

World Service Conference Report

WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Greetings. Since our last report, the WSB has been very busy. We had two very productive expanded meetings, one in November at the WSO in Chatsworth, California, the second in January at St. Louis, Missouri. Each of the trustee subcommittees has had ongoing work that benefited greatly from the participation of the WSC conference committee chairs and vice chairs along with WSC and WSO BOD liaisons. The board appreciates and thanks them for their work and continued support. We have participated in the following CAR workshops: a multi-regional CAR workshop in Muskegon, Michigan; the Upper Rocky Mountain Region, Casper, Wyoming; and at MARLCNA in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We also will attend the following workshops: the South Eastern Forum in Miami Beach, Florida; the Northern New England multi-regional in Alfred, Maine; and the Southern Forum in Tyler, Texas. Following are brief summaries of the trustee subcommittees.

External Affairs

The WSB External Affairs Committee (EAC) has been busy this year. We attended the 37th International Congress of Alcohol and Drug Dependence (ICAA) held in San Diego, CA. Part of our subcommittee's mandate is public relations, and in fulfilling this mandate we participate in such events to further the public's knowledge of NA. At the ICAA, in addition to our exhibit booth, members presented a paper at a workshop and acted as a "discussant" for a major presentation about twelve-step program research. These were done at the invitation of the event planners. The event gave us an opportunity to use it as hands-on training for trusted servants and WSO staff. In attendance were two WSB members, who gave the presentations, and the WSC PI chair and vice chair. Four WSO staff were present for the set-up, but only two remained for the entire week, one to attend the exhibition booth and the other for research purposes. You may contact the WSO for information about obtaining tapes of these presentations and the two presentation papers, which also are available on the WSO Home Page web site on the Internet at <http://www.wsoinc.com>.

In the past, there has been some confusion about how approval and funding were processed for participation in professional events. We have drafted written protocols on the approval process and selection of events and participants. These drafts have been sent to the full board and the Interim Committee for review and input.

Another of the external committee's responsibilities is additional needs. At the beginning of this conference year, we prioritized drafting a handbook for use by local service committees. After much discussion, it was decided that an insert about additional needs to the PI, H&I, and convention handbooks would provide direct assistance to these committees. In addition, a small working group will be developing a small separate additional needs handbook for use by local service committees.

The WSO assigned a staff person to research our public relations activities and develop a plan for us, which has taken approximately a year. An initial plan was presented to the external committee at our January 1996 meeting. The plan was discussed and slightly edited, and will be forwarded soon to the full board. In brief, the plan targets government and non-governmental organizations for PR efforts, providing training resources to RSC and ASC committees, and promoting research on NA. Research in our fellowship may be controversial and has not been considered a priority, but it is necessary if we are to engage more effectively in public relations with major organizations at either national or international levels. It is our belief that research will happen, but if we act first, we will have some control over how it is done and the research targets. The Public Relations Plan covers only to WSC '97, but there will be much carryover to other conference years. A more detailed long-term plan will need to be developed.

Internal Affairs Committee

Fellowship Development Plan

The primary focus of the Internal Committee this year has been the creation of the Fellowship Development Plan. As we reported at last year's conference, the purpose of this plan is to give us a more focused foundation for fellowship development efforts. The assessment of our current activities, bulletins, service materials, etc. has required lengthy discussions. We will be presenting more detailed information at WSC '96.

Development Forum

The Development Forum (DF) was created because of a belief that the WSC was beginning to make decisions affecting a worldwide fellowship without worldwide participation in those decisions. When the DF first began, two days of each conference were spent discussing a variety of developmental issues. However, as the DF has fulfilled its purpose, it has become less of a forum for those newer or developing NA communities and more of a funding avenue for WSC participation by those who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend. While this has merit and value, it isn't what the board believes its involvement should be.

We discussed several options to address this dilemma. However, as we are beginning the resolution phase, it seemed more appropriate to maintain the current funding and participant list rather than to engage the conference in a complex, complicated discussion about open funding and selection criteria. Additionally, we don't believe the conference will be able to consider this matter before WSC 1998. This also would give the conference the

benefit of including the DF participants who were involved in the inventory phase in the resolution phase as well. We think it more responsible to give adequate advance notice to the conference along with DF participants about our recommendation to eliminate the DF. Currently, the DF list stands at seventeen with the addition of a translator and equipment. Three of the participating communities are pleased to inform the conference that they are able to fund themselves to this year's conference. Please keep in mind, though, that with the reduction in last year's budget, this doesn't increase our available funding, it merely gets us closer to our reduced budget. We will ask that the current list of invited participants remain as it is through their attendance at WSC 1998.

Outreach

At our October meeting, we discussed our input to the draft outreach handbook and agreed to provide the Ad Hoc Outreach Committee with both our collective and individual input for their consideration. We had the opportunity to meet with the Ad Hoc Committee chair and vice chair at our January meeting, where we discussed all our input and our mutual perspectives. The board sees the need for and value of a simple, concise document that assists the fellowship in emerging and developed communities to reach isolated groups. Unfortunately, the draft handbook does not define clearly what outreach is, and spends much of its time discussing the structure of standing outreach committees at the local and world level rather than providing assistance about how to focus on local outreach efforts. The board's experience with additional needs indicates that the most effective vehicles for reaching out to isolated groups could be incorporated into committees such as H&I and PI. Much of what has been labeled outreach should be handled by the existing committees at an area level; however, this is not to say that areas and regions shouldn't establish outreach committees if there is a need that can't be addressed by their committee or subcommittees. It just seems more responsible to educate and refocus towards the committees and structures that are already in existence.

Literature Review Committee

As has been previously reported, this trustee subcommittee has been striving to fulfill concerns and needs voiced by our fellowship by the development of new trustee bulletins. Our direction parallels with the Internal Affairs Committee's discussion and outline of a fellowship development plan which includes trustee bulletins as an available tool for use by members and groups. We had targeted five topics along with revisions to existing bulletins. The five new bulletin topics are: misappropriation of fellowship funds, abstinence/use of medication, methadone, misbehavior in meetings, and retaining older members (clean time, not age). The resignation of Mary J, who was also the chairperson of this subcommittee, somewhat altered our original schedule, although we hope to stay as close to it as possible. We will miss Mary's skillful guidance and wish her well in her endeavors. At the April WSB meeting, we expect to present the revised bulletins and two or three new bulletins for approval. If we are able to maintain our current timeline for draft development, review and input, and board approval, the bulletins could be available at WSC 1996. We look forward to presenting them for your concurrence.

CAR Resolutions

When the board met at the November world services meeting, we decided to provide both our collective and individual input to the resolution group. During our January meeting, we developed our consensus on the resolutions and report them here for your information.

Resolution A: Although this may be a direction that we choose to work towards, there has not been adequate discussion in the fellowship about this issue. We believe that a change of this type is premature without extensive discussions about the impact on all levels of service.

Resolution B: We feel a world board would be workable with a strong committee system and sufficient checks and balances.

Resolutions C1 and C2: We believe that some type of committee system directly responsible to a world board is essential. We strongly recommend this to maintain a single point of responsibility when the conference is not in session and to allow for a resource base of members with specific areas of expertise.

Resolution D: We do not believe that the ad hoc system is desirable or workable. There is no accountability during the conference year and no experience base maintained. We think conference ad hocs should be used in extraordinary circumstances only.

Resolution E: the board agreed that a unified budget would be necessary to provide services at a world level.

Resolution F and G: We agree that a world resource pool and human resources panel could benefit the conference but would not want to see applied to the limitations and specifics that are found in the report. The WSB supports the two motions put forth by the Resolution Group regarding the mission and vision statements. Our primary concerns that were reflected in our input to the RG involved their report rather than the motions.

Steps and Traditions

The WSB offered Motion 3, "Should the NA groups consider a proposal to eliminate gender specificity in NA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?" as an attempt to resolve the questions that we have been discussing in the fellowship for three years. If the conference answers yes to this question, the proposed changes to the steps and traditions would go directly to the groups for their decision. We anticipate that this would be a two-year process. If the conference answers no, no further action would be taken by the conference regarding this issue.

The WSB believes strongly that any changes to NA's name, nature, purpose, steps, or traditions should be decided by the groups directly, and should have significant support in order for a change to occur. The motions that we have had before us for the past three years (motions 39, 47, and 88) would involve some type of group tally process. We have

offered Motion 4 as the process for how direct group decisions would occur with decisions of this type. Actually, this motion is in order regardless of the decision made about Motion 3. It would give us a WSC policy to outline what would have to happen should we choose to entertain a motion that involves the types of changes described above. For example, if Motion 3 passed, the time line for the group tally process would look like this:

1. There would be a group registration with the WSO (in a separate database) between July 1996 and April 1997
2. The group registration number would be announced at WSC '97
3. Numbered ballots would be mailed to the registered groups in June 1997
4. Groups would return their ballots by an October 1997 date (postmark required)
5. Ballot results would be released to the fellowship
6. If the group tally balloting affirmed the motion, the motion then would be placed in the 1998 CAR for RSR affirmation of the decision, per the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust

We believe that this group tally process gives the fellowship the assurance that ample time is given them to consider questions of significance put before them.

Trustee Vacancies

We started the year with a membership of twelve and now stand with ten due to the resignations of Mary J and Becky M. Additionally, three trustee terms expire at this conference, myself, Stu T, and Bob McK, leaving us with five vacancies from this year and a total of ten available positions. In 1997, one more trustee term will expire and three the following year. We intend to address our need for increased membership by discussing a possible slate of candidates at our April meeting, and ask that any considerations be forwarded to us by April 20, 1996.

In closing, it is with great sadness that I report the resignations of Mary Jensen and Becky Meyer. Mary served on the board for one and a half years and contributed greatly through her assignments on literature review, the WSTC, and The NA Way editorial board. Even though we tried to find some way to accommodate her schedule, she was unable to fulfill her term due to her increased job demands. We continue to miss her expertise. I have served with Becky for the past five years and have grown to love and respect her very much. Becky's insight and awareness will be missed on the board. She isn't gone, however, as she has accepted employment at the WSO, their gain and our loss.

We continue in our efforts to provide services to you and our fellowship, and offer our assistance in whatever way we can. We appreciate your confidence and support, and on behalf of the World Service Board of Trustees, thank you for allowing us to serve.

Pete Cole, chairperson