

WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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DATE: February 8, 1990

TO: BOT, BOD, JAC, RSR's, RSR Alternates, RLC'S

FROM: Danette Banyai, Chairperson, BOT Literature
Review Subcommittee/Traditions Ad Hoc

RE: Traditions Ad Hoc Report of the January Meeting

The meeting began Friday, January 12, 1990 at 6:05 P.M., opening with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Members in attendance for this meeting were Danette C., Jack B., Donna M., Craig P.W., Bob McK., Mitchell S., Steve B., and Steve Sigman (WSO).

Sally E.'s letter of resignation was received the week following this meeting. Her health and family circumstances necessitates her leaving the committee at this time.

We talked a bit about preparation for the meeting with the consultant Saturday morning. We expect at least two members of WSCLC to be in attendance. Hopefully the information gained will aid all of us in our projects and help us learn which things are most important and how to do those things best together.

Jack then gave a recap of discussions from the previous weekend's JAC meeting which have bearing on our work. Mostly, that included reactions and comments about our reports and about the BOT motion. One of the concerns was about a perceived arrogance on behalf of the BOT in asking to have guideline restrictions removed for this project. It was pointed out that this is for one project only and that the spirit and intent of the guidelines is being maintained by the thorough reporting and by the accountability being demonstrated. If the WSC approves and if the process is valuable, it may be helpful in future projects. While this project might help future projects, this is not the purpose of the committee and no arrogance is intended at all. Concerns arose about comparisons of other committees to this one creating a competitive atmosphere, and about expectations being placed on other committees to do the same kind of reporting. Also, of adding to the WSO workload, which could happen as a result. We did pinpoint some specific

differences in reporting, which include requests for input, abundance of discussion details rather than simply motions and resolutions, and speediness of reporting. The concerns expressed at the JAC meeting were about those things perhaps causing some hardship, requiring an unrealistic amount of time, and maybe setting unworkable precedents for other committees. There was a concern also expressed that if every committee wrote lengthy reports that it would become a burden rather than an asset for the RSR's. Nothing direct was said about changing anything we're doing, however, so..... we'll just continue on and see what happens or wait to hear more specific suggestions.

JAC actions did result in amending the proposed budget. That action's affect on this group was to change the number of meetings from 10 to 7 and the number of people from 12 to 9, which is fine for now. Of course the budget is always apt to change depending on actual donations during a conference year, and, if needed, another meeting or two could be added if funds become available. In addition to financial considerations, a cut in the number of meetings resulted from JAC concerns about trusted servant overcommitment to weekend meetings, and the pressure of WSO staff commitment to support overall WSC committee activity. In an effort to avoid waste, burn-out, and loss of productivity, all WSC committees revised their meeting plans when the projected calendar was examined.

Next, we discussed a memo from the WLC Chair to the BOT Literature Review Committee regarding; 1) communication with Steps group and 2) having the steps and traditions in one or two books. Regarding #2, there really is no problem. We had not meant to indicate that we were planning it one way or another, but simply that discussion about the possibility of two books had come up. So far, all input has indicated a strong desire to have the material on the steps and traditions in one book. When either or both projects are ready, WSC approval will decide this question. Regarding #1, we definitely want consistent and open communication with the steps group. There seemed to have been some misunderstanding among several people about this, so we will all try to resolve those issues when we meet together tomorrow. One suggestion is to have members sit in on each other's meetings, which is fine as long as we can still keep it practical and avoid people burning out from attending too many meetings. The important thing is to find out what each committee wants from the other.

Next, we moved on to discussing letters of input about our work. We want to thank those of you who have sent comments and suggestions to us about graphics, illustrations, format, etc. This information is most helpful in generating additional discussion about various items. This is much more useful than if we asked for yes or no input on these items. Some of those

things will not be decided until later in the process, but be assured that all letters which are sent do get read and discussed.

Regarding the use of input in general, we again talked about the question of how to decide on what stays and what goes and how much input constitutes a majority voice in wanting something changed, when do you know you've finally made a decision that's not going to change regardless of input, etc., etc. There was some desire to develop a policy statement regarding this, especially so that as group members change there won't be a need to rehash the same questions nor bring up old decisions for possible change. After some discussion, we generally agreed to deal with these types of concerns as they come up and to use the same premise we've been using about decisions in general. That is to reach consensus and if we can't to simply not make the decision until later or when more input is available.

There was also a suggestion at this time about how to go over the project-related input we've been getting. That suggestion was to review it quickly point by point, then open up discussion for anything that came up requiring additional general discussion.

We then reviewed last month's ideas about a pre-review period and sending each chapter out as it is completed. This idea was originally designed to get an early sense of direction and to point up any major flaws in style or content. Further discussion focused on considering the possibility that sending something out in a pre-review form can add confusion to the process because there is a natural tendency to totally redo something which is only partially completed anyway. It was generally agreed that a limited and structured pre-review by WSCLC and/or BOT might serve the project well. In this way, the material can receive an initial evaluation by a group of people who haven't been involved in the hands-on production of the drafts. We decided to think more on this and bring it up for discussion again later in the meeting.

WSO staff mentioned two concerns about the input on file at the office. The first is about inaccurate information regarding the actual amount of input in existence. For example, minutes from a recent multi-regional meeting contained a quote referring to "five drawers of traditions input on file at WSO". In reality, input is contained in parts of five different drawers, but the drawers are not filled completely with traditions input. The amount of material totals approximately 2409 pages and can be categorized as follows:

Traditions Input Book (brown): 383 pages
Additional Material (referred to on page vi of Traditions Input Book):
1698 pages
Input received since 1/89: 308 pages
Recent letters: about 20 pages

There are also drafts and notes used in preparing the original blue review draft of *It Works: How and Why*, which included both the steps and traditions. This, along with the 1986/1987 Unpublished Draft, *Newsline* articles, and miscellaneous input received prior to 12/88 was all included in the brown Traditions Input Book.

Secondly, we need to address exactly how we are going to use the previous input which contains new writing and line by line input on the brown book. This will be discussed more with the consultant tomorrow.

We ended Friday night about 8:45 with a prayer.

Began Saturday about 9:30 A.M. The consultant was in attendance as well as the WSCLC Chairperson, Bryce S., and another WSCLC member, Mary J. The consultant briefly described his professional background, what he does and what he can do for us. He is basically a production manager and re-writer. We went on to discuss outlines, group facilitators, schedules, pre-review ideas, and use of content input.

It turned out to be a very helpful discussion for all of us. He has worked with WSO on other production related aspects of literature for some time, and so had a fair understanding of our process as well as some of the problems and restrictions we face in developing N.A. literature. Most importantly, he was able to point us in a direction to start reviewing the content input that has been generated over the past several years. We agreed to some basic organizational ideas and codings to use in this evaluation.

We still have much to decide and learn about the actual writing process. How much will the committee do to get the material into form; how much will or can be done outside of the committee? We agreed that any non-committee member who is hired to provide expertise will have to participate in each meeting, so this expense is an important aspect of our decisions.

We resumed previous discussions about the term "writer" and the many different images it conveys. To some people this means "author" in the sense of total creative control of the material, while to others it simply means a technician who assembles material and rewrites it to meet certain standards. We recognize that, at some point, actual new written words will have to be

developed to fill the spaces and act as transitional material even if we do have lots of content input. Also, there is no way that all the input and current drafts can simply be reviewed and then just kind of mushed into a new form. The valuable concepts in the existing input will need to be rewritten into one stylistic voice. We have made decisions about tone and style and voice that will require a completely new draft and new writing to go with it. The "writing" which we visualize as necessary will be organizational as opposed to creative. Someone will need to synthesize concepts, ideas, and existing writing into a clear and consistent first draft which will then be redone until the committee is satisfied that it is the best it can be. The committee may not have the time nor the skills to get done what it wants.

Discussion then turned again to the hiring issue -- professional writers, addicts/non-addicts, etc. The committee/BOT is responsible for the management of this project and regardless of whom is hired, we need to ensure that the needs of addicts and the Fellowship's desires are met and integrated into the finished product. We agreed to not go any further with this issue for the moment, choosing instead to use the consultant's time for more constructive activity.

Style Guides - after looking at the one used by WSO, we felt that, with some additions and alterations, it will work fine. We were advised that a style guide as simple as ours could probably be applied manually almost as well as by computer. We asked the WSO coordinator to complete the guide and give it to the consultant with a sample document for review and comments.

We agreed to begin reviewing input in two person teams as soon as the WSO coordinator gets it out to us. We will work on it through our March meeting, check in at that time for progress reports, and continue on until the WSC, at which time we look forward to more guidance on the writer questions. The consultant developed a checklist and coding system to use in reviewing the input; a checklist to note which elements of each chapter are covered in the input and then a coding by A, B or C to denote desirable, less desirable or unnecessary and duplicated portions.

Broke for lunch between 1 and 2 P.M.

Reconvened after lunch without consultant but with two WSCLC members. Began by reviewing WSCLC Chairperson's memo to the BOT Lit. Review Committee regarding the one or two book question and communications. Reviewed with them our responses from last night. One book is fine. Communications are necessary. We decided to have the chairpeople of each spend more time talking about the specifics of our meetings and share tentative agendas to identify times that may be most helpful to have

members participate back and forth. It was agreed to try shared participation; we scheduled such for the next two step meetings and will try to schedule future meetings on same weekends.

We talked briefly about additions to the committee. We need two more members as soon as possible.

Two person teams were assigned for input review and we spent the rest of the day practicing on Tradition One input using the checklist and coding system. The purpose of this practice session was to gain a common understanding of how to identify elements of the input as well as make sure that we are all taking the same approach.

Recessed at 6 P.M. Saturday evening.

Reconvened Sunday about 9 A.M.

Discussion began by reviewing our previous discussion about the pre-review period. We hope to get more clear with BOT and WLCLC on the reason for and goal of both the pre-review and formal review processes. There was more discussion of the value of review by groups of people who are not directly involved in producing the work. It was also noted that It Works (white approval form) went out for approval without an actual review, and this can now be recognized as a deficiency in that process. Another point of emphasis was that the committee editing review process and the style guidelines will deal with any necessary line-by-line wording corrections. Therefore, this type of input will not be useful and will specifically NOT be requested in either pre-review or formal review.

After much discussion, we agreed that a pre-review period would serve to elicit specific feedback about the direction of the project from a smaller group of people (i.e. WSCLC and/or BOT). It was also agreed that a more formal review period would be better for specific responses in the form of communication from the Fellowship. This review period could be for a limited time period and designed around specific requests. In essence, pre-review and review would ask for the same type of information, but from different groups of people.

On the related issue of putting the material out chapter by chapter, we still feel strongly that doing so is practical and desirable. There had been some suggestion that it would create problems because people have a tendency to want the whole picture and also tend to change things more if they feel something is not a finished piece. A suggestion was made to consider sending several chapters out for review instead of just one. For now, we will continue

to plan chapter by chapter with explicit instructions on the types of responses which will be most helpful.

The consultant returned for a short time to go over confusion and problems we had in our practice input review session.

After that, we turned our attention to the RSR letter from last month's meeting. There had been sufficient BOT and other concern and input regarding it to warrant another review and amendment of it. We had overlooked a few things necessary for clarity and emphasis; i.e., financial responsibility for workshop attendance, coordination of that attendance through WSO and/or BOT, regional attendees at committee meetings. There was also a suggestion to send copies of the letter to RSC's because, sometimes, information does not get widely distributed throughout regions. We agreed that sending reports to RSR's and RSR Alternates will help the committee to utilize and encourage the service structure. The summaries in the *Newsline* also help, and enlarging the mailing list at this time appears to be unnecessary. As always, the committee members will appreciate your help in getting this information to your groups and members.

Brought up more discussion about hiring writers. Also, we talked about the group tending to go "gung-ho" for whoever shows up in the role of consultant/technical advisor/writer/editor, etc. We need to consider an actual job notice/search instead, which may not happen until after WSC. There was also some confusion/concern about the WSO and or BOT making the hiring decisions. Discussion clarified that this committee's role is to make a recommendation for the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees to consider.

Each of us has gone back and forth in our feelings about addict/non-addict, particularly since we each have differing perceptions at various times about the type of writing that will be required, i.e.. transitional, new, etc. So far, our experience has been limited with addict writers but has indicated difficult ego/ownership problems. On the other hand, can a non-addict take our stuff and give it back the way we want it? Or can anyone, for that matter!?

Once again, we decided to let it go for now. We can make decisions as we go along. Perhaps WSO staff can take it to a draft form easily by the time we go through all input. Perhaps we can ask a hired writer to develop outlines before drafts. And we can certainly have any writer hired for just a couple of chapters to be sure we can get what we want without being stuck for an entire book contract. The bottom line is that we believe this committee will continue to be responsible and responsive to the Fellowship. If we end up

deciding that hiring a professional writer (addict or non) is desirable, and the Fellowship doesn't want that to happen, we would not pursue it.

We then reviewed the latest form of the BOT motion requesting that restrictions on this project be removed. We found a few minor things that might still be changed. Mostly though, we discussed the possible misunderstanding of last year's motion based on the difference between what appeared in black and white and what was verbalized in discussion at last year's WSC. We suggested that the next two BOT reports (prior to and during WSC) include information about the developments and understandings since that time.

Each member was asked, in addition to the input review, to compile a list of principles to have ready for the combined BOT meeting in March.

The scheduled meeting for February was cancelled. Our next meeting is March 9-11 with the Board of Trustees for the purpose of general discussion about the Traditions. A meeting has been scheduled for April 6,7,8 to combine results from the input evaluation teams.