



February 2009 Northern CA Alternate Delegate Report

World Wide Workshop

Some of you have been asking about the agenda for the World Wide Workshop, as well as whom the NAWS travelers are. The travelers are: Ron M, Jim B, and Mary B from the Board, and Elaine W, Becky J, and Steve R from the office. The agenda is still being compiled, but a rough first idea may look something like this:

Friday, 27 February 2009

7:00-9:30 pm: NAWS Update - Join us for an opportunity to welcome and get to know each other, followed by a report on the activities of NA World Services and a presentation of our fellowship's growth around the world. We'll also have an overview of the workshop agenda and plenty of time for general questions and answers.

Saturday, 28 February 2009

9:00-11:00 am: Building Strong Home Groups - For many of us, finding NA is like finding home. This session will give members an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the groups and provide a sense of home and belonging—so that all addicts seeking recovery will continue to come to NA and feel welcomed.

11:30 am–1:00pm: Communication - Communication at all levels of service is consistently pointed out as one of the weak links in our service system chain. As a fellowship, we are united by our common desire to carry our message to every addict. Without effective communication, this unity is compromised.

11:30 am-1:00 pm: Our Freedom, Our Responsibility - Before we came to NA, we had very little freedom. Getting clean opened a world of possibilities. As we explore our possibilities, we learn that if we want to keep something, we have to take care of it. We take care of NA by giving back what we've been given—the NA message, as well as the opportunity to hear it.

1:00-2:30pm: Lunch Break

2:30-4:00 pm: Leadership in NA Session 1 - We will consider some of the basic foundational principles of leadership including the traditions and concepts which help form the foundation of leadership in NA, and how effective leaders can help service bodies function better as a team.

2:30-4:00 pm: Living Clean Project: - This will be a great opportunity for members to share and write their personal experiences as a part of the gathering of source material for the current book-length project about ongoing recovery in NA.

4:30-6:00 pm: Leadership in NA Session 2 - The purpose of this session is to gain valuable perspective on our role as leaders in NA, including what guides us as leaders, how the position we have is a critical link to others in the service structure, what others expect of us and need from us, and a chance to focus on a few key skills all leaders should work to improve.

4:30-6:00 pm: The Planning Process - There are a few basic steps in every planning process, and each is necessary to the overall development and creation of the plan. With these, everyone involved knows what needs to be done, who is doing the work, and when to anticipate each step's completion.

6:00-8:00 pm: Dinner break

8: 00 pm: Recovery Meeting

Sunday, 1 March 2009

10:00 am-Noon: Wrap Up - We'll have one last chance to come together and share final thoughts or ideas regarding any of the weekend's discussions.

Service System Update: January WB Meeting

A lot has changed since My December report to you on the status of the NA Service System Working group. As you may recall from my previous reports, our Work Groups charge from the World Service Conference over the course of the next Three years is to:

1. *Create a "Vision" for all NA Service Efforts, and*
2. *Frame options for local service delivery*

After having held 2 workgroup meetings with a minimum of direction or guidance; it had become painfully apparent that the World Board itself had not given adequate time and consideration the magnitude and breadth of this project. As a result, our working group is on hold until late April, as the Board needed to hold facilitated sessions at both their January and April meetings in an effort to provide further clarity to the scope of work to be undertaken. At their January meeting, the Board and project support staff reviewed the process of defining the 'mega issue' of our service system. The session essentially led to the following "Big Question:"

"How can we build a system of service within NA that is driven by unity of purpose, and that allows for flexibility in meeting the diverse service needs and goals of our NA communities?"

The sub-issues to this question are:

- ◆ Adoption of a common vision throughout NA
- ◆ Examination of the structure based on a need for certain roles and functions within the system, and the need for flexibility
- ◆ Development of qualified and committed leaders within the system
- ◆ Adequate flow of resources within the organization to support service activity – and member ownership and responsibility for this
- ◆ Governance and decision making – e.g. representation; voice vs. vote, WSC seating etc.
- ◆ Communication and information flow within the structure
- ◆ Shift from a 'structure driven' system to a 'process driven' system
- ◆ A spiritual foundation to the system – what are the core spiritual principles underlying the service system, and how are they applied practically to the effective delivery of service in NA? We have a commonly accepted foundation of principle – how do we move forward from here?

There are also political and ethical considerations to making changes. The political ones were identified as:

- ◆ Many current methods of communication on this type of issue rely on those who are most entrenched in the old system and therefore the message won't reach those members who have been disenfranchised and alienated.
- ◆ There are factions that feel differently about the current system; Implementation at the necessary levels will need to engage those who maybe most resistant
- ◆ Structural change will create an emotional response in many members

The ethical considerations are:

- ◆ We have to create a service system that can be run by NA members - one that is feasible and clear
- ◆ Present concepts at a level that all members can understand, even those outside the system
- ◆ There has to be full access to service and the process for all members – those with the desire and will to participate are able to because the opportunity is there
- ◆ Our structure isn't a barrier to any addict having access to NA service – it has to be open to all levels of recovery
- ◆ Diversity can't be a barrier to access – a system must be appropriate to all cultures

The Board identified the following five steps for their discussion process, and began brainstorming on the steps 1 and 2:

1. Roles and scope of responsibility of World Board and Workgroup
2. Project phases/major stops
3. The need for feedback, reporting, review, and redirection
4. The timeline
5. Resources

The April World Board meeting will finish the five step process above using the input from January's session. The Board meeting is on April 22nd to the 25th, one week before the planned next meeting of our work group. The following points were also made during the Board session that didn't fit in the record neatly but were worth capturing:

- ✓ Groups and service bodies tend to follow written guidelines as gospel even if they are only offered as suggestions. Levels of consciousness may not currently be up to the change we envisage.
- ✓ The value of zonal forums is often intangible and lies in peer group communication, which is a common human need. Many zonal forums were started and grew because it felt good to meet, and because other regions were doing it.
- ✓ Are we seeing intimidation rather than apathy limiting involvement in service? Is our system unattractive or off-putting?
- ✓ The Iranian service model was created by a central group who designed the system with full participation from groups. They had the *Guide to Local Service* translated, but didn't use it as a mandate to create the structures that it outlines.

2nd Printing of the Commemorative Text

A second printing of the Commemorative Basic Text will be available in late March 2009. These books will clearly be labeled as a “Second Printing” and will be numbered from 10,001 to 20,000. However, we are aware that a minority of members in our fellowship are upset with this decision. As a result, I’ve had to answer some difficult correspondence from some members of the fellowship. What follows are my perspectives on the rationale for a second printing:

When the 5th Edition Commemorative Book (in celebration of the sale of our 1Millionth Basic Text) was published, the internet wasn’t nearly as prevalent in our daily lives as it is today. The size and demographics of our fellowship have also changed substantively in the intervening years. Add to this that the printing of our 1 millionth Basic Text, although important, had nowhere near the apparent emotional resonance for our membership that the new 6th Edition appears to have (both as a result of being the first changes to the Basic Text in almost 20 years and the inclusion of stories from a truly world-wide fellowship). 5,000 copies of the Fifth Edition Commemorative were sufficient at that point in our fellowships evolution to meet the demand of our members for that occasion (In fact, it took a considerable amount of time for all 5,000 to leave inventory throughout our fellowship). For the 6th Edition commemorative, 10,000 was essentially a “best guess” of what the demand might look like for this particular item, at this point in our fellowship’s evolution. This estimate appears to have been inadequate to meet the demands of our membership for the commemoration of this occasion.

The eBay phenomenon has also brought an ugly new reality into the mix. The means for individual members to seek profit has subsequently prevented many members of the fellowship from having an opportunity to obtain a Commemorative Basic Text at the fellowship’s price, and has thus deprived them from participating in this watershed historical moment for our fellowship

All of this begs the question of whether commemorating an important milestone in our fellowships growth is something that our members should have a reasonable opportunity to “be a part of,” or whether many of our members should be deprived of this opportunity because of the investment concerns of others? Does NAWS have an obligation to ensure that the book I buy will be worth \$25, \$50, or \$100 on the open market now, or in ten years?

Another important issue that is largely lost in all of this is the reality that we are talking about a commemorative item that really only has resonance for our English speaking members. Most language groups have not yet translated the Basic Text 6th Edition into their respective language. In a very real sense, the commemorative books are a luxury or novelty for our English speaking members only. By their very nature, they are somewhat exclusionary of an enormous part of our fellowship worldwide. At some point, we will need to have discussions about these commemorative items, and if special commemorative books should be available for each language group to celebrate their successful first printing of a translated book.

Beta look at the new na.org

The beta version of the new na.org site is up and running at <http://web.na.org>. NAWS hopes to go live with the new site in early March. Please feel free to look around and test it out, but be aware that they are still making changes to it in the background. Over the next few weeks, the Office will be making cosmetic changes to some of the extraneous websites (such as the database, meeting search and shopping cart portals) to bring them closer in design to the new look and feel. In discussing the changes, however, there are a couple of points we need to raise for all the Area “Webmasters” out there:

- ✓ Many of the links from local service committee websites will not work once the new website goes fully into production. To help in the transition, please review the sitemap on the beta site. The direct link to it is <http://web.na.org/?ID=sitemap>.

- ✓ While the main address, www.na.org, will remain the same, other links may break if not adjusted locally. As you are setting up the new links, please use the syntax <http://www.na.org/I?ID=pagename>, rather than the full address from the sitemap. That is because once the site is launched, it will no longer be <http://web.na.org> but <http://www.na.org>.
- ✓ NAWS does not have an exact date for the new launch due to the fact that some changes have not quite been completed.
- ✓ You are encouraged to check the old website periodically, as we will post the exact date for the launch approximately five to seven days prior.
- ✓ Webmasters can send an email to informed@na.org and thereby receive notifications of significant changes to the website. Should you have any questions or concerns, please email webmaster@na.org.

WSC Seating - A Short History of a Long Story

The history of seating regions at the WSC is long and, at times, torturous to trace. A number of different committees working through the late 80s and the 90s focused on widening attendance among international communities, funding isolated or developing communities, and preparing communities for attendance at the WSC. During this period regions seeking seating would submit a letter of intent by the February before the conference, attend the conference and give a verbal report followed by a question and answer period, and finally a two-thirds vote by conference participants would decide whether they were seated. The largest change occurred at WSC 1992 when the Board of Trustees (WSB) invited 11 international communities to the WSC on conference funding. Of these 9 attended. Israel was already a seated region, and the other 8 were granted voting participation. This practice continued under the WSB until 1998. The expansion in the conference body during the 1990's was either by invitation from the WSB with conference funding or US and Canadian regions requesting seating and funding themselves.

Rapid growth and dissatisfaction with the process of the WSC led to the World Services inventory, which began in 1992. Following the initial information gathering phase of the inventory a Resolution Group was formed that presented a series of eight resolutions to the conference in 1996, of which six were adopted. The first was Resolution A which proposed, in principle, a change in participation at the WSC. Its intention was to reduce the number of representatives, ensure an equal representation from all geographic entities, and move the conference towards consensus based decision making.

From 1996 – 1998 the Transition Group, whom I had the privileges of serving with, worked on a series of proposals to implement the resolutions. Motions resulting from these led to the creation of the World Board, HRP, World Pool, and a unified budget for NAWS. Resolution A was the only resolution adopted that didn't result in any specific proposals being accepted by the WSC.

The Transition Group presented four possible models for representation to the 1997 WSC.

- ◆ Model One called for freezing the number of US and Canadian delegates at the 1997 level of 70 and adding delegates from countries outside the US as they emerged.
- ◆ Model Two reduced the number of US delegates to 48 and kept single delegates from each non-US country.
- ◆ Model Three created 24 district delegate positions, consisting of three each from Europe, Latin America, the Asia Pacific rim, and Canada, along with two each from six US districts, to create a total of 24 delegates. Models one to three also included up to 23 World Board members and the WSO Executive Directors.
- ◆ Model Four was the most radical departure from the familiar WSC structure. It suggested having five different service conferences; one each in the US, Europe, Latin America, the Asia Pacific rim, and Canada.

The '97 conference struggled to come to any clear consensus on any of the four proposals. Following the lack of direction before, during and subsequent to the conference, the Transition Group concluded that any changes to the nature of participation at the WSC should come from the fellowship itself, rather than from the new World Board.

The desire to control the growth of the conference, while also increasing participation from around the world, remains the focus of feelings for many members when the issue of conference seating is discussed. The sentiment has been expressed many times that there are enough US regions, although this has never been captured in any written policy. The size of the WSC is not always the primary concern though. Many members also feel that the issue is one of cultural dominance and a feeling that conference time is unduly absorbed by US issues. This has proved a difficult reality to address because the US fellowship is still such a dominant percentage of the fellowship worldwide. So far no clear direction has emerged from the fellowship.

One of the few changes suggested was to move to a two year conference cycle. This was approved at the 1998 WSC, and began at the 2000 conference. Among other advantages, it was seen as a short term solution to the financial issue raised by an ever growing conference. A bi-annual event made funding every seated delegate possible, which in turn allowed for genuine universal representation from all seated regions. As we've moved toward a more discussion based conference the topics we deal with at the WSC are increasingly determined by the needs of the fellowship as a whole, rather than the motions that are made by the attendees, the majority of which are US delegates who tend to focus on US issues. The conference conditions that Resolution A was originally drafted to address no longer exist in many ways, largely due to the changes brought about by the other resolutions.

Discussion around Resolution A continued after the Transition Group was dissolved. Several motions were made and committed during the late '90s to either transfer voting privileges from some regions to zonal representatives, or to allow zonal forum representatives participation rights at the WSC. 2002 and 2004 saw motions to create a US conference participant assembly and to restructure the conference along the lines of Model Three. None of these resulted in any affirming conference action.

The only question remaining was the criteria for seating a region at the WSC. The CAR in 2000 presented a set of seating criteria to the fellowship for approval, which were duly accepted, although no criteria for what constitutes a region were suggested or established. This was offered as a part of a package of proposals which included funding of delegates by the WSC, and the elimination of second alternates on the conference floor. The proposal for criteria was seen as a short term solution that was politically acceptable but outlined the following challenges that would need to be addressed in the near future. The message of the 2000 CAR essay has remained consistent ever since, with certain key points:

1. The WSC is not a democratic or political body. It attempts to represent the fellowship through a spiritual process.
2. With so many US regions already seated the voice of unseated US regions must already be heard.
3. A need to restructure to better provide services on a local level does not equate with a need for WSC seating.
4. Some control of the size of the WSC must be introduced.
5. The WSC should represent the diversity of a worldwide fellowship. There are other ways for culturally similar groups to have their voices heard other than being seated. This does not only apply to US regions.

Once the seating criteria were applied it became clear that the one solid definition of a region contained in them was whether it had been in existence and providing services for a minimum of three years before applying for seating. In the absence of any other defining factor of what constitutes a region, this became the sole qualification for seating.

The 2002 *Conference Report* outlined three main challenges for the seating process:

1. Reducing the emotionalism surrounding the process.
2. Finding a way to assess the readiness of a community for WSC seating.
3. Slowing down the proliferation of US regions.

WSC 2006 – Limitations in the Process

The limitations of the policy were understood by the WB when it was offered but by WSC 2006 these limitations had become apparent to the conference itself. Despite stating that each application needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis, the criteria don't provide a model or method for any evaluation of conference or regional needs. Several regions have interpreted the process as – “*form a region and then apply for seating in three years*”, regardless of whether it serves the conference or local needs.

The 2004-2006 workgroup recommended not seating South Africa and Western Russia, based on the fact that those regions did not have a standard service structure that conformed to the seating criteria. The World Board made the decision to step outside the 'criteria box' and recommend seating for these two regions due to the fact that they represented an otherwise unheard voice at the WSC, and that they had been in existence for 15 years even though they hadn't referred to themselves as regions. The Bluegrass Appalachian and North Carolina regions were also recommended for seating by both the Board and the seating workgroup. The conference voted to seat South Africa and Western Russia, but not to seat Bluegrass Appalachia and North Carolina, thereby further highlighting the deficiencies of the policy and the ways in which it fails to capture the will of the conference. The Board stated their desire to review these criteria at the WSC, and during the 2006-2008 conference cycle, in the February 2006 issue of *NAWS News* and in subsequent publications. The tendency for the existing service structure to encourage regional splits was highlighted in the 2006 *Conference Report*.

The November 2006 *NAWS News* reported Board discussions on the difference between a new region resulting from a regional split, and a newly created region in an emerging community. Following discussions on the options for participation that don't require WSC seating, the nature of the 'extraordinary circumstances' from the seating criteria that justify seating, and the need for more effective planning of local services and better RD training, the Board recommended a moratorium on seating regions resulting from regional splits until 2012. No feedback regarding the proposed moratorium was received by the Board by WSC 2008, even though several regions reported this as an issue they wanted to discuss at the 2008 WSC in their reports to the conference. The intention was also stated to hold a discussion on the wider service system and what it may look like in the future as we become a truly global fellowship.

The 2008 WSC decided to seat all the recommended regions from emerging communities, as well as two regions resulting from regional splits regardless of whether or not they were supported by their original region, and also approved the seating moratorium. There does not seem to be a common theme or understanding that can be drawn from the actions of this conference. More will be revealed.

Thank you for all you do in service to the fellowship.

Matt Schmeck
NCRSC Alternate Delegate

Important Dates:

- ✓ February 27- March 1, 2008 – World Wide Workshop, Oakland CA
- ✓ Western States Zonal Forum July 24, 2009 thru July 26, 2009 - Tempe, Arizona