



## P.I. NEWS

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*Narcotics Anonymous  
World Service Conference  
Public Information Committee*

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### SURVEYS AND RESPONSES

Hopefully, all of you out there in P.I. land have seen or heard of the recent letter and survey asking for updates and information about your P.I. subcommittees. The survey went out in a recent Fellowship Report. It contained basic questions about how many subcommittees in the region, how many members active in P.I., etc. The letter went out to every P.I. subcommittee listed with the WSO and asked for detailed information about the origination and structure of P.I. subcommittees and what techniques have been most successful in attracting volunteers to the subcommittee.

We had originally planned to include in this issue all of the information received from both those mailings. However, it became virtually impossible to prepare any type of a tally, so we will present excerpts of actual responses which discuss the most often reported problems, successes and other items of interest.

Quite a few responses included information about phonelines, some of which follow in these excerpts:

#### *From California:*

These are the ways I have enlisted N.A. members into service--Our phoneline was in deep "s.t.". No one would commit to being available and a handful of people were answering all the calls. But all of the members (and their egos) wanted our phone service to be a 24-hour hotline! I printed 200 copies of a proposed change for the phone service-to cease being a 24-hour hotline and just be an information line. I presented all the pros and cons and what the members would have to give in order to get the desired results. I then asked that this be taken back to the groups for a general group conscience at the meeting level, requesting that questions and answers be discussed with everyone understanding the choice that had to be made. As a result, we now have a fine tuned, functioning 24-hour hotline and we are planning to show PSA's this month. Sometimes one person tries to do it all. When we were smaller, one person could, but as we grew so did the responsibilities without a comparable increase in volunteers. I simply said "I can't, we can" and it happened. I was willing to let go of the 24-hour phoneline if that's what it took to let it function properly. And we all know what happens when you let go. Service is the responsibility of the entire Fellowship--we are but trusted servants. Thank God! I had twenty people show up at the last P.I. meeting.

*From Georgia:*

In July of 1985, plans were discussed for a statewide 800 helpline number. Tentative plans were for the Georgia Region to carry out this service. Areas would provide start-up money with fund-raisers, and the region would kick in money. The present service served only the Metro Atlanta vicinity. For all practical purposes it served only as a clubhouse referral service. In August of '85 plans were abandoned and the present service was deemed adequate.

The Piedmont Area P.I. Subcommittee presented a motion for an area helpline because services from the G.R.S.C. were not sufficient to meet the needs of the addict seeking recovery. In November of '85 final approval was given P.A.S.C. for a statewide 800 helpline. This service is described on page 10 of *A Guide to Phoneline Service* as (TYPE6). The start up was expensive. Negativity from personalities opposed to it began to surface. P.A.S.C. asked for funds from G.R.S.C. for start up and a monthly funding amount was set. The service would be for the region as a whole. Staffing would be by local, area, and regional volunteers. Local personnel during the week, area and regional volunteers on the weekends. Approval for funding was given in November of '85 from G.R.S.C.

By the end of December of '85 a suitable location was found and the lines and equipment were installed. Most groups originally opposed to it, surrendered to the conscience of the area and rallied behind the helpline. Some did not. Opposition through group opinion became stronger. Group donations were diverted to a particular subcommittee whose funding was separate from the Seventh Tradition.

We continued holding workshops throughout the area for potential volunteers. The last one was held in the city where the phoneline was located. Opposition and apathy were apparent when only a handful of potential volunteers attended.

Area conscience separated the service from P.I. and formed a helpline subcommittee. The first day of service was January 27, 1986 and money soon became a problem when the volume of calls was more than expected. Our area was strapped financially to pay for the services. There were gaps in service but they were very few and far between. Volunteers from other areas were staffing the helpline on weekends.

Problems began to arise. Twelfth Step lists from outside the Piedmont Area were not being updated. Addicts who had relapsed remained on the list because of this. Also, those who were willing to be on the list in the beginning were unwilling to respond to the suffering addict seeking help. Abuse of the phone was also a problem from volunteers and people within the Fellowship just calling to "bulls..t". By April of '86 the cost had increased to more than three times what was originally estimated. The P.A.S.C. treasury was drained. Money had to be transferred from the general and literature funds to pay the bills. The opposing members jumped on this and tried to use it as an excuse to discredit the service and members working within the helpline subcommittee.

Funding through excess money from the Fifth Georgia Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous was on hold because of problems with the hotel. The Chairperson of the Georgia Regional Activities Committee rallied the plea for help by giving total support for the service. An amount was recommended and approved by the G.R.S.C. After funds were made available, action was taken against regional conscience, which delayed the transfer of funds and cut the amount to only 75% of the original amount.

P.A.S.C. was angered by this. Opposition to the helpline within the Piedmont Area rallied to support the helpline! But it was too late. Burnout was apparent to the volunteers who were manning the lines. Areas outside of P.A.S.C. were no longer volunteering to man the lines on weekends. Gaps in service were more and more prevalent. The helpline subcommittee chairperson, visibly upset, overworked and beset by personal problems, threw up his hands in disgust and withdrew from service. A few members tried to continue but to no avail. The G.R.S.C. voted to assume responsibility of the service in September of '86. It became apparent to the Fellowship statewide that we do have a responsibility to the addict seeking recovery. Plans and proposals are being drawn up to re-establish the service. God, as we understand Him, has shown us our shortcomings and will guide us through this. We do learn from our mistakes and the Twelve Steps provide us with a way to prevent us from making them on this subcommittee.

Submitted in loving service,  
Edgar G., Piedmont Area Service Representative

*From Tennessee:*

The purpose of this historical report of the Nashville area is to share experience, strength and hope with anyone in the Fellowship who has a desire to know. With gratitude in our clean life, we dedicate this report to our Higher Power, in loving service.

A few years ago the Nashville area decided to start a helpline service. At first it was a recorder which announced meeting times and locations plus a way to leave a message if the caller desired a return call. It was later decided to contract with an answering service to take messages and give out meeting information. We currently have a computerized answering service.

Approximately two years ago, the area decided to establish a P.I. subcommittee to handle information requests coming from outside the N.A. Fellowship. Also, we were assigned the overall responsibility of the helpline.

During the first year, we had two to three dedicated members attending the monthly meetings regularly. We had great hopes but not much support from the members of the N.A. community. There were a lot of questions about P.I. but low attendance at the meetings. We explored ideas about funding and getting support from the groups, but just couldn't decide where to start! That was all right because we received a great deal of experience on keeping the helpline working.

In January, 1986, we started hearing about PSA's and the ASC was talking about ordering them. The P.I. subcommittee was assigned the task of finding out more and subsequently, appropriated monies to purchase them. At that time, this writer became P.I. chairperson, the only other active member moved out of town so we had a subcommittee of one and instructions to buy PSA's! Fortunately, the ASC gave a tremendous amount of support in the form of suggestions and direction AND an approval copy of the *Guide to Public Information* and the *Guide to Phoneline Service* appeared in Nashville!

Just the idea of getting PSA's on TV created much interest, but also many areas of concern. A lot of time was spent studying the new guide. One thing that stood out more than anything else was on the page containing Do's and Don'ts, where it said "Remember, quality is more important than quantity. Start with one or two projects and do them well before branching out." Keeping that in mind, we created the following list of priorities:

1. Create knowledge and interest in P.I., not to mention getting attendance at the monthly meetings. We needed a project that would get maximum exposure and one that we knew something about. It seemed like running the PSA's would be a great first effort. But, if we were actually going to do that, could our phonline handle the increased activity? Those questions gave us a chance to speak with a lot of members about something exciting that we were planning as well as updating our call list and inviting them to the next P.I. meeting.
2. During this same period of time, we recognized a need for providing information to the phonline volunteers describing their duties, responsibilities and general information from the Phonline Guide. We copied the flow charts from the guide and developed some localized information in the form of a Nashville Guide to Helpline Service. The Nashville Guide also contains a list of current volunteers.
3. We then proceeded to create a positive, working relationship with the answering service. We contacted the service and asked if they were having any problems or required any information. We furnished them with a new list for the computer. They were able to tell us when they have the hardest time reaching volunteers. We also found out that a computerized print-out was available which gives us complete information on how each call is referred. (Not the total number of calls received)

*Along with the helpline work which Nashville did, further information from them on general start up of a P.I. subcommittee and getting members involved is included later on in this issue.*

## BUDGETS

*The question about budgets on the form brought forth some dismaying information. Apparently, many P.I. subcommittees are not being funded through their area and/or regional service subcommittees. Or, perhaps they aren't active enough yet to require budgets. In either case, it will become more apparent as P.I. service work continues, that it requires probably more money to do P.I. than any other type of N.A. service. The cost of postage, copies and hand-out literature for professional presentations are just a few of the costs relative to P.I. service. The best way we know to have the funds available when your subcommittee needs them is by estimating how many mailings, professional presentations, etc. you would like to do in a year's time, what it will cost to do it and submit that estimated budget to your service subcommittee. As the subcommittee actually carries out those planned activities, budgets can be adjusted to be more accurate. There were a few responses that mentioned budgeting which are included here:*

*From Oklahoma:*

Concerning the public information survey that WSO distributed, I'm writing to give some more information about the Western Area of Oklahoma. Our area's



greatest need, and the region's as well, is getting participation from more than a handful of people. I realize that people within the area service structure will have to generate excitement about service among the Fellowship, but at this time, that excitement has been limited to a few pet projects and fewer individuals.

About budgeting, our subcommittee doesn't have a budget. We simply ask for allocations depending on area resources and project needs. Just last weekend, though, I requested another \$44.00 to continue distribution of P.I. packets. (*Note: Another area decided to prepare a local information flyer, using I.P.'s as the basis in their writing instead of sending the actual I.P.'s. This kept their mailing costs to a minimum. Any materials such as that flyer, or other hand-outs created by P.I. subcommittees, are welcomed by the WSC P.I. Subcommittee as input for their ongoing projects.*)

Until our subcommittee draws in a larger participation, I'll hold off on sending a list of contacts.

In loving service, David T., WASC P.I. Chairperson

*From Missouri:*

How did I get the N.A. community involved in P.I.?

The answer to that question is money. It takes money to do this work and thank God the Ozark Area is willing to trust me with it. That makes this work a little easier. The way I got people (groups) involved in a P.I. seminar is by letting them do it; giving them the money and trusting that they'll make the right decision, keeping my opinions down to the minimum. It seems that when I make a suggestion they feel I'm trying to tell them how to do it. So I just tell them what the book tells us to do and not just my way. Thank God They Believe In The Book.

In loving service, Tom G., Ozark Area P.I. Chairperson

*From Tennessee:*

At the same time that Nashville was working on their phoneline and developing guidelines for their subcommittee, they also addressed the budget question. As stated in their historical report, "We asked for a budget from the ASC. They approved up to \$100.00 per month. It hasn't taken this amount to operate, at present, but it was important to establish a budget simply because, as more requests for information have arrived, our costs have risen. A checking account was also needed at this time.

### MINUTES AND OTHER REPORTS

*This is another reminder that minutes of your P.I. subcommittee's meetings are welcomed. They provide ongoing updates to our contact list and are an important tool in sharing experience with other P.I. subcommittees. A recent set of minutes from the Florida Regional P.I. Subcommittee was so great, that it deserves comment. They included detailed reports from every area as well as discussions relating to new projects, progress on old ones and great input on some items currently being worked on*

by world level P.I.

Along with the day-to-day business which your minutes assist, this newsletter desperately needs your support if it is to continue sharing experience, strength and hope in P.I. with other subcommittees around the world. Items from the minutes and other written correspondence is one way we fill these pages with all the information you read. Please, help. Take some time and write a note to the WSO P.I. Department. The report from the Nashville Area P.I. subcommittee report, excerpts of which are used throughout this issue, was compiled as input to one of the WSC P.I. task forces working on P.I. subcommittee start up and member participation. Of course, we don't expect anything this detailed from every subcommittee, but we won't refuse it either!

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The following are excerpts covering a variety of experiences all related to the general start up of a P.I. subcommittee and getting the local N.A. membership involved.

*From Nashville, Tennessee:*

Developing Nashville P.I. guidelines was our next project. We used the P.I. Guide extensively. Of course, we had to localize for our needs.

While working on the guidelines, we started our contingency plan. It included an informational hand-out designed to inform the members of their responsibilities in regard to public information. We are currently awaiting group conscience permission for use in the Nashville area.

The concepts presented throughout this historical report are twofold. One, we are getting our house in order. Two, we are starting to create communication and interest within our N.A. community. The members are starting to equate the term "P.I." with public information! There are a lot of questions now and the P.I. meetings are more populated. All Right!

When the PSA's arrived, a P.I. and ASC group conscience was taken on how many stations to approach. We didn't want to get on too many at once and we wanted to be able to monitor the increased activity on the helpline. We were also aware that other areas might be affected.

Since we'd planned for a media subcommittee in our guidelines, this seemed like a good time to start establishing it.

*More from Nashville regarding their media experiences in a later section.*

*From Pennsylvania:*

This letter is a reply to the two questions you raised in your last letter.

First, the P.I. Committee was started with a few dedicated members.

1. Letters were sent to local radio stations asking them to air our PSA's. Drug Problem?-Need Help?-Call Narcotics Anonymous!
2. Government agencies, drug counselling centers and other establishments were asked and then delivered N.A. pamphlets, meeting lists and White Books to place in their offices. The literature was purchased with the \$50.00 monthly allotment given to

- P.I. from the area service committee.
3. The school district center was contacted to get approval to speak about addiction in schools-speakers were selected from a list passed through the Fellowship.
  4. Posters were made to hang in buses.
  5. The phoneline committee sent a list to be signed by members indicating what time they would be able to receive calls. These contact lists were sent to our answering service who did the rest.

All these things are done over and over by present P.I. members. As for getting members of the Fellowship involved, all that we do now is make announcements at meetings. If you have any information on getting the N.A. community to take commitments in P.I. please let me know. Also please let me know if there is anything else we could do.

Sincerely, Martin G., P.I. Chairperson, Northern Central Pennsylvania Area.

*From New Brighton, Pennsylvania:*

I wanted to send this as soon as possible. Sorry about not typing but it makes communication more personal and, of course, I don't have 200 plus letters to write and send out.

P.I. in our area started about June '85 when it was functioning under H&I and we initially provided a booth at the health fair in the local mall. Up to that point most of us who did P.I. pursued it on our own, breaking most of the traditions; but it did serve to provide us with a host of experience.

In November '85 I was fortunate enough to be made the Chairperson. At that time, Butler and Beaver were one area; since July of this year we split, primarily because of distance.

Through our RSR I received the handbooks on phonelines and P.I. Then my education began. The workbook proved invaluable and still proves invaluable in setting goals, dealing with reporters, establishing the committee, distributing bulletins, incorporating the phoneline, developing a speaker's list, and how to present our goals and carry the message to interested parties, to mention just a few.

Initially I made ten copies of the workbook at the local union and being now slightly aware of traditions, paid the going price of \$.04 a copy to the local food bank (anonymously), which is associated with that union. It would have been real easy for me to have overlooked that trifle except for knowing about our self-supporting attitude. Oh, I almost forgot, we were also initially given \$200.00 from the area. As with most new things, there was initial interest and several of us made trips twice a month to Butler holding about five meetings a month until June of '86.

The committee began by defining responsibilities and determining membership but because of turnovers in the committee we redefined everything in June and July. Because of this reorganization, things have been running more smoothly. Also, several personalities clashed but the principles superseded and peace was restored.

Our initial goals were a bulletin campaign and a letter writing/sending campaign. We also contacted the local newspapers to get meeting list space. The bulletins were debated over, a style was developed by someone in the Fellowship (I have sent one to the World Service Office), and volunteers were sent to post them.

I broke our area into sections for distribution purposes and then my aggressive personality began, cajoling, coercing, and all the other things needed to get people to fulfill the task they undertook. Of course, the resentments began; I did several sections myself and felt good doing it; and of course I couldn't understand why others weren't as enthusiastic. Well in God's time most of our area was covered.

The newspapers contacted us and I followed the guidelines to the best of my understanding as reported in the last *P.I. News*. I signed that last input "Take a Chance," but knowing what I do today. I would have taken the decision to the committee first.

We also had a fund-raiser on Valentine's Day and had a shirt designed and painted by people in the Fellowship "Your Hell was my Hell, Together we have Hope." These two projects have provided us with literature and paid bills for this year.

Our bulletin campaign led us to the professional prevention people in this area and it became apparent that they had an opinion that some lechery appeared at our meetings. We tried to state our case but that was futile and it did lead us back to group conscience to re-evaluate our atmosphere of recovery and let us see how the P.I. representative could become a feasible trusted servant of the area.

Bell Telephone tried to contact one of the P.I. representatives about some business and their inability to access us caused us to revamp our helpline. We updated lists and designated certain people on the list as P.I. representatives of the area, plus re-evaluating the answering service.

The bulletin posting project also made us aware of the head hunting in the treatment business and has made us very aware of our policy of non affiliation.

All school guidance counselors in our area were sent letters and literature from our committee. "Networking" various contacts by individual members has created the need for speakers at Penn State College, five presentations at a Catholic school and many more presentations.

At these we take notes, carry literature targeting the interested parties, try to tell about the history of N.A. in our area and try to talk about our feelings (not war stories). We inform people of different kinds of meetings and their availability in our area and what N.A. has done for us.

For the end of 1986 and beginning of 1987 we have planned another workshop on speaking and phonline techniques. Soon we will also send letters to the law enforcement people, churches and doctors.

Our region just this weekend filled the P.I. Chair position, one that has been highly neglected and ever changing during the year. I know the individual and am really looking forward to gaining some input from the region and surrounding areas.

Thanks for the chance to share,  
Sincerely, Dick M.

*From Alberta, Canada:*

Edmonton has had a P.I. subcommittee for about 1-1/2 years now. We have operated a hotline for about the same length of time.

Presently we are a committee of eight, with each committee member having a specific area of committee business to look after. For example: Besides the committee executive, we have a media coordinator for speaking engagements and a



telephone answering service coordinator. We have little difficulty with the committee's functioning. It seems to be a fairly cohesive group and is able to work together with little difficulty. We hold one meeting a month and report to the area once a month.

We, as a committee, update our Twelfth Step lists and speaker lists every month through the GSR's. We try to maintain communication with every group, either through the GSR's or group representatives who come to our P.I. meeting. We also have a group liaison (a member) who goes to most meetings and communicates anything pertaining to P.I.

For about the last year we have tried to put an emphasis on education in the form of holding a workshop every three to four months. The purpose is to go over the Twelve Traditions and to inform the Fellowship on how to handle Twelfth Step calls, speaking engagements and the answering service. N.A. Edmonton seems to be growing quite quickly and the need seems to be there. Our next workshop is being planned jointly with the H&I, entertainment, and literature committees, primarily to help unity between the different committees.

Many Thanks,  
Irene M., P.I. Chairperson, N.A. Edmonton, Canada

*From Michigan:*

Thank you for your recent letter. I really enjoyed the style with which it was written. So much so, I couldn't help but respond.

With respect to the Flint Area Service P.I. Subcommittee, the answers to both of your questions are about the same.

We started with a goal, a project.

It seems in our ample experience these are three basic ingredients:

1. A handful of members who truly love this Fellowship. People who have found N.A. to be their solution and believe that it is the solution for others and want them to have the opportunity to pursue recovery in N.A. There will also be those who just want to see the Fellowship grow in number (for whatever reason) and believe that P.I. is the way to accomplish this.
2. The second essential element is a task. A group of people, or sometimes just one, to initially decide on a project or a goal, something to work towards.

In Flint in 1983, a couple of women decided we needed to start letting doctors and probation officers know what N.A. was about and that it was in Flint. They announced their intentions (to write and mail letters to these people) at all four of the area meetings. People wanted to know what they could do. They formed a P.I. subcommittee and put people to work looking up addresses in the phonebook, addressing envelopes, etc. I believe the letters they used were model or stock letters that were already written and reviewed for content by the WSC P.I. Committee. I don't really know, but the letters came through the service structure or at least from other addicts in another area. In fact, I believe it was when the letters fell into the possession of the local members that real interest was first

generated. Those letters were the spark. From there the committee had card parties where they sat around with note cards and colored markers and made cards to put up on bulletin boards. From there it was a helpline, then the project was PSA's and then bus signs. Sometimes there were extended periods of inactivity between projects.

My whole point is that our P.I. involvement has been very task-oriented. When we had a project, we had participation. When there was no project, there has been no interest. I believe that, in general, P.I. work has real intrinsic rewards, it really appeals to our personalities. All we need to do is provide a goal or project and a little leadership, which brings us to:

3. Leadership, the third necessary ingredient. Really, it seems that it just takes someone or some people to coordinate things and delegate responsibilities.

Ron W., P.I. Chairperson, Flint, Michigan

*From Washington/No.Idaho:*

I became the regional P.I. Chairperson in October 1985 and was given the following: The old P.I. Handbook, a hug and a hearty vote of confidence.

With our region consisting of 13 areas I felt quite ignorant of what to do first for I had relatively no knowledge of:

1. Who the area P.I. Chairs were
2. How large their committees were
3. What P.I. work had been accomplished in the past year
4. What future goals they had
5. Any presenting problems
6. How the regional P.I. committee could support them best

During the first two weeks I devoted many hours on the phone establishing contact with the appropriate service people in each area. With contact established, I set up appointments with each area to meet with any interested P.I. people and their area committee if they had one. I then set an agenda whereby I visited an area a day for a thirteen day period. This involved considerable effort, mileage, and time, plus money with the end result being quite valuable. The following were the results:

1. An accurate list of area P.I. chairs
2. Knowledge of past P.I. activities
3. Knowledge of what worked and what didn't on an area level
4. A commitment of unity
5. Personal contact with area P.I. people.

One of our major hurdles has been to get area P.I. activity summaries in a consistent manner. Numerous forms have been made and are sent to areas and groups regarding input and updates on their activities. We found that communication is our responsibility: to share with areas, connecting regional P.I. Chairs and the WSC. Once we started sending copies of the regional P.I. committee reports (which are sent to the RSC Vice-Chair monthly) areas responded better for

they were receiving communication from us on our activities and goals. Communication takes two parties.

Presently we are summarizing area P.I. reports and phonline reports monthly and are sending this combined input back to the area committees. This has proved valuable in sharing information and work. We are now putting in a calendar of upcoming area/regional P.I. events.

Having a work phone number where members can reach you is important. We have also found it valuable to keep an accurate log of phone calls placed and received. With the implementation of our regional contingency plan in February, 1986 a work phone number became a must.

We found we needed regional P.I. letterhead and the regional P.I. Chair's home address and phone number was put on all correspondence. Our RSC has a post office box which is 160 miles from us thus there was a lengthy delay in receiving correspondence and often correspondence never got to us. A suggestion that the regional P.I. Chair have a P.O. box close to home would probably prove quite valuable and still respect anonymity.

Consistent mailings to area P.I. committee and area phonline chairs have aided us in developing an image of credibility and willingness to serve. We also update lists of P.I. and phonline chairs monthly.

It took three months for us to realize how we could coordinate our committee work. We knew we surely could not mandate this action or direction. We set up monthly mailings of form letters which were targeted at specific areas of P.I. work. Many areas were able to utilize the material and implement it into a project for their area. This month we have targeted letters towards physicians, next month will be attorneys and judges, etc.

We have developed one year goals which have been sent to areas for their input and review. At the upcoming administrative meeting they will be up for approval with individual areas bidding for hosting regional workshops and fund-raisers.

Also, in our monthly reports to the RSC, we put the next month's goals and as we have stated earlier, that report goes to all P.I. and phonline committee chairs. On our area summary form we also have a space provided for their upcoming goals. So it all seems to keep communications open, provide a unity of purpose and a certain cohesiveness in our public information efforts.

We have found several ways to approach groups for their involvement in public information activities on an area level. They have proved valuable in gaining support from the membership. It seems that with clear, concise, short-term commitments, members will respond. It is our belief that the clearer we are with whatever project is in the works, the better the quality, ease and credibility of that project.

One area used our school involvement request form and received 70 members volunteering to do a variety of tasks. We have found that the format we used can be transferred to almost any project a P.I. committee has in mind.

Our last group involvement package went out three weeks ago and hopefully it will work as well as the one before it. We feel that with P.I. representatives on a group level the volume and quality of P.I. work can be incredible.

Our group involvement packet on flyers/informational packets brought good responses throughout our region. Follow-up seems to be the biggest roadblock with these group involvement projects for the area P.I. chairs need to keep track of each group. That requires some administrative skills to assign tasks and special projects from the pool of members which come from the involvement requests.

We are currently looking at developing a request for members involvement for phonline committees. As soon as this is completed we will forward a copy to you.

In one area each group has a P.I. report as part of their meeting format. This has worked well in helping the area inform members of what is being accomplished with respect to public information.

In three weeks we will have a regional/area P.I./phonline chairs meeting. With this administrative meeting one agenda item is to solidify dates for area/multiple area/regional workshops in the upcoming year. We have found multiple area workshops to be most successful. There have been three of these in the past six months. The multiple area workshops bring communication and unity and individual areas do not have to duplicate what someone else just did. Workshops devoted solely to P.I. have proved beneficial because more members seem to attend.

"Special Topics" workshops have tended to bring more involvement also. For example, workshops on PSA's, public speaking, and working with the media have brought valuable experience and strength to the membership of our region plus they have brought many new people into service work. It has been our practice to ask those members in our region with considerable experience to speak on specific topics at workshops. This has not only brought a lot of involvement but has also taken the "load" of the workshop off the regional P.I. committee.

Working with other subcommittees of our RSC has been vital in the past year. We have committed to sharing all of the "paper" created by each subcommittee. Besides this, at three regional P.I. workshops we have had panels where regional subcommittee chairs (H&I, literature, outreach and activities) have spoken on how subcommittees can best work together. We are planning a joint workshop with H&I with agenda items to help solidify our communication so that we can plan a number of special projects for the upcoming year (joint mailing campaign or a joint community meeting).

We have also had public information chairs from connecting regions speak at our regional conference, speak on panels at workshops and be a part of other committee meetings that have a direct affect upon them. They have also provided input on how we can continue to work together.

I have been involved with P.I. work for almost five years now from group to area to regional involvement. Addicts are finding us in larger numbers daily and being a part of this influx of people seeking recovery furthers my commitment to be a part of public information work.

It is our hope that something can be gleaned from this input. If there are any questions or if the WSC P.I. Committee wishes further definition of any project we have accomplished please call me.

Jon A., P.I. Chairperson, WNIR

*From North Carolina:*

Love and greetings from Fayetteville, North Carolina. I was very glad to receive your letter the other day and now I am writing my response to answer your question.



How did I start a P.I. committee?

First, when I was given the job I didn't know everything about P.I. work so I wrote to the WSC Public Information Committee letting them know that I was a P.I. chairperson, that I was new at this, and asked them to send me any and everything about P.I. work. Then, I started studying *A Guide to Public Information* so that I would know what to do and what my responsibility would be in handling the response from the Fellowship. I believe that if we educate the Fellowship on what P.I. is and the responsibilities entailed, they will know what to do and who to get in touch with when they are approached. So that's what I did and what I am still doing, because you would be surprised how little the Fellowship knows about P.I. I started acquainting myself with what to do if I was approached by the media or other people outside of N.A.

How did I get the N.A. community involved in P.I.?

After educating the Fellowship about what P.I. is, I started looking around for people to serve on the P.I. subcommittee (after praying about it first). Then I started asking people at our monthly ASC meeting, people who were there and come often, (not just anybody) to fill the spot. A lot of things I have to do myself because some people don't want to get involved at this time. I keep doing what I can in P.I. and keep praying and asking questions. The most difficult and frustrating part of P.I. service work is sometimes getting the actual P.I. subcommittee functioning. Along with recruiting members and drafting guidelines I have come to believe that I might not be the one that my Higher Power wants to get this committee functioning but I might be able to get a firm foundation started so that the next Chairperson can get it functioning on that foundation. I have written letters to all groups in our area to send one person who wants to get involved in P.I. to come to our area meeting. The response has been slow so I keep waiting, asking, praying and studying and have drafted letters out of the P.I. Guide. I'm getting ready for the time when they will be put to use. Our committee has no funds. The things that I got for P.I. I paid for myself. Do you have anything like buttons or bandannas or head bands or T-shirts that I could sell for a fund-raiser for P.I.? If so, please let me know. Let me know if you have those types of things and the cost for me to get them.

Love in fellowship and service,  
Joseph M., P.I. Chairperson, Coastal Carolina Area

*Note: Many service committees produce and sell N.A. memorabilia for fund-raising purposes. The World Service Office does not produce or stock any of those items, nor has the World Service Conference P.I. Committee discussed that possibility. There is some concern about using fund-raisers too often as a primary source of revenue for N.A. services. It is important to educate our Fellowship about the importance of the Seventh Tradition.*

*From Texas:*

In response to your letter of October 22nd.

1. How did we start a P.I. committee?

I honestly don't know. I recently became P.I. chair and I don't know what efforts were put out before.

2. How did we get the N.A. community involved in P.I.?

Since my appointment, I have strived to inform the N.A. community as to P.I.'s needs and responsibilities. We have lovingly asked for input stressing the fact that no pressure tactics will be used to get people to serve. We're currently in the process of organizing a helpline workshop and hope to begin to see even more involvement as more people learn of the responsibilities and rewards of service. One thing we have seen a lot of is people with substantial clean time not being willing to serve. It has caused a large lack of experience in service work and we see more newcomers being pushed into service without knowledge of responsibilities or duties. P.I. is trying not to follow this pattern and we would appreciate any input you have.

In loving service,  
Becky P., Austin, Texas

*From Florida:*

Here in the North Dade Area we found a group of recovering addicts with the willingness to serve and the required clean time for trusted servant positions. We then sent to the World Service Office for information to help us get started. Next we announced at every meeting we went to that we had started a P.I. Committee and there was no clean time requirement to get involved. P.I. then stressed that getting involved was a good way to stay clean and would give members the chance to help another addict by making the community aware of what Narcotics Anonymous has to offer.

As we started to get the N.A. community involved we formed task forces, such as:

1. T.V. and radio coordinator
2. Printed material coordinator
3. Educational institutions
4. Judicial and law enforcement
5. Health agency
6. Clergy
7. Special events coordinator

We elected heads for each task force members (who had the required clean time) and had them work on their committees. The people got involved with the tasks they chose.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve N.A. and to be able to give away what we have freely gotten. We are successful at our efforts in carrying the message, and we seem to be getting cooperation from our community.

In loving service,  
Sheeli D., Secretary, North Dade Public Information

*From Miramar, Florida:*

Like most other areas, when the Gold Coast Area formed this public information subcommittee, it consisted of just a handful of members. That didn't stop us from making mistakes or allowing personalities to come before principles. We also had problems when individuals went outside of the committee to do public information work by giving inappropriate interviews which reflected on the Fellowship as a whole and our area especially.

We have all heard that we can learn from our mistakes as readily as we learn from doing "what works for us." We have found this to be true and because of our experiences, both positive and negative, we have grown into a strong, unified, effective subcommittee bearing a clean Narcotics Anonymous message, excluding all else. We are very conscious of the risk involved in dealing with the media; whether it be press, radio or films and are aware of the need for our message to be consistent with the N.A. way of life, N.A.'s Twelve Traditions and N.A.'s program of recovery. We try to keep our personal opinions and emotions out of interviews and speak as much from our Narcotics Anonymous literature as we can.

We cannot list all of the accomplishments of our area P.I. subcommittee. We have worked in conjunction with our neighboring areas to air video and radio public service announcements and we plan to continue to do so. Our plans are to air the PSA's simultaneously.

Today we are able to accomplish such activities as radio interviews by which we deliver our message to the public. We have sponsored community awareness seminars to which we invited local professionals in order to inform them that Narcotics Anonymous is here, who we are, and that addicts can and do recover through the Narcotics Anonymous Program. One of these seminars was such a success that different companies approached us for additional presentations. We were reminded by this event how thin the line is between attraction and promotion. We are tradition conscious and are very much aware of our one and only purpose.

The Gold Coast Area P.I. Subcommittee has also granted newspaper interviews in which we successfully carried a good, clean N.A. message to the public. We always try to keep the doors open in order to be welcomed back for future interviews, presentations, and newspaper articles.

We try to work with the Gold Coast Area Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee, furthering their effort to carry the message of freedom from active addiction into institutions wherever addicts can be found.

The work of public information is a very important and rewarding part of Narcotics Anonymous. We exist in an area where drug addiction has reached monumental proportions and we are proving that the old lie, "Once an active drug addict, always an active drug addict," is truly dead.

Today there is hope for us and for the growing number of our population who are still out there seeking help. Our hope is called Narcotics Anonymous and

it works!

Our spirit of cooperation, not competition, when working with neighboring areas has been most beneficial. We learn through our mistakes what does and does not work for us and we are very willing to share what we've learned through our growth.

We try to do our best to carry out the will of our Higher Power, keeping with what we believe will be good for N.A. as a whole, as well as the individual still out there suffering. We believe that as long as we follow that path all will be well.

In loving service,  
Gold Coast Area Public Information Subcommittee

*From Southern California:*

The Bay Cities Area P.I. Subcommittee has had a rich and lengthy history that extends back prior to my involvement in service. When I became involved in service, there appeared to be only one P.I. member. His activities consisted of quarterly mailings of PSA's to local radio stations and making 3X5 cards, following the approved format, which were handed out at the ASC meetings.

Under the next P.I. chairperson's leadership, the subcommittee expanded to five consistent members with occasional larger meetings. Looking back, this subcommittee seemed to appeal to those members with little clean time who wanted to be of service. In addition to the previously mentioned activities, there were large mailings accomplished to doctors, lawyers and criminal justice professionals. Newcomers stuffed and addressed envelopes, etc. (*Note: Another response indicated their area has time allotted at P.I. meetings for envelope stuffing and addressing. This is a great way to use the enthusiasm of newcomers who want to be of service but may not have the clean time to do other things*) We also began donating Basic Texts to local libraries and staffing booths at one or two health fairs.

When I became chairperson a group conscience was taken to shift the emphasis from mailing to speaking. There was a great influx into the subcommittee at that time. The desire to speak did not equal the opportunities to do so. There has been some loss of subcommittee members since then. We now function as an active subcommittee of seven or eight members with a list of those familiar with the Twelve Traditions who are available to speak.

Increasing N.A. community involvement in P.I. has taken a couple of routes. There are the standard announcements at the ASC, sending representatives to our phoneline subcommittee to educate those volunteers on how to handle P.I. calls, and referrals to P.I. and serenity (learning) day presentations.

Another important aspect of getting members' involvement has been reinforcing the awareness of members who are doing P.I. work without knowing it. A prime example of this is when any member makes phone calls trying to find a location for new meetings. We also try to show our own personal enthusiasm for the P.I. service work we do and give members opportunities to serve P.I. functions even if they're unable to be regular participants or attend the P.I. meeting.

We now have a printer produce our P.I. 3X5 cards and the area always enthusiastically responds to our requests for help in distributing them.



We've found three other factors important in doing P.I. service work:

1. A sense of humor and humility
2. Using P.I. pitch sheets, in which members who go on P.I. speaking panels get together to discuss how it went, how to make it better and fill out the pitch sheet with comments and suggestions (*Note: Many responses included the suggestion to use a similar follow up "pitch sheet"*)
3. Responding to group conscience regarding what N.A. wishes us to do.

I hope this information will be of some use to you.

*It was interesting to note how many P.I. subcommittees break into various task forces with one member coordinating each. For example, media coordinator, speaking engagements force, phonline coordinator, mailing groups, etc.*

*Another interesting point which was mentioned several times is the fact that the P.I. chairperson should not be the prime candidate to respond to requests to interviews. The chairperson, or other delegated member, serves a much more necessary and beneficial role as a coordinator for media interviews. More information on interviews can be found in the "Media Information" section.*

Craig W., P.I. Chairperson, Bay Cities Area

*The Nashville historical report continues here---*

### WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Our area's media committee (this is a task force of the P.I. subcommittee) handles all incoming and outgoing electronic or written media action. Once we decided to get PSA's on the air, the following items were listed as necessary preparations.

1. Determine the area of direct influence for each state. This is best done by calling the advertising sales department of each station. They know how far their station broadcasts.
2. Contact any other areas where the broadcasts are received. In Nashville, we are blessed with wide open country and no major cities were affected. Two smaller cities did, however, receive the broadcasts. The end result was that we added their helpline number to our helpline referral list. Then, the Nashville helpline can give a caller his/her local N.A. number. If necessary, some of our members return long distance calls.
3. Make a list of the stations in the area. We accomplished this by calling the operator at the station and requesting a mailing address and names for station managers, program directors, public service and news director.
4. Pick the stations and call the public service director for an appointment. Because we have more than one PSA, we wanted them to pick one suitable for their station. If we got an appointment, we were able to take written material with us and share, in person, a little bit about N.A. and what we're trying to do. We also shared a

bit about ourselves.

5. If the public service director doesn't have time for an appointment, we ask to drop off a PSA at the front desk. Always call back later to ask if they received it and when it will be in the production department ready for use. We always try to find out when it will be aired. The most frequent answer is one month and they usually do not give any indication of frequency. However, they do indicate that it will remain on file for six months.
6. Immediately after the first contact, we send a thank you note and after about two weeks, we call the public service director and ask when we can pick up our copy of the tape. That serves two purposes. One-the PSA won't get lost in the shuffle and two-you get a chance to further your relationship with the station.
7. Report to ASC on progress. We also ask that GSR's request every member to keep an eye on the TV stations and report any viewing of the PSA. As soon as any viewing is reported, we send another thank you note, this time to the station manager.
8. Continue to call the public service director, take a new selection to each station every six months to renew their commitment, and keep a calendar of contact dates and action taken.

The PSA effort was very worthwhile and we gained invaluable knowledge in dealing with the media. The following reflects some general observations we picked up along the way. PSA's are not the absolute best way to get our message across. A national survey indicates that an individual must see a commercial fifteen times before the information sinks in, which means a TV spot would have to run 100 times per week for a month in order for one person to see it 15 times.

The number of calls to our helpline did not increase the way we expected. However, we started getting more calls from co-dependents (family and friends) and organizations requesting written information. A little more advance preparation for these requests would have been nice.

After several months, we had the PSA's on all of our major stations, and decided to try a different media activity. We took advantage of the contacts and experience gained from the PSA campaign and began approaching local stations, asking if they were interested in doing interviews. We contacted only public service directors and stayed away from the news desk. The reasons for that were:

1. Possibility of being picked up at a national level
2. Short time notices
3. Editing that takes our statements out of context
4. High exposure to anonymity breaks
5. Helpline number hard to get on screen

We feel the following experience is important to share:

1. Take at least two speakers, both for comfort and protection from egos.
2. Have a P.I. volunteer present to arrange the details, provide information to the interviewer and be the keeper of the Traditions. Usually, the volunteer who made the initial contact needs to be there to provide continuity.

3. Select different speakers for each interview. P.I. administrative members and coordinators would appear only once for experience and otherwise would appear only in cases of no-shows.
4. We found it helpful to choose speakers from the helpline list who have the following assets:
  - a. Most clean time available in the area
  - b. Active commitment to N.A.
  - c. Prior service experience
  - d. Experience in sharing about N.A.
  - e. Working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Traditions

We also found it important to train the speakers on our speaker list. The first few times we got together before an interview to talk about what to say, but that created so much nervousness we found it was best to turn it over to H.P., let it speak through us and discuss only the mechanics, not our specific words.

When asked difficult questions, we've found that a "yes, but" or "no, but" answer works well. Say yes or no, then follow with something about the N.A. principles. This keeps the discussion on our message of recovery and helps control the line of questioning. Whatever you use to end an answer with will help lead the interviewer into the next question.

We've usually been able to meet with the interviewer prior to the actual show which enables us to create a harmonious relationship. Remember-you catch more bees with honey than with smoke. One time, we also invited the interviewer to an open meeting before the show. That worked out great because he was able to ask informed questions based on some understanding of what a meeting was like.

We haven't had a lot of luck with the printed media in Nashville. However, we did create a list of all the papers in the area and determined the availability of a community meeting/happening section in those papers. We then prepared a news release as illustrated in the *Guide to Public Information* and mailed them out. Those announcements have been in papers in our community all year. We occasionally update the news release and do re-mailings.

As a closing note, we've included some helpful hints, in addition to those listed in the Do's and Don'ts on page nine of the *Guide to Public Information*.

1. Don't put anything off. Do whatever you have to now.
2. State your business quickly. Be pleasant and smile while talking. A smile can even be heard over the telephone.
3. Be a good listener. After stating your business, don't keep talking. Wait for their questions. Be sure to give a contact name and phone number.
4. Keep it short. Remember, the people you're contacting are usually very busy.
5. Face to face contact is the best initial contact. Mailings make good follow-up action.
6. Remember, most of the people you're contacting don't know much about N.A. They're like newcomers. Always share with them about N.A. and what it means to you.

This writer would like to thank the Higher Power for allowing me to be a part of this project. The opportunity to live the Program of Narcotics Anonymous has been a growing experience and a miracle in my life.

In gratitude,  
the Nashville Area P.I. Chairperson

*From Flint, Michigan:*

I would like to share a little of our experience in preparing to air the TV PSA's in order to demonstrate how powerful having a goal to work at can be. In September of 1985, Flint P.I. began discussing the airing of TV PSA's. In the PSA Kit we received there were many suggestions. The P.I. subcommittee was hot to get those tapes on the air (with the exception of the chairperson). We as a group decided we would meet all the recommendations in the PSA Kit before we put the tapes on the air. This was at the insistence of the chairperson who believed that there was no way a subcommittee could do all the things recommended and that it effectively assured that the tapes would not make it on TV. That P.I. subcommittee was committed like I had never seen, they worked tirelessly. At one point they had fifteen members (the ASC was only attracting about seven participants). It was wild. They re-wrote the helpline guidelines, developed contingency plans and all sorts of things, mostly working around a stubborn chairperson who tried to throw more road blocks up.

The rest is history. Of course with that much enthusiasm they couldn't help but meet every one of the PSA Kit's recommendations. By December first they had finished and took the first tape to a TV station. By Christmas, the stations had tagged it with our helpline number and it was on the air. By February 1986, the P.I. committee had evaporated. No project-no committee. End of story.

In love, fellowship and service,  
Ron W., P.I. Chairperson

#### INDIVIDUALS RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FROM NON-N.A.'S

A number of calls and letters have been received about the problems resulting from individual members being contacted by non-N.A. organizations and facilities requesting speaking engagements. Sometimes this happens when a treatment center wants one of their graduates to talk about the T.C. and the person's ongoing recovery. Other times it occurs because a non-N.A. happens to know clean addicts and wants them to share with an organization about their personal stories of addiction and how they're staying clean.

If N.A. members don't know about P.I., they are apt to respond to these types of requests without the benefit of the service structure. If a member agrees to participate in these speaking engagements and talks about staying clean and recovery, it is almost inevitable that Narcotics Anonymous will be mentioned. At that point, the presentation has become of concern to other groups and possibly N.A. as a whole. We see, then, why it is so important to saturate each of our N.A. communities with information about the service structure and the existence of a P.I. subcommittee. Many members, with the best of intentions, find themselves caught in the position of doing P.I. work without support and guidance.



If this has happened in your community, you probably know the types of problems that arise. Members may suffer attack by others who feel situations we've handled incorrectly. The non-N.A.'s may have received erroneous information. In any event, there are some basic responses that have been used and found to work. First, you obviously have a member who is willing to carry the message. So, get him or her involved in the P.I. subcommittee. If the member isn't interested, share the subcommittee's experience on the benefits of group conscience and doing service work through a subcommittee. Ask that future requests which might lead into N.A. P.I. type activities be forwarded on to your committee. Secondly, if non-N.A. organizations has asked an individual for help, there's a good chance that they are unaware of the P.I. subcommittee's existence. So, you may need to do a mailing with an informational letter and a contact name and address for the next time that organization needs speakers.

Be assured, these things happen. We all learn from our mistakes. We're all responsible to the newcomer and part of that responsibility includes providing information about handling P.I. requests. Every member walking in the doors of Narcotics Anonymous should hear information about how to contact members of their local service subcommittees.

#### **CAN THE PUBLIC BE EXPECTED TO ADHERE TO N.A.'S TRADITIONS?**

We don't believe so, but it's interesting to note how many times a letter or phone call begins with "Such and such newspaper or magazine broke our traditions. They printed a member's full name" or "A treatment center in our town affiliated N.A. with their program". Although we certainly would like everyone to live and abide by spiritual principles, the fact of the matter is that no one except N.A. members are responsible to practice the principles of the Twelve Traditions. So, that means that, technically, no one except a member can break a tradition, either.

So, what P.I. subcommittees do is contact the organization and/or responsible person. This is done most effectively by writing a letter which begins with a thank you for mentioning Narcotics Anonymous or showing interest in N.A. (whatever sentence is appropriate in the circumstances). Always keep it positive and attractive. Remember that we practice these principles in all our affairs. The next paragraph or two might give a description and basic information about the program, specifically mentioning whichever tradition is in question. If the circumstance involves a treatment center's advertising which implies affiliation with Narcotics Anonymous, it can be helpful to provide suggestions for alternative language. An example would be, "We direct our clients in developing an understanding and implementation of the Twelve Step philosophy as well as transporting them to Twelve Step meetings in the community." or "Clients receive constant exposure to a Twelve Step program." The closing paragraphs might say something like "We are sure you will understand the importance of...(protecting member's anonymity, not affiliating with other organizations, or whatever applies in your particular letter) and then provide the P.I. subcommittee contact name and address so that the organization can obtain accurate information for any future needs. An invitation to attend P.I. community meetings or open N.A. meetings is another good way to improve communication and promote better understanding to the non-N.A. community about how N.A. works. We are all aware of the good feelings generated in our meetings and that these feelings are contagious even to non-addicts.

#### **A CLOSING NOTE FROM THE WSC P.I. COMMITTEE'S VICE CHAIRPERSON**

It's become apparent that the WSC P.I. Committee cannot perform all the tasks necessary without the areas and regions taking an active part. It's been our experience that this can only happen when the areas and regions know how they can help and what they require from us. In order to begin this process, I've recently sent a questionnaire to regional P.I. subcommittees.

Perhaps the second phase would best be served by holding multi-regional P.I. workshops. These would be handled with the funding, coordination and participation of WSC P.I. What do you think? Please let us know. These are only suggestions. After hearing from you, more definite plans can be made. Look for additional information in future issues of the *P.I. News*, *Newsline* and *Fellowship Reports*.