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WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH

With the Conference only a month away, the Fellowship seems to be spending a considerable amount of time getting RSR's prepared and sending in input for the committees to work on. If there are any Conference participants who have not responded to recent letters for information about reservations and committee assignments, please do so soon. This Conference will have a more international flavor than prior Conferences as there will be members of the Fellowship from at least five non-U.S. countries.

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* * * * * PUBLIC INFORMATION CHALLENGES * * * * *

A recent article in a national weekly magazine carried an article that has caused some difficulty within the Fellowship. The article, a story about an individual upon whose life a recent movie has been based, included the following quote about the person's current activities. "Now her time is spent as a counselor at Narcotics Anonymous and ..." The individual's full name and several full face pictures appeared in the article. Subsequently, several letters and phone calls were received by the Trustees, the WSC P.I. Chairperson and the WSO with regards to this matter. This opportunity therefore seems like a good example to clarify how these items are handled.

When the WSC P.I. Chairperson, the Chairperson of the Trustees and/or the WSO receive information about such incidents, copies of the newspaper or magazine are obtained, if possible. Sometimes this involves calling people in cities where a local or regional paper or magazine are published. After the article is received and studied, conversations are held between the WSC P.I. Chairperson, the WSO and the Chairperson of the Trustees. A consensus is reached about the appropriateness of a response and the specific details of a response if one is to be prepared. Depending upon the circumstance, a response is then prepared, cleared with the P.I. Chairperson, Trustees and WSO and then sent. Most such responses are sent from the WSO with the signature of the WSO Office Manager in order to avoid additional problems with violation of anonymity.

The general tenor of such letters is to advise the publisher and editor that having published such information about a member of the Fellowship frequently has negative consequences for the individual involved. Our experience has shown that such anonymity breaks make it harder for the individual to maintain their own recovery and the Fellowship is anxious to avoid future recurrences. We always offer to assist in future situations where an article might involve members of

the Fellowship so that the Fellowship can offer positive suggestions about how to avoid anonymity breaks or making incorrect statements about the Fellowship.

It is not possible to stop individual members from destroying their own anonymity if they choose. In most cases, members of the local Fellowship where the individual attends meetings, offer support and guidance to the individual in an effort to discourage recurrences. When this situation does occur members of the Fellowship should be positive and supportive to the member's recovery and not become hostile or negative.

Little success has been experienced in getting publications to print retractions or corrections. There is little space allocated to "letters to the Editor" and most publications use this space selectively to reinforce their past articles rather than show their faults. And, depending on the tone of letters to the Editor, some publications have used such letters as the basis for future stories that reinforce their prior story and the way they reported it. Therefore, rather than provoke a fight with the editor or publisher, corrections are suggested rather than demanded. Letters include language which suggests the importance of the accuracy of future articles mentioning N.A. because of the significance that correct information may have in saving the lives of addicts still using.

There is, it should be noted, a distinction between how publications report on "public figures" and the rest of us common folk. Most publications consider "public figures" to be fair game for stories that include any detail that can be obtained. However, stories about the rest of us are usually more carefully treated, in order for the paper or magazine to avoid law suits.

In the case of the magazine story cited above, the person central to the article is one of those people who, because of prior exposure to the world through the media generally, is considered a public figure. Most publishers and editors are unwilling to correct stories in the way this one needs correcting, although it was suggested in the letter from the Fellowship.

Prepared in loving service,

Kim J.
WSC Public Information Subcommittee
and

Bob Stone
WSO Office Manager

***** WORLD SERVICE OFFICE REPORT *****

We are trying to adjust to an ever-increasing workload and sometimes we get the feeling we are not succeeding. The staff is in the process of researching the statistics and other information that will be included in the 1985 WSO Report to the WSC. Last year the same report covered about 42 pages and included a considerable wealth of information about

the operation and growth of the office. The report this year will include statistics and information on many of the same areas of work. Because we have almost grown accustomed to the daily flow of work, it is almost startling to compare the new information with that which was reported last year.

An example of these statistics can be shown in the average number of orders processed each day. Last year at this time, the number of orders on an average day was 35. An average day now reflects 80 orders are received and on many days the number is higher. The orders are also substantially larger in the quantity of items purchased. Whereas the average order last year approximated \$65.00, the average order this year has grown to about \$110.00. Last year few area or regional committees made single purchases that were in excess of \$1,000.00. We now receive orders from area and regional committees two and three times a week in this range.

Changes of this kind naturally have a significant impact on how fast and how accurately we get individual orders out. Last year at this time we had one full-time person and one part-time person handling all of the shipping. The demand has increased so much that we now have three full-time employees and one part-time person packing orders.

Perhaps the most dramatic statistic that has come to our attention is the current shipping rate for the Basic Text. During the three week period from February 26 to March 19, (15 working days) there were 9,314 books shipped. Included in that was a second part of a shipment to the Hazelden Foundation. As a point of comparison, in the first twelve months that the Basic Text was available there were only 36,742 copies sold. Another comparison to be made with the first twelve month sale figure is that between December 5, 1984, and March 19, 1985, there were 34,594 copies sold.

In spite of this increased work load, we are still maintaining a two day response time on all orders. The busiest day is of course Monday because that is always the day with the largest number of orders received. The last of the Monday orders are shipped on Wednesday. There is every reason to expect that the increase in work load will continue growing at an ever-increasing rate.

This anticipated growth rate is expected to be assisted because of the renewal of a joint H&I and P.I. effort tried last fall on a trial basis. In October and November, an informational kit of literature was mailed to a number of treatment centers and hospitals with addiction rehabilitation programs. We have identified two separate consequences of this trial project. The number of treatment programs and hospitals purchasing N.A. literature doubled and over 65 new meetings were started resulting from that contact and subsequent communications. This project has been renewed in the continuing effort to provide information about N.A. to professionals in the field of drug treatment. It is reasonable to expect that this renewed project will have an indirect impact on groups across the country through the increased availability of literature to addicts in these treatment programs.

In the most recent Newsline we indicated that Hazelden Foundation had agreed to purchase N.A. literature and offer it for sale through their mail order system. We had been informed they intended to spotlight the literature on the cover of their spring catalogue but were given no opportunity to review the "copy" for the descriptions they were going to use. Unfortunately they chose to describe our Basic Text in a

manner that would have been different if we had been given opportunity to review it or have any editorial control. This does, however, highlight one of the real facts of life concerning an appropriate application of our Traditions to these types of circumstances. To have had editorial authority over their choice of language would have been to create an affiliation that would have violated Tradition Six. Our only recourse is to try to provide information to them about N.A. terminology and encourage them to alter such descriptions in future publications. This we have done.

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* * * * * PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS SOON TO BE AVAILABLE * * * * *

As indicated in recent reports from the WSC P.I. Committee Chairperson and in reports from the WSO, a project to make quality public service announcements for TV will soon be completed. These announcements will be available from the WSO in the near future. The exact price to be charged for them is not known at the present, but the price will be less than the actual cost for their production. This cannot be avoided, because to attempt to recoup the costs involved would severely inhibit their use because of the cost.

However, before they do become available and public information committees make plans to get copies and use them, there needs to be considerable thought and planning involved about the impact their use will have on the Fellowship.

Public service announcements, when shown on TV, have significant affects on the Fellowship wherever they are used. There are impacts on three separate segments of those who see the PSA. We have to understand each and how their responses affect the decision to use them in a specific community.

The first impact is to increase the general awareness among the general public about the existence of Narcotics Anonymous. This simple but important aspect is the least likely to have a direct impact on the Fellowship.

The second impact is to those who may be looking for a solution to a drug problem for themselves, friends or relatives. These people may take the phone number or address shown in the PSA and call or write. These are potential contacts for the local Fellowship to be concerned about.

The frequency with which our PSA's are shown will have an impact on these potential contacts: the more they are shown, the sooner that people will call or write. This is the impact of mass media repetition that advertisers desire and easily obtain in the sale of commercial products. The viewer, seeing the same PSA a number of times in a short time (a week or so) begins to develop a positive association in their thinking about N.A. This motivates the viewer to make contact with us sooner than if the PSA is only seen once.

The most immediate impact is on a third group of people who see the PSA's. These are the people who are on the verge of immediately contacting someone about a drug problem. These are the people who will call or write within the first hours or days of the time they see the PSA. The number of responses that result will depend on a number of factors, but the local fellowship needs to be concerned and prepared to handle these contacts.

If the PSA's are aired only a few times and at times when there is a limited viewing audience, the immediate response may be fairly minimal - depending upon the population size of the community and the viewer coverage of the station at the time it is shown. If, however, the PSA is shown in a large audience viewing time slot, on a station with a high viewer share of the market, in a population center with a large concentration of people or if the PSA is shown frequently, there will be an immediate and strong response. The public information subcommittee needs to be prepared to handle the largest possible viewer response.

The most immediate contact point with the Fellowship continues to be the telephone helplines. If a public information subcommittee decides to obtain and use the PSA's, it should be done only after discussion with those responsible for the telephone lines. If the telephone lines suddenly have a 300 or 700 percent increase in the number of calls, it may cause a severe problem for those involved. If, for example, the helpline handles 50 calls a week, to suddenly get 400 calls a week will create a tremendous work load for some members of the Fellowship.

If the PSA's generate a large viewer interest and a mail address is used, there will be a considerable number of letters to answer and pamphlets to send out. The public information subcommittee, in making the decision to air the PSA's, needs to be sure that there is sufficient literature available to handle the immediate need. If each inquiry needs to receive a written response, the base cost would be for postage, an envelope, one or more pamphlets and maybe an individually written or typed response. The cost for these items, say an envelope, postage and two IP's might cost the committee \$.54. If there was need to make 3,000 responses, the cost then becomes \$1,640.00. Of course there is also the matter of getting enough volunteers for the committee to be able to address, insert and mail all the responses.

Another point to consider is the impact on other area service committees that are covered in the same viewing area of the TV station. They also will be impacted. It is important therefore to consult with them and develop a unified approach to the desire for having the PSA's aired and our ability to respond.

If the PSA's are successful, they will have an indirect but fairly substantial impact on the meetings themselves. This will mean more people coming to meetings who are newcomers. The Fellowship in the area covered by the use of the PSA's must be able to handle this sudden influx. Of concern are the number of meetings, size of the meeting space and the ability of the Fellowship to respond to the immediate needs of these newcomers.

This article is not intended to encourage public information subcommittees to avoid using the new PSA's. Quite the opposite is the case. Every P.I. subcommittee should be encouraged to use these tapes. But the decisions involved should be fully discussed and the area committee or the regional committee (as appropriate) should be involved in the decision-making process and all members involved in service need to be aware and prepared for the impacts that will result.

At this time we need to begin thinking about alternative ways to use the PSA's without the substantial impact on the local Fellowship. Some have suggested a nationwide 800 number. This has been examined, but the resources necessary for operation of an 800 number are not currently available. Another alternative is to use a central address for mail

inquiries. This will be an option available for the PSA's if the local P.I. subcommittee desires to utilize it. A special post office box number was recently obtained for the permanent use by the World Service Office. This number will be put on all N.A. publications and materials including the public service announcements. That number is: Post Office Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA, 91409.

It is expected that approximately 500,000 responses will be made during the first year resulting from television coverage of public service announcements. The cost for responding to these 500,000 written requests for information is estimated at \$175,000.00. The WSO has been responding to an increasing number of general information inquiries and these costs associated with responding to those we receive are considered an operational expense of the office. The anticipated expenditures resulting from PSA use will be considerable but we must remember that carrying the message is an essential part of every N.A. member's recovery.

There is a central issue involved in this whole matter. The issue is how seriously we personally take the message of the Twelfth Step. Do we believe that our obligation is to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict by doing it in the same way we have in the past? Or should we utilize this larger approach to carrying the message?

Most members find themselves responding that every avenue of public service should be used. The World Service Conference Public Information Subcommittee believes that and has moved forward to make these TV PSA's available. How and when they are used will be determined by the local P.I. committees. The impact of their use may be substantial and the Committee felt that the entire Fellowship should be made aware and given the opportunity to study the matter before the PSA's are completed.

Prepared jointly in loving service by

Kim J.
WSC PI Subcommittee Chairperson
and

Bob Stone
WSO Manager

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* * * * * WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORT * * * * *

On March 2, 1985, the World Service Conference Convention Committee was invited into Chicago to receive a report from the WCNA-14 Committee and to review the financial records of WCNA-14. The World Service Conference Convention Committee is pleased to report to the Fellowship that all of the WCNA-14 financial records are in order. The WCNA-14 was managed for the Fellowship by the committee under the operation of a set of bylaws adopted early in the planning process for the convention. Included in the bylaws was a plan for the distribution of any surplus income created from the successful completion of the convention. By all measurements, the convention was a tremendous success. As of this date,

according to WCNA-14 bylaws, they have begun the initial disbursement of surplus funds by the following plan.

WCNA-15 - \$6,318.85 (fifty percent)
Mid Coast RSC - \$1,895.66 (fifteen percent)
Chicago ASC - \$1,895.66 (fifteen percent)
WSC - \$2,527.53 (twenty percent)

The World Service Conference Convention Committee would like to extend our thanks to WCNA-14 for its cooperation throughout the year and especially for their willingness to invite WSC Convention Committee to review their records for the Fellowship when no specific provision exists for them to do so. A report from WCNA-14 (including a more detailed financial report) will be made available to all WSC participants in April.

Some questions have come to our attention, concerning Section 2 in the proposed Convention Guidelines included in the Fellowship Report. We realize there is a great deal of material to review this year and very little time to do it in. This may make all the different options and plans seem overwhelming. We ask that the Fellowship bear with us in our requests for a group conscience on these issues. We remain ready and willing to assist in any way we can to clarify questions. Thank you very much.

In loving service,

Bobby B.
WSC Convention Committee Chairperson

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* * * * * A CORRECTION * * * * *

Mistakes are made and thanks to our application of the Tenth Step, we can more fully redress our mistakes. In the Newsline issue mailed in December, Volume 1, Number 11, an article included the statement that the approval of the N.A. Way magazine had been done by the World Service Conference without prior opportunity for the Fellowship to consider the matter. This is in error and a member of the Fellowship brought this matter to our attention. The facts reveal that a two-line item had appeared in the January 1982, report to the Fellowship which included the following language: "Proposal: WSC form a sub-committee [sic] to administer the publishing of a monthly magazine on recovery from addiction the N.A. Way." We are sorry for the mistake and hope no one has been injured because of our error.

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* * * * * CLOSING COMMENTS * * * * *

When the Newsline was published for the first time in June 1983, it was done so with the desire to provide a means of informing the Fellowship of the problems, successes, the proposed plans and the schedules associated with the operation of the World Service Office. The exception was that flyers for Fellowship activities were also

included. During the first twelve months, most of what appeared in the Newsline was directly or closely related to the activities of the Office. There were occasionally items not related to the office until the Board of Trustees accepted an invitation to publish a series of articles on issues that come to the attention of the Board. When these WSB articles began to appear, the nature of the Newsline began to change. In the summer of 1983, the full scope of the Newsline began to change by the introduction of regular reports from the World Service Conference Committees.

The Newsline grew in size as more information was presented from the WSC Committees. However it did present new problems associated with getting written reports from nine or ten different sources on a regular basis in time for a regular publication schedule. Unfortunately I must confess to a failure in regard to maintaining a regular schedule, in part due to the difficulty of getting material. But that problem was only a small part of the production schedule issue.

Although the WSO seems to many to have grown to an immense size, we have taken on a greater number of tasks than our increased staff size can accommodate. As we added new staff members in response to needs of the Fellowship, we took on a greater work load than we could comfortably manage. This is principally my fault. My willingness to have the office take on new responsibilities that assist the Conference Committees or provide service to elements of need that had previously not been serviced is an error in my judgment. For example, the decision to accept responsibility to type, duplicate and distribute the voluminous work for a WSC workshop was a great help to the workshop, but it took precedence over other work in the office because of the deadlines associated with the schedule of the workshop.

As these daily dilemmas arose--do direct office work or other work we volunteered to help with--decisions had to be made that effectively delayed some office activities. The Newsline was one of those that always got delayed. This led to a deadly malaise of the senses called "rationalization and justification." "It was not critical to get the Newsline out every four weeks on the dot, maybe it was okay if it was a week late, or after that passed, two weeks late is okay, just as long as it gets out."

A very sensible member of the Fellowship has correctly brought this to my attention in a very positive way that has led to this editorial note and admission of error. The Tenth Step applies to the workings of this office and in my responsibilities as a trusted servant of the Fellowship. I have been wrong in judgment on this issue and apologize for it. Regardless of the difficulties or the rationalizations that may surface, you can count on a regular monthly publication schedule for the Newsline from now on.

In service to the fellowship,

Bob Stone
WSO Manager

SPECIAL OFFER

N.A. WAY BACK ISSUES

The World Service Office is making available back issues of the N.A. Way. We have received several requests for Volumes I and II of the magazine. In response to those requests, we are reprinting all previous issues of the magazine and selling them by volume. Please check the boxes below to indicate your interest in this offer, and return this form to the WSO. **DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY AT THIS TIME.** The prices are included here for your information only. We will print a limited number of back issues on the basis of these orders, and sell them only until this limited supply is depleted. When all orders are received, the magazines will be typeset again and reprinted. You will be billed when they are available, and upon receipt of your payment, your order will be shipped.

Place an X where appropriate:

____ Please send me _____ copies of Volume I of the N.A. Way (September '82 through August '83) at \$15.00 per volume.

____ Please send me _____ copies of Volume II of the N.A. Way (September '83 through December '84) at \$18.00 per volume.

I understand that this order form is for the WSO's purpose in determining the number of volumes to reprint, and that I should send no money now.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____