



Narcotics Anonymous

DATE: January, 1986
TO: The Fellowship
FROM: World Convention Corporation of N.A.

The members of the Board of the recently formed World Convention Corporation of Narcotics Anonymous would like to take this opportunity to communicate to the Fellowship about the progress and activities for the 1986 World Convention in London. Many of you reading this will have already learned of the reason for the formation of the corporation. Letters and articles giving all the details are available in pages 32-41 of the November Fellowship report and also in the most recent *Newsline*.

Before we get to the details of this report there is a special message for anyone who has received a copy of a flyer that includes some incorrect information about the London World Convention. IF AN 8.5" X 11" ONE PAGE FLYER WITH THE HEADING "LIVE FROM LONDON 86" HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED IN YOUR AREA, PLEASE IGNORE IT. THAT SHEET WAS A PART OF THE LONDON COMMITTEE'S BID PACKAGE AND IT HAS INADVERTENTLY SHOWN UP IN CERTAIN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. IT DOES NOT REFLECT ACCURATE INFORMATION AND SHOULD NOT BE USED TO INQUIRE ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS. IF ANYONE HAS ALREADY MAILED ONE TO EXPOTEL, PLEASE ADVISE THE WCCNA, C/O WSO.

The intent of this report is to bring the Fellowship up to date on what arrangements have been made and also about certain problems encountered which require Fellowship support.

AIR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:

First and probably foremost in everyone's mind is the question of travel arrangements. Calls from around the world make clear that people are willing and anxious to begin plans early and many of us have already begun to put money aside for the trip to London. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this period of adjustment while the prospects for mass transportation arrangements were studied.

This will be the first time a world convention is held outside the United States and we hope to provide the best information possible so that members can concern themselves with having fun rather than worrying about travel and lodging. A lot of time and research went into various possibilities for providing air travel to London. There was much talk about setting up special N.A. air charters and many other ideas about transporting the Fellowship to London. It became very apparent that, with the amount of time available, the safest and most feasible option would be the use of a carefully chosen agency that could meet the needs of the Fellowship, whether those needs be for individual members or groups of members and also, whether or not the members planned on going straight to London and home again or wanted to take an extended vacation to visit other parts of Europe.

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In our efforts to find professional transportation assistance we choose to use a bid process, whereby letters were sent to eight different travel agencies throughout the country asking them to provide a variety of relevant information about their company and prior services. The agency that has been chosen has demonstrated the most extensive background in handling organizations and needs similar to ours. Their approximated price schedules were comparable and the fact that they had offices around the country with toll-free and emergency numbers was, of course, very appealing. To our knowledge, this agency is not connected in any way with any member of the Fellowship.

The name and phone number of the designated travel agency is Cardillo Travel Systems and they offer toll free reservation service at either of these two numbers:

within California dial 1-800-421-7338

outside California, including Hawaii and Alaska dial 1-800-421-7337

This information is provided as a service to members who may not have the time to make their own reservations or may not be familiar with making travel arrangements. Of course, there is no requirement that members use Cardillo and individuals may want to shop around. However, the Fellowship would benefit by the use of a central agency because it would allow a simple way to check on the number of people planning to attend. It will also simplify the coordination of hotel accommodations and allow members to send one check in U.S. currency to Cardillo, rather than one to Expotel, in English sterling for hotels and another to a travel agency for airfare.

A final consideration is that by having a high volume of reservations made through one agency, the convention will gain a number of free airfares which will help defray the cost of transporting speakers to the convention if that is decided on by the London Host Committee.

Although one travel company is recommended, it does not preclude members from using other travel providers or arranging air charters on their own. After some study it was concluded that for air-charters to be arranged by world services would be too difficult, and very expensive to administrate. One of the principle reasons is that so many members will be leaving early or staying longer in Europe to do some sight seeing as this may be their only opportunity to do so for a while. If areas of regions decide to arrange air-charters, extreme care must be exercised so that the money and needs of our members are properly cared for. The air-charter business can be risky because not all companies and travel providers are financially reliable businesses.

PASSPORTS:

Anyone planning to travel outside the U.S. should apply for a passport immediately. Information from the State Department's Los Angeles office does not lead us to believe that any member will be denied a passport because of prior criminal convictions. However, they strongly encourage early application so that additional documentation can be provided if necessary. Contact your local State Department office to find out where to apply in your area. A certified birth certificate, naturalization certificate or previous passport is required to begin your application. Although it would be very unusual for a state or federal probation or

parole department to flag an application, any member on parole or probation is strongly advised to contact P.O.'s prior to making applications.

HOTEL AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES:

We are extremely grateful to the London Host Committee for the groundwork they accomplished in making arrangements for hotel and program facilities. Things in Europe are quite a bit different from what U.S. convention committees are accustomed to and it came as quite a surprise to learn that members would have to be lodged in facilities away from the location where the convention will actually be held. Hotels in England are generally constructed without the large meeting room facilities that we need. It is not common practice in London for hotels to accommodate large conventions and the manner in which large numbers of rooms are reserved for large groups of people is also much different. Hotels usually allow independent companies to make the arrangements for large groups rather than using their own staff. Companies called groundhandlers are usually the contracting agent for organizations who desire to reserve blocks of rooms. The London Host Committee reached an agreement with the largest company of this type to assist with WCNA-16. The company, called Expotel, keeps a year round block of about 1,000 rooms in hotels throughout the city. That is the company through which hotel accommodations for the Fellowship will be made. It is also standard practice for travel agents to utilize groundhandlers when preparing travel arrangements for their clients on an individual basis. The travel agency suggested here has been advised of the agreement with Expotel and will coordinate lodging with them.

This does not preclude members or their own travel agents from making arrangements directly with hotels or through other groundhandlers. However, only those reservations which are made through Expotel can be assured of the rates shown on the registration forms and in the hotels where the majority of N.A. members will be staying. It is most likely that no matter how our members choose to make their travel arrangements, they will end up going through Expotel, for hotel accommodations.

The instructions to, and agreement with, Expotel has resulted in the following accommodations being blocked for the dates of the London convention:

The Ladbroke Hotel (adjacent to the conference center) has 200 rooms available.

The London West (within 15 minutes of the conference center) has 100 rooms available.

The University (also within 15 minutes) has 300 rooms available.

There are an additional 100 rooms available at two other hotels if necessary.

Members desiring to stay adjacent to the conference center, in the Ladbroke, should make reservations immediately to guarantee themselves one of the 200 rooms available.

The University rooms are all private rooms, but only some of them have private baths.

When you receive flyers, you will find that the London West and the University room rates include breakfasts. A continental breakfast is coffee, juice and croissant, while an English breakfast is a full coffee, juice, toast, egg and meat breakfast.

The cost of rooms will vary from 12.5 English pounds per night at the University to 54 pounds per night for a regular hotel room.

The currency rate changes daily, but at the time of this report (January), one pound equals about \$1.50 U.S.

The hotel adjacent to the conference center will accommodate the hospitality room and some of the smaller meeting rooms. The conference center itself, Wembley Center, will house the main meetings and banquet.

FUNDS AND CASH FLOW

The Fellowship as a whole has been experiencing such dramatic growth during the past several years, that the number of members attending conventions has risen to a point which was bound to require a change in how our world conventions were arranged. Convention or conference centers will be needed because we will have outgrown the facilities of even the largest single hotels. Our meeting space requirements have been increasing beyond the capacity of what most hotels can provide.

The London World Convention will be arranged in that manner because of the difference discussed earlier in the accommodations of European hotels. The necessity of renting Wembley Center for our meeting space means spending extra money. In the past, much or all of our meeting space requirements could be off-set by having enough people register at the hotel. Because this is not possible in London we have to pay for the meeting facilities on our own regardless of where or how many people stay in the hotels offering special rates.

Along with that comes the requirement that all major expenditures must be paid in advance. Although this may not be customary in the United States, it is the way business is done in England. Because of this business practices, we won't have the luxury of making final payment for meeting space and banquets at the end of the convention. These expenses must be paid in full prior to the first day of the Convention. The schedule for the Wembley Center is:

\$2,793.00 due on February 28, 1986

\$4,653.00 due on May 28, 1986

\$9,307.50 due on July 28, 1986

In addition to this, the banquets must be paid entirely not less than seven days prior to the banquet.

It is common knowledge that N.A. members tend to procrastinate and depending on pre-registrations to cover this expense is simply not realistic.

Another factor which will affect the cost vs. revenue for WCNA-16 is the predicted drop in attendance due to the cost of traveling out of the country. Historically speaking, attendance dropped way off when the World Convention left California because of the fact that the majority of the members of the Fellowship were no longer close enough to drive to the convention. It took several years before attendance at the World Conventions's held outside California began to match or exceed those held in California. With this being the first World Convention held outside the United States, the amount of drop off is unknown and nearly impossible to forecast. It is reasonable to suspect there will be considerable drop off because of the additional transportation expense, and lack of

convenience that has been afforded when members could easily drive from their homes to the convention.

The World Service Conference adopted a motion at the 1985 meeting which requested that WCNA-15 (Washington D.C.) pass on 66 2/3% of their net proceeds to help fund future World Conventions. Although the committee for WCNA-15 had indicated its willingness to support that motion, it has been advised by lawyers to deposit the net proceeds from WCNA-15 in a special holding account until their tax exemption questions are resolved. That process could take several months and we cannot be certain that the contribution from WCNA-15 will arrive in time to assist with the financial dilemma facing WCNA-16.

When the Fellowship decided that the World Convention needed to be a responsible part of the N.A. service structure, it truly became our World Convention. When potential problems arise, it is our responsibility to try to resolve them.

In the past years World Conventions, although planned and hosted for our entire Fellowship, was largely the responsibility of the hosting city. The success or failure of the convention laid squarely on the shoulders of the Hosting Committee. They had complete liability for any financial losses and total authority for the distribution of any net proceeds. It was certainly not an enviable situation for the hosting cities, areas and regions.

The situation is different now and this cash flow problem is not London's problem alone, it is the Fellowship's problem and we must try to resolve it together.

There are three options for obtaining the necessary revenue when it is needed: 1) Increase the registration fee from \$30.00 to \$60.00; 2) Request that other N.A. conventions assist by selling WCNA-16 merchandise at their conventions; this, of course, in conjunction with their own merchandise; and 3) Request that other service committees, in the course of their normal fundraising activities, donate the proceeds, or part of the proceeds, of one dance, activity, etc. to support the World Convention.

We are all strongly committed to the concept that WCNA should be self supporting without the need for fundraisers and at the same time be priced so every member of our Fellowship can attend.

Unfortunately, WCNA-16 brings with it certain differences which may force us to modify the position until such time as we have sufficient funds to provide the required funding of future World Conventions.

We believe that option #1 is self defeating and would hurt rather than help the projected shortfall in funds.

In light of the above, the WCCNA Board of Directors has agreed and proceeded with the implementation of option #2, "That all N.A. Conventions scheduled to occur between now and August 15, 1986 agree to handle and market WCCNa merchandise." Letters to regional convention committees, including a copy of this letter have been mailed. We hope to begin receiving affirmative responses from those committees soon. WCCNA further agreed that option #3 or other alternatives be discussed only in the event that merchandising efforts do not result in the necessary funds.

In years gone by this dilemma would have been the sole responsibility of the Hosting Committee. Now, we are all responsible, through the service structure for the Convention. Although it is not desirable, it is necessary for the us to request financial assistance as needed. We must insure its success. We must be willing to register early, purchase the merchandise and assist with fundraising if needed.

OVERALL:

Other than the projected financial shortfall, WCNA-16 is progressing very well. The Hosting Committee members are hard working, energetic, trusted servants. The London Fellowship truly possesses the spirit of N.A. and will serve as excellent hosts for the membership world-wide.

It has been most gratifying to feel the warmth and openness with which London greeted corporation advice and support. As we said earlier, the Host Committee really had things under control and made working together easier. Two members of the London Host Committee, David and Vivianne, are on the Board of WCCNA and we had the good fortune to have David in attendance at the January 4th meeting of the WCCNA.

It sounds like we can expect a wonderful convention and a fantastic experience in a country where most of us have never been. The members in London and throughout Europe are as anxious as those of us in the U.S. to share in this special celebration of recovery.