

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

N.A. NEWSLINE

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, INC. • P.O. BOX 9999, VAN NUYS, CA 91409-9999 • 818-780-3951
VOLUME 6 DECEMBER 1990 NUMBER 8

ILLEGAL BASIC TEXT UPDATE

Following months of discussion and several failed attempts to reach an agreement, a unanimous decision was made by all three arms of world services to proceed with litigation to stop the illegal printing and distribution of the Basic Text. Accordingly, a lawsuit was filed on November 30, 1990, in Federal District Court in Philadelphia, to protect the fellowship's rights to the exclusive use of its properties.

The decision to move forward was prompted primarily by two key factors. The first factor is the responsibility of world services, legally and philosophically, to insure the integrity of N.A.'s message. The other deciding factor was the volume of letters of support from the fellowship.

The suit itself is very straightforward and seeks preliminary injunctive relief on behalf of the fellowship, to stop any further production and/or distribution by one individual. Once this first suit is resolved, others will be pursued, should the activity continue. The fellowship will be kept informed each step of the way.

TRUSTEE INTERACTION WITH THE FELLOWSHIP

As was announced in the November *Fellowship Report*, the Board of Trustees made plans to hold its meeting of February 7-10, 1991, in Philadelphia. Since that time, we have been informed that the annual Learning Conference, including review of the *Conference Agenda Report*, will take place that same weekend in Harrisburg, PA. An invitation to move the trustees' meeting place to Harrisburg was extended, and accepted. Accordingly, the business portion of

the trustee meeting, which will be open for observation, will be held in Harrisburg on Thursday and Friday, February 7-8, 1991. The open forum portion of the trustee meeting will take place all day Saturday and Sunday morning. The meeting will be held at the:

**Holiday Inn East
4751 Lindle Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111**

Room rates are \$50.00 per night, beginning on Wednesday. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel at (717) 939-7841. When making your reservations, please refer to MARLCNA VII. The positive feedback received after the open forum held in Arlington, VA, in July suggested that another open forum opportunity might be beneficial, to both the trustees and the fellowship. We hope to see you there!

CONFERENCE AGENDA REPORT

The *Conference Agenda Report* will be available from the World Service Office beginning January 22, 1991. Each copy will cost \$7.50 (including shipping and handling). If you are ordering in California, be sure to add 6.75% sales tax to the total cost. An order form is attached at the back of this *Newsline*.

UPDATE FROM THE TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT

The Translation Department at the WSO involves three staff members. As administrator, George Holahan oversees the work of the department and communicates with the Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees, and the Translation Advisory Committee

regarding all translation activities. Mary VanEvery is the coordinator who takes care of correspondence, phone calls, meetings, and the general organization of the department. Ursula Mueller is responsible for tracking and updating the translation of correspondence and literature, revising and inputting all draft translations, and then preparing them for eventual publication. Ursula speaks English, German, French, and some Dutch. During the coming year we hope to add an English/Spanish speaker to the staff.

The Translation Department has been quite busy the past three months. With the recent changes in Europe, we can expect to hear more from those countries about the need for Narcotics Anonymous groups, and in particular the need for literature in Eastern European languages. Most countries do not have a network of help for drug addicts, so our literature will be a primary source of information about recovery from drug addiction. During this past year we received inquiries from professionals in countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and several of the Soviet Republics. And this is just the beginning.

Part of the difficulty we have experienced in translating our literature is the intensive work needed to determine appropriate wording for each language. Mechanically generated literal translations are seldom successful. Every language has a corresponding historical, cultural, and social perspective that is reflected in the expression of that language.

The uniqueness of each language means that all these things must be considered by someone knowledgeable about not only the country, language, and people, but about Narcotics Anonymous as well. For example, while the Russian translations are exceptionally well done, the translator clearly did not understand the meaning and consistent use of the phrase "carrying the message." Although we know exactly what that means, to someone new or unfamiliar with N.A. it gets translated differently and often inconsistently, depending upon the context. Considering how easily people misunderstand each other within the same language, you can well imagine what a delicate and complicated matter it is to communicate ideas between languages.

Another important aspect of the translation process is the cultural applicability of the information portrayed in our literature. While translating the new

Group Booklet, for instance, the section describing where meetings are held states "Groups usually want to find an easily accessible public place," and then gives examples of types of facilities. However, there are no such public places for meetings in the Soviet Union or in certain other countries. Usually the way to resolve problems like these is to ask someone familiar with the conditions in a certain country to develop a general statement of information that is applicable. Of course, with recovery literature this process is much more delicate and demanding.

As you can see, translating our literature is not as easy as purchasing a computer program and replacing English words with words in another language. It's a lot of hard work and often requires substantial time, money, and effort among all those involved in each language translation. Following are a few highlights of our current translation efforts.

Spanish

Members working to translate the N.A. Basic Text into Spanish met again the first weekend of December in Los Angeles. The meeting was attended for the first time by additional members from northern California and Mexico, as well as regular committee members from Miami, New York, Texas, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

On Friday afternoon the committee received a letter from the Board of Trustees and the WSO Board of Directors. The letter expressed concerns reported to the boards, mostly from Spanish-speaking members and groups outside of the U.S. The letter emphasized the need for a universally acceptable translation, along with a strong concern about the time needed to complete the work. After a series of lengthy discussions, the committee considered a proposal which would reduce the completion time considerably, and allow representatives from seven Spanish-speaking countries to review and approve the work for publication.

A member with professional translating skills will meet with four members of the Spanish Translation Committee in February, to discuss terms, phraseology, and consistency. If all goes well, and we have every reason to believe that it will, a Spanish version of the N.A. Basic Text will be a reality this coming summer!

