For anyone with an open mind and full belly, here is a familiar topic to digest. Do we have a food fund or a 7th Tradition at Region? The host (Area RCM) of region is given the task of caterer for the day of the Regional Conference. If you have not experienced this commitment, I offer this recipe for you to enjoy.

As the host, take a glance at the last regional minutes; find all the names that attended. This is your headcount; call this A. Recall what you ate last session you attended; ask yourself, did you eat what was provided? Was most of the food consumed? About how much (pay close attention, this part of the formula is important) were you suggested to contribute to cover the cost of food provided? Use this number as B.

Now take A times B which should equal: a call to a more experienced Regional Member, a prayer or two and at least one read through of the 7th Tradition and 11th Concept. Time to go purchase supplies, cups, napkins, plates, food and beverages. Oh, I almost forgot no one told how much you could actually spend of your own money. So when you make the decision about food, do not let your conscience spoil your easy meal plans of sandwiches or finger foods.

Recall you did not fill out a dietary preference card on your last visit to region either. So push your conscience aside again and try not to please everyone. Besides the person complaining about the high carbs. or the person stating there are not enough vegetarian dishes will be outside smoking a cigarette at break. One rule is, make sure the food is edible on a scale of the majority will have experienced the type of foods provided. Not a good time to try out that new Emeril recipe.

Now do try to keep the costs down. Some people will be traveling long distances; tolls and gas in this great state are already a hardship. Which brings us back to 7th Tradition or food fund. Which is it? At my home group we collect the 7th Tradition to support our expenses. NA members will enjoy an atmosphere of Recovery complete with free IP's, coffee and cookies, all the other essentials are there to make it a positive recovery experience in carrying the message. So part of our money collected subsidizes the refreshments, probably a $\frac{1}{2}$ of the funds collected on average. If we collected for the refreshments only we might call that the food fund. I digress; at region we provide food for those in attendance performing a service that could on average be 5 to 7 hour sessions. That is, we are expending energy and nourishment may be required to move forward.

You have done fine and hand in receipts; the treasurer determines the "fare share" amount top put in the basket.

As the RCM hosting chef, you have to submit a motion to recover your out of pocket expenses. Like most, we may be making a decent living but we " don't have it like that!"

What if the funds collected comes up less than expected? Well you might think that is the purpose of the motion. Sort of. If the fund is short, should Chef RCM, host for the day, eat it? (Puns are intended through out this article if you have not noticed already).

Should we ask Region to use a smidgeon, possibly less than one percent of the current working capital, to fill the gap and subsidize the refreshments that have already been consumed and being used to create and expend energy to discuss this topic? Or suggest to next Hosting RCM, "We collected X amount this session, please spend X amount. We will collect refreshment fund next session, if we come up short, we hope you provided enough food to get us through to discuss a motion for further reimbursement".

John M.

History and Archives Seeking Help

Hello my name is Eric E. and I am the current NJRSC History and Archives chair. I need your help with two projects that I am involved in.

First is I'm looking to build a Group & Areas history to keep in the archives also our archives are limited in history concerning the group and areas. If you have any old area-meeting list, flyers minutes, event notifications such as speaker jams formations of new groups group anniversaries etc. And would be willing to donate the original or a copy to NJRSC History and Archive committee. What ever you donate will be greatly appreciated.

Second this coming June will be the 20th convention for the NJRSC. And in going through our archives unfortunately, we are severely lacking in convention memorabilia. What I would like help with is that if any body who has been around for previous conventions please see if you have anything such as t-shirts, coffee cups, pens, magnets, address books, etc. if you have any of these items and are willing to donate them to the history and archive committee for display at our 20th convention. Then all donated items will be put in the H&A archives or returned upon request. Again any help will be appreciated.

You can contact me at my home at 732-970-3010

Or you can Email me at ee918@yahoo.com please put NJRSC H&A in the subject line. Or you can send any donations to 219 11th avenue Belmar NJ 07719.

In loving Service

Eric E

Entirely Ready or Not, Here We Come!

It's impossible to spend much time in the meetings of Narcotics Anonymous without running into the frequent discussions of how, post step three, we periodically "take our will back," or how, post six and seven, we continue to periodically act out on defects that we were ostensibly "entirely ready" to have removed in the sixth step, and humbly asking to have removed in the seventh.

I can recall sitting in an H&I meeting while still in rehab, in which the topic was the sixth step (H&I meetings at that time were largely indistinguishable from other meetings, except for a tad more cross-sharing from the chair and the other 'outside' members). In any case, I went on at some circular length on being ready versus being entirely ready, prompting an eventual response from the fellow who had the commitment that went something like: "I don't know if anybody's ever entirely ready to do anything in the sense that you're trying to use the word. How about ready enough to do something? Anything. How about ready enough to get better?"

Practicality—what a novel concept. And of course he was absolutely right. I was at one of those points where riffing on absolutes is really mainly a tactic to avoid action by making the very possibility of action seem unrealistic.

Nonetheless, the ramble itself did have a point of sorts to it, which is experienced by many of us particularly at the third and sixth steps, but to some extent throughout recovery. I refer to that feeling that one sincerely wants to do something but is unable to do it in spite of the fact that it is purely internal and no external obstacle could possibly be to blame.

For those who like to believe that we as addicts:

- Come from another planet, and
- Collectively invented all of the solutions and all of the problems,

it may be comforting to know that this question was on people's minds a long time ago, without benefit or need of the "disease model."

The example for this ramble's purposes, I take from Augustine, 5th century bishop of Hippo. (Best liked by me for his famous prayer: "Grant me chastity and self-control, but please not yet.")

For those not familiar with Augustine's *Confessions*, the work is something of a proto-4th step inventory, mixed with Platonic intellectual speculation and poetry. (As an inventory, it may overdo it a tad by contemporary standards. Certainly I hope that no sponsee of mine will find it necessary to devote several pages to their motivation in stealing pears off a tree during childhood.)

In any case, in Book VIII, Augustine deals with what he would have called his conversion struggle, but which is simply one form of turning one's will and life over to the care

of god as one understands him, her, it or them..

Here is Augustine, in all his confusion:

—there were plenty of actions that I performed where willing was not the same thing as being able; yet I was not doing the one thing that was incomparably more desirable to me, the thing that I would be able to do as soon as I willed, because as soon as I willed—why, then, I would be willing it! For in this sole instance the faculty to act and the will to act precisely coincide, and the willing is already the doing. Yet this was not happening. My body was more willing to obey the slightest whim of my soul in the matter of moving my limbs, than the soul was to obey its own command in carrying out this major volition...

...How did this bizarre situation arise, how develop? As I say, the mind commands itself to will something: it would not be giving the order if it did not want this thing; yet it does not do what it commands.

Evidently, then, it does not want this thing with the whole of itself, and therefore the command does not proceed from an undivided mind. Inasmuch as it issues the command, it does will it, but inasmuch as the command is not carried out, it does not will it. What the will is ordering is that a certain volition should exist, and this volition is not some alien thing, but its very self. Hence it cannot be giving the order with its whole self. It cannot be identical with that thing which it is commanding to come into existence, for if it were whole and entire it would not command itself to be, since it would be already.

This partial willing and partial non-willing is thus not so bizarre, but a sickness of the mind, which cannot rise with its whole self on the wings of truth because it is heavily burdened by habit.

Being a fifth century lad, Augustine doesn't drag the subconscious into it, and having no disease to blame, he doesn't do that. What he does do is to get a firm grasp in the role of habit energy in maintaining our old way of thinking, and of the fact that it is more a problem of failing to want what we consciously think we should want, than of being unable to do something that we do unreservedly want. (Indeed, once we actually want to take the third step it is already done.)

This goes a long way to explaining the role of prayer, meditation and constant practice throughout the steps. The roots of our previous way of living and thinking run deeper than intellectual thought, and are not fully accessible to it. This is why no amount of studying a step is the same thing as working the step. This is why, at the end of the day, there remains little advice better than Dogen's: "Therefore put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that takes the light and shines it inward."

Bob M