



A newsletter from the Asia Pacific Areas of Narcotics Anonymous

Welcome to the APF Newsletter
Vol 1 Number 10 Nov 1998

Greetings and welcome to the Asia Pacific Forum Newsletter. This edition will include news about APF Committee meetings, service work in our part of the world and stories from and about NA members. This Newsletter will be edited by me and Ron B (Co-Vice chairperson APF) I have been elected to the World Board and have had to regretfully resign from my position as APF Newsletter editor to take up these other duties.

The Newsletter editor's job is one that I have enjoyed very much. I believe that good communication between members is essential to develop and maintain a strong and healthy service structure, and have appreciated the opportunity to encourage this communication through the Newsletter. Ron will continue this work until the next APF Meeting in February 1999 when the Newsletter Editor job will be open for election. I encourage any member with an interest in this work to consider standing for this position. I am happy for members to continue to contact me to discuss the newsletter or other issues. Thankyou for the pleasure and privilege of serving you - Bella A.

We have had to edit down some articles so as to fit most of them in. If you have been interviewed or written an article and it hasn't appeared yet, don't worry, it probably will next issue. We are also receiving more contacts from other Zonal Forums and individual members from around the world. This newsletter can be viewed and downloaded from our web-site www.apf.com.au. Please pass this newsletter on when you have read it, and feel free to make copies. - Ron.

The Contact address for this newsletter is still the same: -

*PO box 136 Kings Cross NSW 2011 Australia.
Phone 61 2 9365 3652
Fax 61 2 9130 2985
bellron@eagles.com.au*

Singapore PI Presentation

I have recently finished a 10 year commitment on the World services Board of Trustees. The Trustees sent me on my first public relations non-NA event in 1988, to the International Federation of Non-Govt Organisations conference, which was actually in Singapore, so while I was there I found a meeting and I met some of the local members.

At that time, for the Board of Trustees this was new ground, going out and doing professional events, even though this is what I do in my own professional life, attending Drug & Alcohol conferences. So I didn't feel uncomfortable, I fact I took to it like a duck to water, and because I showed interest in it the board gave me leeway to develop protocols for these events.

Last year SCORE (the Singapore Corporation Of Rehabilitation Enterprises) had approached the rehab service where there were some recovering addicts, and they were talking about including the recovering addicts on a committee to put on a conference, and out of that came the idea to hold a 1 or 2 day workshop for the purposes of educating health professionals in Singapore about NA.

I was at the APF meeting in Calcutta this year as a Trustee when Shuradi, the Singapore rep approached the meeting about getting some assistance to fund a Public Relations event, and that's how it all started.

We were able to get funding from world services at this year's WSC for assistance with accommodation. At that time the APF had already made an in-principle decision to fund the airfares for myself and Ramli (ex PI

chair Malaysia) and the Singapore fellowship really kicked in to take the weight of world services by providing most of the meals, transportation and incredible hospitality.

This is the first time we have ever had a Zone, World and Local fellowship all getting together to fund this kind of event. Everybody had a stake in it, so all the stakeholders contributed to it, and this could be the way these things go in the future. It brings things back to a local level rather than going cap in hand to world services.

When we got to Singapore it was one of the most concentrated non-stop events I've ever attended. From the moment we touched the ground it was full on. We went straight to where the conference was to be held and I met up with Ramli. The local rehab had set up power-point in the room, I had some overheads, the Singapore fellowship had made this incredible backdrop with "Singapore PI" on it and set up a display table with T-shirts and presentation papers. We were really well set up.

World Services managed to get a prototype of IP#1 in Bahasa Melayu for local members to use at the event. So when we held our demonstration meeting, the readings like "Who is an addict" and "What is the NA program" etc were read out in Bahasa Melayu. People really took notice. And when local members shared their stories in Bahasa, people in the audience laughed, cried and there was a good connection made.

The local fellowship were fantastic, they were at our hotel at 8.30 in the morning and they dropped us off at 11.30 at night. They drove us everywhere and took us out to eat and insisted that we stuff ourselves on beef satays till we couldn't eat any more. We didn't have time to get back to the hotel for a shower and at one point they let us use the showers in the offices of the rehab so we could freshen up.

It was one of the most productive assignments I've ever attended. Whichever way we went there was positive feedback. The Singapore government knew what NA had to offer and they were trying to work out the best way to make it work for them. And they knew this because of past Public Information efforts. This is why follow-up is so important, the work we have done here will only be as good as the follow-up that we do next.

Next edition.... The workshops, SRO NA meetings, lunch with the jail superintendent, electronic bracelets, the surveys, photo sessions and more. EXPERIENCING THE

Experiencing the women's meeting at the Calcutta Convention

I'm Deeta I'm an addict from Calcutta, I'm often the only woman at my local meetings and it was wonderful to be able to attend the second women's meeting held in Calcutta. I have always attended mixed meetings and heard men sharing that they were hearing their own story, but this was never my experience. However this women's meeting was my opportunity to experience identifying completely with other addicts. Basically we shared about relationships and feelings which was just wonderful, I could have gone on and on and on. The meeting went for about 2 and half hours and it seemed like 5 minutes and I am very very grateful for this meeting.

My name is Judy and I'm from Hawaii. We have held 2 Women's meetings at the Calcutta Convention. I felt very honoured to attend these meetings, the sharing was very honest and we all got the chance to talk about our feelings. I felt very supported and loved. There was so much recovery happening in the meetings that it felt like magic was occurring.

I'm Parti, I came into recovery in 1991 but didn't attend NA because there was only 3 or 4 guys. It was very difficult for me without any other women. I finally started attending last year. I am so grateful for this women's meeting because it was the first time that I could discuss intimate things that I cannot share with guys and listen to other women like me. I really felt a strong bond and a sense of relief. I realise that I have been feeling quite lonely somehow and now I feel good. Today I feel like I was finally able to really speak from my heart. I am very grateful too all the women who were there. It has made this convention feel like a real success for me. I would very much like to start a women's meeting here in Calcutta. I just hope that I have the consistency to keep the commitment.

Postcards from China

My Name is Debs, I'm from Newcastle, Australia and I now live and work in China. In Shanghai we met up with two fellow NA members who were from Canada and we decided to start a meeting. There were just the four of us but sometimes we would get extra people at the meeting with visitors coming from Australia. We contacted the WSO to let them know what we were doing and supplied contact details. We have been able to

get a good supply of literature from the WSO and Larry in Hawaii.

It is difficult to hold meetings of any sort here. It is hard to get the use of halls, schools, churches etc as the government likes to charge high rents to ex-pats and if you have three or more people meeting to discuss a common issue, there must be a representative from the government present.

NA and other 12 step meetings are held in people's homes here, so that's where we hold the meeting, in our home. At least we don't have too far to go. Then the Canadians moved to another city, so it was just the two of us, in our home with our regular Saturday meeting. I'm also a member of meetings by mail and I correspond a lot with other women in different countries.

Things are starting to change here. At the moment some famous young people in China are coming out in public and saying that they are addicted to drugs and have been using for some time and they can't stop using. This is promising, because in the past the government would not have let this type of information out to the general public.

The government has been running ads on Chinese TV informing people about drugs, where to go for help and who to call about the many new rehabs (government run) starting up through out China. There has also been an exhibition about drugs and addiction showing at all the military museums around the country.

We are going for a holiday soon to an area in the south that has been described as the "Kathmandu of China" (a good place to party and get on). We have to be a little careful though, because the Public Security Bureau keeps a file on all ex-pats that live in China.

We are moving to a smaller town (600.000 people as against Shanghai 25 million!) but we will still be contactable. We hope that the APF and the WSO can help make the carrying of the message of recovery to the rest of this huge country a reality.

Love to all our friends in the APF

Debs and Geoff.

Editors note... Debs and Geoff have been busy helping with translations. More about this in the next edition, till then did you know that "We keep what we have by giving it away" literally means in Chinese, "By freely giving, we ourselves harvest" so there.

Carrying the Message - The Philippines Convention 1998

The convention early this year was held on the weekend of 16th and 17th of January 1998. The event was held at the San Antonio Parish Centre which has nice grounds, rooms for meetings and workshops and the dance, and best of all, it was fully air conditioned.

140 people attended and gave very positive feedback about the entire convention. The Speaker meetings were very popular and so was the fabulous dance.

PI and H&I workshops were informative and helped the local fellowship find new and better ways to carry the message.

The most common comment about the weekend was that it was GREAT.

Everything ran smoothly and the event broke even.

The date of the next convention is 12/14 February 1999 the weekend before the 1999 Bangkok Convention.

Thanks for everyone for attending and a big invitation for those wanting to join us next year.

Asia Pacific Forum Meeting 1998

Edited Minutes:

This meeting was held in Calcutta India February 3-5 1998. Present were members from Australia, Philippines, Japan, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Hawaii, the WSO and WSC.

COMMUNITY REPORTS: All represented communities tendered reports. Some of these reports were published in the last edition of the APF Newsletter, some will be included in this Newsletter and the balance in the next.

Most Reports generated discussion about the progress of translations, and important local issues. These discussions offered participants the chance to ask questions and discuss service work in their own communities.

APF HISTORY: Larry R gave the traditional overview of the History of the APF to assist new participants to the meeting.

APF STRUCTURE: This consisted of general discussion about the need to develop a service structure and guidelines for the Forum itself. Issues discussed included: communication, representation and simple voting procedures.

Outcome: For this meeting recognised delegates from member NA communities are the only voting members, with the Chair voting in the event of a tied vote. Other participants will be; WSC, WSO, Translations Groups, Local community ASRs, other local service members.

GUIDELINES: Ron B and Bella A were delegated the task to develop a draft set of simple Forum policy guidelines to be discussed and adopted at the next meeting in Bangkok. Ron was asked to circulate these guidelines to all participants.

Guidelines to include: History and Goals, written agenda, service workshops at each meeting, annual orientation of new participants, positions and responsibilities.

APF PURPOSE AND GOALS: Our stated purpose and goals were discussed. The participants affirmed the following:

"PURPOSE: We the NA Regions and communities of the Asia Pacific have joined to discuss issues of mutual concern, address our common needs, exchange ideas and share experience to further our primary purpose. This Forum is intended to compliment the existing service structure of NA.

GOALS: To encourage, develop and support NA in this part of the world.

1. To encourage and support translation of NA literature into our languages.
2. To encourage and support Outreach, Hospitals and Institutions and Public Information efforts in the Asia Pacific.
3. To encourage, support and maintain communications among NA members, communities and regions in this part of the world.
4. To continue working with NA World Services in our efforts."

General discussion about these matters raised issues of

- a) difficulties with translations and the ways that WSO have attempted to speed up the process,
- b) WSC / WSO ongoing interest in APF service work,
- c) the need for service workshops as an important part of any APF meeting,
- d) how to represent the needs of unrepresented APF communities at the WSC, and
- e) Singapore's specific need to have assistance at a PI event they intend to hold in April - WSC participants will look into this.

APF NEWSLETTER REPORT: General discussion about the current format and content. Members would like to see; more news about local communities, a forum for discussion about local issues, condensed community reports, addition of APF contacts and a letters to the editor section.

Some problems exist with the Newsletter only being in English at this stage. When Bella finishes her term, the cost of the Newsletter, currently carried by the Australian Region, will become the responsibility of the APF.

Elizabeth O. elected as treasurer, Ron B. and Simon T. elected as co-vice chairs. Among duties: Ron to follow up with Thailand for next years APF meeting and send out draft guidelines for adoption at next years APF. Simon to look into viability of APF Website and pass on WSC mailings to APF members.

APF Meeting at WSC April 1998

This meeting ran concurrently with other forum meetings at the WSC. Present - RDS, Trustees and committee members from Australia, Hawaii, India, and Philippines. Business dealt with included:-

SINGAPORE PI PRESENTATION; It was agreed that the APF would fund airfares for Garth and Ramli and WSC Interim committee would pay land costs.

TREASURER; Resignation of Elizabeth Tali M. (Vice Chair Hawaii Region) offered to fill this vacancy and was elected unanimously. Garth P and Erik R also offered their services as resource people and were unanimously welcomed.

Other items were discussed including Fundraising, Public Information, and Resolution A.

Next meeting Bangkok Thailand 16/18 February 1999

Current APF Contacts

Chairperson,
Bob B.
1 808 326 2668
bobbear@gte.net

Vice chairpersons,
Ron B.
61 2 9365 3652
bellron@eagles.com.au
Simon T.
61 3 9525 7888
steese@vic.bigpond.net.au

Treasurer,
Tali M.
1 808 2543 7181
talitom@aol.com

Public Information resources,
Erik R.
1 808 833 1845
bullit@desperados.com

Professional events resources,
Garth P.
61 2 9558 8224
garth@mypostbox.com

Greetings from Mahipal, RD Indian Region

Hi I'm Mahipal and I'm just over 4 years clean. I started doing service more than 2 and a half years ago when I got involved with local Translations. Then I became the Translations Chairperson of my Area and then the Bombay ASC Chair for one year. I am still involved in Group service.

In India there are 2 Areas Delhi and Bombay translating into Hindi. Bombay were working on the IPs so we started with Just For Today. It was a very exhausting experience. When I was Chair I remember standing at the meeting place for 4 hours in extreme heat and nobody else turned up. I was good at translating material but it was difficult to find people who would sit with me to review it.

When there is only one person on the committee it doesn't function well. My big mistake was that I waited for people to join me. The new chairperson learned from my experience and has put in a lot of effort to find other people to get involved. Translations work in Delhi has increased.

This is my first APF Meeting. Before I came to the meeting I was so caught up in my own problems that I didn't think that I could come But here I am.

I got my copy of the CAR on the 29th January just before the regional Forum, I felt overwhelmed at the idea that I had to somehow understand it and discuss it with the other delegates at the Meeting. It was good to have people from the WSC there to help us work through it. It has been very tiring but a learning experience for me.

I didn't know what the APF was except for the name. India is a large place with a lot of our own issues to discuss therefore it has been difficult for any experienced servants to pass their knowledge onto new people. As a result I was uninformed.

We were able to fund the RD Alternate to attend this meeting which means that he knows about the APF and will be able to participate and carry the group conscience better next year. Now I have a lot of ideas about how the APF functions and what it has to offer local communities.

One of the best things about these discussions is that we have had the opportunity to resolve an outstanding translation issue between Bombay and Delhi. Work has been stalled because we could not agree on a translation for the work "Addict". The world servants helped us find ways we could reach a resolution.

Having so many people here from the APF has encouraged a lot of new people to get involved in service.

I am happy that my Region has confidence in me and wishes me to represent them at the next WSC. I believe that god will help me with this thankyou.

PS Mahipal at the World Service Conference:

In lots of ways the WSC is not much different from back home. Everyone acting a bit crazy at times. The number of people here at the conference is massive, bigger than at home, and the knowledge that they have taken this time from their lives to work together is impressive. I am enjoying myself here, meeting people and realising that NA really is a worldwide fellowship. Even though I attended the Calcutta APF meeting and met people from the world services, Australia and other countries this conference has further opened my eyes. It is really mind boggling to find out that addicts from all around the world are all the same, just as crazy as each other.

The Calcutta Experience: A Journey of Growth, A Journey of a Better Kind

Noela V - RD - Philippines. Calcutta.

A name that rings of swashbuckling tales of romance and daring heroism. In this city of Rajahs and fakirs, where the din of humanity rises each day like a symphony of ecstasy and suffering, I attended the Asia Pacific Forum Meeting. For 4 days NA representatives from all over our culturally diverse fellowship met and experienced new adventures, new people and personal growth. This experience was rich and not without moments of doubt and fears.

Calcutta was different. I did not expect to find it just as it is in the movies; throngs of people, old reconditioned cars and trucks.

The absence of malls and convenience stores was more than made up for by the warmth and openness of the NA members. Even we Filipinos could learn hospitality from them. I was not only impressed, my heart was truly warmed. It is the people that I will remember the best.

The APF Meeting was like any other conference, business mixed with pleasure. At first I found it very unexciting because I wasn't prepared to talk about structure - until then my experience of NA service had been more about substance. It didn't take long to get into the feel of things and to start sharing opinions and lobbying for candidates.

Two issues which seemed vital were a) translations and b) representation of the developing NA communities at the APF and the World Service Conference.

Representation, and where the needs of the participants would be best met, was discussed at length. We concluded that the most vital meeting for any developing communities was the APF meeting where their needs and problems would not be competing with those of more developed communities.

I remain ever grateful to the folks of NA who helped me to make this memorable journey. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of the APF and to give a woman's and a Filipinos perspective. I am proud that the Philippines Fellowship has been able to play an active part in the ongoing APF service work in the hope that we can better carry the message of recovery to addicts still suffering in our part of the world.

When I left Calcutta I came home full of enthusiasm with a heart full of dedication to service. It was a journey of growth - a journey of a better kind.

Welcome to Erik The new APF Public Information Resource Person

I have been in NA service since I was 34 days clean when I started answering the phones at our service office, so PI has been an important part of my recovery from the start. Although I have held many service positions at group and Area level I have served the Hawaiian Region and the World Service Conference through PI.

I believe that my Higher Power offered me the opportunity to work in PI because it fits my personality best. I'm a very logical person and I like the opportunity to give something to somebody. When I started working the phonelines I enjoyed talking to people, offering addicts information and spending time talking to family members, but was surprised that so few people seemed to know anything about Narcotics Anonymous.

So I looked into the Traditions and discovered why we don't just go out in the media and promote ourselves, put lots of faces on billboards and accept lots of money from people. I realised that it is difficult to reach out to help people without compromising fellowship unity.

Even though it is difficult I am prepared to work with challenges. Not that I don't get frustrated from time to time. It is difficult to sit in committee meetings when only 2 people turn up and one of them is me. But I continue to do this work, finding a lot of personal fulfilment.

I want to be available to help other people carry the NA message to the public and to find the personal growth that comes from doing service work. People can contact me through phone e-mail and fax and I'm prepared to make a few phone calls myself. Because we can't just meet each other face to face we will need to use all forms of communication to keep in touch and to help each other.

If you want to contact me to discuss your own PI issues I can be contacted through:

Ph: Hawaii 808 833 1845

Fax: 808 833 2263

Email: bullit@desperados.com

Hello from Aziz from Malaysia at the APF Meeting

I have been clean for 4 and a half years and in service for 4 years of that time. What motivated me to get into service so early is that I believed that it would help me to stay clean.

Initially although I was in service I wasn't into it very deeply. I was not wholehearted. When I first entered the NA rooms in Kuala Lumpur there were a few people who told me that they were 2 years clean. I thought "these jokers can't be really clean for that long they must be taking grass or something". I had been using dope for 18 years and had tried all sorts of ways to get well.

It was only in NA that people really told me what I should do, and I did it. I got clean in a half way house and at that time my sponsor was 4 years clean. I didn't want to use anymore but I didn't know how to stop. At that time there was nothing but NA offering me any support to get well.

I can say now that for the first 2 years in the program I really didn't know what I was doing or what was happening. I just attended my meeting every Friday night for one and half hours with other recovering addicts.

I didn't know what the Steps were I just went there every week to be with other people like me. This was very important to me. I can say that the friends that I developed in NA have been honest and trustworthy. They didn't want anything from me except that I get well.

After the first 2 and a half years I realised that the reason I liked to go to the meeting was because I felt so much better afterwards, almost like a high, it felt so good. At that point I decided to move further into service.

I got involved with Translations as committee chairperson and we set about translating our literature into Bahasa Melayu, our local language. I started this in 1995, it was very hard work but at the end of the day it is a very worthwhile job. We spent 2 hours every Monday night translating the Steps. This was good for me personally. I became able to put the program into MY life. For me NA has shown me how to live a good life. I have done more service since then and am now the Regional Delegate which is why I was able to attend the APF Meeting in Calcutta. It felt just so great to be able to go and be with all the other delegates.

We were able to talk to the Singapore fellowship and get our joint translation project underway again. I was able to go back to Malaysia with good news. Part of this good news was that Malaysian addicts are an important part of the worldwide NA community and that there are people we can contact for support or

information.

I had a good chance to talk to the people from WSO and discuss our issues with them and can take their answers back to my local fellowship. It was wonderful to talk to other addicts working on translations and to discuss our issues with Tata from the WSC Translations Committee.

One thing that was reinforced through the Forum Meeting was that the Newcomer really is the most important person at any meeting because it is they who will continue to carry the message and keep our fellowship strong And by the way, even after all this time Meetings still give me a spiritual high.

PS We would like to thank the Australian Fellowship for the box literature they sent us last year. When we got the box we put it on the table of our meeting. All the committee was there, we were surprised and very touched. We became aware of the strong bond between us. Even though we are not of the same religion and culture we are together.

It is difficult for me to express this because in Malaysia we often see western people as very separate from us but we have never experienced this difference in NA.

When we got the box I looked around at the faces of our members and Oh Boy we felt good. We realised that in NA we are not just talking about working together we are actually acting on this too.

APF Community Contact Numbers

Australia (Country code 61)

Canberra

Sydney NSW

www.naoz.org.au

61 2 6288 0835

61 2 9212 3444

61 2 4325 0524

www.ccna.idl.net.au

Far North Coast NSW

61 2 6678 2290

Hunter Valley NSW

61 2 4969 6767

South Coast NSW

61 2 4272 2398

Brisbane Queensland

61 7 3391 5045

Gold Coast Queensland

61 7 5571 9222

Melbourne Victoria

61 3 9525 2833

Adelaide South Australia

61 8 8231 4233

Perth Western Australia

61 8 9227 8361

Hobart Tasmania

61 3 6234 8087

Guam (Country code 1)

1 671 649 4357

Hawaii (Country code 1)

Kauai

1 808 828 1674

Kona

1 808 969 6644

Maui

1 808 242 6404

Oahu

1 808 539 6857

1 808 734 4357

Hong Kong (Country code 852)

852 2813 7343

852 2981 9014

India (Country code 91)

Bangalore

91 80 333 4949

91 80 56 9160

91 80 554 0173

<i>Bombay</i>	91 22 261 9195 91 22 446 6609 91 22 765 1905 www.angelfire.com/in/nabombay/
<i>Chandigarh</i>	91 17 269 4811 91 17 270 5037 91 17 260 3070
<i>Calcutta</i>	91 33 440 7793 91 33 244 9639 91 33 412 1729 91 33 27 9844 91 33 440 8528
<i>Madras</i>	91 44 84 1812 91 44 942 2745 91 44 532 4020
<i>New Delhi</i>	91 11 651 1721 91 11 617 3596 91 11 572 9787
<i>Manipur (North East Region)</i>	91 38 522 7770 91 38 522 5937 (fax) 91 38 524 0037
<i>Japan (Country code 81)</i>	81 3 5685 6129
<i>Malaysia (Country code 60)</i>	(day) 60 3 441 4699 (night) 60 3 738 2131 www.geocities.com/HotSprings/Resort/1144/index.html
<i>New Zealand (Country code 64)</i>	
<i>Auckland</i>	64 9 303 1449
<i>Christchurch</i>	64 3 365 0686
<i>Wellington</i>	64 4 496 3365
<i>Philippines (Country code 63)</i>	63 823 1012 63 843 6170
<i>Singapore (Country code 65)</i>	65 746 4752 65 841 0034
<i>Thailand (Country code 66)</i>	
<i>Bangkok</i>	66 2 712 8062 66 2 652 7469 http://www.na-thailand.org/

Coming Events

29Oct/1Nov1998
7th annual Hawaiian regional convention,
Turtle Bay Hilton,
North Shore, Oahu.
 1 808 676 9125
 1 808 834 4867
nahnl@aol.com

11/13December1998
Australian Regional Convention,
Tallebudgera,
Gold Coast, Queensland,
 61 7 5500 6000

01 / 0590 0990
61 7 5597 4544
fso@naoz.org.au

22/24Jan1999
6th Bombay Area Convention Bombay,
India
91 22 765 1905
www.angelfire.com/in/nabombay

12/14 Feb 1999
Japan Service Workshop,
Tokyo, Japan
na-japan@rsc.hot.co.jp

12/14Feb 1999
“We can make a difference”
Philippines Regional Convention,
San Antonio parish Centre Makati, Manila
namanila@yahoo.com
or tat@epic.net

16/18Feb1999
Asia Pacific Forum meeting,
Bangkok Thailand
Bob B. bobbear@qte.net
Ron B. bellron@eagles.com.au

19/20Feb1999
2nd Annual Thailand Convention,
Bangkok Thailand
<http://www.na-thailand.org/>

The APF newsletter presents the experiences and opinions of members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed are not to be attributed to narcotics anonymous as a whole, nor does publishing of any article imply endorsement by narcotics Anonymous.

[Top](#)
[Menu](#)