

**A  
GUIDE TO SERVICE  
IN  
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

World Service Conference  
Work-In-Progress  
Unapproved Literature  
For Review and Input



# **A GUIDE TO SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**



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Work-In-Progress  
Unapproved Literature  
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Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions  
reprinted for adaptation by  
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**World Service Conference  
Work-In-Progress  
Unapproved Literature  
For Review and Input**



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# WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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March 27, 1985

## TO THE FELLOWSHIP:

On the following pages is the comprehensive work in progress towards the development of a manual on service. It contains a tremendous quantity of material, greatly in excess of what is contained in the existing Service Structure known as The Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure.

This work in progress reflects hundreds upon hundreds of hours of work of the committee and the Fellowship. The committee sifted, sorted, studied and discussed the ideas, policies and procedures contained in this draft and many others that are not included. The committee felt it's duty was to take all the input received and produce the best possible draft containing what the committee felt was the best ideas, policies and procedures. Many of the items submitted conflicted with other ideas submitted by others and some represent departures from the policies or patterns that have previously existed in the Fellowship.

An effort has been made to include as many ideas as possible that were suggested if they could be integrated in a way that did not conflict with other ideas. This necessarily implies that a choice was made. In many cases the choices were easy and in others it was hard.

Many of these ideas or policies worked for the Fellowship at some time and in some places. This draft presents changes in some areas of policy and procedure in an effort to improve some aspect where conflict exists or previous policy or procedure was vague.

The committee understands and accepts that not everyone is going to like every part of this work-in-progress. It is expected that many changes to these ideas will be suggested and many new ideas will be advanced. All of these ideas are welcomed. The committee believes that the Fellowship should and will determine the final draft to be prepared during the coming year.

A new approach is reflected in this draft. An effort has been made to explain how the experience of the Fellowship has pointed to change and how our Traditions exist as the foundation for most of the duties and procedures. Some will say, of some parts of

this draft, that an attempt is being made to change something that works and it should not be changed. The committee has been brave enough to believe that putting forth the ideas from the Fellowship, be they the same ideas or new ones, will result over time in the formulation and approval of a complete manual on service.

The committee believes in group conscience of the Fellowship and submits this work humbly not with the pride of authorship that gets in the way of analysis or change but in the spirit of loving and humble service.

The committee asks that this work in progress draft be carefully and fully studied. The Fellowship will be best served if no response from groups, areas or regions is developed for at least 90 days. A deliberate effort should be made to study this work objectively and questioningly before a list is hurriedly sent that contains a shopping list of changes.

After a thorough review has been made by individuals it would be helpful for area committees to establish study committees to review the material over a period of weeks or months.

The Select Committee recommends that input from the Fellowship be made in writing and sent to the committee between July 1, 1985 and September 1, 1985. A special workshop will be held by the select committee in November 1985 to review all input and develop a final draft.

You will discover, that Chapters One, Three and Five are not complete and are not included at this time. Chapters Two and Five are nearly complete and will be available soon to be mailed to those who have received this early draft. Please complete the form on the following page and these Chapters will be mailed when they are available.

Chapter Three will not be complete for a considerable period of time. It covers an area of work that the Select Committee felt should be handled by the Policy Committee since they were working on this subject during the current year. They do have a draft on the subject of group conscience and the trusted servant, it will be prepared and made available to the Fellowship.

The Committee apologizes to the Fellowship for the delays in making this work available to the Fellowship. The Committee was fully aware of the schedule established by the Conference in 1984. However the overriding importance of this work was so keenly felt by the Committee that it believed a more deliberate document was in the long run the better choice and in the interest of the Fellowship.

Additionally the Committee is guilty of one tactical error that had advantages for the final work but which delayed its development. The task of assembling the majority of this work was assigned to one individual. The committee revised all the input then developed the parameters, and general philosophy through its meetings and discussions. The "fleshing in" of this to be a comprehensive work process was assigned to one individual in order to promote consistency in language and style.

Unfortunately the task proved larger than the members of the Committee imagined when the decision was made. There were several deadlines set and passed but the Committee was too far committed to substantially alter this original course of action without big penalty to the quality and clarity.

There are two positive aspects of this unintentional delay. The review of the work can be done without interfering with the work of the Conference in 1985 and review by the Fellowship can be more fully done with leisure.

The committee had two full committee meetings lasting several days each. There were countless telephone discussions among the members and input was reviewed throughout the full year. Much of the information for some parts of the draft was changed several times as new information was available, new evidence of experiences revealed which policies or procedures worked and which did not.

An example of the continuing change is that of Chapter Seven on the IAC. It was changed after the current IAC experienced internal problems and a new concept was proposed and recommended in principal by many of the IAC participants. This took place in the 90 days prior to the final copy of the draft being prepared.

This was a learning process for everyone involved. We were presented with new and innovative ideas that can have positive effects for the Fellowship for generations.

This work is being advanced in part with the idea that a complete manual on services will be used for many years without substantial change, and that it will serve the Fellowship for many years.

In loving service to the fellowship,

Robert R.  
Chairperson  
Select Committee on Service Structure



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Please complete the form below when you receive this booklet.  
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# A GUIDE TO SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One - The Individual Member and Service . . . . .	1
Chapter Two - The Narcotics Anonymous Group . . . . .	27
Chapter Three - Group Conscience and the Trusted Servant . .	63
Chapter Four - Area Service Committees . . . . .	64
Chapter Five - Regional Service Committees . . . . .	96
Chapter Six - World Service Conference . . . . .	126
Chapter Seven - World Service Conference Subcommittees . .	169
Chapter Eight - World Service Board of Trustees . . . . .	200
Chapter Nine - World Service Office . . . . .	221
Chapter Ten - The N.a. Way Magazine . . . . .	243



CHAPTER ONE  
THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBER  
AND SERVICE

Chapter One is not complete at this time. It is in the final stages of preparation, and will be available for distribution in the near future.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS GROUP

The earliest experiences of recovering addicts proved that staying off drugs through individual effort may have been possible, but was not probable. The most practical and quickly-found solution was the establishment of regular gatherings of addicts so that they could all benefit at one time through sharing with each other. However, getting a bunch of recovering addicts together at one time to do anything, especially in an orderly manner, has never been an easy task. The best answer seemed to be to borrow something from the experience of others.

The result was the adaptation, again from A.A., of the formation of the group. The first groups lacked a little of the decorum and organization that we find in N.A. groups today, but through trial and tribulation, they gradually became stronger, and addicts found recovery. We share the benefits of this experience with you in an attempt to be helpful to N.A. members involved in service at the group level.

When starting an N.A. group, we have found that it is essential to maintain consistency and perseverance. Most groups are started because an addict needs a meeting. For example, an N.A. member may move to a city where there are no N.A. meetings yet. Sometimes members start meetings because they wish to



attend a meeting on a particular night or in an area near to their homes. In each of these cases as well as in all other circumstances, when a meeting is started--even if it is only by one person--that person must be prepared to have a meeting even if no one else shows up. This lesson was learned through repeated experiences and still holds true today. Many of our meetings have started this way, and thousands of addicts are alive and clean today because one person made and kept the commitment to have the N.A. door open when addicts reached out for help. Therefore, if a meeting is scheduled to begin at 8:00, it is very important that the group's trusted servants come early so that the meeting does take place at the scheduled time.

In some cases, when a meeting is first started, no one shows up except the member who started the meeting. In this situation, it may be helpful to do some basic public information work, but above all, keep the door open, make some coffee and study from the N.A. Basic Text. It is often helpful to put up notices or announcements in places where other addicts might see them. Newspapers and bulletin boards are common places these notices can be found. Do not be discouraged if your new meeting seems to have a rocky start. Put up more notices and come back the next week. Do it over and over again until other addicts begin coming to the meeting--and they will come. There have been many examples cited by members of our Fellowship where meetings have been kept open for up to a year with only one or two regular

members. Then, for no apparent reason, the rooms suddenly filled with people seeking recovery. Many of these groups now report quite a few years' experience with successfully carrying the message of recovery.

If two or more addicts join together to start a meeting, the task may be easier and more comforting than when one individual takes on the job alone. But it still requires the same dedication and consistency. With two or more addicts, decisions need to be made by the group rather than by an individual. This promotes an acceptance of unity and an application of the Traditions. Unity within the Fellowship is important and can be developed or maintained only through the association of one addict with another. This can be on an individual basis but it conveys a stronger understanding if it can be in the setting of a meeting.

In the paragraphs above the words "group" and "meeting" have been used interchangeably. The terms "meeting" and "group" have evolved to have synonymous meanings in some areas in the Fellowship, while in others the two words convey different meanings. Although some areas of the Fellowship have found it convenient to determine that a group can be two addicts meeting on a regular schedule, in other places the meeting of two addicts on a regular basis would be called a meeting, but not a group. In order to avoid confusion and to encourage a more common understanding, the term "group" generally refers to two or more

individual members who meet regularly at a specified time and place to share their recovery. That regular event is known as an N.A. meeting.

Using this understanding, a difference can be drawn between a meeting and a group. A meeting is essentially an event that happens on a regular basis at the same time, place and day of the week and is the primary activity of an N.A. group. While it is expected that members of a group will all attend their meeting, they may also attend meetings of other groups. It is from this understanding that the concept of a home group has evolved.

#### THE HOME GROUP AND ITS MEETING

Choosing and supporting a home group is an important part of recovery. A home group allows us to have an anchor each week where we can really get to know the people, and they can really get to know us. A home group should be a group that you are comfortable with and whose meeting you will attend regularly. Each N.A. member should make a decision to support a particular group on a weekly basis. We call this group our "home group" because it suggests a place where we fit in and belong. We have made a commitment to that group, and if we are absent for some reason, we will be missed. This is a real benefit to our recovery. It helps us in making a commitment to the N.A. Program

and teaches us about responsibility and consistency. Someone once said "the only good reason to miss your home group's meeting is a death in the family--yours!" This statement may seem a bit extreme, but it highlights the importance of regular attendance at your home group meetings. To get a home group, a member simply gives their name to the secretary. Many groups maintain a small file box with an index card for each member. This provides information about the person's name and clean date. The information is used for commemorating clean time. Many groups prepare birthday cakes and/or present commemorative medallions as a means of celebrating recovery.

Having a home group is also important when voting on matters that affect the area, region and N.A. Fellowship as a whole. All recovering addicts who consider themselves members of the group and attend that group regularly, may vote on matters which affect that group and when that group votes on matters affecting the rest of the Fellowship. These may include approving new literature, suggesting or approving actions for area, regional, or world service committees, or a variety of other questions which come before the group. In the interest of equity, each member votes only in their home group.

Although Narcotics Anonymous is not built on the democratic principle found in the one man-one vote concept of voting, there is an application of that concept in the spiritual development of group conscience. A loving God will express Himself through

group conscience and every member should have an equal opportunity to allow that to happen through their own participation. For one member to vote more often than once in the gathering of a group conscience is to believe that God needs help in speaking through that member by virtue of some special knowledge by that member. If we feel that an issue is so important that we must vote more than once, we are not trusting in a God of our understanding. To act in this way places the member in opposition to the acceptance of a Higher Power described in the Second Step.

The difficulty over the distinction between "group" and "meeting" arose in part from situations where a small N.A. community or in a remote area or town wanted more than one meeting, but didn't want to have the headache of having two, three or more sets of officers and the necessary business meetings for each group. While on one hand there is no specific desire to force autonomous groups to conform and thereby believe that groups are no longer autonomous, the issue does have Fellowship-wide impact.

The lack of common practice has caused controversy and conflict when these practices are carried with addicts who subsequently move to an area where the practice is different. The controversy also involves the development of group conscience, fellowship conscience and participation at area service committees.

In a typical situation an area service committee found the conflict arose when it attempted to define its membership. Some parts of the area chose to believe area service committee membership was based on the number of groups with group service representatives, while other parts felt that each group, even if it sponsored several meetings could use one group service representative, and should be allowed to have a vote for each meeting. The extension of this controversy can be seen when it comes to developing a fellowship-wide conscience. Unless there is a universally applied approach, some will exercise a disproportionate influence in the matter of Fellowship conscience.

The solution of this issue rests in application of common understanding that the words are not synonymous and that groups are the basic element of Fellowship structure and that each group sponsors one meeting.

It may be necessary for a short time for a group to sponsor more than one meeting, while a second group is developed. In this manner, the supporting group gets the meeting on its feet, helps with the procedures of electing officers of the new group and then returns to the management of its own affairs. The new group then operates on its own. Several months should be a reasonable time for this divide and build system of starting new meetings and groups.

A home group also encourages the group to practice the



principle of the Seventh Tradition. The Seventh Tradition observed at the group level keeps the group self supporting by providing funds to pay for the meeting hall, purchase coffee or other refreshments, maintain a supply of N.A. literature for public information purposes and for any addict who desires it. Customarily, most literature, including meeting directories, various informational pamphlets (IP's), and "The Little White Book" are free to newcomers. This is not a hard and fast rule; rather it is just another way in which the principles of Step Twelve and Tradition Five--"carrying the message"--is practiced.

The Seventh Tradition is not a directive to individuals in order to qualify for membership in the Fellowship. Quite often newcomers are asked not to contribute, because we are all aware that financial security was not one of our assets when we first walked through the doors of N.A. On the other hand, in order to maintain a regular meeting place, meet our obligations, and remain free from outside influences, the Seventh Tradition at the home group level is one of the foundations upon which we build an atmosphere of recovery.

Most groups find that using key tags or chips to celebrate clean time is a good incentive system for new members and old members alike. By using the home group concept and encouraging members to celebrate their anniversary dates in the home group, a strong bond is developed that strengthens the commitment to total abstinence.

An important consideration in this matter is that a member of a group not have an office or position in another group. This defeats the understanding and purpose of the Home Group concept described above.

#### BUILDING A STRONG MEETING

N.A. is a personal and spiritual program of recovery, therefore a personal experience. Life stories, and/or N.A. principles or N.A. general information should be the main topics at our meetings. You may find the following suggestions, which were derived from our collective experience, helpful to your group. Meetings often take on a character reflective of the members who attend the meeting. Some meetings are boisterous, while others are quietly serious; some meetings are short, while others are long. Although there is no perfect time length for meetings, those which follow an established schedule and time limitation are usually the most successful. The meeting leader and secretary should try to keep the meeting on schedule. It should start on time and end on time.

Each group makes its own decisions concerning when and where the group will meet, as well as the format of the meeting and a wide range of other questions that will come up. The meeting format chosen by the group will most likely reflect the particular needs of the members. These needs will be determined

by the size of the group, the clean time of the members, as well as the level of support the group receives in its area or region. A group just forming in an isolated area where no N.A. community has ever been established might opt for a "participation" format which allows for every addict to share his or her recovery with others in the meeting. Another very helpful format is the "Basic Text study" in which the members read from Conference approved N.A. literature and discuss how they apply the material in their lives. As the group evolves and its members gain some clean time, the need to discuss and study the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions becomes more apparent.

The group may then either change or expand its format to include a "step study," or its members may decide to start a second meeting. In an area or region where many meetings are available, meeting formats are often varied. Among the most common are: "participation meetings," "step studies," "Basic Text studies," "speaker meetings," "half-speaker/half-participation meetings," "question & answer" or any combination of the above. Whatever format your group decides upon, it is helpful for the group secretary to type up a standard format so that all the group's members may become familiar with it. A standard format helps the group develop an identity and is also very helpful for the various members who are chosen from week to week to lead the meeting. With a typed format to follow, even the group's most quiet member may contribute something without

feeling it necessary to have a vast experience from which to draw.

Experience has shown that the same basic organization for the group works in almost any place a group is started. We have also found that new groups which pattern themselves according to the commonly-utilized formats are the most successful. Perhaps one reason for this is that groups can learn from the experience of those who have come before them and avoid many of the mistakes made by their forerunners. It is also true that many addicts travel and attend meetings in distant areas. Because recovering addicts know that their very lives depend upon N.A., they may react quite forcefully if a great deal of difference is perceived in the N.A. meetings. Therefore, following the tried-and-true methods seems to work out best for all.

Coffee alone or coffee with refreshments are nice ways of welcoming newcomers to N.A. meetings. For many addicts, a hot cup of coffee is a reassuring sign that they are welcome, safe and comfortable in the N.A. meeting. This may become an important aspect of the meeting and should not be overlooked. However, we must be careful to see that it is handled appropriately. Do not let the coffee break become a coffee hour. Coffee and other refreshments, when made available and used properly, encourage people to socialize and get to know each other better. It also allows members who have been clean awhile to introduce themselves and offer support and phone numbers to

the newcomers who have been identified during the meeting. We can all remember when we first came to N.A. how frightened we were, how alone we felt, and how we welcomed that initial smile or extended hand. When we utilize a coffee break to share our recovery with a newcomer, it becomes a small but vital function of a group's primary purpose. It is the living practice of the principle of attraction, and one of the doors which was opened to allow us to "keep coming back."

An important function of every group is to have Narcotics Anonymous literature available. At every meeting there should be a collection of literature, openly displayed in a convenient place. Each group should have copies of the Basic Text Narcotics Anonymous, and the step/tradition book, It Works: How and Why. During the course of each meeting, the secretary or meeting leader should draw attention to the available literature and explain its usefulness. If the group can successfully meet its needs within the Seventh Tradition, the literature can usually be given away free to newcomers. Purchasing the Basic Text and It Works: How and Why should be made as easy and as inexpensive as possible in order to help the newcomers obtain these important tools of recovery.

Another important point is that we use only Narcotics Anonymous literature in our meetings. This is another principle so simple that we sometimes overlook it. There is a wealth of written material available today from a variety of sources. There

are prayer books, self-help books, books for addicts, books for alcoholics--the list is almost endless. However, when we are tempted to use non-N.A. literature in our meetings, we must bear in mind the Sixth Tradition which warns against implied or direct endorsements. To use outside literature is to endorse and lend the N.A. name to that publication or organization and it diverts us from our primary purpose--sharing the message of recovery with addicts. It stands to reason therefore that N.A. funds should never be used to purchase non-N.A. literature. Buying, selling and using literature, other than our own, at any level of service, implies affiliation with others and violates the spirit of our Twelve Traditions.

N.A. meetings are conducted by addicts for addicts. This sounds so simple many might think it unnecessary to be stated. However our Fellowship, like A.A. before us, faces constant pressure to open the doors to membership for people with a great number of difficulties other than drug addiction. It is a compliment to our members and our groups when others with different problems want to join us. It is our recovery--the application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions--which attracts them. We cannot be misled by this flattery though; our recovery is at stake. We cannot allow ourselves to be diverted from the single purpose of Narcotics Anonymous. It is this singleness of purpose, recognizing that we cannot be all things to all people, which strengthens N.A. and gives us integrity.



Those with other problems such as gambling, overeating, emotional problems and the like, can and do find help by adapting the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to their specific problems. This is what our founders did when Narcotics Anonymous was started in 1953. Since that time, many successful organizations have begun adapting the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for their specific problems.

An important aspect of the need to keep N.A. to the singleness of our purpose is so that addicts who come to their first meeting can relate, and can identify with the others at the meeting. This is a vital point among addicts. We need to find others like ourselves, others who have been through what we have and can understand our feelings and experiences. A meeting that becomes distracted from this does not provide that essence of welcome that an addict needs at the first meeting. A meeting that moves away from our primary purpose and attempts to meet the needs of those with other types of problems will begin to exclude the addict from the new membership list.

If we keep in perspective when sharing that this is a personal and spiritual program of recovery, problems within the group will be minimized. An N.A. meeting is not group therapy, nor is it a gossip session. Recovering addicts attend meetings not only to share their experiences, but often to gain strength and hope through listening to other members describe how they have handled seemingly hopeless situations through working the

Twelve Steps. In an atmosphere of recovery, we often hear solutions applied to problems that we were unable to figure out by ourselves. A newcomer walking into a group doesn't need to hear how many problems we've been through today; they know enough of the problems already.

### MEETING LOCATIONS

Although many meetings have started in private residences, years of experience have shown that it is best to move the meeting as soon as possible to a public meeting place. In some cities there are zoning ordinances that prohibit meetings in residential areas. Also, neighbors frequently object to the increasing number of parked cars and strangers coming around. Therefore, meetings in public places are generally more successful and have fewer problems. There are a great number of organizations and public agencies that have rooms where meetings can be held. It may require some effort on the part of the group to find a good meeting place, but they are available. Check with nonprofit organizations, fraternal groups, public and private schools and governmental agencies.

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, it is important that we pay our way for places where we meet. In some places a percentage of the collection or a fixed monthly donation is acceptable. Other organizations, especially small churches, can

be compensated by some service such as typing, painting, gardening, etc. In some cases, donating N.A. literature may be more beneficial than a monetary donation. In order to maintain a good relationship with your landlord, always leave the meeting place clean and orderly. This includes putting chairs away, emptying ashtrays and wiping up any spilled coffee. Try to leave the room in as good shape or better than you found it.

There are two different types of regular N.A. meetings: open and closed. Open meetings are just that--anyone is welcome. Very often, families and friends of addicts may be curious about the N.A. Program and wish to accompany a recovering addict to a meeting. Addicts may also wish to invite family members and friends to attend a meeting when they are celebrating increments of clean time. Closed meetings, however, are for addicts only. There are times when addicts choose to attend meetings where they know their anonymity will be closely safeguarded. They may wish to share particular experiences which would not be appropriate in an open meeting. It is always wise to indicate in the local meeting directory which meetings are open and which are closed. We do not ever like to turn someone away from a meeting. Therefore, these embarrassing situations can be avoided if non-members are informed at an early stage which meetings are open to the public.

Care must be exercised when holding meetings in hospitals, medical facilities, public buildings and in facilities providing

drug treatment or rehabilitation. There may be regulations established by the facility that infringe on the free exercise of the Twelve Traditions. For example, perhaps a meeting place is available in a room at a hospital but the hospital has a requirement about who may attend the meeting. They may state that no prior patient may attend the meeting unless they has been clean for a certain period of time, or that patients discharged for unsuccessful completion of their program cannot attend the meeting. A facility may mandate their patients to attend the N.A. meeting, or addicts may also be prevented from attending if they are under the influence of any drug. Requirements such as these would conflict with the Third Tradition of N.A. which states that "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." In such cases, or similar situations where the facility imposes rules or regulations, certain admonitions apply. We do not want to cause problems for the facility nor do we want to violate any of the Twelve Traditions. Therefore, a meeting in a facility such as the example cited above would be classified as a "Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) meeting." These meetings are not regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. They are coordinated through an area or regional hospitals and institutions subcommittee and are considered an activity of the committee.

The distinction between regular N.A. meetings and H&I meetings is an important one to make because most area service committees exclude H&I meetings from voting at area service

committee meetings. Inasmuch as they are considered activities of a committee rather than regular meetings, they do not have the usual officers, including a group service representative. So caution should be exercised when starting a meeting in a facility that restricts our members from a complete exercise of our Twelve Traditions.

#### TRUSTED SERVANTS OF THE GROUP

In order to encourage the atmosphere necessary to recovery, successful groups generally utilize the following trusted servants: Secretary, Treasurer, Group Service Representative (GSR), and Group Service Representative-Alternate. For conducting meetings many groups select a Chairperson and/or a Discussion Leader. Each of these trusted servants have separate responsibilities but they work together as a team.

Without doubt the single purpose of Narcotics Anonymous is to save the lives of addicts by keeping them and ourselves from using drugs. There are, however, some important by-products of this purpose. Among them is the development of skills, attitudes and personal tools that help us return to a productive role in society. This process of group-supported self improvement can result from being a trusted servant. When selecting the trusted servants for our groups, this self improvement objective can be kept in our thinking and may be one of the reasons a certain

individual is elected or appointed to serve in a particular position. Care must be exercised, however, to maintain a balance in the leadership of each group so that there are always some with considerable clean time and service experience along with those new to service.

When new groups are formed or when there is a rapid growth in membership, some trusted servants will be selected with relatively little clean time or service experience. New officers should be elected every twelve months. In order to accommodate a smooth transition, many groups install their officers two months after they are elected. This gives the new officers time to more fully learn their new responsibilities. Some groups stagger the election of officers, holding elections for the Secretary and Group Service Representative six months away from the regular election for the Treasurer and Alternate Groups Service Representative or some other combination. With these new leaders extra effort should be exercised to provide them with the best and most experienced help and guidance. The quality of our meetings and therefore our recovery can be affected by how the group is managed and the meetings conducted.

Of particular caution should be those trusted servants who will be responsible for the group's money. Both early and later in recovery, the temptation to use the group's money is always present. The procedures adopted by the group in the actual handling of money can aid or hinder the temptations involved. To

use procedures that encourage temptation is harmful to the group and to the growth of the individuals assigned these responsibilities.

Growth in personal characteristics and responsibility can be important results of service and every group should encourage this opportunity for every member. An effort should be made to rotate the leadership and participation in an orderly manner so that confidence in the group and trusted servants is strengthened.

Although at first one or two members may do all the work when a meeting is first started, it is usually better in the long run to adopt the distribution of duties outlined later in this chapter. Even if the group is small, it is desirable to have as many separate trusted servants selected as there are separate jobs to be done. This helps to establish the framework for growth and helps to keep the work load spread out and the trusted servants from getting burned out. Every effort must be exercised by the group to equally divide and share the responsibilities necessary for the functioning of the group. This permits every member the necessary time and energy to devote to their own recovery--to study and apply the steps in their personal lives.

The group's responsibility to provide an atmosphere for recovery should include the existing members as well as the newcomer or the addict who just stopped using that day. No one person is responsible for keeping a group or meeting alive. The

trusted servants working together, determine how best to meet the needs of the group. The importance of working together is paramount. We must never forget our failures at trying to stay clean alone. If the trusted servants do not work together for the benefit of the group, members will eventually wander away and the group will die due to a lack of commitment and support.

The most successful groups provide opportunity for members of the group to learn as much as possible about each of the trusted servant positions within the group. This can be done effectively by an openness and encouragement of each existing trusted servant. This will prove to be an important aspect in the selection and training of replacements for trusted servants.

Every effort should be exercised to have each trusted servant complete their full term of office. While this is not always possible, the continual change of trusted servants undermines the strength of the group, threatens the confidence of the members, and affects the quality of recovery gained from the group.

All N.A. groups should inform the World Service Office and area service committee of the location, type and time of meeting, as well as the name and address of the group service representative and group secretary. In this way, inclusion in the World Directory and local meeting directory can be maintained.



## The Secretary

The Secretary is the backbone of the group and carries a lot of responsibility for the success of the group. The Secretary is primarily responsible for the day-to-day activities of the group, such as when the meeting takes place, selecting a leader or chairperson, etc. Because of the importance of this service position the best collective judgment should be exercised when selecting the Secretary.

The Secretary is responsible for calling and chairing all regular and special business (steering committee) meetings. It is also the duty of the Secretary to answer all correspondence in conjunction with the Group Service Representative. The group's correspondence may include letters from other groups, conventions, WSO, the landlord, public and private social or service agencies, mental health groups, etc. All of these things are important and should not be taken lightly. Without a good Secretary and other trusted servants, a group has little chance of attracting new members or providing a positive atmosphere of recovery.

The Secretary makes the arrangements for celebrating N.A. birthdays. It is helpful to keep a sufficient number of commemorative keytags and medallions on hand, or order them at least two to three weeks before the celebration. Some groups commemorate birthdays with special refreshments, such as a cake.

Frequently making these arrangements is the duty of the Secretary.

The responsibilities of the Secretary make it important that in the selection of the Secretary extensive clean time and service in the group be used as criteria for nomination. Unless there is not another member of the group with more time and service experience able to do the job, a Secretary should be selected with not less than two years clean time and service experience.

#### The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the collection and distribution of the group funds. Among these responsibilities are:

Paying the rent. The group's rent is usually determined by the landlord but in some cases, such as a clubhouse or public facility, there may be other things that can be done in lieu of payment of rent. The group conscience will be involved in the decision related to paying rent, but the Treasurer is responsible when it does involve payment of money.

Purchase supplies for the group such as coffee and refreshments, literature, N.A. meeting directories, newsletters, the N.A. Way Magazine, commemorative key tags and medallions.

Pays the bills for the group and forwards to the Group

Service Representative Seventh Tradition money that is to be donated to the area service committee.

Makes funds available to other officers or members for other purchases as may be authorized or needed such as envelopes and postage for correspondence, etc.

Makes and keeps financial records of the flow of funds both in and out of the group. Most Treasurers use a notebook or ledger so that the records can be passed to the next treasurer. The Treasurer's Handbook can be obtained from the World Service Office and provides guidance on the details of how to perform all of these responsibilities. Usually group financial records are made in duplicate and the second set of records kept by another trusted servant. This protects the Treasurer in the event the records are lost or if questions arise about the use or flow of funds.

A checking account has become almost essential for the management of group funds. A checking account makes transactions easier to perform and easier to document. The group Treasurer must always keep the group's money separate from personal funds.

Experience learned over and over throughout the Fellowship has shown that care must be exercised in the selection of a group Treasurer. Unless there is absolutely no other person available for this position, a member with less than two years clean time and service experience is not elected as a Treasurer. A Treasurer should have previously served as a Secretary and/or

Group Service Representative-Alternate. Of course it is helpful if the Treasurer has good mathematical skills and handles his/her own personal finances properly.

#### Group Service Representative (GSR)

As soon as you have a small number of regular members, elect or choose a Group Service Representative. The most important facet of this position is to be the communicator for the group. This duty requires the representative to provide information to the group about what is happening in the rest of N.A. (at the area, regional and world levels) and to keep the area informed about activities, strength and problems of the group. There is a tremendous amount of information and experience to be shared through the proper exercise of responsibility of the representative. The representative is a vital link that binds the groups together in their common efforts to carry the message of recovery.

The Group Service Representative attends each meeting of the area service committee and usually serves as a member of one subcommittee. Through this association the Representative is able to share what is happening in his group and learn what is happening in others.

If the Representative cannot attend the area service committee meeting, it is essential that the Alternate attend. If

this is not accomplished then the group goes unrepresented at that meeting. This is not recommended because it harms the Fellowship from the lack of communication and associating with other groups.

The Representative also attends the area service committee meetings to express group conscience of his group. The representative receives from the Treasurer any funds that he is to take and give to the Treasurer of the area service committee. The Representative keeps the group informed each month of what happened at the area service committee meeting, the needs of the area, and any activities or subcommittees that have been started or need support.

The Representative usually discusses the progress and needs of their group with members and trusted servants of other groups at the area service committee meeting. When the Group Service Representative is elected, notification of their address and name should be provided to the World Service Office in order to be added to the NEWSLINE mailing list.

Because of the importance of the Representative to the group and the Fellowship as a whole, special care should be exercised in their selection. Unless there is not another member of the group with more time and service experience, a Representative should not be selected who has less than two years clean time and service within the group. It is particularly helpful if the person selected had previously served a full year as an Alternate

Group Service Representative.

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE-ALTERNATE

The Group Service Representative has one of the most important and busy jobs in the Fellowship. With so many activities going on that the Representative needs to be aware of and involved with, our experience has shown the need for an alternate representative to help carry the load. Accordingly when most groups get large enough to have a full complement of officers an Alternate Group Service Representative is also elected.

This members responsibilities are to attend the business meeting of the group, attend meetings of the area service committee and serve as a member of an area service subcommittee. In order to gain the widest possible benefit from this members participation and attendance at area service committee meetings and subcommittees the Alternate should not serve on the same subcommittee that the Representative serves.

When the Representative is unable to attend the area service committee meeting, the Alternate represents the group and has the responsibility to act for the group in the Representatives absence. In order to effectively do so, the Alternate must be almost as well versed about what is going on at the area and within their own group. This clearly shows the necessity for the

Alternate to take their job seriously and be an active Alternate.

Because the Alternate usually becomes the next Representative, frequently before the next regularly scheduled election, an effort should be made to select an Alternate with the same basic qualifications and experience as the Representative. Unless there is absolutely not another member of the Group with more recovery time and experience, an Alternate should not be selected who has less than two year and served actively within the group at meetings.

#### CHAIRPERSON AND/OR DISCUSSION LEADER

These are the people who actually guide the meeting so that it provides an atmosphere of recovery. A Chairperson or Discussion Leader should be teachable and willing to learn. The individuals chosen should also be members who share on a positive note. The Chairperson and Discussion Leader really set the tone for the meeting and can do woeful disservice to the group if they start off the meeting in a negative way. We must always remember that our N.A. meetings are not "dumping grounds" for us to air all of our complaints. We are there for the specific reason of staying clean and helping other addicts to find recovery from addiction. It is for this reason that we try to choose members with at least 90 days clean for Chairpersons, and Discussion Leaders with 6 months of abstinence. Some groups elect a

Chairperson and Discussion Leader for a month. Other groups choose different people each week.

The Chairperson is responsible for carrying out the format of the meeting. The Chairperson opens the meeting, goes through the readings, introduces the Discussion Leader, gives out the chips or keytags, explains the Seventh and Twelfth Traditions, and closes the meeting.

The Discussion Leader is responsible for keeping the discussion moving smoothly. The Discussion Leader usually asks if anyone has anything they would like to hear discussed. If no one suggests anything, the Discussion Leader introduces a topic for discussion. The Discussion Leader should make sure the discussion stays on the topic. It is always preferable to generally discuss recovery and the N.A. principles, rather than directing comments to a specific member about a specific problem. It is also advisable to keep the sharing down to a reasonable time so that each person who wants to share has a chance to do so.

An important aspect of the Discussion Leader's responsibility is handling Tradition violations when they happen at a meeting. An attitude of recovery must be maintained at all times and divisive or violent arguments over real or suspected Tradition violations diverts the meeting from serving the needs of recovery. For this reason the Discussion Leader will need to learn how to avoid such disruptions and handle them correctly if



they occur. In this area of responsibility, the Secretary and Group Service Representative are usually available and supportive to the maintenance of a good atmosphere for recovery.

Typical problems in this area are the reading of literature other than approved Narcotics Anonymous literature and discussing outside issues. While such activities should not occur in our meetings, they do from time to time. The Discussion Leader should provide guidance to the individual involved that it is not appropriate to continue in such direction. In most cases this gentle reminder is sufficient to end such indiscretions. However in some circumstances it may not. It is not desirable to initiate a verbal battle and disrupt the meeting over such an occurrence, but after the problem has passed the Discussion Leader should convey to the meeting the necessity for remaining within our Traditions. Using this approach it keeps the meeting from disintegrating into a verbal battle and allows the Discussion Leader to remind the group of the necessity of providing an atmosphere conducive to recovery from addiction.

It is a good idea to discuss these incidents with the individual after the meeting in order to clear up the matter if possible. The Secretary, Discussion Leader and Chairperson should all meet with the member to review the situation to determine if a violation had occurred and how to avoid such incidents in the future.

## BUSINESS MEETINGS

Most groups have found that there is an increasing pressure to conduct business of the Fellowship at the regular meeting of the Group. This has tended to distract many groups from the fulfillment of the needs of the members for a meeting that satisfactorily meets their needs for maintenance of their recovery. There are business matters for the group, the area, the region and also the world Fellowship. With so much going on, it would be possible for every group to occupy more than half of their meeting with the business of the Fellowship. This is detrimental and should be avoided.

The solution to this problem in most areas of the Fellowship has been the institution of business meetings for the group. These business meetings are held separately from the recovery meeting but are usually always open to all members of the group. In some places around the Fellowship the business meetings are held just before or after a regular recovery meeting. In other places they may be held on regular schedules at other times or days. The individual group will find among their members the most practical solution to this need.

Even for those groups that utilize the business meeting approach, they do provide a few minutes at each recovery meeting for the Group Service Representative to make announcements of pending events at the area or region level. It is very helpful

for the Representative to make copies of flyers or announcements that can be handed out rather than taking a lot of time to explain each activity.

For most groups that use the business meeting approach, the business meeting is held on a regular schedule or may be called anytime by the group. Frequently they are held just prior or after an area service committee meeting so the group can work with the Group Service Representative so they are properly represented at the area level. Sometimes the business meeting will be held when the Minutes of the last area committee meeting are available or when the agenda for the next meeting is on hand. This helps the group in its ability to develop a group conscience on any matters to be discussed at the area committee.

Another aspect of scheduling business meetings are when there are any problems in the group. When Tradition problems or difficulties related to the conduct of the meeting, the meeting place or unusual needs, there should be the ability of the group to have special meetings. When Tradition problems do arise, the group should exercise every effort to resolve the problem within the group at the business meeting. If this proves impossible to do, the matter should be discussed with the Chairperson of the Area Service Committee. Hopefully the Area Chairperson can help resolve the matter. If not it should be formally taken to the Area Service Committee for consideration and assistance.

If the situation cannot be resolved by advice and action from

the area committee, the matter should be successively taken to the region and world level services for consideration and advice. Unfortunately but also important is the ability of the group to have business meetings to discuss and resolve problems related to their elected trusted servants.

When it is time to elect new or additional trusted servants are other occasions for business meetings. If a member wants his group to call a business meeting, he should contact the Secretary and ask that a business meeting be called and provide reason for having the meeting. The group should be informed at least one week in advance of the date set for each business meeting, even if it is held on a regular schedule and if possible, the business to be discussed should be announced. This gives the members of the group an opportunity to be present and to vote on the matters at hand.

Usually at the business meeting financial matters will be discussed and decision reached about how much and when to forward money to the area service committee. Many groups have elected to delegate the responsibility to its trusted servants what amount above a prudent reserve to donate to the area service committee. However it is generally accepted that a group should not retain in their treasury an amount of funds that exceed the routine expenses of the group that would be experience in a three month period. To hold larger amounts of funds is to deny their use to help carry the message of recovery to other addicts.

## GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

There is a propensity among recovering addicts to take on new responsibilities every time the opportunity comes up. This frequently results in one member having two, three or four different jobs in the Fellowship. Our experience has shown that this is not a good idea. It is not good for the recovery of the individual involved and it is not good for the Fellowship. Each member should be encouraged to accept one trusted servant responsibility at a time.

A common trait among addicts is the drive to personal excess. We want to cram as much recovery into as short a time as possible; we want to cram a lot of recovery down the throats of other addicts we know; and we want to force the group to succeed. We frequently find ourselves thinking that the job cannot be done as well by anyone else or "if I don't do it, no one else will."

Especially with newcomers, this rush to excess is both common and dangerous. We sometimes find newer members active on Twelve Step calls, working on the phone lines, serving as secretary or treasurer of a group, active on various area committees, etc. It is easy under these circumstances to build the burden of responsibility so high that failure results. Older members may tire of their commitments and welcome the vitality and enthusiasm of newcomers. However, it must always be remembered that the newer members have had only a brief reprieve from active

addiction and lack the experience and clean time of the long-term members. It is a contradiction of the spiritual principles of N.A. to allow one member to do more than his or her fair share. We must be vigilant about recovery--not only our own, but also that of the newer member--and guard against overcommitments which often lead to failure. This is crucial because failure under these circumstances frequently leads back to the streets and using.

Some of the common problems that arise when groups are not careful in the selection of their trusted servants are meetings not being opened by secretaries who either have forgotten or haven't cared enough to be on time. Sometimes Seventh Tradition funds have been assumed by Treasurers who have not yet learned to separate their own funds (or lack of them) from the group's donations. Groups sometimes carelessly elect GSR's who are overwhelmed by the area business meetings or who are unable to communicate to their group the issues or functions which pertain to them or to N.A. as a whole.

With all of these problems, a common occurrence usually takes place: the old nemesis, fear, is often covered up with an "I don't care" attitude and the result is usually chaotic, both to the trusted servant and the group. Service positions are not popularity contests, nor are they a substitute for working the Twelve Steps. The problems mentioned above keep occurring over and over when we ignore the common sense suggestion of choosing

people who are not only willing and able but have sufficient lengths of recovery. Steering committee meetings are vital to the trusted servants who work together to keep the lines of communication open within the committee and between the trusted servants and the group they serve. By holding regular steering committee meetings, the secretary, treasurer, group service representative and the group service representative-alternate can often prevent these problems.

Because the operation of the Group is so important the Fellowship has created several important resources to help groups, their officers and members. The first resource is the area service committee. This committee is discussed in Chapter Four. In addition to the area service committee, there is the regional service committee and then world services. There is assistance available from the World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees and the World Service Office. If or when problems arise or help is needed all of these resources are available to every group.

## CHAPTER THREE

### GROUP CONSCIENCE AND THE TRUSTED SERVANT

This chapter has not been completed. The chapter is currently being developed by the World Service Conference Policy Subcommittee. When that work is complete it will be submitted to the Fellowship for consideration and inclusion in this place.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### AREA SERVICE COMMITTEES

Carrying the message of recovery to every addict, is a job we've found simply too big and complicated to be accomplished by groups working alone. As the first Narcotics Anonymous groups matured and more were started, we found that communication between groups made each of them stronger. We also found that many things that were helpful to our recovery and in carrying the message could be done better or easier if groups worked together.

The early groups did work together until the first area service committee was officially formed in 1969. The experience written on these pages about area service committees is a result of the lessons shared by that first committee and the many that have followed.

It is important, before discussing how area committees are formed, to know why they are formed and who the participants are. Because we have grown accustomed to area committees we almost automatically believe one should be started whenever two or three or more groups are in close proximity. Committees should not be created simply because of custom or structure. They should be created because of need and a conviction among the groups that

there are things an area service committee could do better than the groups acting separately.

Group support and group service are usually the first apparent needs if there has not been an area service committee or if the existing area service committee has become extremely large. New groups always have problems and even older groups have cycles, sometimes being strong and other times weak. Area service committees have been found as a good resource from which to draw when a group is faced with problems. And, frequently, the more difficult the problems the groups face, the stronger the area service committee becomes.

The availability of literature is always a pressing problem and most groups have found that having a stable area service committee makes it easier to keep literature available at meetings. Many area committees purchase large quantities of literature and have it available for their groups because it eliminates the problem of small groups not having enough funds to keep a steady supply of literature on hand.

Public information is frequently among the first needs that groups identify for starting an area committee. Each group will usually do a fair amount of public information about their own meeting but it is usually limited because of financial and manpower resources. Operation of a telephone helpline is a prime example. Most groups are not large or strong enough to maintain one on their own, but three, four or more groups working through

an area subcommittee can more easily take on this task. So, many groups are quick to support creation of an area service committee to accomplish things related to public information.

Because so many members found out about N.A. while they were in hospitals or institutions, many members and their groups have a desire to carry the message into the hospitals and institutions they came from or those near their meetings. An almost universal experience has been that these activities are most successful when done in concert with other groups through a coordinated approach. The area service committee becomes a good base for this important work.

Individual and group improvement are important areas that are found to be desirable reasons for forming an area service committee. Learning days or workshops for studying the Steps and Traditions, learning about service responsibilities of trusted servant positions (secretary, treasurer, GSR, etc.) and special meetings on public information or hospital and institution work are activities that most groups would find impossible to put on by themselves, so area service committees become important tools for conducting these activities.

Because recovering addicts are not always prized socialites, many groups seek the company of members of other groups for personal and social support. This is frequently found in the form of dances, picnics or other group recreation activities. This does not mean Narcotics anonymous becomes a social event,

but it is a valuable part of the Fellowship for development of interpersonal skills many which addicts didn't learn while using. An increasingly active role of many area service committees' involves sponsoring activities and events that supplement the recovery efforts of the individual group. These activities provide the members, and especially newcomers, with an opportunity to meet other recovering addicts in an informal situation. The benefits of such activities include giving the member an opportunity to readjust to social interaction in a drug free environment. These special activities area service committees have been found to be a successful answer to these needs.

Another important part of the area service committee is making meeting lists or directories and to act as a central point for the exchange of information about activities of the individual groups or activities the groups may decide to sponsor jointly.

There are more reasons for starting area service committees, but the key to understanding why they are created is that they are intended to provide service to the groups and to accomplish tasks that the groups find difficult to do alone.

The next and important issue to understand is who are area service committees composed of and why? Our experience in developing a clear answer to these questions is not entirely universal. In some parts of the Fellowship it may be done

differently and for different reasons, but here are some of the most common grounds.

Each group that becomes part of an area service committee should have an ability to be an equal participating member. To accomplish this, the position of Group Service Representative was instituted. Group Service Representative, as the title indicates, should be the representative to, and member of, the area committee from each group. This does not mean that the Representative is an observer who sits on the sideline while the area service committee goes about whatever business it has. It means the Representative is a principal participant, responsible as are the other Representatives for the activities, decisions and actions of the area service committee.

If the Representative or the Alternate does not attend meetings or participate, then the group suffers because the area service committee is weakened. Experience has shown that some Representatives and Alternates take a subservient roll in area service committees, preferring to let the "service junkies" do all the talking and much of the work. Many area service committees have found that the Representatives and their Alternates don't always attend the meetings. This practice defeats the purpose of having an area service committee to serve the groups and members.

If there is poor involvement on the part of Representatives or Alternates, then serious re-evaluation of the area service

committee and its activities should take place.

Area service committees have found that the work cannot all be accomplished by the representatives alone. The result is the creation of a limited number of officer positions and a subcommittee system to do much of the actual work. Although the number of officers, subcommittees and their duties varies considerably from area to area some aspects of this system have become fairly common.

### Guidelines

The first task for an area service committee is the creation of guidelines for the operation and management of the area service committee, its subcommittees and the activities they sponsor or conduct. A later section in this Chapter provides additional information for the creation of new area service committees, so this section will concentrate on the guidelines generally. For the first several years after the formation of an area service committee it may be desirable for a policy subcommittee to remain active to assist in the development, review and change in guidelines for the area service committee and each of the subcommittees.

The subcommittee established for creating the guidelines usually includes opportunity for the participation of a Representative or other member from each group. It is helpful if

this subcommittee has members with previous experience at area level. Copies of guidelines can frequently be obtained from other area or regional service committees and they can be obtained from the World Service Office. Keeping in mind that area service committees are created by and for the groups, it is of utmost importance that guidelines for those committees receive final approval by the groups. There should be considerable time given for the development of the guidelines and for their review at the group level.

The guidelines should include specific language detailing the purpose and function of the committee, voting participants, voting procedures, elections, officer job descriptions and qualifications (including GSR, ASR and ASR Alternate). These details are needed to help guide and facilitate the many responsibilities of the area service committee. They should be written simply with as much experience as possible incorporated from every source. Although the specifics of any guidelines vary greatly throughout the Fellowship because the needs are different in different places, changes may have to be made but they should always be fair, reasonable and equitable.

The matter of autonomy is a complicated issue with respect to area service committees and the groups that are part of the area service committee. It is one area of service that has almost as many variations as there are area service committees. In many places in the Fellowship, nearly every decision is sent back to

the groups for group conscience and in other places there is a shared responsibility for decisions. In other places the area service committee is given nearly the same complete autonomy that is vested in individual groups. Regardless of which concept is chosen, the policies and procedures involved should be contained in detail in the guidelines.

A growing number of area service committees are given considerable latitude in making decision, while the groups reserve the right to review decisions upon demand from a certain number of Representatives who are part of the area committee, with only certain types of decisions referred to the groups. Another area of this complex issue are the actions of the voting participants of the area service committee. Many area committees rely upon the judicious exercise of responsibility by their trusted servants to use common sense in conducting the affairs of the area committee so that the groups are not bothered with the routine issues, but important or controversial issues are sent to the groups for consideration.

Area service committees are commonly given authority by the groups to have autonomy for the discharge of responsibilities related to the proper functions of the committee or subcommittees and their activities. For example most area committees operate on approved budgets that are created and approved by the area service committee. The subcommittees that actually use the money get their authorizations from the area committee rather than



having the groups directly involved. So the details of certain activities, the organization of a dance for instance, is done entirely by the area service committee or delegated to a subcommittee.

Another commonly held principle about autonomy is that the regional service committee, although it may from time to time offer advice, does not have authority over the decisions or activities of the area service committee. Other area service committees and even the regional service committee can suggest things to the area committee, but neither has the authority to dictate or give orders to the committee.

It is important to understand the benefits of the relationships described in the paragraphs above. Area service committees have a responsibility given to them by their constituent groups to properly manage the affairs conducted under the authority of the area service committee.

The most widely used participation and voting pattern for area service committees is modeled after the World Service Conference. In this situation, each Group Service Representative, elected officer and subcommittee chairperson would have a right to vote; however, some area service committees use an approach whereby only Group Service Representatives have votes.

Whatever pattern an area committee eventually decides to use, the most important factor is that the language be precise in

order to avoid conflicts at a later date.

### Officers and Participants

In order to coordinate it's services, each area committee elects officers which usually include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Area Service Representative and an Alternate Area Service Representative. These officers are elected annually from among the group service representatives and other participants. The election procedures outlined in the area service committee guidelines should be followed closely. They should provide opportunity for advance notice of the elections, and many area service committees stagger elections so that not all of their trusted servants leave or take office at the same time. This is important in developing continuity.

Many area committees read the job descriptions and qualifications at group business meetings several weeks in advance of the elections so that everyone who may be interested can assist in the search and selection of these trusted servants. One of the important responsibilities of an area service committee is to train other members to replace them. An area committee can be strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. This can easily be accomplished by conducting "learning days" about area service responsibilities several months before the election

procedures begin.

Most area service committees permit officers and subcommittee chairpersons to succeed themselves in office, but in keeping with the Ninth Tradition and the principle of rotating leadership, they do not usually have the ability to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Area service committees have learned from sad experience that their trusted servants serve them better if they do not have conflicts in their service commitments. So most area committees prohibit officers and subcommittee chairpersons from holding more than one position at a time, including service positions at the region or world level.

In the following section are general job descriptions for officers most commonly elected at the area service committee level. The exact duties may vary from place to place in the Fellowship just as the guidelines of a particular area service committee may, providing for differences in needs. There are several important criteria for all area service committee officers and participants. They must have the personal time to devote to their assignments and be accessible by members of the Fellowship, groups and subcommittees. They must have the interest to do a timely and thorough job. They must have a proficient knowledge of the Steps and Traditions and have provided general service at the group level. These jobs usually require the member to be able to expend a certain amount of personal money and be willing to accept some personal

inconvenience in order to get done the job they are elected to.

#### CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson usually arranges an agenda for, and presides over, the area service committee meetings, serving as the general coordinator of the area service committee and the activities of the subcommittees. Most area committees provide that the chairperson does not vote except to make or break a tie, but may vote if the vice-chairperson is presiding at the time. A chairperson should be chosen for their mature judgment reflected in success in their recovery. A chairperson must be capable of conducting a business meeting with a firm, yet understanding hand. Our experience indicates a minimum of four (4) year's continuous abstinence from all drugs is important. General service experience as a Group Service Representative and as a chairperson or other officer in the area service committee is essential background for selection.

The best chairpersons display leadership ability and by being able to organize and lead yet act as a servant. It is important that a chairperson is able to plan administrative actions upon which the success of area service committee meetings rests.

A chairperson should be a good communicator and be available to the membership, especially the subcommittee chairpersons and officers. A Chairperson should to be sensitive to wishes of the

area, while also being objective and tolerant of those who cannot see beyond their own groups.

An important qualification is that of being a living example of success in recovery through Narcotics Anonymous.

#### VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Most area service committee guidelines provide that the vice-chairperson coordinates the activities of the subcommittees. In the temporary absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson serves as the chairperson and performs the duties of the chairperson. If the office of chairperson becomes vacant, the vice-chairperson may assume the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson until the area service committee elects a new chairperson, if the guidelines so provide. Experience indicates that three (3) years' continuous abstinence from all drugs and general service experience is essential in the selection of vice-chairpersons. Minimum experience for this position includes previous experience as an area subcommittee chairperson and group service representative.

The specific qualifications listed above for the chairperson showing leadership ability, communications skill, objectivity, tolerance and being a good example of living the program are also important characteristics to use when selecting a vice chairperson.

## SECRETARY

A Secretary is an important member of the area service committee leadership team. The most proficient and qualified Secretary should be found. In a new area a minimum two year clean time is usually required while in older areas three or four years clean time is required. The Secretary must have general office or secretarial skills, and access to typewriters or word processors and copiers. The service experience usually required is one year as a Secretary of a group and general service experience on one or more area subcommittees as a secretary.

It is essential that the Secretary have a sense of order about what transpires at meetings. The duty of a secretary is to put in the minutes of the meeting the essence of what is conducted at the meeting without making a transcript.

A Secretary must be able to organize and maintain file systems for all information generated by the area committee and certain materials created by the subcommittees. Preparation of letters and other communications for the officers and if necessary subcommittees is essential. Information lists about officers, committees, and groups must be maintained.

A Secretary prepares accurate minutes of each area committee business meeting, types and distributes copies of the minutes to each Representative within the time stipulated in the guidelines, usually one week or ten days following each meeting. A secretary

is responsible for correspondence, maintaining area files and archives and current registration with the WSO and the regional service committee

#### TREASURER

The Treasurer will usually have more experience and clean time than any other officer. A minimum requirement for clean time is four years. In a new area service committee a Treasurer may be selected with as little as three years. This is the person acting as guardian of area funds. The Treasurer should have bookkeeping experience and be precise with checking accounts. The Treasurer's Handbook available from the WSO may be helpful in the development of guidelines for management of area service committee and subcommittee money. The assistance of a typist is usually essential.

A Treasurer is primarily responsible for the funds which come into the area from the Seventh Tradition collection in the groups and for management and control of funds generated from activities of the subcommittees of the area. The Treasurer keeps accurate record of all these funds and makes disbursements of funds when appropriate. Our experience has shown that the Treasurer can best fulfill this responsibility by joining some experience as a trusted servant in area service with some business background.

A special note about Treasurers and the management of funds.

The temptation to use Fellowship funds for temporary personal needs is ever present. It happens at the group level, the area level and the regional level too. We must not be so lazy that the opportunity arises for Treasurers to take advantage of such situations. We must trust our treasurers, but we must also love them enough to help prevent temptations. All disbursements over a reasonably small amount must be made through a bank checking account which requires two signatures for every check.

#### AREA SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

It is the responsibility of the Area Service Representative to provide a clear understanding of all communications between area committee and the regional service committee. The Representative's ability to understand and explain the workings the Fellowship is a factor in determining the unity, growth and stability of those they serve. They convey the group conscience of their area committee to the regional service committee when appropriate and provide guidance and information to the area committee in addition to the member groups on issues that require group conscience action. The Representative attends as many area and regional business meetings and subcommittee activities as is possible. In this way the Representative is the eyes and ears for the area from which they are elected and also communicates to the region the activities, problems, needs, etc. of that area.



The Representative participates in the actions of the region and may serve on a subcommittee of the region.

The importance of the duties of the Area Representative is such that area committees may provide supplementary financial assistance for expenses. This hopefully encourages service and participation that helps the area and the groups themselves.

When selecting the Area Service Representative, knowledge of the area committee, its activities and the groups within the area is important. General service experience within the group and area as an officer or committee chairperson is essential. Clean time requirements may vary but usually Area Service Representatives have four (4) years abstinence before they are elected.

#### AREA SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE ALTERNATE

The responsibilities assigned to the Area Service Representative are so important and so large that it has been necessary for us to have an assistant. This assistant, the Alternate is also usually the member who succeeds the Representative at the end of their term. In this manner we have a member learning the job and also helping get the job done.

The Alternate must have the same qualifications in service experience and clean time in order that the Alternate can immediately step in and complete the term of office of the

Representative if a vacancy occurs.

#### GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Although the Group Service Representative has been discussed in previous chapters it is important to highlight here the relationship of the Group Representative to the area service committee. Because the Group Representative is the principal communicator between the group and area, the Group Representative must be a very active participant. Without a strong involvement the area committee will not be able to provide the service or assistance to groups for which the area committee was formed.

#### AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Area service committees meet on a regular basis. Although every area has different needs, experience gained through operation of the area committee will reveal the most appropriate meeting schedule. The most successful area service committees are those with relatively frequent meetings, usually once a month. Although there are many factors which influence the frequency of area service committee meetings (for example geographical considerations and the kind and number of activities the area service committee undertakes), these characteristics should not be used as an excuse to avoid having meetings. Most

area committees that meet less than monthly when the area committee is first formed, eventually decide to meet more often as they come to realize that the unity necessary to function effectively is weak. New groups need a strong area, and as the area grows, the complexity of its service projects increases. For these reasons, meeting at least monthly is recommended.

Area service committees meetings are usually open to all members of the Fellowship, whether as participants or observers. This helps in creating an opportunity for new members of the Fellowship to learn about N.A. and to develop interest in this form of service. More importantly, it encourages recovery in newer members as they begin to understand how big and stable the Fellowship is and are able to witness recovery in members outside their own group. This is one important way to create an open and positive feeling within the Fellowship served by the committee.

Most area service committee meetings are held on a Saturday or a Sunday in a central location or rotated geographically. Many area committees have several subcommittee meetings scheduled at the same location either before or after the area committee meeting. Some areas schedule social activities on the same day (lunches, picnics, dances etc.) as this provides an ideal setting for the participants, who might not normally get to know one another, to meet and develop valuable lines of communications. The monthly ASC meeting is an opportunity for all the groups to touch base with each other--to keep abreast of the progress and

developments of each group, to refurbish supplies for the group and to acquire information and understanding about the N.A. Fellowship on a larger scale.

Many area service committees use the following agenda for the conduct of their business meetings:

1. Opening with a moment of silence to contemplate the ASR's primary purpose, followed by a prayer.

2. Reading of the Twelve Traditions.

3. Introduction of new GSR's and orientation whenever necessary.

4. GSR reports (including average attendance, ability to meet financial responsibilities, overall functioning in its primary purpose) If there are specific problems, other ASC participants are often asked to share experience on how similar problems have been solved.

5. Old business (status of ongoing projects or concerns).

6. Subcommittee reports (financial reports, goals and progress).

7. New business (including questions or issues affecting the area or N.A. as a whole)

8. Announcements

9. A collection.

10. A closing prayer.

Area committee meetings are generally fairly flexible in their

formats in order to deal with the wide variety of questions and issues which come up.

#### AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE FINANCES

In order to provide services, the area committee needs the support of its groups, the active participation of the group service representatives and qualified leaders. The area must be actively supported by each group financially, functionally and spiritually. Because it takes money to provide some of the services the committee will provide, every group has a responsibility to contribute this support through sharing part of their Seventh Tradition funds with the area committee. When an area service committee is first formed, the need for funds may be minimal, i.e., payment for a post office box, rental of a meeting place, and purchases of coffee. However, as an area grows, the financial needs of the committee also grow. In order to provide a full range of services the committee needs a steady, reliable flow of funds.

Each group must be informed of the importance of financial support of each group to the area. Accurate financial reporting of each service performed by the area including monthly expenses should be available to groups through their GSR's.

Area must maintain a reliable prudent reserve in order to meet the needs of their area as it continues to grow. The area should maintain a ninety day prudent reserve. Funds in excess of

the ninety day reserve should automatically be forwarded to the regional service committee. An exception in this policy should be made for the "seed" money necessary for large conferences, retreats or other activities that require substantial amounts of money that would be in excess of the ninety day prudent reserve.

#### SUBCOMMITTEES

The area committee cannot realistically conduct all the desired services as a single committee, but they must retain the ultimate responsibility for activities assigned to their subcommittees. Although subcommittees carry the direct burden of work assigned, they share responsibility with the parent area committee. Even the most successful subcommittees are seldom given carte blanche to operate independently of the direction and authority of an area service committee.

Each of the subcommittees are an integral part of the effort to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict. The work of the area should be distributed throughout the subcommittees so that individual groups are not overloaded with work that might prevent them from providing the basic atmosphere of recovery

Subcommittees must be supported by the Area Service Committee not only financially but also physically, through the active participation of members from each group. Without this continued

support, the work will be become burdensome for the few members and they soon suffer from service "burn out". Communication between the area committee, the subcommittees and the groups is essential. Without full and expeditious communications the activities and needs of the subcommittees cannot be known and their work cannot succeed as well as they might otherwise.

Guidelines for subcommittees must ultimately meet the needs of the groups comprising the area and should include details for the participation, membership and trusted servant duties of the members and officers. An effort should be made to provide for the members of individual groups to serve on area subcommittees. If a new subcommittee is started, the first responsibility, unless previously completed is to draft proposed guidelines for the approval of the area committee before any other subcommittee work is done.

Experience, learned the hard way, has shown that every subcommittee should be given the latitude to conduct the routine affairs it is assigned, but should report periodically to the ASC. Subcommittees should request approval from the area committee before conducting new activities and even routine activities if they involve funds over a pre-authorized amount. Budgets should be presented for approval and periodical financial statements given to the full committee on any project involving expenditures. A comprehensive written report should be made available soon after the completion of such projects. Other N.A.

publications provide guidance on financial record keeping and should be consulted for specific details.

Participation in subcommittees is a widely discussed matter. Most use the approach that the area committee elects the chairperson, while other officers of the subcommittee (for example vice chairperson, treasurer and secretary) are selected within the subcommittee by the subcommittee. There are, however, other area service committees that elect all these trusted servants, then the subcommittee approves its own membership, giving consideration to equal or at least fair representation from each separate group.

In the following paragraphs, suggestions are presented for different areas of work commonly accomplished by area service committees. There are few details provided because more definitive guidance in these areas of work can be found in other publications on these subjects.

#### Public Information

Specific activities of public information subcommittees varies considerably from place to place, but the most frequent activities include: posting notices of meetings in places frequented by addicts, providing periodic public service announcements for local radio, television and newspapers, keeping in contact with professionals in public and private agencies that come in contact with addicts, and arranging for a telephone



hotline service to take calls from addicts seeking recover.

This type of work is very important, but often very touchy. Most of the violations of our Sixth Tradition inadvertently occur during this type of work. Drug programs, mental health groups, hospitals, criminal diversion courses, drug and alcoholism schools, and other organizations who have requested N.A. speakers or panels for the benefit of their patients, residents, or members have at times used the N.A. name as part of their publicity. This type of misuse should, at all times, be avoided.

#### Hospitals and Institutions

Most area committee H&I subcommittees become involved with treatment centers and local correctional facilities in their efforts to carry the message. This is important because it provides the opportunity for many addicts to learn about N.A. Chapter Two contains important information about groups and their relationship to H&I subcommittee work. Communication and coordination of H & I work with other area committees and the regional H & I subcommittee will be important when deciding to work with major state or federal correctional facilities. Many of the state and federal correctional facilities require substantial clean time for member participation from the outside.

#### Outreach

Many area committees have started using this subcommittee approach to actively seek and encourage the growth of N.A. within the area by helping to start new groups. It may also lend support by providing literature and working closely with P.I. to get information out on meeting area places and times. This committee might send experienced trusted servants to groups to act as a "trouble shooting" committee, sharing experience, strength and hope with officers. This committee also helps to start new groups or meetings.

Isolated groups often have a hard time, because there is no one nearby to whom they can turn for help. For this reason it is to the groups' benefit to put forth as much effort as possible towards starting other groups in the area and involving them in forming an area committee as soon as possible. Many groups, if not served by an area committee, have found it helpful to participate in activities of area committees that serve areas a considerable distance away. Although this may be inconvenient, the benefits derived from the contact and support make the effort worth while. Outreach subcommittees are important assets to groups remote from the bulk of the area committee's groups.

#### Activity Subcommittee

Many areas use an activity or entertainment subcommittee to manage and conduct activities and events for the economic and social needs of the area. Many groups individually conduct some activities, but coordination and communication through a subcommittee helps prevent conflicts and provides greater support for each activity.

#### Literature Subcommittee

Literature subcommittees created at the area level fall into two work categories. Many are operated only to purchase and make available literature to the subcommittees and the groups of the area. Sometimes the subcommittee becomes involved with the development of literature through the efforts of the World Service Conference Literature Committee. When deciding to engage in the literature development activities, the area should contact the Chairperson of the World Service Conference Literature Subcommittee.

#### Policy Subcommittee

A policy subcommittee is frequently utilized as a standing committee to work on procedures and policies for the operation of the area committee and subcommittees. This subcommittee frequently is responsible for the development of guidelines for

the operation of subcommittees before the subcommittees are created. Many area committees use the policy subcommittee to supervise the area review of material from the world level that requires group conscience consideration.

#### FORMING AN AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE

Just as the number of recovering members is free to grow once a group is formed, the number of groups is free to grow once an area is formed. For this reason it is important to form an area committee as soon as it is desirable, reasonable and practical. It has been our experience as a Fellowship that the area service committee consistently plays a key role in making the N.A. message widely available to those who need it.

The early stages of development of an area committee may be very much like the early stages of a group. Depending upon the local population, the number of groups and the length of time N.A. has existed locally, progress may be quick or painfully slow. The main ingredients are having more than one N.A. group, enough trusted servants to fill the positions of officers, subcommittee chairs and group service representatives, and a prevailing attitude of dedication and willingness to learn and

grow.

When the local trusted servants decide the time has come to form an area, the first step is to gather information. Members who are to be involved in the ASC formation should become aware of the major areas of service, such as Public Information, Hospitals and Institutions and Literature. Handbooks for each of these are available through the World Service Office. The roles of committee officers, subcommittee chairs and group conscience representatives (ASR, GSR) should be reviewed and discussed.

The first temptation when reviewing all this information is often to become overwhelmed and think, "we're not ready for all this yet." While it may be true that a newly forming area is not ready to function as a seasoned area committee don't be discouraged from making a beginning. Just as we do in our personal recovery, we grow as an area one day at a time.

After becoming informed, the next step is to get the names, addresses and phone numbers of key members of the Regional Service Committee. You are then ready to contact your most important resource in helping you form the area. The regional service committee exists primarily to help areas. Be sure to make use of that resource.

Equipped with the above information and resources, interested members can now schedule planning sessions to establish the area committee. It may be helpful to invite the regional service representative to attend these as a resource. For three or four

weeks in advance, announce the date, time and purpose of the session at all meetings in the area. A good turnout is important so that the new area committee is understood and supported by as many local members as possible.

Each area designs the planning session according to its own needs. If the Regional Service Representative is to attend, it may be a good idea to have him/her preside over the first session. Some areas have allowed all present to vote during these planning sessions. The important issues are usually to decide which subcommittees need to be formed initially and to hold elections of officers. These sessions also serve as a forum in which to discuss the various service units of N.A., and to pass along the information discussed above.

From there, each area service committee grows and develops according to local needs. As long as both the area committee and the groups remember the area committee is formed by the groups and exists to serve the groups, many problems are avoided.

Among the first actions of a newly created area service committee should be to register the committee with the regional service committee and the World Service Office. Any change in the mailing address or the position of secretary of the area service committee should be reported to the regional service committee and the World Service Office. The area service committee is an integral participant in their region, just as the groups are participants in their area service committee. The

region can provide additional assistance to the area service committee, so contact with the regional service committee at the earliest possible moment will be of importance.

The most successful area service committees are those that adjust to the changing needs of the Fellowship they serve. When an area committee is new, it may provide a limited number of activities and services. As the needs arise and experience is gained, the committee frequently broadens its scope of activities and services.

#### A CLOSING WORD

Many addicts have a history of refusing to accept orders and work under close supervision. Some of us rebelled against parents, school authorities, employers and the legal system. Our recovery and our individual re-entry into productive association within our society can be aided by the learning experiences service work offers. It is important that we, as individuals, as participants in subcommittees, and even the area committee itself, learn from the positive experience of working within the authority of a loving Fellowship. This experience often has a direct affect on our ability to cope with working in society generally.

Part of this learning experience is embedded in the check and balance created by using the group conscience of all groups of the area service committee the ultimate authority for activities of the area committee and the subcommittees. This group conscience would have no effect if a subcommittee was unwilling to submit, with love and understanding, to the will and authority of the area service committee. The requirements for frequent and detailed reports, especially involving money are not intended to be a hindrance or show lack of trust, rather they are important as learning experiences and acceptance of group conscience.

Subcommittees must remember their primary purpose is to their groups and N.A. as a whole and not solely to perpetuate themselves. It is important for the area service committee and its subcommittees to use the region as a resource.





CHAPTER FIVE  
REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEES

Chapter Five is not complete at this time. It is in the final stages of preparation, and will be available for distribution in the near future.





## CHAPTER SIX

### WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

The World Service Conference serves as the framework upon which the Fellowship has evolved for making decisions for the Fellowship as a whole. However, it was not always that way. For sixteen years after the first meeting started in 1953, there was not even an area service committee. Until 1969 the groups existed in a loose association with one another, working together, but without the formalized relationship we know today. Growing into that first area service committee was a gradual process.

As the number of groups increased and many were started in places distant from the Los Angeles area, discussions began to arise about a structure for the Fellowship. There were concerns about a structure because everyone seemed to have different ideas of how it should be.

That first area committee was started in Southern California partly because there were enough addicts and meetings close together. This area service committee served the Southern California area and a considerable distance beyond. The area committee had a rocky start and was the scene of many loud and strongly felt arguments.

Among the actions taken the first year was the decision to hold a convention. Even though the Fellowship was relatively small, it was decided to call the Convention the World Convention for Narcotics Anonymous. The event was a rousing success, bringing participants from all over the Fellowship. This first large gathering also accelerated the discussions about a structure and discussions ensued about having a World Service Conference in a manner similar to A.A.

As time passed, more groups were started in more cities in other states. Northern California decided in 1971 that they had grown enough start an area service committee and did so. In 1972 serious discussions began on the idea of creating a structure for a conference composed of representatives from around the Fellowship. Work was begun in 1973 on the draft of a document that might be considered as the framework from which the Conference, when held, might be organized.

That first draft held a remarkably similar shape to the three element division of responsibility that the Fellowship continues to have today. There were provisions for a Board of Trustees, a World Service Office and a World Service Conference. The language about each of these service arms has been modified and fine tuned over the years but the decentralization of that original plan has remained.

The first World Service Conference was held in 1976 in conjunction with Narcotics Anonymous's Sixth World Convention in

Ventura, California. That Conference established an Ad-hoc Subcommittee of representatives of the Fellowship, to review and revise the service structure that had been proposed for Narcotics Anonymous in The N.A. Tree.

The Ad-hoc Subcommittee presented the results of its labor to the group conscience at N.A.'s first independent World Service Conference, held in Van Nuys, California in the spring of 1978. The Conference accepted the draft but turned it over and many other suggestions that came in, to the newly established World Service Conference Literature Subcommittee for finalization.

The Literature Subcommittee work was completed and presented to the Fellowship for approval at the World Service Conference held in the spring of 1979.

The Conference is more than simply a meeting of trusted servants, yet it is not quite the government within Narcotics Anonymous, as some believe. The Conference does not speak for Narcotics Anonymous as might be perceived by non-members yet the Conference does have certain duties and responsibilities. These duties and responsibilities have been shaped by the Fellowship through the trials of experience and our understanding of the Twelve Traditions.

A number of misconceptions about the World Service Conference, had grown over what it is and what it is not, what powers it has and what powers it does not have. A few words on this will be helpful in understanding the relationships of the service arms.

We find in the Traditions all of the parameters which form the purpose, pattern and duties of the Conference. For, Tradition Nine example, "N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve" is one of the foundations upon which the shape and duties of the Conference are based. This tradition seems to many non-addicts to be contradictory, yet it speaks clearly to the method for arranging the Conference and the relationship of the Conference to the members of the N.A. Fellowship. The Fellowship, and its relationship to the World Service Conference can best be illustrated by visualizing two images: one of what it is not, and the other revealing more accurately the relationship of the Conference to the rest of the Fellowship.

Many believe that N.A. is shaped like a pyramid with the base composing all of the members and groups at the bottom, with the area committees, regions and world services, including the Conference, rising towards the top. This is not, however, correct and the Fellowship should not be thought of as having the shape of a pyramid. The Conference is not the apex of organization and power.

A more accurate image of the Fellowship is that of a table with four supporting legs. The top of the table is made up of the members. Using this illustration it can be seen that every member on that table is equal as a member to all other members of the Fellowship. None are more privileged or have more authority than



others. Each of the supporting legs has its separate but interrelated duties and responsibilities, each having a direct relationship to the top which is the individual member and the group. Each of the legs represents one of the service functions that support the recovery efforts of every member.

Using the illustration of a table with four legs, we can more clearly understand that the service arms are indeed supporting the Fellowship and not the other way around. The four service elements can each be identified: the group, the area committee, the regional committee and world services. The world services leg of this support system has three elements; the Board of Trustees, the World Service Office and the World Service Conference.

Each of the world service elements has different areas of work and responsibility but they are mutually supporting and interrelated. None is more important than the other nor has power to control or run the duties and responsibilities assigned to the others. There is one focal point through which they are all related, and that is the exercise of Fellowship conscience which is done through the World Service Conference.

The Conference and its exercise of duties, like everything that occurs in the course of Narcotics Anonymous service, must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. We must always remember that as individual members, groups and service committees we are not and should never be in competition with each other. As

individual members we work separately but also together to help the newcomer and also for our own recovery. We have learned, painfully, that internal strife cripples our Fellowship; it prevents us from providing the services necessary to carry the message or sustain our own recovery.

The ultimate authority in Narcotics Anonymous is a "loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." One of the functions of the World Service Conference is to serve as the element through which Fellowship wide group conscience is expressed. The Conference has sometimes been described as a general deliberative assembly of the Fellowship. While this may sound correct in an organizational sense, because the Conference meets, the members make motions and vote on them, it is not correct in the sense that the members attending as voting participants have power in and of themselves. The authority delegated to the World Service Conference is the expression of Fellowship conscience.

The Conference is composed of regional service representatives, Officers and Subcommittee Chairpersons of the World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office and the Board of Trustees.

The Conference holds three (3) meetings each year; an annual meeting and two quarterly workshop meetings. The annual meeting may last up to a week; however, the planning and implementation associated with the Conference is a year round proposition. The

location and dates for the Conference workshop meetings are determined at the annual meeting of the Conference. These conference workshops have one primary objective and that is to allow the Conference subcommittees to continue work on the tasks assigned to their individual subcommittees.

The annual meeting is always held within the Los Angeles area in order to utilize the staff and facilities of the World Service Office and to have access to the records and archives of the Fellowship which are stored at the World Service Office. The World Service Office is responsible for the logistical planning of the Conference itself, arranging for supplies, equipment and special services that the Conference might need. Additional benefits of this rotating workshop system are that there is opportunity for the Fellowship in the host city to interact with the trusted servants of the Conference and their subcommittees. An additional benefit is that world level trusted servants learn first hand what is happening in the Fellowship at the host region and benefit from that association.

All of the voting subcommittee participants and selected staff members of the World Service Office attend each of these conference workshop meetings.

#### The Annual World Service Conference Meeting

Each year the Conference meets, the Conference runs more

smoothly and accomplishes more than the previous year. The early Conference meetings were subjected to hotly contested disputes as many participants disagreed with many of the other participants on policy, procedures and philosophy concerning almost every aspect of the Fellowship. But gradually these disputes have withered away and unity has replaced the conflict, suspicion and anger. Much of this change came as a result of better communications during the year prior to the Conference. Some of the change in attitude resulted from having more voting participants. But most of it has resulted from increased productivity of the subcommittees and therefore the Conference as a whole.

We have learned and grown from the experiences of past conferences. We experimented with different policies and procedures for participation and organization of the Conference. And each year has disclosed weakness and strengths that improved conferences held in subsequent years. The sessions and procedures of the Conference shown on the following pages reflect the best experience from prior conferences. There is always more work to be accomplished and more to be said than there is time for so some flexibility is built into the Conference schedule. If any session concludes early the next session is started early. When a session is found to be running late, long winded discussion or constant counter arguments often have to be curtailed.

Conferences have proven to be both exhilarating and exhausting. At the Conference, the future of the Fellowship is

revealed through actions of Fellowship conscience on proposals that had been submitted to the Fellowship. Most participants find that sleep is hard to find and that meals are irregular and short. But these sacrifices mean the Fellowship is being well served for the energies and expense invested in the annual meeting of the Conference.

The annual World Service Conference usually begins with a welcoming session which includes introductions of participants and a welcoming speaker who is a distinguished member of the Fellowship. This is followed by a general sharing session during which the voting participants are afforded the opportunity to share the concerns and problems facing the Conference and the Fellowship.

On the second day, committee meetings are held for each of the standing subcommittees and special subcommittees. These meetings provide opportunity for detailed discussion concerning suggestions, questions, and problems that have been submitted concerning the subcommittees proposals and new items relative to the subcommittees area of responsibility. At the end of the session each subcommittee prepares a report concerning every item discussed. For every item that involves more than one subcommittee, each subcommittee will separately review the item and make recommendation concerning the part that is within their area of responsibility.

After the subcommittee sessions, the first general assembly

meeting is held. This session provides time for each of the officers of the Conference, subcommittee chairpersons, Trustees, and World Service Office to present written and oral reports on their activities during the year. At this time also, written reports are presented on the discussions and actions taken in the subcommittee meeting session that preceded the report session. This is the period of the Conference when most of the work is done. The voting participants interact with the subcommittee chairpersons and other trusted servants concerning various aspects of the reports given. Motions are made, debated and disposed of according to the procedures adopted by the Conference. At the end of this session all of the work received prior to the Conference will have been disposed of by action from the subcommittee or the Conference or included in the work the subcommittee will schedule to accomplish in the coming year.

The next session is for elections, at which time nominations are opened for the various elective positions at world level service. Elections are held and the new trusted servants introduced to the Conference. The procedure for elections is discussed later in this chapter.

Following completion of elections, the next session is a new subcommittee meeting session. At this time the outgoing subcommittee officers and committee members meet jointly with the incoming officers and subcommittee members. This is a general planning session during which plans are discussed and outlined for

work to be accomplished during the ensuing twelve months. The subcommittee returns to the next general session with a report including proposed plans for the committee that will be acted on by the full conference.

The final session, usually on the last day of the Conference is another general session during which unfinished business or new business can be addressed. It is during this session that each subcommittee submits their proposed work program and budget for the following twelve months. When the work is completed the Conference closes until the following year.

The workshop meetings of the Conference are held according to a different format than the annual meeting. There is usually an opening session which may include an inspirational speaker from the Fellowship. Because no general session is held wherein voting for the whole conference is conducted, the rest of the meeting is devoted to meetings of the various subcommittees. The committees may meet separately to work on issues related to their own area of responsibility or jointly to work on problems related to other subcommittees. It is at these sessions that the majority of the productive work of each subcommittee is accomplished. The chairpersons and members present reports and proposals which the subcommittee examines, debates, changes and finalizes in the form of proposed policies, procedures, new pamphlets, handbooks and other tools that can be used by the Fellowship.

In order to have the most productive workshop sessions, the

work to be considered is mailed to the appropriate subcommittee members in advance, at the time notice of the workshop is given. The workshop meetings are held in July and October and are where most of the basic work of the subcommittee is done. New input is worked on, new proposals are received and the formulation of final drafts of reports and policies are generated. The material completed at the October workshop by each subcommittee is then made available to the Fellowship in the Conference Agenda Report. The Conference Agenda Report is sent to each conference participant not less than 90 days prior to due date of the conference. All subcommittee members are responsible to be present at each workshop where their subcommittee will hold a meeting. Other members of the Fellowship are invited to attend these workshop sessions and observe the subcommittee working but are not to participate or vote.

A January workshop meeting may be held for the chairpersons of the subcommittees and the officers of the Conference to review the final report of the subcommittees before it is published in the Conference Agenda Report. It can also serve as a planning session for the April Conference.

In the early years of the Conference, the most frequently discussed and hotly debated issue was the determination of who was eligible to vote at meetings of the Conference. It was decided very early in the evolution of the Conference that the experience, strength and hope of the world level trusted servants was an



important element to have as voting participants. The Trustees, the Conference officers and subcommittee chairpersons were found to have important knowledge and wisdom gained from their experience and service that was vital to the future of the Fellowship. Some had argued that these members should be excluded because they did not represent a constituency of specific Fellowship areas and groups. The feeling was that only regional service representatives should vote.

This approach reduces our spiritual Fellowship down to the common denominator of a representative democracy. While the Fellowship does manage its affairs in a democratic manner (allowing for equal participation in debate and a voting procedure) the Fellowship is not a governmental agency nor is the Conference comparable to a legislative body. The Conference is indeed a deliberative assembly, but on a higher spiritual level than a governmental legislature.

The basis for resolution of this dispute is in a full appreciation of the Second Tradition, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." The phrase "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern" was the operative slogan used in the argument against allowing anyone to vote except for RSR's. The feeling was that having Trustees or conference subcommittee chairpersons vote amounted to an exercise of having

trusted servants govern the Fellowship. This concept is greatly incorrect and fails to fully understand the value of experienced trusted servants.

Another perception of this issue was that the Fellowship should indeed be organized in a pyramid fashion and that the pyramid did not make provision for a trusted servants participation at the world level who were not directly elected by a region. This unfortunately would leave the Fellowship "organized" in the fashion that Tradition Nine speaks against. This pattern of thought includes the seeds of discontent nurtured by jealousy, envy, pride and prestige frequently felt by those who had not served at the world level as trusted servants.

It should be emphasized that the Conference is not a political body, demanding a completely rigid formula of representation. If this were the principle followed, each voting participant would have to represent an equal number of members or groups or in other ways reflect the representative equality that such "direct representation" concepts would call for. Not only is this scheme impractical, it is also unnecessary for a spiritual Fellowship. What our experience has revealed is the Conference needs always to have RSR's to afford a reliable cross section of the Fellowship plus enough world level trusted servants to balance the regional and sectional influences that many RSR's tend to carry in their thinking. Experience has revealed that trusted servants new to world level service tend to have sectional and regional bias when

they start their terms of office. Usually when their year is completed they have lost that bias and reflect a broader understanding of the Fellowship.

The Fellowship has learned that lengthy clean time, broad experience in service and a good personal understanding of the Steps and Traditions are the best foundations for world level service. The requirements for election to various service positions at the area, region and at world level attest to the importance of that experience, strength and hope. The Fellowship very early recognized the importance of retaining that experience as part of the decision making that does occur at the World Service Conference.

Accordingly the Fellowship has retained as voting participants of the Conference trusted servants who currently serve as chairpersons of subcommittees, the administrative subcommittee members, Trustees and a representative from the World Service Office. These members of the Conference usually have years of experience and service in particular fields of service that play an important part in the discussions and actions by the Conference. The Fellowship has long recognized that to exclude these members with valuable experience, would doom the Fellowship to repeat mistakes periodically and impede efforts to carry the message of recovery. Experience has shown that these trusted servants tend to provide positive balance in their actions at the

Conference by their exercise of positive judgment and moderate participation.

Concerning the argument that the non-RSR's control the rest of the Fellowship, time has shown this is not the case. Some had feared that they would make decisions that were contrary to the best interests of the Fellowship because they were interested primarily in protecting their positions and personal prestige. An example of the fallacy of that argument is the record of the participation of the Trustees in the development of the Fellowship.

For more than ten years the Board of Trustees existed without any direct or indirect control from the Fellowship. The Trustees selected their own members and handled the general matters affecting the Fellowship as a whole. During this period the Fellowship continued to grow and the message of recovery continued to be carried to addicts. The Trustees were instrumental in the creation of the Conference and have been a valuable settling influence on the Conference and the Fellowship as a whole. The Trustees are now selected by the Conference and they still provide wisdom and guidance as they did before. If anything can be gained from the experience of the Trustees and their relationship to the Conference, it is that they provide insight to the failures resulting from past experience and serve as a beacon toward positive solutions to our problems.

These trusted servants with nine years and more of clean time and service experience usually have a more even disposition about the controversies that seem to repeat themselves periodically. The Fellowship has relied upon these trusted servants to counter balance the newness to world service that many first time Conference participants have.

Most RSR's are relatively new to the Fellowship and nearly always new to world level service. Although the prior Service Structure suggested that an RSR's should have five years clean time in the program, it was often difficult to find a member in each region with that amount of time who was interested in serving. Consequently many RSR's have arrived at the Conference with about three years clean time, and some with less. This was unavoidable in growing areas where there had been no Fellowship, but as these newer areas matured, they more frequently sent members with five years and more. This trend has brought added maturity to the Conference and decreased the recurrence of arguments resolved in previous years.

When the Conference first began there were more Trustee and subcommittee chairpersons than there were regional service representatives. This changed with the addition of three or four new regions each year. By 1985 there were more than thirty five regions, while the number of Trustees and subcommittee chairpersons remained about the same. As the Fellowship continues

to add RSR's the voting impact of the Trustees and the subcommittee chairpersons will continue to diminish numerically.

It is not likely however, that their indirect influence will generally be diminished, regardless of the number of voting participants. The Trustees and conference subcommittee chairpersons are usually the most well informed members of the Conference. The Trustees and conference chairpersons generally travel to more places within the Fellowship in the conduct of their duties and have a broader perspective of the Fellowship from that experience. They are the members most directly involved in the Fellowship wide work being done by the Conference and usually have more specific knowledge of the issues being presented.

Trustees always have more than eight years clean time and conference subcommittee chairpersons usually have more than five years at the time they are elected to their positions. Their lengthy clean time records usually provides additional balance in their judgment and clarity in their thinking.

Because the Fellowship created a World Service Office to be separate from the Fellowship, yet be subject to the Fellowship to handle the business activities, there needed to be some place for the World Service Office and the Fellowship to interface. To provide for adequate interaction of the World Service Office with the Fellowship, a representative of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office is included as a voting participant of the Conference. This has been found to be a valuable and productive

arrangement. The Office directors and staff have the experience and service knowledge that impacts many of the decisions the Conference needs to make. With a representative of the Office as a member of the Conference there is the ability to have that experience and knowledge easily accessible to the Conference and provides opportunity for closer service by the Office.

The conference participants therefore (those who may make motions, participate in debate, address the Conference and vote on motions), are the RSR's, the Conference Chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, subcommittee chairpersons, the Trustees and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office. The Chairperson of the World Service Conference Administrative Subcommittee usually is the presiding officer of the Conference and when presiding does not vote except to make or break a tie vote or to cast a vote in a roll call vote. When the vice chairperson is acting as the presiding officer at the Conference, he/she similarly does not vote except to make or break a tie vote or cast a vote in a roll call vote. Other individuals are not authorized to participate in the Conference without a 2/3 vote of approval by the Conference, except for the participation of a parliamentarian, the manager of the World Service Office and guest speakers. These exceptions have been found to be essential for reasonable and proper operation of the Conference. In the absence of the elected regional service representative from any region, the alternate regional service representative is

authorized to perform the duties of the RSR' and to participate and vote in place of the RSR.

### ELECTIONS AT THE CONFERENCE

An important part of the annual meeting of the Conference is the election of trusted servants to serve at the world level. Experience has shown that considerable care has to be exercised in the selection of world level trusted servants. In recent years nearly half of the Conference subcommittee chairpersons or vice-chairpersons have resigned or otherwise failed to discharge the duties of their office. This experience has been reflected in more specific election procedures and expanded criteria for nomination for world level service positions.

To some extent the selection of many world level trusted servants has shown a resemblance to buying items in a store already wrapped in a brown paper bag. Many of the trusted servants elected to positions at the Conference failed to do the job they were expected to even though their personal performance at the Conference was outstanding. Many were elected to world level positions only on the basis of their "appearance of judgment or wisdom" while at the Conference. This system of electing people to positions of great responsibility without having had opportunity to base the decision on observed past experience has led the Fellowship to change the election system. The system now



provides for a Nomination Subcommittee responsible for recommending to the Fellowship which persons are most likely, based on past experience in service, to capably serve the Fellowship in world level service.

The Nomination Subcommittee is composed of two Trustees, selected by the Trustees, the immediate prior Chairperson of the World Service Conference, the current Chairperson of the Conference and three RSR's selected at random by the Conference. Service on this subcommittee does not preclude discharge of other general service responsibilities. Membership on this subcommittee shall be an incidental responsibility and allow the members to also continue their other general service duties.

The Nominating Subcommittee will meet several times during the year as they find convenient, but conduct much of their work by phone and through informal discussions. They will search throughout the Fellowship for trusted servants whose skills, talents and personal program provide examples of the success that N.A. can offer. They will observe world level trusted servants in discharge of their responsibilities to determine strengths and talents important for world level service. They will publish a list of nominees for each world level position in the Conference Agenda Report. The list shall include two or more nominees for each position in paragraphs A., B., C., D., F., G., and I., if appropriate. The Nominating Subcommittee is always receptive to suggestions for nominations, but campaigning must be avoided at

all costs. To campaign for a position as a trusted servant in a spiritual Fellowship goes against the very concepts of N.A. world level service. The subcommittee does not make nominations until and unless the prospective nomination has been discussed in detail with the member and the member has consented to the nomination and expressed a willingness and ability to serve if elected. The subcommittee prepares and publishes a short biography of each nominee and it is published in the Conference Agenda Report.

The Conference elects the following trusted servants:

- A. A chairperson, vice-chairperson, and treasurer of the Conference.
- B. A chairperson for these subcommittees: policy, literature, public information, hospitals and institutions, group services and conventions.
- C. A vice chairperson for these subcommittees: policy, literature, public information, hospitals and institutions, group services and conventions.
- D. Two members to the International Fellowship Subcommittee.
- E. Three members to the Nominating Subcommittee.
- F. Trustees.
- G. Three members to the World Service Office Board of Directors.
- H. Three members to the reserve pool for directors of the World Service Board of Directors.

I. The Conference may also elect other members or individuals to Ad-hoc, special or new subcommittees if such are created and their election is provided for.

The elections are held for each position separately.

Our experience gained from the failures of many world level trusted servants to complete their terms of office, has revealed positive solutions to avoiding future re-occurrences. As described in Chapter 1, the difficulties of having too many service responsibilities and also having personal or financial difficulties are the chief problems associated with trusted servants failing to complete duties to which they are elected. The Fellowship is substantially harmed by these situations. The individual is harmed because of the sensitive nature such failures are to us as recovering addicts. It hurts our pride and frequently embitters us against further service. The Fellowship is harmed because important work is halted or disrupted.

It has been found to be important that a member about to embark on service at the world level be given opportunity to prepare for the personal strains both financially and emotionally. This is best accommodated by having the nominee be an observer of the world level trusted servant duties that they are being nominated for during the year prior to their first election to world level service. After they have had that one year of inactivity, they may continue to serve in world level positions

without additional periods of inactivity unless nominated to the position of Trustee.

World level trusted servants become eligible for world level service after having served as a regional service representative. Every RSR is expected to complete their full term of services as an RSR in order to fulfill their obligations to the Fellowship they were elected from. This also serves as a proper example for newer members of the Fellowship just starting their own general service activities. This is an important point to understand and abide by. The acceptance of responsibility as a world level trusted servant can be disastrous if rushed or if sandwiched on top of other service commitments at the area or region. Recent years of experience has proven that the tendency to attempt to serve as an RSR and also as a vice chairperson or chairperson of a subcommittee has created terrible results both for the individual personally and for the success of world level service. Some have attempted to remedy this by resigning from their position as an RSR. This has frequently left the region with problems of continuity and adequate service and is not a reflection of positive judgment. An RSR can be nominated for a world level service position while they are an RSR but cannot be elected as a world level trusted servant until they have completed their existing RSR commitment and then a year of service inactivity after they have been nominated for their first world level position.

All members meeting the requirements for service in any of the positions listed above can be nominated. The nomination becomes official when made at the Conference. Except as noted in the following paragraph, the nominee enters for the subsequent year, a period of inactivity. Upon acceptance of nomination, the individual resigns from every conflicting service position. Since the RSR should complete their full term of office, they should not resign if nominated to a position elected by the Conference. Since the RSR should only be holding that position, there may be little conflict. During the ensuing year the member does not hold an office above that at the group level, after their term as RSR is over. The nominee should attend all meetings of the subcommittee to which the nomination is made. If the nomination is to that of the officer positions of the Conference (chairperson, vice chairperson or treasurer) the nominee should attend the workshops and the January meeting if one is held. If the nomination is to the World Service Office the nominee should attend the World Service Office Board meetings. If the nomination is to the Trustees the nominee should attend all meetings of the Trustees.

This procedure has evolved as a means of allowing the trusted servant to learn first hand what the duties are of the office and to eliminate conflicts in service that would inhibit effective service to the Fellowship at the world level. This also provides opportunity for other trusted servants to be able to observe the

nominees learning the work of that position. The requirement for inactivity also inhibits individuals from essentially campaigning for the position to which they have been nominated. Selflessness and humility are important characteristics for trusted servants at the world level and this procedure has proven to be an excellent way to observe and measure these important qualities. Another important reason for the year of inactivity is to provide opportunity for the nominee to have some "free" time before several years of intensive service begins that will be personally expensive and demanding. This has been a good way to insure that the Fellowship gets the best qualified and interested trusted servants at the world level.

Because of the nature of constant change in the lives of addicts, there must be exceptions even to many of the most important procedures. If the circumstance shall be found that there is less than two nominees in the nomination pool having been nominated at the prior year conference for the position, the Nominating Subcommittee will propose additional members for the position. These additional nominees will have all the required qualifications and have completed a year of inactivity as an elected world level trusted servant although they may currently or previously have been of service on a subcommittee or board.

At the annual meeting of the Conference the following year an election is conducted from among those still interested and eligible for the position. As there will be two or more nominees,

successive ballots shall be completed, each time deleting the nominee with the least number of votes, until there are only two nominees remaining. On the subsequent ballot the nominee must receive a simple majority vote of those voting in the election to be elected.

The terms of office for all of the officers listed in A., B., C., D. and H., shall be for one year from the close of the Conference meeting at which they are elected to office. Every individual elected to a position in paragraphs A., B., C., D. and H. may be re-elected for a successive term of office without having had to discontinue service in their present position and without having to leave service for one year. Those members currently serving in each position will automatically be renominated by the Nominating Subcommittee if they desire to continue service for a second term of office. The Fellowship has found that there should be rotation in world level service positions, therefore a member cannot be renominated for a third term of service in the same position.

#### DUTIES OF OFFICERS ELECTED BY THE CONFERENCE

The officers of the Conference shall be the Conference Chairperson, conference vice chairperson, treasurer and the chairperson and vice chairperson of each of the standing subcommittees described in this chapter. The basic purpose of

these subcommittees are to collect, clarify, define, and articulate the decisions that the Fellowship must make within their specific areas of concern. Subcommittees, through their meetings, collect data from the Fellowship, and prepare recommendations for the Fellowship that can receive final deliberation at the World Service Conference. The subcommittees are advisory rather than decision making in their nature as trusted servants of the Fellowship.

The World Service Conference is an important part of the Fellowship because it affects every aspect of the Fellowship, from the member right through every level of service. These world level trusted servants help shape the activities of the Fellowship through their spiritual leadership, insight to the needs of the Fellowship and their administrative abilities. Although the following descriptions of major duties of world level trusted servants portrays many of the aspects of each position, any such list would be confusing and lengthy if every separate responsibility was listed which covered their duties for every separate situation that they may find themselves involved with for the Fellowship. So the list is necessarily short. But trusted servants are expected to exercise restraint in judgment while basing their actions on spiritual application of the principles of N.A.

Chairperson of the World Service Conference. The Chairperson is responsible for general administration of world level services,



except for activities of the Board of Trustees and the World Service Office. The Chairperson works with each of the Conference committee chairpersons and their subcommittees to accomplish the separate tasks of the subcommittees. The Chairperson helps the subcommittees with programs and activities that encompass more than one subcommittee area of responsibility and monitors expenditures within budgets of the subcommittees and concurs or does not concur with proposed budget changes within individual subcommittee budget allocations. Additional allocations may be authorized when necessary and funds are otherwise available upon concurrence of the full Administrative Subcommittee. The World Service Conference Chairperson with advice of subcommittee chairpersons and the Trustees establishes the location and agenda for the annual meeting and each of the workshop meetings. The Chairperson establishes the agenda for the Conference, arranges for such administrative duties related to the Conference as may be necessary and serves as presiding officer of the Conference. The Chairperson monitors the activities and meetings of each subcommittee and if it shall be necessary for the best interests of the Fellowship assist directly in the operation of subcommittees if or when the subcommittee chairperson and/or vice chairperson fail to properly manage the affairs of the subcommittee. As Chairperson of the Administrative Subcommittee of the Conference, appoints special subcommittees and makes appointments to such subcommittees as may be directed by the

Conference or this service manual and arranges for action of the Administrative Subcommittee to concur or withhold concurrence to vice chairpersons of subcommittees to succeed as chairperson of a subcommittee when the chairperson of the subcommittee resigns or otherwise fails to discharge the duties of the Office.

Vice-Chairperson of the World Service Conference. The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson in the discharge of the responsibilities of the Conference, oversees activities of the subcommittees under the direction of the chairperson and other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson. In the event of the resignation, incapacitation or failure of the Chairperson to perform the duties of Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson if there is concurrence by the Board of Trustees. When this does occur the Vice-Chairperson serves as Chairperson of the Conference until the Chairperson is able to resume their responsibilities or the next meeting of the World Service Conference. The Vice-Chairperson may preside over the Conference when required and discharge such other duties as may be directed by the Conference.

Treasurer of the World Service Conference. The treasurer is responsible for the receipt, recording and distribution of funds received and expended by the World Service Conference, the World Service Conference subcommittees and to forward funds for the Board of Trustees to the World Service Office. This shall include the financial activities of the Conference subcommittees, their

officers and participants. The treasurer manages the funds through such number and type of accounts as may be desirable. The exact details of the discharge of these duties are more clearly described in the Financial Guidelines publication of the Fellowship. The records of the treasurer are audited each year by an accredited accountant and open to inspection by the chairperson of the Conference and the chairperson of the Board of Trustees at any time upon reasonable notice. The audit report is submitted to the Fellowship within sixty (60) days following completion of the fiscal year of the Conference. The treasurer is responsible for the distribution of funds as may from time to time be required, but shall not be responsible to determine the appropriateness of expenditure of such funds as may be requested by the subcommittee chairpersons, the chairperson of the Conference. If there is question of the appropriateness of proposed expenditures the matter shall be resolved by the full Administrative Subcommittee of the Conference.

Secretary of the World Service Conference. The duties normally associated with the position of secretary of the Conference are assigned to the office manager of the World Service Office. The office manager serves in a ministerial role in this capacity. For many years the Conference elected a secretary from among the participants of the Conference. However, there was little consistency in the discharge of these duties and the level of accomplishment of the duties varied widely with the time,

skills and ability of the person so selected. It has been found that the office manager, through utilization of the World Service Office staff and resources, provides the best service to the Conference as a general secretary. As there is no elected position for a secretary, the office manager performs these duties without a vote in the conference and/or the Administrative Subcommittee.

Chairpersons of subcommittees. The chairpersons of each subcommittee serve as the general administrators of the subcommittee they are elected to serve with. They are responsible for scheduling work of the subcommittee, assigning tasks to individuals and subcommittees of their subcommittee and reporting to the Chairperson and vice chairperson of the Conference and the Fellowship. They organize agendas for their workshops and assure that the workshops properly process information and material of the subcommittees area of responsibility.

Vice chairpersons of subcommittees. Experience has shown that the Fellowship is best served if a chairperson of a subcommittee has previously served as a vice chairperson of the subcommittee for at least one year prior to their election to become the chairperson. If for any reason the post of chairperson of a Standing Subcommittee becomes vacant, the vice chairperson may assume the position of chairperson for the remainder of the unexpired term and may continue to serve their own full term as chairperson. In the case of this succession of office, the

position of the then vacant vice chairperson may remain vacant, or the World Service Conference Chairperson may appoint a temporary vice chairperson upon the advice of the subcommittee involved.

Bitter experience of the Fellowship has found that some trusted servants elected to positions by the Conference fail to complete the duties with which they are entrusted. In order to protect the Fellowship the Administrative Subcommittee may act to remedy such problems when they arise. The Administrative Subcommittee may suspend activity of individual subcommittees if substantial reason exists to do so and may require an audit of such funds as may be under the control of the trusted servants in question or the subcommittee as a whole.

The vice chairpersons assist the chairperson of the subcommittee to which they are elected under the leadership of the chairperson. They work with subcommittees and help organize material for workshops and reports as may be needed by the chairperson of the subcommittee. They may assume the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson of their subcommittee if such action is concurred with by action of the Conference Administrative Subcommittee.

#### THE CONFERENCE AGENDA REPORT

The cornerstone of the deliberations and decisions of the World Service Conference is the advance consideration of the

issues by the Fellowship. In order to provide opportunity for the Fellowship to be fully informed about items to be considered by the Conference, the agenda (known as the Conference Agenda Report) including major items to be voted on are submitted to the participants of the Conference not less than ninety (90) days prior to the Conference. All participants are expected to study the material carefully. Regional service representatives may have this material disseminated throughout their region in order to receive input from their Fellowship on the agenda items. In some regions the GSR of the groups takes the group conscience on each item to the area committee meeting with specific instructions on how to vote on each item when the area committee considered each item. This pattern may then be repeated at the area level as the ASR's are instructed by action of the voting members of the area committee and sent off to the regional meeting to vote as instructed. Similarly the RSR may be instructed by the vote of the ASR's and is expected to carry that vote to the Conference.

While in some respects this carries the implication that the Conference is then be able to precisely follow the group conscience of the Fellowship as developed by every group in the Fellowship, there are several fallacies in the concept as its practical application shows.

Not every group is interested in taking the time from their recovery meetings to discuss the lengthy reports that comprised the agenda of the Conference. In many of these cases the attitude

and group conscience is that these matters are the responsibility of the GSR and that is what the GSR was elected for anyway. But because not all groups feel this way, there is an uneven evaluation of the Conference Agenda Report at the area committee level too. This creates problems in the area committee because some ASR's are specifically instructed and some are not. Those who are given authority to do so, vote as their conscience best reveals the issues to them. Other ASR's are specifically instructed by votes taken on each item individually.

The same experience is reflected at the regional level also. Some RSR's are given explicit instructions while other RSR's are given great latitude or even complete freedom to represent the region as their individual experience and wisdom dictates.

At the Conference, there have been constant conflicts over the handling of many issues because those who had been specifically instructed frequently did not have the authority from their regions to vote on issues that the groups, areas and region had not developed a specific group conscience on. This is made more complex when items that had been sent out to the Fellowship for consideration contained specific language and at the Conference, that language was amended prior to final action on the matter.

This circumstance is highlighted when regions send specific amendments with their RSR to be introduced on a certain item and other regions send their RSR with amendments that conflict. At this point a new problem comes up. After the amendments are all

added on or in their inclusion alters the specific language of the original proposal, was any RSR who had been specifically instructed, able to vote on the issue because it is now different than when it had been acted on by their groups, areas and the region?

This circumstance was made more difficult because of the provision allowing for direct input to the Conference from the Fellowship for items to be considered by the Conference. There was not a provision that these "input" items be sent out to the Fellowship ninety (90) days prior to the Conference. Because of this, other regions were not able to consider these input items for group conscience.

The resolution of this conflict, one of the most divisive conflicts the Fellowship has had to wrestle with, is found in Chapter 3. In brief there is only one solution. The Fellowship must utilize greater reliance on trusted servants to reflect group conscience at each level of service. For those regions that chose to specifically instruct their RSR, they may continue to do so. But the Conference cannot withhold action on items because the RSR does not have latitude to vote on items if they are changed. And the regions must accept these actions of the Conference even if their own procedures are more restrictive.

Every RSR may serve on one conference subcommittee. Our experience gained from years of operation of subcommittees and RSR participation has shown that the Fellowship overall is best served



if the RSR serves on a subcommittee wherein the individual member has a special interest. And to the best degree possible this is accomplished, while at the same time, some subcommittee are not loaded up with members and other subcommittees have only a few members. Each RSR that desires to serve on a conference subcommittee completes a subcommittee assignment preference form and sends it to the conference chairperson at the time the RSR begins service for the region. Because RSR's are not all elected and begin service at the same time, there is continual movement on and off of each subcommittee. If the first subcommittee of choice has a vacancy the assignment is made, if not then a secondary choice assignment is made in sequence of the preference shown on the form. If at a later date a vacancy occurs on the subcommittee of first choice of the RSR, a change can be made. In this manner a loose fashion of seniority is observed in the subcommittee assignments whenever possible. This permits members to be of service in areas where they have special interest or knowledge without creating inequities in the size of subcommittees.

In a similar manner RSR-alternates may be assigned to subcommittees if they desire when they are elected by their region and begin to serve. The RSR-alternates although assigned to subcommittees are voting members of the subcommittees. They participate in the discussion and may introduce proposals for the subcommittee to discuss and act upon, and vote when the subcommittee takes action on proposals. In order to provide for

the greater interests of the Fellowship, RSR-alternates are not assigned to subcommittees to which the RSR from the same region is assigned. This allows the region from which these two members come to have representation in different areas of Fellowship activity.

#### WHEN THE CONFERENCE DOES TAKE ACTION

The Conference, as the embodiment of Fellowship conscience, is always mindful that the actions and decisions of the Conference set the course for the Fellowship. The impact of each vote affects the nature of the Fellowship as a whole and each member of the Fellowship. Every participant of the Conference must remember always that Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual program and there are tens of thousands of addicts in the Fellowship around the world depend on the Fellowship for their recovery.

Every form of collective human activity must have fair and equitable procedures and policies that are available for all members to have knowledge of. The experience of past conferences has shown this need and that to fulfill our desire for unity, they must be simple but precise procedures. The procedures followed by the Conference are the result of trial and error, input and reflection and application of N.A. principles to our needs for participation at the World Service Conference.

As the Conference has matured in experience and wisdom there has been a growing movement to abide by the standard procedures of order detailed in Roberts Rules of Order. While these procedures have been used and will continue to be used in some circumstances, the policies detailed here take precedence over those in Roberts Rules when they may conflict.

Actions taken by the Conference are determined by a voice vote if possible and when that is not practical or if there is doubt about a voice vote result or on matters that require a specific percentage number of votes, then a standing vote is taken. For most matters a simple majority vote is all that is required. But in those matters where a special vote percentage is stipulated careful attention to the vote count is required.

A roll call vote may be asked for and approved, upon an approval by a majority of the Conference participants. When conducting a standing vote, three separate vote counters will be used. The presiding officer will announce the result of every vote, in order that no misunderstanding result and so that the minutes may be accurately maintained. In the manner which votes are taken at the Conference, effort will be exerted to permit informality so that new representatives will not feel intimidated by "old timers."

To permit a fair representation of the Fellowship, no individual may carry or cast more than one vote. Because the Fellowship utilizes a system of RSR-Alternates, the RSR or

much of the disunity and discontent could have been avoided if sufficient discussion had been permitted or if the reasons for disagreement had been fully understood. For this reason, debate may be extended in order to permit substantial unanimity in decisions. It may not be possible for all actions of the Conference to be by unanimous vote, but every effort is exerted to attain this result. The Conference cannot however become stuck on single issues and as a last resort the majority or 2/3 majority rule vote standards may be applied.

If any matter considered by the Conference is rejected, it can be returned to the appropriate subcommittee for additional consideration. Experience has shown that there is a tendency for some items to be brought up at nearly every conference, even if it had been acted on the previous year. Although the Fellowship must have the ability to consider any item of concern to the Fellowship, a minority should not have the ability to force the entire Fellowship to discuss the same issue year after year. Consequently any matter that is rejected twice is not appropriate to again be proposed to the Conference for five years from the date of its second rejection. If the matter is adopted, but then or later found to be in need of review or revision, such suggestions for change will be handled in the same manner as for new material: submitted to the Fellowship through the action of a subcommittee in a subsequent Conference Agenda Report.

RSR-alternate is expected to attend and be present for all deliberations. For this reason no proxy vote may be cast or counted. A voting participant must be present to cast a vote in order for it to be counted. It is the nature of our spiritual Fellowship that decisions should not be made in haste and that the fullest possible discussion precede action. To facilitate clear understanding of issues being considered by the Conference, motions, other than procedural motions, must be displayed in writing so that voting participants can read them before a vote is taken.

As a spiritual Fellowship, Narcotics Anonymous has chosen to require that certain major decisions be made by a greater number of participants than a simple majority. Motions to affect the following must receive a 2/3 vote of all eligible voting participants in order to be approved: Change in the manual on service, approval of new regions, approval of literature, modifications of the procedure of the Conference, or to permit consideration of or adopt any item of business that has not been submitted to the Fellowship ninety (90) days in advance of the Conference.

In keeping with the need for unity and in an effort to utilize the spiritual nature of the Fellowship, a special approach to voting is used whenever possible. Disunity is fostered when participants leave the Conference disagreeing with the final action on any particular matter. Our experience has shown that

much of the disunity and discontent could have been avoided if sufficient discussion had been permitted or if the reasons for disagreement had been fully understood. For this reason, debate may be extended in order to permit substantial unanimity in decisions. It may not be possible for all actions of the Conference to be by unanimous vote, but every effort is exerted to attain this result. The Conference cannot however become stuck on single issues and as a last resort the majority or 2/3 majority rule vote standards may be applied.

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This system has the additional advantage of reinforcing the importance and necessity of an active subcommittee system. It permits the work to be accomplished under more positive circumstances, leaving the Conference to be more productive and absent of the rancor, suspicion and conflict found in earlier Conference.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SUBCOMMITTEES

An important strength of the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship is the ability to accomplish our needs, goals and objectives through committees. We learned even before the first area service committee was formed that subcommittees were essential and that if we tried, we could succeed. Although it is not always easy to work in committee situations, (subordinating our will to that of a group is hard some times) we have proven it can be done. We have become so successful at it, it continues to marvel ourselves and non-members.

The Fellowship has grown so large and complex, with different projects, programs and activities, that having a stable, well-established subcommittee structure is important. Because we know that the lives of addicts depend on our efforts, special care is exercised by subcommittee participants to make sure the business of the subcommittee gets done properly and with the least amount of wasted time and energy.

The World Service Conference subcommittee system has been continually changing and this chapter describes the guidelines for Conference subcommittees. In previous Conference subcommittee experiences, there were many subcommittees that succeeded and many that had tremendous problems. The guidelines on the following



pages reflect the results of those experiences, both the good and the bad. An effort has been made to learn from our mistakes, consequently, there is not absolute uniformity among the subcommittees in their structure and operation. The differences in areas of responsibility and the special needs of the different subcommittees has shown patterns and guidelines most likely to produce results in a given area of work.

Conference subcommittees are coordinated through the leadership of the chairperson and the vice chairperson of the Conference. The Administrative Subcommittee, which includes all of the Conference subcommittee chairpersons, works together as a team to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fellowship. Each subcommittee chairperson coordinates and oversees the affairs of their individual subcommittees with the assistance of their vice-chairperson.

Each major area of Conference responsibility has a Conference Standing Subcommittee. Each of the Conference Standing Subcommittees has a membership which includes the chairperson, vice chairperson, one or more assigned Trustees, regional service representatives, regional service representative-alternates, and members of the Fellowship from regions who are experienced in the area of responsibility of the subcommittee. Non-addicts may serve on some subcommittees by special invitation.

Non-conference participants are selected to serve on Conference subcommittees by appointment by the subcommittee

chairperson and through nomination by their region and by random drawing. Each Regional Service Committee is permitted to nominate for service on Conference subcommittees, the chairpersons of one or more of the regional subcommittees providing service in those areas of service for which the Conference has a corresponding subcommittee. The selection of the regional nominee depends on the service assignments of their RSR and RSR-alternate and selection from a random drawing.

For example, a regional service committee may nominate their regional public information subcommittee chairperson to serve on the Conference Public Information Subcommittee. If their RSR or RSR-alternate is already assigned to that subcommittee, then their regional P.I. nominee cannot serve. If, however, their RSR and RSR-alternate are assigned to other Conference subcommittees, the name of the regional P.I. chairperson nominee is entered into the random drawing. Twelve voting members of each Conference subcommittee are selected this way. Members selected in this manner serve for one year and can be selected for another term by re-entering the random drawing if the new assignments of their RSR and RSR-alternate do not conflict. In this way each Conference subcommittee has half of its members drawn from regional subcommittees. These members are usually well experienced in the specific area of responsibility of the subcommittee and are of extreme value to the Fellowship.

After all of the members are elected or selected for the

committees, the Chairperson of the subcommittee assigns each member to special or standing subcommittees or task forces within the area of responsibility of the subcommittee. The subcommittee chairperson may appoint up to two additional members to their subcommittee. These subcommittees and task forces are more clearly explained in the full description of each Conference subcommittee below.

The World Service Conference may from time to time establish other standing subcommittees and special subcommittees. Any standing subcommittee established by the Conference operates in the same manner as described above for the review of their work by the Fellowship, making reports and obtaining approval of their recommendations by the Conference.

Subcommittees abide by the policies established in this publication and utilize Robert's Rules of Order-Revised, in the conduct of their meetings. It must be stressed however, that the use of Robert's Rules of Order is intended to be an aid rather than as a weapon. We cannot afford to become embroiled in fights over procedure because we are trying to use these rules for the conduct of meetings. Common sense must prevail on the matter of how much of such rules are used and when.

When subcommittees conduct workshops or meetings that are not concurrently scheduled with other subcommittee workshops such meetings must be scheduled not less than 90 days in advance and notice of the meeting given wide publication. Special meetings of

subcommittees require approval by the Administrative Subcommittee. Notice of the meeting must include the agenda, time, date, and place of the meeting. The effect of the meeting shall not be such that new work is developed for submission to the Conference during the 90 days immediately prior to the World Service Conference meeting.

It had been the practice among the subcommittee that workshops were held independently of other subcommittees and that each subcommittee utilized different procedures and practices for participation and membership. One subcommittee might add to the subcommittee anyone who wrote asking to be on the subcommittee or who showed up at a subcommittee meeting. Other subcommittees held to strict membership procedures. Each Conference subcommittee utilized their own policies pertaining to participation and voting in their meetings. The resulting confusion and disparity caused many problems. This was exacerbated by having the subcommittees meet in many different places. Frequently, a workshop of a subcommittee would have as participants a great many people who never came to another meeting of that subcommittee. In this manner, the lack of consistency caused the output of some subcommittees to keep moving in different directions, depending on the people present or the mood of a particular workshop. This caused the workshops to frequently "start over" or completely change what had been done at the previous meeting.

An important step in the maturing process for the Conference

has been to develop more clearly defined policies on membership and voting. This has been done in order to avoid difficulties that resulted from subcommittees that had few members attend each of the workshops.

## SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE CONFERENCE

### WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Administrative Subcommittee is chaired by the Conference Chairperson, and includes the Conference Vice Chairperson Treasurer, and each of the standing subcommittee chairpersons. The subcommittee coordinates the work of the subcommittees, schedules meetings and reports of the subcommittees. The committee is responsible for the preparation of reports to the Fellowship from each standing subcommittee and Ad-hoc Subcommittee containing items to be considered at the Conference. These reports may also contain reports from other service arms and regions.

The Administrative Subcommittee meets as often as may be necessary at the direction of the chairperson. There are additional duties assigned to the Administrative Subcommittee in other chapters of this book.

## POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

The Policy Subcommittee is responsible for the development of proposed changes or modification to the structure of Narcotics Anonymous and major programs or activities that are not specifically within the purview of other standing subcommittees. The subcommittee provides guidance for the understanding and application group conscience and the relationship of the trusted servant to group conscience. The subcommittee provides guidance in financial matters and assists in the development of guidelines that may be used throughout the Fellowship. The policies and procedures utilized by the Conference and subcommittees, management of Seventh Tradition funds and development of administrative practices.

The Policy Subcommittee does not have standing subcommittees but may create such standing subcommittees as from time to time becomes necessary.

## NOMINATING SUBCOMMITTEE

The Nominating Subcommittee is responsible for proposing members for service to the various world level service boards and subcommittees and individual service positions elected by the

World Service Conference. The subcommittee does not have subcommittees or regular meetings. This sensitive work is important to the maturity of our leadership and the quality of future service.

#### LITERATURE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Literature Subcommittee is responsible for the development of literature of used to describe or explain addiction, the Fellowship and recovery through the Fellowship. The subcommittee concentrates on the production and, when necessary, revision of literature, that will help carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict. There are other responsibilities for the creation of approved literature that are assigned to other subcommittees when such literature items are specialized in their nature to the responsibilities of another subcommittee. As a matter of practice and procedure all literature items, regardless of which subcommittee they are initiated from are reviewed by each of the other subcommittees for input and review prior to their submission to the Fellowship for adoption.

## PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR WORLD LITERATURE SUBCOMMITTEE

Approved literature is the embodiment of the message of recovery developed by the Fellowship according to these policies. The World Literature Subcommittee acts as the trusted servant for the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in all matters pertaining to the development of literature, subject to the constraints described in the paragraph above. In the guidelines below, the name of the Literature Subcommittee is used to mean the Literature Subcommittee acting for the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

Any member of the Fellowship can propose new literature. A proposal can be a simple letter suggesting a subject or title or it can be as comprehensive as a draft of a complete work. All proposals should be sent to the WSC Literature Subcommittee at the World Service Office. A copyright release form should also be submitted along with all works written by any individual. Copyright release forms are essential if the Literature Subcommittee is to give consideration to the item. The copyright release gives the Literature Subcommittee the rights to the ideas, outlines, language and "story" suggested. Without a release, the Literature Subcommittee does not have a legal right to use the idea or story and no work can be done.

The Literature Subcommittee is comprised of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, who also acts as secretary of the subcommittee, a Literature Review Subcommittee and registered members. The



chairperson and the vice-chairperson are elected by the World Service Conference in accordance with the provisions of the N.A. Service Manual. As a means of encouraging Fellowship-wide participation in the Literature Subcommittee, no more than two members from the same region may serve on the Literature Subcommittee simultaneously, regardless of the manner by which members are selected.

1. There are seven (7) members of the Literature Review Subcommittee (LRC). Before members are considered for the LRC, they will have gained and demonstrated in prior service work their knowledge and understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous through service at area, region and/or world levels for a period of at least five (5) years, three (3) of which were directly involved with Literature Subcommittees. Our experience has shown that those involved in service for these longer periods of time have demonstrated the ability to complete lengthy commitments and usually bring a deep understanding of recovery through the Narcotics Anonymous Program. These individuals share valuable perspective and experience in living the N.A. principles which is then reflected in the literature produced by the World Literature Subcommittee. Many lessons have been learned throughout the history of the Literature Subcommittee, resulting in more effective methodologies as reflected in these guidelines. In order to benefit from this experience, there is a great need for continuity among the members

of the Literature Subcommittee. In an effort to promote such continuity, members of the Literature Review Subcommittee, except for the appointees of the chairperson, serve for three years.

A. Three (3) members of the Fellowship are elected by the World Service Conference. These members may be re-elected for consecutive terms to the Literature Review Subcommittee.

B. One member of the subcommittee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees appointed by the Board in such manner as they may select. The Trustee member serves as a regular member of the Literature Review Subcommittee, except that the Trustee presides over the meetings of the World Literature Subcommittee and further acts as a liaison to the WSB. The Trustee member will normally be found to have considerable experience (four or more years) in literature development.

C. The Chairperson of the World Literature Subcommittee is a member of the Literature Review Subcommittee.

D. Two (2) members are appointed by the World Literature Subcommittee Chairperson to serve for one-year terms. These members may be reappointed by succeeding chairpersons. In order to utilize the experience and knowledge gained through involvement with literature development, previous members of the World Literature Subcommittee will frequently be found to be appointees by Chairpersons.

2. There are twelve (12) registered members of the World Literature Subcommittee. One of these is the Vice-Chairperson of

the World Literature Subcommittee. These members demonstrate their interest and ability in literature work, as well as knowledge and understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, through prior service on area or regional literature committees for a period of at least three years.

A. Five (5) registered members are elected by the World Service Conference to serve for one year. Each registered member may be re-elected at a succeeding World Service Conference. The registered members elected are chosen from regional service representatives attending the Conference, previous RSR's or previous registered members of the World Literature Subcommittee. Regional service representatives elected to serve as registered members of the World Literature Subcommittee continue to serve as registered members for a full year from the end of the World Service Conference at which they are elected, regardless of their term of office as a regional service representative.

B. Six (6) registered members are selected by the World Service Conference by drawing to serve for one year. Each year, prior to the World Service Conference, eligible regional service committees may nominate a member of the Fellowship from their region to be selected for membership as a registered member of the World Literature Subcommittee. The six members are randomly from these nominees selected by a drawing at the World Service Conference. In order to promote the widest possible participation in the World Literature Subcommittee, registered members selected

by drawing are not eligible for selection in the same manner the following year and the region from which the member was selected cannot submit a nominee for the following year.

C. The Vice-Chairperson of the World Literature Subcommittee is a registered member, coordinates the activities of the registered members and presides over any meetings of the registered members.

The World Literature Subcommittee receives a variety of proposals from N.A. members, groups and service subcommittees. These proposals reflect a full range of specialized publications representing the principles and philosophies of the Narcotics Anonymous Program. In the evaluation of literature proposals, the Literature Subcommittee uses the following criteria in determining if a particular piece of literature is appropriate.

1. The proposed item will expand the inventory of materials adopted by the Fellowship that aid members of the Fellowship in an understanding and application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

2. The proposed item carries the message of Narcotics Anonymous to the addict who still suffers from active addiction.

3. The proposed item supplies valuable information to the professionals with whom addicts would most commonly come in contact.

4. The proposed item clarifies the nature of addiction to the general public.

The Literature Subcommittee reviews all proposals received each year. An outline of each item is included with a summary of the work to be considered. The members of the Literature Subcommittee indicate to the Chairperson which projects they feel are the most important to be finalized in the upcoming year. These responses are then used in the preparation of a prioritized work list which is submitted, with other conference materials, 90 days prior to the World Service Conference. The prioritized list reflects a manageable number of projects on which the subcommittee plans to work in the upcoming year. The World Service Conference may then adopt the list as recommended, amend the list and add or remove proposed items from the list prior to adoption.

Once a project is approved as part of the priority list, the Literature Subcommittee undertakes to develop or have developed the specific items of literature. Depending on the nature of the project, the Literature Subcommittee Chairperson may assign an item to a local, area or regional literature subcommittee; the Literature Subcommittee may complete the work themselves at a workshop or conference; or have it done by other individuals such as professional writers or editors.

Drafts completed by any of these means available to the Literature Subcommittee are thoroughly evaluated by the Literature Review Subcommittee. The Literature Review Subcommittee recommends any changes they conclude are appropriate. Before the final draft is complete, the recommended changes are made at a

World Literature Conference, special workshop, by an appointed Ad-hoc subcommittee or a professional writer/editor. At such time as the Literature Review Subcommittee is satisfied that the draft meets criteria, the proposed item is forwarded to the registered members for further evaluation.

The registered members evaluate draft literature, recommending any changes they feel are appropriate. If a majority of the registered members recommend any change(s), the recommended change(s) are then evaluated by the Literature Review Subcommittee. If the LRC concurs with the recommendation, the changes are made, in the manner described in the paragraph above. Although this process is somewhat lengthy, the experience of the World Literature Subcommittee has demonstrated that an overemphasis on speed often results in unnecessary errors. Although time is certainly of the essence, the Literature Subcommittee must remain focused on **quality**, if it is to fulfill its purpose of carrying the message of recovery in the written form.

The evaluation of proposed literature assures that an accurate representation of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous is presented when the steps or traditions are included in full or in part of a draft. Before the evaluation is complete, the draft is edited to ensure correct use of morphological and syntactic rules (including spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization). This process further maintains

consistency in writing style and Narcotics Anonymous terminology.

The development of literature and the internal working of the Literature Subcommittee involves expression of a group conscience of the subcommittee. Developing literature for a spiritual Fellowship is a delicate and important process for it conveys not only the language of recovery, but also the framework for a new relationship of an individual to his/her perception of a Higher Power.

In an effort to assure that the Fellowship receives materials which reflect the best efforts of the trusted servants to whom the responsibilities described herein are entrusted, the concept of complete unanimity is incorporated into the deliberations. The Literature Subcommittee will normally be able to achieve near-unanimous approval for draft materials before the draft materials are submitted for Fellowship consideration. As a last resort, when a unanimous decision cannot be achieved by the Literature Subcommittee, a vote system is utilized. Each member of the Literature Subcommittee, as described above, has one vote in the deliberations. When this may become necessary, the Literature Subcommittee shall rely upon a two-thirds majority for recommendations to be followed.

The World Literature Subcommittee meets no less than twice a year, and as often as necessary to accomplish its goals and objectives. Although any N.A. member is welcome to attend and observe the meetings of the Literature Subcommittee, participation

is limited to the actual members of the subcommittee. The annual meeting held at the World Service Conference is for the purpose of deliberating on any input received from the Fellowship in the form of general suggestions, and for planning the accomplishment of its work list. Regional literature subcommittees are frequently assigned to write drafts of specific items after they have displayed the ability to perform this important work and have volunteered for such assignments.

At the November meeting, reassignments of certain projects may be made if necessary, or other provisions made in order to accomplish work on the prioritized items. The meeting is an informal gathering of the World Literature Subcommittee for the purpose of working on and/or completing projects on the approved work list. Items to be brought to the upcoming World Service Conference are also discussed. It is generally not appropriate for registered members of the World Literature Subcommittee to introduce actions related to developing or changing the internal workings or policies of the subcommittee. Any actions of this nature are considered by the Literature Review Subcommittee who then makes recommendations to the chairperson. In this way, the Literature Subcommittee avoids the conflict and controversy often associated with internal "politics," concentrating its efforts entirely on the creation and development of literature for Narcotics Anonymous.

The Literature Subcommittee may recommend that a completed



piece of literature be distributed to the N.A. Fellowship for review and additional input. The Fellowship is normally provided a period of nine months in which to review the new literature and generate input for the Literature Subcommittee. The input received may be used in the preparation of an approval form, which may be accomplished at a World Literature Conference, special workshop, by an appointed Ad-hoc subcommittee or a professional writer/editor. The new item is then forwarded to the World Service Board of Trustees for evaluation. This evaluation by the WSB ensures that the piece accurately represents the principles of Narcotics Anonymous as outlined in the Twelve Traditions. Any language which is inconsistent with the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous is automatically revised based on the recommendations of the Board of Trustees. Upon completion of this process, the approval form is distributed to the Fellowship one year prior to consideration at the next World Service Conference.

The printing and distribution of review-form and approval-form literature is accomplished by the World Service Office. From the time these guidelines are approved until one year following, review-form and approval-form literature shall be available at a nominal cost to any member of Narcotics Anonymous. Beginning the following year, review-form literature will be distributed only to area and regional literature subcommittees, for the purpose of generating additional input and encouraging the growth and support

of area and regional literature subcommittees. Approval-form literature shall continue to be distributed to N.A. members.

Any written material (input) which is received by the World Literature Subcommittee pertaining to a piece of literature not on the subcommittee's priority list, is kept on file for future consideration. All Wsc-approved literature is considered for revision at least every five years. Additionally, input may be received pertaining to general topics which is channeled to the Literature Subcommittee resource files. This source material may then be used for a variety of different projects. Proposals received by the Literature Subcommittee which are not placed on the priority list, are kept on file for consideration for the following year's list.

More specific information about the functions and activities of local, area, and regional literature subcommittees, as well as the World Literature Subcommittee, may be found in the Revised Handbook for Narcotics Anonymous Literature Subcommittees. This handbook also describes, in detail, the roles of the trusted servants of the Literature Subcommittee and ways for individual members to contribute material.

## HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee acts as a resource to the Fellowship in efforts to carry the message of recovery to hospitals, institutions, jails, detoxification centers, recovery facilities and other types of programs where addicts may be found who are not otherwise able to participate as a member of the Fellowship without restriction. The purpose of this subcommittee is to provide assistance and guidance to local, area, regional and world service subcommittee efforts to carry the message of recovery to those in such hospitals or institutions. The subcommittee may, from time to time, propose policy that, while consistent with the Traditions, may be necessary or desirable to assist those working with members of the Fellowship in hospital and institution work.

The Conference Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee operates as a general committee, creating subcommittees and task force committees when the need shall arise.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Public Information Subcommittee is responsible to serve as the resource for the development of information and material that is primarily directed to the relationship of the Fellowship to the

general public. This may include our relationship to the public media in its various forms and in our direct relationships with non-N.A. public and private companies, agencies and individuals. The subcommittee recommends to the Conference policies that may be adopted which would establish guidelines and principles upon which the Fellowship will communicate with and through the media and the public at large. The subcommittee develops for the Fellowship appropriate media communications tools and programs that explain how the N.A. Program works which will not conflict with any of the Twelve Traditions. Such programs may include contact with newspapers, magazines, radio and television and other media forms. This subcommittee is responsible for public relations with the professions and services that impact public opinion concerning N.A.

#### Subcommittee and Task Force Subcommittee Activities

Although the work of the Conference Public Information Subcommittee may vary from year to year, there are five areas of work that consistently require the attention of the subcommittee. To accomplish the work in these areas of need, three standing subcommittees and two task forces have been created. The number of members on each subcommittee or task force may vary from time to time as the need may require.

A. Media Products: This task force is responsible for the production of electronic media public service announcements and the assignment of individuals to handle specific electronic media contacts and needs.

B. Professional Community Contact: This task force is responsible for development of information and tools that can be used by the Fellowship and non-members to provide interface with those in professions associated with medicine, law, counseling or other fields that have direct impact on addicts while they are members or before they become members.

C. Handbook Subcommittee: This subcommittee is responsible for work on the general P.I. Handbook. The handbook is an ever changing tool used by individual members as well as area and regional P.I. subcommittees. It requires constant revision to meet the changing needs of the Fellowship and our contact with the media and general public.

D. Communications and Education: This subcommittee is responsible for development of tools and instruction for use throughout the Fellowship in all areas of individual participation in P.I. activities. This subcommittee assists in the preparation and completion of workshops or seminars on how to do public information. These workshops and seminars are held at area and regional level activities to help members learn about P.I. activities.

E. Telephone Helplines: This subcommittee is responsible for

development of tools and techniques that local and regional or world level telephone helplines can use. Among these activities are workshops on how to improve helplines and interface neighboring helpline operations. Important among the duties of this subcommittee is the working relationship of the response to 12 Step needs generated by the helpline.

The full WSC P.I. Subcommittee meets at the periodic WSC workshops. The subcommittees and task forces usually also meet at this time in order to accomplish their responsibilities. The task forces may also meet at other times if the need may arises.

#### GROUP SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

The Group Services Subcommittee develops programs, policies and tools that can be adopted by the Conference to assist groups. The programs, policies and materials developed will include methods to improve the strength of groups, provide for development of skills of trusted servants at the group level and assist the group in carrying the message to the still-suffering addict.

The strength of the group and the meeting that the group conducts is the backbone of recovery for our membership. Experience has shown that group services for new groups is a vital

function for the Fellowship. This is primarily accomplished at the area service committee level. However, there has been a growing need for specific assistance at the World level in providing help to new groups. This subcommittee does not replace the area committee or the direct assistance area committees provide to groups. The subcommittee is a resource for the Fellowship including the area service committees.

The Group Services Subcommittee utilizes two standing subcommittees for much of the work done by the subcommittee: General Services and Leadership Services. Other subcommittees may be created from time to time as needed.

General Services Subcommittee: This subcommittee helps develop communications between groups and areas, their trusted servants and their membership to more conveniently serve the Fellowship at large. They may propose guidelines and literature that helps groups serve their members and reach addicts who attend their meetings. This subcommittee serves as a resource for groups to call upon when they experience difficulties internally and in their relationship to the community in which they serve.

Leadership Services: This subcommittee is a resource for the improvement of trusted servant skills and service. The subcommittee provides guidance in helping group and area level officers and trusted servants complete their responsibilities and help educate and train their replacements. The subcommittee proposes resource tools and assists areas and regions in the

development of learning days or workshops for helping trusted servants learn their jobs better.

#### INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

The International Fellowship Subcommittee is responsible to assist the Fellowship in helping carry the N.A. message of recovery to addicts in non-English speaking countries. This may include assistance in the form of assisting the WSO in the translating of N.A. literature, proposing to the Conference special literature and special policies that assist the development of the Fellowship in other countries.

When the World Service Conference was given that name, it was done so as an expectation and hope that eventually the Conference would indeed be a world wide meeting of recovering addicts. There have been many Conferences since that first one and each year participation expands to include representatives from parts of the Fellowship outside of the United States. The International Fellowship Subcommittee is another effort at reaching out for that international participation necessary to fulfill the desire for the World Service Conference to truly be a world conference.

It is important to have a strong international representation as part of the Conference because the needs in different countries can be substantially different from those in the United States.



It is through this subcommittee that those special needs and circumstances can be addressed and acted on by the Fellowship.

One of the important needs is related to the problems of language. It is important for the Fellowship, as a spiritual association of individual members, that the message of recovery be simple and clear, that it not be distorted, changed or violated. In order to protect these needs of the Fellowship it was decided that one language should be used as the primary language in which all of the literature is written. This is not to suggest that one language is essentially better or more spiritual than any other, but has been done as a practical solution. In part because the Fellowship was started in the United States and in part because English is continuing to become an international language, it was decided by the Fellowship that English would be used.

By using one base language and making all of the translations from that language, there is less danger of having the spiritual message of the Fellowship incorrectly translated from one language to another. Special care always needs to be exercised when translations are completed to assure that they are done in a manner that protects the essence and meaning of the Program. For this reason, the International Subcommittee, the WSO and the Board of Trustees are all directly involved in the translation of N.A. materials.

There are, however, parts of N.A. literature that should not necessarily include material written originally in English or be

from the American part of the Fellowship. This is an important factor in preventing an American English bias in stories, concepts and examples. Because it is not easy and sometimes not possible, even with adequate translations, to have non-American addicts understand or relate to the American experience in drug use or recovery, individual stories about recovery for the Basic Text are collected and reflect experience, strength and hope of members of the Fellowship from within the language group into which the Basic Text may be translated. Because the standards of living, the nature of different civilizations in other parts of the globe, and the legal aspects of recovery or drug use are so different, the experiences or examples chosen from another culture may not always provide adequate guidance to understanding addiction or provide to addicts the key to relating to our literature and therefore our experience.

Another major problem with a world wide Fellowship is the substantial difference in economic circumstances of recovering addicts in different continents and nations. For example, the cost of living in one continent may be so substantially different that purchasing literature from another place in the Fellowship with a higher standard of living inhibits the availability of the literature. This is especially true for addicts in remote cities and in prisons in countries with lower income levels.

These difficulties caused by standards of living and currency difference is made more difficult if transportation cost factors

are included. For these reasons, and because of the time delay that results from shipping literature from distant places, a growing effort is being made to encourage printing of approved literature in the continent where the literature will be used. When it is practical to do so, the literature for specific languages is even produced in the different countries within a continent. Arrangements for printing right are made by the WSO in consultation with the International Fellowship Subcommittee.

Important considerations in these efforts are financial strength, consistency and permanency. An effort that starts and stops, has periods of inactivity or failures to communicate is harmful to the Fellowship as a whole and can be fatal to members on an individual basis. For these reasons, the movement to have much of the work done outside the United States is continuing with a slow and deliberate approach.

As new N.A. communities outside the United States develop, the financial resources and mature judgement that can provide good chance of success and confidence, more of the printing and administrative work will be done by these newer memberships for their separate language groups.

An important factor in the International Subcommittee is that it must always be more non-American than it is American. In this way, the International Fellowship Subcommittee is truly an international subcommittee, not an American subcommittee acting

for the N.A. communities whose language, standard of living, culture and experience in recovery may be substantially different.

The subcommittee was first created in 1984 to propose guidelines for operation of the subcommittee for Conference consideration in 1987. The guidelines will include the first of a set of yearly goals and objectives, which will be accompanied by specific plans and programs to accomplish those goals and objectives. The goals and objectives are approved by the Conference as for all other subcommittees before action is taken to implement plans and programs.

In order to accomplish the activities on the International Fellowship Subcommittee, because of the great distances involved and the problems of finances for the participants, the subcommittee operates differently than other subcommittees.

The subcommittee is composed of one representative, with more than three years' clean time, from each country where N.A. currently has members participating in meetings. Additional members are added from other countries as meetings are started in other countries. The World Service Conference provides the subcommittee with administrative and logistical support necessary to provide immediate and full response to requests or communications from subcommittee members. At least one part-time employee at the World Service Office is provided to accomplish the coordination of activities, communications and meetings of the subcommittee. The Conference provides some funds for essential

travel expenses for the chairperson of the subcommittee to attend the Conference and other meetings approved by the Conference in the budget of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee has one meeting a year, about four months after the meeting of the World Service Conference. The subcommittee meeting follows an agenda developed through written communications between the members and the meeting participants involving only the voting representatives from each separate language or country representatives. The subcommittee proposes a budget for the administrative operation of the subcommittee at the next meeting of the Conference. With the subcommittee operating according to this schedule, and with the membership authorized for it, the procedures seem long and involved. They are somewhat complex and have to be if the subcommittee is to act with equal involvement from members throughout the Fellowship. The approach of an International Subcommittee for the Fellowship is that of a supporting effort rather than directing activities in separate countries. It provides a platform for expression of needs and ideas from the non-U.S. Fellowship and is primarily composed of members from the non-U.S. Fellowship.

One or more Trustees are assigned to the Subcommittee to act as mentors for guidance and to chair meetings of the Subcommittee, but do not otherwise participate. A member of the WSO staff serves as the secretary of the Subcommittee but otherwise is a non-voting participant. There are two participants selected by

the World Service Conference as provided in Chapter Six, and these are usually members from the American Fellowship.

The subcommittee chairperson is always a non-American in order to encourage participation from the non-American Fellowship. Because the International Fellowship Subcommittee does have the opportunity to more closely examine the strengths of its members than the Conference as a whole, the subcommittee is authorized to nominate the chairperson of the subcommittee for the next year and the conference confirms the nomination. The nomination is forwarded by the subcommittee through the nominating subcommittee.

The subcommittee and its members are not a substitute for direct participation from N.A. communities in non-U.S. countries as voting members of the Conference. As regions at service subcommittees are developed in other countries, they are recognized as participants of the Conference in the same manner that regional service subcommittees have been accepted in the United States. This membership and participation does not have an impact on the membership and participation of the International Fellowship Subcommittee.

Members selected from the International Fellowship Subcommittee are assigned as members to other standing and Ad-hoc Subcommittees as there is interest, desire and ability for their participation. These members are not expected to attend all meetings of the subcommittee; their membership and participation are permitted through the mails.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In the early years of the Fellowship there was very little written material for the Fellowship. Their only piece was a little hand book, similar to the current white booklet, but much smaller. In some respects this was a blessing in disguise, for it forced members and groups to work harder to understand the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions through development of group conscience on each conflict or dispute that arose.

It seems that as more literature became available, the number of conflicts over understanding and applying the steps and traditions grew. But in many ways the number and complexity of conflicts developed simply because the Fellowship was growing at a more rapid rate. When conflicts arose, many addicts tried to use the techniques we used when we were children; get some authority to back up our side of the issue. In this way, those who had been around for a long time became the unofficial arbitrators of disputes. This unofficial system was fraught with problems and many of the "elder" addicts didn't want to be involved in this way because it seemed inappropriate.

Eventually it became apparent that our Fellowship needed to borrow another lesson from A.A., to create a Board of Trustees.

The A.A. Board of Trustees had existed for some time and was relied upon to be a court of last resort in their Fellowship in difficult cases where a dispute arose over an interpretation of the Twelve Traditions as they applied to a specific problem. After doing some research, including discussions with A.A., we eventually created our own Board of Trustees.

The first Board of Trustees was elected by the Fellowship in Southern California in 1963. The members were primarily from Southern California because that was about all there was of the Fellowship at the time. Both addict and non-addict trustees were selected. The Trustees were given "indefinite terms" of office and authorized to select other trustees as the need developed. Eventually, as a service manual was created, the Board of Trustees, their membership, procedures and authorities were more clearly standardized.

The number of trustees has fluctuated periodically from a low of six trustees to a high of fourteen. Until the early 1970's, the Trustees held responsibility not only for protection of the Traditions, but also for operation of the World Service Office, such as it was at the time. Meetings of the Trustees were held regularly, usually in the home of one of the Trustee members and were rotated for convenience. For many years all of the Trustees lived in the Southern California area so it was not difficult to have meetings.



An effort was made to have a record kept, so minutes were made of all meetings. Unfortunately, the clerical duties were frequently done by the Board members themselves, so many of the minutes from those early years are sketchy. Another problem to contend with, resulting from the lack of funds, was that these records had to endure the tribulations of constant moving and transferring from one member's home to another's. Somehow the Trustees managed to resolve these problems.

One of the principal activities of the Board of Trustees was to respond to letters from members and groups involved in controversies. The Trustees discussed these letters and answered each one hoping that their accumulated experience, gained through service, would be of some help.

With the publication and adoption of the N.A. Tree, the Trustees became a standardized institution within the Fellowship. With the guidelines established and published in the N.A. Tree, the path to resolving disputes became more clear. These guidelines also relieved the Trustees of their prior responsibility for management of the World Service Office. A provision requiring that half of the Trustees had to reside within commuting distance of the World Service Office, although practical, created difficulties with a Fellowship growing so fast in other areas.

Eventually conflict developed over the "California" control of the Trustees and the requirement for half of the Trustees

residing close to the World Service Office was deleted. The Trustees now have members from across the United States.

The Board of Trustees has evolved in recent years into a hard-working and efficient service board. Gaining internal strength from the necessity of regular meetings and solving difficult problems, the Board has been welded into a highly visible and stable force in the Fellowship. The guidelines established in the N.A. Tree were changed regularly, almost each year, but the Trustees have kept pace with the growing needs of the Fellowship.

Although the Board of Trustees evolved from a need to resolve conflicts over interpretation of traditions they have never felt that their role or responsibility is to dictate to, or run, the Fellowship. They have found their duty and position more in the nature of a resource for understanding and sharing of experience. When it was practical, the Trustees encouraged the World Service Conference to resolve difficult problems, feeling that the development of a Fellowship conscience was better than their judgment alone. When clarification of the traditions is needed between meetings of the World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees is responsible to act for the Fellowship.

This practical arrangement, for the Trustees to perform as trusted servants to act for the Fellowship, is accomplished with great care. The Trustees evaluate every issue in considerable depth and trust the resolution to their collective experience,

strength and hope. Constant temptations arise throughout the Fellowship to erode the strength and meaning of the traditions and to apply unusual and unacceptable interpretations. The Board of Trustees are charged with the responsibility to provide guidance and education to keep the Fellowship clearly in sight of appropriate understanding and use of the traditions. They are further responsible, under certain circumstances, to take actions for the Fellowship when it is appropriate to do so in order that the Fellowship be protected from public controversy and violation of the traditions in publications, materials, policies and practices within the Fellowship.

Addict members of the Board of Trustees are chosen for their experience, strength and hope, as examples for all addicts to be guided by and for their wisdom and judgment in understanding and applying the traditions. The Trustees are not empowered or directed to issue demands or edicts but are to be a resource for understanding and clarity when disputes arise. Trustees provide guidance and enlightenment in our understanding of traditions, and to how they apply to the complex issues confronting the Fellowship.

A principle duty of the Trustees is education. Knowledge and experience gained from years of personal application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions can be passed on to others in the Fellowship through writings and oral presentations by the Trustees. In this way the Fellowship can be kept to a true and

faithful appreciation of the meanings of the traditions. The Trustees publish a continuing series of articles about the Twelve Traditions, based on issues presented to them for consideration. These articles are published in Fellowship periodicals and are available from the World Service Office.

The Trustees also serve as the "keepers of our traditions" to prevent accidental or intentional change through misunderstanding or error. They are relied upon to review all items of proposed Narcotics Anonymous literature and world level periodicals for inaccuracies pertaining to traditions. If the Trustees find that in their judgement, proposed literature is in violation of a tradition, they should act to correct the specific language which violates the tradition before the piece of literature is published. The Trustees may choose to take such action in conjunction with the WSC Literature Subcommittee. The Board of Trustees are accepted as the principal resource in the resolution of disputes over the application, interpretation and meaning of the traditions between meetings of the World Service Conference and/or prior to consummation of a Fellowship conscience on a particular issue. The World Service Conference, as the embodiment of Fellowship conscience at their annual meeting, is the final authority on matters of interpretation and meaning of the Traditions, and may alter actions by the Board of Trustees. When the World Service Conference acts in this regard, to alter

or change a prior decision of the Trustees, it can only do so by a unanimous vote.

The Trustees serve as the principal resource for review of public information materials, tapes, public service announcements, movies and printed matter, that are generated within the Fellowship. Although it is not intended or practical for the Trustees to review all such materials prior to their use, when disputes arise over the appropriateness of such materials, these items should be sent to the Board of Trustees for review. The Trustees do review all public information materials generated at the world service level.

Although the Fellowship does not have "spokespersons," as such, the Trustees act for the Fellowship if or when public controversy arises in the media or the society in general over the activities of the Fellowship. It is not intended that the Trustees become the "on camera personalities" of the Fellowship, but they serve as the resource for clear understanding of what the Fellowship is and how the Fellowship carries the message of recovery. If or when the Fellowship may become involved in a public controversy, the issue should be referred to the Trustees for consideration and appropriate action.

Our experience has shown that Trustee members are asked to make a tremendous number of interpretations of traditions and provide guidance on matters related to suspected violations of traditions on almost a daily basis. Some of these cannot be

avoided, so the Trustees regularly ask that such matters be developed in the form of a letter and sent to the Board for official consideration. Although it is more appropriate for the Trustees to act on matters that have been referred to them in writing, there are many situations where that is not practical or possible. In such situations, the Trustee making a verbal recommendation prepares a short memorandum of the matter and the action taken, and forwards it to the secretary of the Board for distribution to other trustees.

Because most of the responses from the Trustees have been provided in writing, and these problems and responses have been collated and published for widespread use, the volume of correspondence referring new issues to the Board for action has decreased. Additionally, the growth and maturity of the Fellowship in most areas has afforded opportunity for many problems to be handled effectively at other levels within the Fellowship.

Although any member of the Fellowship who has a concern that cannot be resolved at another level of service can forward their question to the Board of Trustees, every effort should be exerted to resolve the issue locally. In this way an issue involving actions by an individual should usually be brought to and decided by the home group. An issue relating to a member of the group or the group as a whole, if unable to be resolved by the group, should be taken to the area service committee.

Issues referred to the area service committee or issues related to the area service committee or area service subcommittee activities should be resolved by the area service committee if possible, and if not, should be referred to the regional service committee.

Similarly, matters referred to the regional service committee for action or matters related to the regional service committee or regional service subcommittee actions should be resolved by the regional service committee if possible, and if not, then be referred to the World Service Conference.

The Board of Trustees should not be thought of as the Fellowship policeman, responsible to correct or discipline every suspected tradition violation or to resolve every dispute. Every effort should be made to resolve difficulties by talking them out at the level of service where the problem arose. This is how many of the same problems and issues were resolved in the early years of the Fellowship before there were Trustees. The experience of a group, area or region in resolving strongly felt issues concerning possible tradition violations can be a spiritually rewarding endeavor beneficial to all concerned. All members involved in these controversies and their resolution will grow in their understanding of the Twelve Traditions and learn from development of group conscience on such issues.

It should be clearly recognized that there can be no compromise with the strict interpretation of the Twelve

Traditions. It is through our strict adherence to the traditions that an atmosphere and circumstance for recovery is possible. It is the Twelve Traditions that have made the Fellowship strong and helped tens of thousands to recover from addiction. In the past we have had experiences, especially when strong personalities prevail, where an incorrect application or understanding of tradition has harmed the Fellowship. The Trustees have been called upon, and will continue to be of service to help local memberships overcome these difficulties.

The Board of Trustees holds four regular meetings each year and special meetings can be called by the Chairperson of the Board or any three members by providing written notice at least twenty days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting. The notice for regular or special meetings is provided by first class mail to all members stating the time, date and place for the meeting. An agenda for the meeting is included with the notice.

At least two of the Boards meetings are scheduled to be held at the World Service Office over a two day period. In this way, the Trustees have the availability of an adequate facility and supporting staff which are important in their work. Of the other regularly scheduled meetings, one is held in the week immediately prior to the World Service Conference and the other is held near the time of the World Convention. The meetings scheduled to coincide with the Conference and the convention may be arranged



so that the Trustees can be available for access to the Fellowship before or after their meeting.

Trustee meetings are conducted according to customary parliamentary procedures with slight modifications, and follow a standard agenda as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order. The voting actions of the Trustees are different from the routine majority vote system used in other organizations. Because Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual Fellowship, there has grown within the practice of the Trustees a different approach to counting votes when making important decisions. Accordingly, the Trustees utilize a unanimous vote approach in developing group conscience of the Trustees in all matters affecting the N.A. Fellowship as a whole. If a member is not satisfied that a proposed resolution is entirely supportable, continued discussion proceeds until a unanimous decision can be reached. In this way, all Trustees are provided the opportunity to reveal every aspect of their thinking before an issue is concluded. Because most of the actions of the Trustees are related to the Twelve Traditions and their application, the unanimous vote policy is added assurance that strict adherence to the traditions will be maintained.

Minutes are kept of every meeting of the Board and published within thirty (30) days of the close of the meeting. Copies of the minutes are sent to every Trustee, the officers and subcommittee chairpersons of the World Service Conference and

every regional service representative. Copies of the minutes can be obtained from the secretary of the Board of Trustees at the World Service Office.

The Trustees select from among themselves, by election, two officers: a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. Elections for these officer positions are held at the meeting scheduled prior to the World Service Conference. The officers serve for a twelve month period. Both officers may succeed themselves if re-elected by the Board the following year, but may not serve a third consecutive term of office. The Trustees utilize a staff member of the World Service Office as secretary of the Board of Trustees but this person does not have a vote or voice in the proceedings.

The Chairperson of the Board is responsible for general management of the affairs of the Trustees including all communications, chairing trustee meetings, establishing Ad-hoc Subcommittees and appointing trustees to subcommittees when appropriate. The chairperson assigns responsibilities to other members of the Board as required.

The vice-chairperson assists the chairperson and assumes the responsibilities and authorities of the chairperson when asked by the chairperson to do so or in the event of incapacitation or failure or refusal by the chairperson to perform the duties of chairperson.

Each trustee is assigned by the Board to serve with a subcommittee of the World Service Conference. The Trustee has

the responsibility to attend every meeting of the World Service Conference Subcommittee that he or she is assigned to. At meetings of the Conference Subcommittee, the Trustee is responsible to preside over the meeting. In this way, the committee benefits from the experience and strength of the Trustee. This new and important working relationship has been established between the Conference Subcommittees and the Board of Trustee in order to strengthen the Conference Subcommittee system. This working relationship has strengthened the ability of the world level trusted servants to provide better service and more thoroughly developed responses to new problems and needs.

Addict members of the Board always continue their individual participation in N.A. activities as part of their own continued recovery from addiction. The participation of a Trustee in a local N.A. activity or subcommittee, however, should not be construed to be that of the Trustees as a whole or for the Board of Trustees. The Trustee members are careful to avoid situations where they may be drawn into controversy involving Fellowship politics, personalities and issues which may be referred to the Board for action.

Because the Trustees serve in important and visible ways within the Fellowship, Trustees are elected in a manner considerably different than that of other trusted servants. Our experience with the election process at the World Service

Conference and the growing work load of the Trustees has necessitated this new procedure.

Experience has shown that there does not need to be a constant number of trustees; therefore the number of Trustees fluctuates periodically, depending on the needs of the Fellowship. There can be no more than twenty-one (21) members of the Board of Trustees, of whom not more than fifteen (15) can be addict members. Trustees are nominated and elected by the World Service Conference. Nominees for addict trusteeship will have a minimum of eight (8) years' total abstinence from drugs, including alcohol, at the time of their nomination, have served as an officer, committee chairperson or RSR at one or more World Service Conference(s) and have the personal time and resources necessary for active participation as a Trustee.

Non-addict nominees will have demonstrated a good understanding of the nature of addiction and of the Narcotics Anonymous Program of recovery, have the time and personal commitment necessary for active participation and have a good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Non-addict nominees are usually selected for expertise in a particular field of experience and knowledge that will be helpful to the Fellowship. Historically, few non-addicts have provided direct service to the Fellowship at the world level, which is seemingly a requirement for election as a non-addict Trustee. Unfortunately this has prevented the Fellowship from using many

non-addict trusted servants as Trustees. In an effort to rectify this dilemma, regions frequently encourage the participation of non-addicts in certain activities where non-addicts would normally be associated with the Fellowship. Serving as participants and advisors at the area level and/or regional level in public information or hospital and institution committees and as advisors in legal or administrative affairs are common ways in which non-addict participation is encouraged and observed. In this way, regions have become the arena from which non-addict Trustee nominees frequently arise. Whenever possible, regions are invited to encourage non-addict trusted servants involved in their regional activities to become involved as volunteers in similar capacities at the world level.

Considerable discretion is involved in the process of encouraging participation of non-addicts in Fellowship activities, especially at the regional and world levels. Such encouragement should be done only through group conscience action of the regional service committee based on several years of observed service by the regional service committee. Caution is important in order to assure that non-addict participation is not done for personal or professional motives of the individual.

Non-addict nominees may also come as a result of contact and associations developed through activities of the Board of Trustees or the Board of Directors of the World Service Office. The Trustees and the World Service Office Board have utilized the

experience and assistance of non-addicts in the resolution of various problems and duties in the course of their work. When such contact has been established, and when appropriate, such individuals are invited to participate as a non-addict trusted servant in situations where their interest and knowledge of the Fellowship and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions can be observed.

It is important for the maintenance of Fellowship integrity that all potential non-addict nominees exhibit an interest in providing service to the Fellowship as an anonymous person and seek no personal or professional advancement or gain. This is best observed through long association prior to any discussion concerning nomination or service as a non-addict Trustee. Guidance in this area is very important as the nature of non-addict participation is a rather sensitive matter. Should any consideration arise about a particular person, the Board of Trustees should be consulted at the earliest possible moment.

#### NOMINATION OF TRUSTEES

At the annual meeting of the World Service Conference, the Nominating Subcommittee recommendations which have been published in the Conference Agenda Report are acted on by the Conference. The Nominating Subcommittee may propose up to eight qualified individuals to be entered into the pool from which Trustees are

selected. At this time, conference participants may make additional nominations of addicts and non-addicts to be added to the "pool" for consideration. The Conference then votes to add any or all of those nominated to the "pool" for possible election the following year. At the Conference meeting a year after the nomination is accepted by the Conference, or any later year that an individual nominee remains eligible and interested in serving as a trustee, the Conference may elect members as Trustees.

During the six months following the selection of an individual as a member of the "pool", the WSC Nominating Subcommittee prepares a resume of the potential Trustee. Information included should describe the Narcotics Anonymous service and experience of the member, as well as information on personal and professional growth and maturity. This resume is forwarded to the Board of Trustees.

This nominating pool of potential Trustees evolved as a means of allowing the Fellowship to get to know their potential Trustees for a year before the Conference is given the opportunity to vote on the actual election of the nominee. At the annual meeting of the World Service Conference following the entry of the individual to the nomination pool, the nominee becomes eligible for election as a Trustee. The number of members in the pool should always exceed the number of positions on the Board that will be filled. In this way choices are provided and the Fellowship is given the ability to select the

best possible nominee for this important service work. Those nominees in the pool who are not elected will remain in the pool indefinitely and may be elected to be a Trustee at subsequent annual meetings of the World Service Conference.

During the year(s) that the individual is in the pool as a nominee, the addict members are expected to relinquish service positions at the regional and world service levels. This has been found as an appropriate means of observing the nominee's understanding and application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Humility and faith are important traits for Trustees to have and leaving the spotlight of regional and world service provides opportunity to observe these characteristics. This also has been found to keep nominees from essentially campaigning for election. Their attendance and participation in service functions around the Fellowship during the year(s) as a nominee are growth experiences for the nominee and learning experiences for those entrusted with responsibility for voting for Trustees.

The Board of Trustees include in their portion of the Conference Agenda Report the names of each of the individuals from the "pool" that they believe should be elected. They include the resume prepared for review within the Fellowship. The Board makes the decision on the number of addict and non-addict positions that are to be filled as they have the best understanding of the current load of the Board and the capacity of the existing Trustees to satisfy those work needs. In this



cooperative way, the Conference fills the number of positions the Board indicates it desires to have filled, but does not elect more members than the Board indicates are needed. In this manner, the Conference does not dictate to, but rather works in unison with, the Board of Trustees. The Trustees submit not more than five names for election by any annual meeting of the Conference.

When the elections take place, the Conference may elect to follow the suggestions of the Board of Trustees or they may select other members from the pool of nominees. Each nominee is voted on separately. A nominee is elected when two thirds of those voting vote to elect the member to the Board. Any nominee not receiving the required two-thirds vote remains in the pool for consideration at future meetings of the World Service Conference.

Upon election of a nominee at a World Service Conference, the individual serves as a Trustee for five years. At the end of the five-year term of office, the Trustee's position may be filled through the process described above. A Trustee nearing completion of a five-year term of office may be renominated by the World Service Conference. Should this occur, the nominee re-enters the pool of prospective Trustees and can be re-elected as a trustee after having been a member of the pool for one year, during which the nominee would be observed in the same manner as described above for new nominees. A year of inactivity is a

positive way to help the Trustee relax and be able to face another five year term if re-elected.

As with all service boards and subcommittees, vacancies occur in the Board of Trustees for a variety of reasons. Vacancies are only filled in the routine manner described above for Trustee positions. If at any time the number of Trustees falls below seven (7), the Conference may, if requested by the Board of Trustees, select additional trustees to bring the number to more than fifteen.

The range of service that trustees provide to the Fellowship is extensive and growing as the needs of the Fellowship grow. The most effective and productive trustees are those with good writing and English language skills, because so much of their work involves written reports. Good verbal communicative skills are also important, as trustees are called upon constantly to moderate learning days, represent the Trustees on World Service Conference Committees and speak at numerous Fellowship events.

Important considerations also include the availability of the personal time and resources necessary to serve as a Trustee. As the Trustees have taken a more active role in Fellowship activities and as the Fellowship has grown at a tremendous rate, Trustees are being called upon to travel frequently to meetings of the Trustees, Conference Committees and other Fellowship meetings.

However, the most important attributes are those involved with a mature understanding and application of the Twelve Steps in the member's personal life. Service as a Trustee should always be a reflection of the growth and maturity of the individual's personal recovery.

## CHAPTER NINE

### WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

The necessity for having a World Service Office was not immediately apparent when the Fellowship began. Of course, with so few recovering addicts and only a few groups there was little need. Each of the groups knew about the others so little logistical or administrative support was necessary. But as more addicts were brought into the Fellowship and some of us moved to distant places to live and start new meetings, the need for a central office did arise.

The first efforts at establishing an office were limited by the time and determination of those interested. For a long time, the records and files of the Fellowship floated around between the members of the Board of Trustees keeping what records there were in their car or home. The first office moved from location to location depending upon the availability of money for rent. Because money was always a problem, it ended up again in the home of a Trustee.

There were few records, little office equipment and a limited supply of literature and wherever it ended up became the office. The "Office" might occupy the kitchen or a bedroom and always

part of someone's garage. These were not ideal circumstances, but we did what was necessary.

The primary purposes for an office were to produce and distribute literature and to be a resource for those starting new meetings or having problems with existing meetings.

The first items of Narcotics Anonymous literature were mimeographed copies of single page messages about recovery. These sheets were used widely in most meetings. As a Fellowship conscience began to evolve against the practice of using A.A. literature in Narcotics Anonymous meetings, more interest and energy was invested in developing material by members for use in our Fellowship.

The first real publication was the "Little Yellow Booklet". It was in use several years before it was produced in vast quantities. The next was the "Little White Booklet." By the middle 1970's a standardization of sorts had been achieved in the use of the Little White Booklet, and the first four pamphlets became available in 1976. By that time the Fellowship had grown to about 100 meetings and was to grow rapidly as each year passed.

During the 1970's, discussions had begun about how to formalize the structure of the Fellowship. Some of those in world service at the time began to work toward the development of a first World Service Conference. A draft service manual was

generated and, through telephone calls and correspondence, the first World Service Conference was scheduled. It was through the auspices of the World Service Office that the organizational work was done to host the first World Service Conference. Evolving from this first conference meeting was a recognition and acceptance of the existing World Service Office operation.

In 1977, the Board of Directors of the World Service Office incorporated under the laws of the State of California and applied for tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board. The Office also assumed full responsibility for printing literature and moved to copyright the literature for the protection of the Fellowship. During the first few years literature sales were slow, as many groups continued to copy their own literature or used literature from A.A.

By 1980, literature sales began to creep up and a little money now came in from individuals and groups through the Seventh Tradition. The volume of letters, inquiries, and group registrations began to increase and the Office began to take more space than was available and it had to be moved to a regular commercial office. Space was located and rented on Vineland Avenue in Sun Valley. It was between a flower shop and a chinese restaurant. The Office, furnished with used donated desks, file cabinets and two old wooden television cabinets for a shipping counter, opened for business.

Having rented enough space, at first complicated the problems rather than simplifying them. It seemed harder to entice volunteers to come by to help. Calls for volunteers and contributions went out periodically but there was never enough of either.

Unfortunately, about this time, because the Office now had the appearance of money, property and prestige, the Directors and volunteers began to be criticized for nearly everything they did. Beginning with the World Service Conference meeting in 1979 a major conflict emerged over the issue of who was going to control the Office, the Directors or the World Service Conference. The issue was continually and hotly contested and at each successive World Service Conference.

The amount of money handled by the Office was relatively small during these years and in some ways hardly warranted the controversy. In 1977/78, the total income was \$5,365.17. In 1979/80 it had grown to \$21,073.07. Income finally grew to \$64,987.75 in the corporation's fiscal year ending in February 1982. The conflict reached a head at the World Service Conference that year and a compromise was reached. The compromise resulted in a gradual transfer of authority to the World Service Conference for the selection of some Directors.

During the 1982/83 fiscal and administrative year, the Office began hiring temporary part-time help to get work accomplished at

the office. Two members of the Fellowship were paid for part-time work to handle some of the shipping and some of the general office work, including typing.

Although most operational activities of the Office improved, there arose philosophical and administrative problems during the 1982/83 year. The Basic Text had been approved at the 1982 meeting of the World Service Conference and had been turned over to the Office for publication. During the production efforts of the Book, the Office discovered what the Directors believed were philosophical inconsistencies in the approved language of the text. After consultation with the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference Administrative Subcommittee, the language was changed before the Book was sent to the printer. Unfortunately the printer went bankrupt after having received over \$10,000.00 in advance payments. Another printer was secured and completed printing of the Book in time for the Conference.

Both issues caused a crisis within the Fellowship that culminated in several changes when the Conference met in April 1983. The Conference ordered the language changed back to that which was originally approved and excellerated the change in the selection by the Conference of Directors for the Office.

In June of 1983, the Fellowship's first full-time paid office manager was hired to supplement a paid staff which then consisted of one part-time shipping clerk and a full-time clerk/typist. Soon thereafter, two additional employees were added and first



steps toward modernization of the office equipment began. Whereas in every year prior to 1983, there was never enough money to meet the expenses, much less buy equipment or hire full-time staff, the income rose significantly to the point that these needs could be accommodated.

In November of that year the Office moved from Sun Valley to a larger building in Van Nuys. This new office, though at the time thought to have sufficient space to accommodate growth for several years, proved in the first year to be insufficient for the growth experienced in the following twelve months. By the time of the World Service Conference in April of 1984, the Office had a staff of seven full-time and one part-time employee.

During the 1983/84 administrative and fiscal year the Office income grew to \$329,000. There were 36,741 copies of the Basic Text sold and the last copy to be sold by the Office since the Book had first become available 365 days prior, was presented to the World Service Conference Chairperson as a commemorative gift.

#### OPERATION OF THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

The World Service Office provides a wide range of services to the Fellowship. Although the principal duty is that of publishing literature for the Fellowship, its services have grown

to include administrative support services to the World Service Conference and its subcommittees as well as the Board of Trustees. Additionally, the Office continues to be the central source of information for the general public.

The Office operates in response to Fellowship needs; its role and relationship to the Fellowship is defined by the Conference and the Traditions. Although the Office is managed with a mindful eye to adhere to all of the Traditions, there are eight Traditions which relate specifically to the activities of the Office. Understanding how these eight Traditions are particularly applicable provides an overview of how the Office is part of the Fellowship, a servant of the Fellowship and also an independent corporation.

Tradition Nine establishes the basic framework for the existence of the Office. The Fellowship has a fundamental need for a permanent office to act as the publisher for literature and to accomplish a full range of administrative tasks. The history of the Office clearly demonstrated that the enormous volume of work required was too large to be accomplished by volunteers. Because many of the tasks performed by the Office have legal ramifications, it became imperative that the Office be formed as a legal corporation. At the time this was done, some people thought that a corporation, as a legal entity, could not exist as part of the Fellowship, within an accurate interpretation of Tradition Ten.

Accordingly, for a time the Office was considered as an adjunct to the Fellowship, but as far as the authority of the Fellowship was concerned, it was considered an outside issue and separate from the Fellowship. This inconsistent perception seemed to work for awhile. Common understanding of the relationship was that the corporation existed to assist the Fellowship and would adhere to the Twelve Traditions, to the directives of the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference. At the time, the Office was considered by many to exist as an entity described in Tradition Ten, as an "outside issue" on which N.A. should have no opinion. However, the Office held the publishing rights to Conference-approved literature and the Fellowship expected to buy only from the Office.

This confusing relationship was clarified by the World Service Conference in 1982, and The World Service Office by-laws were changed. This action was accepted by the World Service Office Board of Directors and the confusion prompted by an incorrect appreciation that some thought existed within the meaning of Tradition Ten was removed.

The relationship between the World Service Office and the Fellowship is clearly understood that although the World Service Office, a corporation, it is a service board created by the Fellowship. With respect to Tradition Nine, it is the World Service Conference that essentially gives authority for the existence of the World Service Office. In this way, the Office

is responsible to the Conference. While, in a technical sense, the World Service Office is a legal entity and its activities are under the control of the corporation's Board of Directors, the Board of Directors are connected to the will of the Fellowship through election of its members by the Conference and its symbiotic relationship with the actions of the Conference.

The Fellowship, through the World Service Conference, approves literature which the World Service Office is then expected to copyright, print and make available to the Fellowship. The corporation retains the full authorities of a corporation: to enter contracts, expend funds, become indebted, etc., but does so in accordance with the desires of the Fellowship and an understanding and application of our Traditions. The World Service Office makes reports to the Fellowship through the World Service Conference. Among the reports submitted to the Conference is a financial report prepared by a Certified Public Accountant who, through an independent contract is responsible to prepare the report on the financial activities of the Office.

The office also operates under the provisions of Tradition Eight. As a "service center" of the Fellowship, the office "may employ special workers" to perform certain activities and services. The World Service Office employs addicts and non-addicts as special workers. Job duties are kept distinct and separate from an employees personal participation in the

Fellowship. Addict employee's are free to continue their involvement in N.A., on their own time, without creating a violation of Tradition Eight.

The Seventh Tradition also has specific application to the activities of the World Service Office. The Office is entirely self-supporting through the management of its sale of Conference-approved literature. The Office provides literature and other authorized items at costs consistent with prudent business practices coupled with a desire to help members of the Fellowship obtain these materials with the smallest possible expenditure. As the financial needs for operation of the Office fluctuate, the price policies of the Office may change. The Office, like other parts of the Fellowship creates a prudent reserve to handle routine and emergency needs. Because the Office is self-supporting in this way, this allows all Seventh Tradition funds generated within the the Fellowship for world service to be used by the Conference and the Board of Trustees.

Of particular importance is the application of Tradition Six to the operation of the World Service Office. Specific care is exercised to avoid any possible link between the World Service Office and non-N.A. facilities or enterprises which could be construed as an endorsement or lending of the Narcotics Anonymous name. The World Service Office is especially mindful of the relationship between the Office and suppliers of products, services, or materials used by the Office or included in the

inventory. Written agreements specify that the business relationship to the World Service Office not be used in any form of advertisement in order to avoid intimation of endorsement. Similarly, the Office maintains an impartiality with respect to sale of literature or other items to non-N.A. purchasers. Again, written agreements, when they occur, contain a requirement that the customer not utilize the business relationship to intimate, infer or claim that the World Service Office endorses or lends the Narcotics Anonymous name to their facility, business or enterprise.

The World Service Office does not make contributions nor pay membership dues to be part of other organizations, enterprises or movements which might seek to utilize such membership or contributions in any manner which would imply, claim or intimate endorsement or affiliation of Narcotics Anonymous to their organization, enterprise, movement or business.

Tradition Five provides additional purpose for the existence of the World Service Office. The Office was formed for the purpose, continues to provide the service of, producing the literature approved by the Fellowship in order to carry the message of recovery. The Office is committed to providing assistance to the Fellowship in any way desired by the Fellowship so that the message of recovery through N.A. can be carried to every addict.

Tradition Four establishes the framework for the Office to conduct on their own the business tasks common to other business ventures while at the time being responsive to Traditions and the Fellowship in matters affecting "N.A. as a whole". The World Service Conference provides guidance on matters affecting "N.A. as a whole" to the World Service Office, which then effectuates Fellowship conscience decisions that have been arrived at by the Conference. In practice the Conference seldom gives the Office specific or direct orders other than to approve or remove items of literature from the inventory. In all other aspects of the operation of the Office, the Fellowship relies upon the trusted servants selected to be the Board of Directors to manage the affairs of the Office.

This does not mean that the Office operates completely on its own. Usually the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Chairperson of the Conference attend all meetings of the Board. Additionally the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Chairperson of the Conference are consulted on most major management decisions that occur between meetings of the Board of Directors of the Office.

There is a tendency among many N.A. members to want to become involved in the development of policies, procedures and decisions of the Office. While this is understandable, it is not practical. In many situations the development of policies or procedures requires detailed knowledge, lengthy reports and

numerous meetings even for the Directors to make good decisions on. In many of these situations, time is an important factor. In order to involve a wide segment of the Fellowship in the development of these decisions, a complex administrative network would have to be built that would be expensive to operate and hard to manage. Accordingly the Directors are selected carefully and trusted to manage the Office entirely.

Because the Office is a legal entity and conducts a business, there are the normal legal matters that may from time to time confront the Office. The necessity for having the ability of the office to respond to such legal matters is the paramount example of why the Fellowship expects the Board of Directors to manage the responsibilities of the Office rather than having the entire Fellowship involved in such matters. However, even in this sensitive area of responsibility the Office does not exercise independent judgment without prior consultation and consent from the World Service Conference Chairperson and the Chairperson of Board of Trustees.

#### WORLD SERVICE OFFICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There are twelve members of the Fellowship serving on the Board of Directors of the World Service Office Corporation. Qualification for membership as a Director is specified in the by-laws of the corporation and they provide that a Director



currently be a member in good standing in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, with full and complete abstinence from any use of any drug or narcotic as it is defined by the Fellowship for at least five years.

Three positions on the Board of Directors are reserved for members selected directly by the World Service Conference. These three Directors serve for a one year term of office and are selected by election by the Conference at its annual meeting. The three Directors directly selected by the Conference shall be replaced by the World Service Conference at their next annual Conference although there is no provision which limits the right of the World Service Conference to re-elect the same Directors for additional terms providing they continue to meet the qualifications required for abstinence from drugs.

Nine of the twelve Directors are selected for membership as a Director from a panel of potential Directors. This panel of potential members is created by action of the World Service Conference at the annual meeting of the Conference. The Conference adds new members for the panel each year by election. The existing Directors select from the panel, the appropriate number of Directors. Each of the nine Directors selected from the panel are selected to serve for a three year term. One third of the Directors positions filled in this manner are replaced each year although there is no limitation on a Director

succeeding themselves providing they otherwise meet the qualifications required for abstinence from drugs.

In the Conference Agenda Report the Conference Nominating Subcommittee lists at least one nomination for each position for the WSO Board to be filled at the annual meeting of the Conference. Each nomination should include a short resume of the individual. The Conference then elects the appropriate number of Directors and selects others to fill the panel from which the WSO Board will subsequently select Directors as provided in their by-laws.

If any of the three Conference elected Directors is removed, or becomes ineligible to serve, refuses or fails to serve in such capacity, that Director's seat may be filled by interim appointment by the chairperson of the Conference from the panel of potential Directors then still eligible for membership on the Board. There is no limit on the right of the Conference to reappoint any Director to serve consecutive or additional terms, provided each such Director continues to qualify under the requirement for abstinence and proper participation as a Director.

Although the Directors are not prohibited from engaging in business transactions with the World Service Office wherein the Director might benefit financially from the transaction, in order to avoid the controversy, this is not done.

The World Service Office, as a corporation, serves as a function within the totality of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. In so doing, it endorses the aims, goals and purposes of the Fellowship and, in fact, by special endorsement in the corporation by-laws, it operates under the Twelve Traditions as espoused by Narcotics Anonymous. A special provision in the by-laws of the corporation contains this specific language, "all members, Directors and officers of this corporation shall be and are subject to, and will abide by, the principles of the "Twelve Traditions" of Narcotics Anonymous as set forth in the Book identified and entitled as "Narcotics Anonymous": and shall further abide by motions adopted at each World Service Conference meeting and implement decisions reached by the Conference as they pertain to the operation of the World Service Office. It is herein specifically acknowledged that the World Service Office acts as a fiduciary in its dealings with the World Service Conference and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous and that the net proceeds resulting from the sale and distribution of all literature and/or other materials shall be dedicated to service the goals established by the World Service Conference and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous."

It can clearly be seen that the World Service Office, although it is a corporation and independent to conduct business as a corporation, is also tied directly to the Fellowship and is obligated to adhere to actions taken by the Fellowship.

## OFFICERS AND OPERATION OF THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

The Board of Directors elects four officers at the annual meeting for the World Service Office held in June of each year. These positions are Chairperson, Vice chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. These positions require of the office holder the performance of certain responsibilities and tasks associated with the management of the corporation as a legal entity. Only the Chairperson of the Board of Directors has a direct and official relationship to the Conference. The Chairperson of the Board is a voting participant of the World Service Conference.

The voting participation of the chairperson of the World Service Office has been found to be an important and practical arrangement in order for the office to participate in deliberations and decisions of the Conference. Because the Office is vested with so much responsibility by the Fellowship and because of their experience and knowledge relating to these responsibilities it is essential to the Fellowships interest that the World Service Office have one vote at the Conference and be able to have motions made and debated. Without this voting participation the Fellowship would not as effectively be served by the Office.

The Board of Directors meets according to an established schedule each year in order to facilitate proper discharge of their responsibilities. The Board has established a series of

internal administrative policies that provide for the routine management of affairs of the Office. The Board selects an executive director as a chief management employee to direct and manage the office on a daily basis. The executive director selects, hires and supervises all other employees to accomplish the duties assigned to the Office by the Fellowship or the Board of Directors.

Twenty days advance notice is provided for all regular or special meetings of the Board. Notices are sent by first class mail and contain an agenda providing notice of items to be discussed at the meeting.

The variety of responsibilities and activities of the World Service Office have increased as the Fellowship has grown. The growth has been so rapid in recent years that the increase in office staff has hardly been able to keep up with the need. A major function of the Office is to publish and make available to the Fellowship and other interested individuals literature approved by the World Service Conference. In this manner the Office functions as a retail literature store.

The Office serves as the general secretary for many Fellowship purposes. Inquiries from the general public about Narcotics Anonymous are handled by the Office as are requests for starter kits. When new meetings are started, they are registered with the Office and included in future printing of world directories. Groups and individuals frequently write to the

Office for assistance when their groups experience difficulties. These issues are each handled with care and discretion.

Because the Office address is on every item of literature, and published so widely, the Office receives many inquiries from individuals, professionals, hospitals and treatment programs. The Office responds to every inquiry with information and individual letters as appropriate. The Office also receives considerable communication from radio, television, newspaper and magazine companies. These inquiries for information for stories or background information are handled in cooperation with the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference Public Information Subcommittee.

The Office publishes a monthly Fellowship newsletter distributed widely within the Fellowship. It contains articles from Trustees and reports from various Conference subcommittee officers and regional service representatives. The newsletter has evolved to include official communications and notices related to the operation of the Conference.

Among the important specialized activities is the Loner Group operated through the Office. This group, whose members span the globe, include members who are unable to attend meetings because of distance or incarceration. The group includes "sponsors" who are attending their own regular meetings and communicate with individual loners by mail through the Office.

A Fellowship magazine, the N.A. Way, is published by the Office. Details about the magazine are contained in Chapter 10. The magazine includes articles and stories promoting recovery through personal experiences from members of the Fellowship.

The Office acts as the secretary and treasurer for the Board of Trustees and as the general secretary for some activities of the World Service Conference. Through the availability of the staff, facilities and equipment afforded by the Office, most conference subcommittees utilize the Office for their clerical support in the furtherance of their separate responsibilities.

In recent years, the Office has begun to accumulate copies of guidelines and formats used by a number of area and regional service and activity committees. This library resource is available to committees upon request. The Office has also been accumulating some of the historical records generated within the Fellowship which can eventually constitute an archival record of the Fellowship.

Some members of the Fellowship have desired to have the Office managed through an open plebiscite that would foster discussion within the groups and areas each of the policies and procedures that the Office might adopt. While this sounds like an interesting idea because we would all like to have our say in the management of the N.A. Office, it is not practical. In fact the history of this concept has displayed how and why it is harmful to the Fellowship.

For a considerable period of time the Minutes of the Board meetings were mailed directly to almost anyone who wanted them. However as the Office began to expand, the decisions became more complex and the dollar amounts discussed and acted on became thousands and tens of thousands. The Minutes of the meetings, although detailed and lengthy, reflected only part of the whole of each such issue and controversy immediately resulted within the Fellowship. The impact of the uninformed discussions that resulted forced delay in making such decisions and this cost the Fellowship additional expense when the decisions were eventually settled.

In order to avoid this confusion, harm and uninformed action throughout the Fellowship, the Minutes of the Board meetings are not generally distributed. The Minutes are however, open for inspection by voting members of the World Service Conference and the Office does provide detailed information about the completed actions of the Board that would usually be of importance or of interest to the Fellowship at large in the monthly publication of the NEWSLINE. Additionally the Office does publish special reports on subject of great importance and interest within the Fellowship.

Many requests are received at the Office pertaining to legal and financial concerns within the Fellowship. The Office has accumulated some experience in these areas and is able to assist with most of these problems with additional information and



insight. The Office does not act as legal counsel but can make available reports and examples pertaining to many situations already faced within the Fellowship.

The World Service Office generally serves, it can be said, as a publishing agency for the Fellowship and an administrative service for the Fellowship for groups, areas, regions and world level service.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE N.A. WAY MAGAZINE

A Fellowship magazine is published by the World Service Office. The magazine, entitled The N.A. Way, is a monthly publication which includes written essays and stories about recovery in the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship. All members of the Fellowship are encouraged to write for the magazine, making it a "meeting in print." Occasionally an article may be printed from a non-member, such as a non-addict Trustee or other friend of the Fellowship, if the article is in keeping with the steps and traditions of N.A.

The magazine is a subscription financed activity of the World Service Office. The subscription price, when multiplied by the total number of subscribers, should cover the total costs of publication, staff, materials and distribution.

The major section of the magazine includes the experience, strength and hope of members of N.A. Essays which share ideas about the Fellowship and personal stories which share experience, strength and hope in applying the principles of the N.A. Program make up the total content of this section. Poetry is not included because of its subjective nature, which makes editing impossible, and because of the difficulties inherent in choosing which poems to print and which to leave out.

A separate section of the magazine, always considerably shorter and less prominent than the above described section, is the editorial section. Letters to the Editor are printed here, along with any essays which are persuasive or informative in nature and any guest editorials. Essays which are primarily negative in tone, and offer no positively oriented presented solutions are not included. This section will always carry a spirit of recovery and service, in keeping with the spiritual principles of the N.A. Fellowship.

The WSO staff member responsible for the magazine is the Managing Editor. The person chosen for this position will always be a member of the Fellowship with a minimum of five years clean time. He or she must have previous N.A. service experience at the group and area levels, and at the regional level as RSR or RSC Chairperson. The Managing Editor must have a bachelor's degree in English or journalism, or at least four years journalism experience in print media as a staff writer or editor or equivalent education and work experience.

All material to be included in the magazine is edited by the Managing Editor with the guidance of both the Review Panel and the Editorial Board described below. This editing is limited to correction of grammatical and syntactical errors in an effort to promote clarity and readability without altering the content or flavor of the article. Letters to the Editor and guest

editorials may not be edited beyond correcting errors in grammar, punctuation and diction.

#### REVIEW PANEL

All proposed input for the magazine is screened by a review panel prior to inclusion in the magazine. The Review Panel is composed of three members of the World Service Board of Trustees and three World Service Conference appointees. The Review Panel members perform two functions: a) they vote to reject or accept each item of input, and state their reasons; and b) they make specific suggestions for editing those items they voted to accept. This input is written in narrative form and mailed to the Managing Editor for use in editing the material. Because the various suggestions of any given panel member may be in conflict with an other, they serve as guidance in the editing process. Whenever a majority of the panel members vote to reject a given item, that item may not be included in the magazine.

The panel consists of three Trustees and three Conference appointees. The Trustees are selected by the WSB in whatever manner the board may choose. If for any reason one or more of the Trustees selected fails to serve in this capacity, the WSB will be notified. Until such time as a replacement is appointed, the Review Panel will continue to function without interruption.

Trustees selected for this service should serve for a period not less than two years.

At each meeting of the World Service Conference held in odd numbered years, three individuals will be selected by vote of the Conference to serve for two years as members of the Review Panel. Each of the persons chosen must have served for at least one year as a voting participant of the World Service Conference. If for any reason the appointee fails to serve, the WSC Chairperson will appoint a suitable replacement within 30 days of notification. The replacement will complete the term, and will be eligible for election to another full term.

#### THE ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL BOARD

After all material has been screened and edited, and before any material item is published, the final draft is screened by an Associate Editorial Board. This board is composed of one Trustee and one conferece appointee. These members carefully review the material for tradition violations or language which is not consistent with N.A. principles of recovery, and make one of three recommendations: a) accept in its entirety b) reject the specific item article c) accept all the item articles, but make specific language changes. The recommendations of any member of the Associate Editorial Board are discussed with the other

members by phone or in person, and any majority opinion is binding.

Members of the Associate Editorial Board are chosen in even numbered years in the same manner as Review Panel members, but no person may serve on both the panel and the board at the same time. The two members chosen are called Associate Editors, and serve for a period of two years. In the event that an Associate Editorial member fails to perform his or her duties, replacement procedures are the same as for the Review Panel.



