

# Sanity

January 2007

Newsletter of the New Jersey Region



## GSR Assembly



The NJRSC Regional Delegate Laura Z. and Regional Delegate Alternate Jean-Claude G. held a GSR Assembly on Saturday, December 16, 2006, at the Masonic Lodge in Edison. Although attendance was minimal, those in attendance received excellent information and provided enthusiastic input during the assembly. One of the responsibilities of the Regional Delegate is to provide information to the fellowship. Holding GSR Assemblies are one of the ways to accomplish this.

**'What is the GSR?'** The assembly discussed this topic in depth. Those in attendance formed three panels and were asked a series of questions regarding what works for GSR's in their groups. Enthusiastic discussions were held by all panels with long lists of suggestions formulated. Each of the three panels chose the two foremost suggestions for a total of six as follows:

1. Help from prior Trusted Servants in learning the requirements and responsibilities of being a GSR.
2. Group responsibility: Every member of a Group has a responsibility, not just the GSR, and the Group should work together as a unit with the information that the GSR gathers from their Area.
3. The desire to give back what was so freely given to us by serving as a GSR.
4. Understanding the connection of the Member to the Group and the Group to Area and passing information back and forth to each.
5. Finding out what is expected of the GSR and fulfilling those requirements by staying for the entire Area Service.
6. Ask questions: Do not assume and don't be afraid to ask questions. This also helps in making the transition from GSRA to GSR.

The Assembly then turned the discussion over to NJRSC Lit Review Chair Steve to discuss the **Basic Text Project**. Steve explained that the input needs to be sent to World Service by February 1, 2007, and to date there had been nine workshops in the State plus three or four in other areas. The participants only totaled 130 to 140 people.

Steve felt that the process should be to get involved now and tell World Service upfront what the committees like or do not like. If that is not done, people have a tendency to 'tear things apart' after they are printed.

The introduction and preface were the only parts of the book that were written by a group of people. All the stories were all written and submitted by addicts. Perhaps input is needed to determine if there needs to be more information in the preface.

Steve noted that there was an overwhelming response a couple years ago to NOT change book one, which involves Steps and Traditions. However, there was prevalence in changing the stories and now that the stories are available, no one is showing up to review the book. The stories accepted by World are stories that are easily translatable to other languages, but currently the book is only being reviewed in English. The stories in the book are riveting and cover all areas from men, women, youth, gangs, gay, transsexual, atheism, etc.

The Assembly's final discussion was an **Introduction to the Area Planning Tool**, which was passed at World Service in April 2006. The Planning Tool was originally created as a tool for Regions, but it developed into more of a hands-on reference for Areas.

The Planning Tool suggests that the Area would take their own inventory to determine any weaknesses and seek solutions. Of the few Areas in attendance at the Assembly, only one Area had previously taken an inventory. The outcome of that inventory was a recommendation that each GSR must serve on one committee. As a result of this, the Areas subcommittees immediately became much stronger.

In reviewing the Area, it is suggested that the participants remain open minded to new ideas and be able to 'think out of the box' to improve things. Areas should have a focus and coordinate service activities. Taking an inventory is a commitment that will take time and goals must be achievable.

A copy of the **Area Planning Tool** can be obtained at the world website at [naws.org](http://naws.org)



# Letters to the Editor.



Subject: **What is Shared Services**

Dear NJRSC: Approximately 12 years ago, when I was the Vice Chair of Region, a concerned member approached me and asked what we could do about the fact that the Helpline has not been tended to in many years and was in disarray. The list of phone numbers was so outdated that there were volunteers on the list that had been using for a long time as well as people who had died. In addition to this, many other problems existed.

Members of the NJRSC and NNJRSC were wondering how the Phoneline and meeting list projects could be made accountable and yet functional. At this point, there was no website yet. A few years earlier, New Jersey has split into two Regions, with NJRSC overseeing all the Committee's functions.

After many discussions and Ad Hoc meetings, it was decided that the two Regions should share a Phoneline and Meeting List because it was the best way to serve the still suffering addict and the public as a whole.

Society in the United States, as well as the World, would be looking for us as 'NA in New Jersey' and would not have a clue as to our service structure.

Understanding what is now twenty-plus Areas and two Regions within one state might be foreign to society as a whole. We approached that as our primary purpose for keeping a shared meeting list and phone number.

Over the years there has been much talk and concern about how the two Regions should interact with each other. Policy was written to give direction. For many years there has been a 'meeting of the minds' so to speak, which we call the Shared Services meeting. Shared services gets together two or three times a year with the intent that someone from each committee and the Vice Chair of each Region would spend a few hours exchanging information about what was being done on the forefront of serving the still suffering addict. At these meetings, no decisions would ever be made and only recommendations would be considered, which would be sent to both Regions for approval.

The Chairs of the shared committees would be present to give reports on what was going on in their Region. The Vice Chairs of the Regions would attend so that there would be accountability on a Regional level and that each Region had the opportunity to voice concerns, give direction, and participate in any brainstorming for future directions that would be of benefit to the still suffering addict and society as a whole.

The basic principle of Shared Services has always been, and should continue to be, a place where whoever has the most knowledge of current activities of the three shared sub-committees, meet two or three times a year with the Vice Chair of each Region to discuss what's going on, plans for the future, and how to serve the still suffering addict through our services. It has always just been an information exchange venue and has never made any decisions without first going to both Regions as a suggestion.

The people who volunteer their time to not only participate in their sub-committee's work but come to Shared Services to exchange information, should be held accountable to deliver the information accurately to the Regional servants, not be Regional servants themselves. After all, both Regions have someone on each committee (supposedly) to give reports at Regional Service meetings with the Vice Chair of Region also being in the loop either from Shared Services or by staying in touch with each sub-committee which was part of the commitment they made when elected.

It would be a huge duplication of service to have a third person who is supposed to be held accountable. How many people need to be held accountable for one service body? If people are wondering who these committee's are accountable to, then ask the Vice Chair of Region if they are keeping in touch with the subcommittees. Get the positions of sub-committees filled and do not spend time questioning the people who do the grunt work; help them.

Communication is obviously lacking and that is a real shame. Misinformation and innuendo are not the way to help the still suffering addict. Instead of wondering what these people are doing and wondering who is accountable to who, why doesn't anyone who has a concern get involved and help?

The web site, meeting list and Phoneline committees are always in need of help and constantly saying so. There are very few people overseeing the massive amount of work that needs to be done. When we question the people who volunteer many more hours than their Seventh Tradition requires, are we helping them are making them feel unappreciated by referring to them as being unaccountable?

I was taught early in my recovery that if I had a problem with a committee, that I should step up and help. I still believe that where the solution lies.

Jw

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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