



*A newsletter from the Asia Pacific Areas of Narcotics Anonymous*

## Welcome to the new look APF newsletter.

The newsletter pages are enhanced for 1997 / 98 browsers which support style sheets, however if you are using an older browser you are not missing out on any information just a little formatting.

### **Vol 1 Number 9 Apr 1998**

Welcome to the April 1998 edition of the APF Newsletter.

This edition includes some reports from the last Asia Pacific Forum Meeting which was held in conjunction with the Indian Regional Convention at Calcutta in February. (Other reports to follow in the next issue).

Participants were inspired by hearing news of the hard work done by other NA communities setting up meetings and carrying the NA message throughout the Zone. The Forum meeting is a giant spiritual boost for members and an opportunity to learn and share skills.

This APF Newsletter includes the new regular feature of a listing of the APF Community contacts. If you can help update this information please contact us at APF Newsletter PO Box 136 Kings Cross 2011 or by email to [bellron@eagles.bbs.net.au](mailto:bellron@eagles.bbs.net.au)

This newsletter has it's own domain on the world wide web at <http://www.apf.com.au>

### **ASIA PACIFIC FORUM CHAIRPERSONS REPORT: Bob B (excerpts from his report February 1998)**

I was very pleased to find out that the World Service Conference Interim Committee had decided to allocate \$2500.00US in travel assistance to the Forums for the year 1997 - 1998. This support will be the key to assisting the development of less established NA communities who have to spend most of their money holding their own service meetings.

Although some individual Forum members did a good job at staying in touch with other members through the year it is obvious that we need to improve our formal communication. It is essential that people in the key APF positions have access to as many reliable forms of communication as possible eg email, fax and a good cheap long distance carrier.

We are separated by such huge distances that regular communication is essential to the growth of NA in our geographical area.

Thank you for patience and support this past year,

Bob B APF Chairperson.

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APF meeting CALCUTTA 1998

*Walking past the young guard armed with a Lee Enfield .303 at Calcutta Airport and out into the light, it was extremely gratifying to see, amongst all the hustling cab drivers, an enthusiastic group of local members holding up the welcome signs. After greetings and putting faces to the e-mails, we were ushered into the Austin Ambassadors and driven at hair-raising speed through a mass of motor, animal, and human propelled traffic to our hotel.*

*Each day began with the ritual re-negotiations with cab drivers about the fare and direction to the APF/Convention venue. These changed on a daily basis. Upon arrival at the venue the next ritual was the anointing of the mosquito repellent and the stocking up of coupons to exchange for cups of chi, soft drinks etc.*

*The meetings began with the serenity prayer in a different language each day. There were plenty of languages to pick from, including Tagalog, Bahasa-Melayu, Japanese, Hindi, Australian and American. There were representatives from Australia, Hawaii, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and World Services Development Forum. Everybody reported from their various communities, there was good news especially with Translations, H&I, and PI.*

*Lunch hours were spent with the DF people in a huddle with the Indian fellowship, who were on site in large numbers. The Convention followed straight after the APF and there were more workshops on PI and the Concepts of service. But the Indian convention is another story and so was the 1st ever Thai Convention that some of us were fortunate enough to get to as a side trip.*

*There was a great feeling of optimism and co-operation with minimal politics. I feel very fortunate and privileged to have attended this years APF, and to meet like-minded service junkies, from other lands and cultures, to experience the hospitality*

**ALOHA FROM HAWAIIAN**

**REGION APF SUBCOMMITTEE:**

*Our primary interest is in what we can do to help. We have had offers from members who are willing to participate in any projects that the APF identifies and we plan to continue with our fundraising. Our feeling is that more person to person contact will serve to assist the work of the APF. Our committee was asked a number of questions about APF work at our last RSC and although there were people who believed that our primary work should be to support needy addicts in our own Region we believe that our support of the APF is a source of pride to many members.*

*We love you all. Let us know how we can best serve you.*

*Kent APF subcommittee Chairperson.*

**DIFFICULTIES FACED IN SETTING UP A MEETING IN BALI;**

*There are a number of recovering addicts in Bali who currently attend meetings of another Fellowship.*

*In Bali people can be arrested just for KNOWING drug addicts so it is all a bit dangerous.*

*Most people would be very reluctant to put their freedom, their visas or the ongoing viability of their businesses on the line to start a meeting that would probably be closed quickly anyway.*

*Any group of 5 people or more has to be reported to the local council, called a Banjar, because it could be a political meeting.*

*Any Banjar would be very concerned if they found out there was anybody in their area who was admitting to using narcotics.*

*There is a really large unacknowledged drug problem amongst the Indonesians who are attracted to Bali because of the tourists and the money.*

*We have held NA meetings in people homes or on their front porches when somebody is really struggling or in early recovery.*

*We've talked about holding a meeting in a church near the Airport where there is a number of local addicts and we've talked about approaching Outreach which is an AIDS prevention program in Denpasar. We've talked about doing a lot of things but we just haven't put them into practice as yet.*

*We believe that if Narcotics Anonymous was started in Jakarta it would be easier for us to start in Bali. Everything that happens in Indonesia is started there first.*

*Because Jakarta is a largely Muslim community their way of life would be very supportive of the NA way of recovery.*

*There is already a 2 year rehabilitation program in Java which offers a recovery program based on meditation and prayer. This could work in well with the NA program.*

*We would like the world servants to continue to talk to the authorities in Jakarta and would be happy to start meetings when it was a little safer for people here.*

#### **RECOVERY AND SERVICE IN JAPAN:**

*We presently have 32 groups in Japan which includes some English speaking groups. These groups hold meetings in 103 venues. In Japan one group has many meeting places. There are 6 working Areas.*

*Public Information: Every year some groups hold PI meetings and every group circulates the map of the meeting places through Hospitals. Each group has its own PO Box Number. We put our contact numbers in the map of the meetings and announce them at PI seminars.*

*Hospitals and Institutions: Every group has their own responsibility for this work and some visit local Hospitals regularly.*

*Translations: We have already translated the Little White Book and IPs 2,6,7,8,11,13,16 and 22 and they are being used all over Japan.*

*We are still working on the Basic Text.*

*Some Areas hold conventions and gatherings.*

*There are still many members who don't understand the service structure and the way that it works and we hope that we can hold some workshops or service seminars in Japan. This would help boost our activities and spirits.*

*Thankyou Masahiko Sugita RD Japan.*

#### **FUN AND RECOVERY IN THE PHILIPPINES:**

*Dear Friends, after the WSC 1997 our service committees gained momentum. Less attention was given to useless bickering and discussions about what we should have done, instead we focussed more on immediate projects and went on to complete them. We have been very careful not to breach any of the Traditions and have pulled together and increased the numbers of members involved in service work. Fun and recovery seems to be the theme of our efforts.*

*Public Information: We have flyers, a Regional Newsletter, pager system and a Regional address. We have had Public service advertisements on radio and television and PI presentations.*

*Hospitals and Institutions: We have a meeting going in the maximum security facility of the National Penitentiary and have begun work to get inside the Women's section of the same facility.*

*We have meetings in 3 Hospitals.*

*Literature / Translations: We have IP#1 in distribution and have submitted a draft of the "Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous" to the WSO.*

*Although our Region is badly in need of funds we are not about to let this stop us from helping the addict seeking recovery.*

*May the Higher Power of our understanding guide us in our endeavours Yours In Service Noela V Regional Delegate Philippines.*

**HI NA IS ALIVE IN JAKARTA**

**INDONESIA:**

*Hi everybody. My name is G... and I'm an addict. It is such a pleasure to be able to communicate with you. I have written to the Newsletter from Singapore where I have been discussing NA with the members of their local fellowship. I am trying to assist the development of NA through its initial stage in my own country Indonesia. At present we have meetings on Monday and Thursday which are held at various cafes, houses and restaurants. The NA Group called "Benag Matahari" has been progressing for 2 months.*

*I have contacted the Australian Fellowship about providing us with a Starter Kit. Our members send their regards.*

*(Eds Note: The Starter Kit was sent )*

#### **NEWS FROM SINGAPORE:**

*The translations work has continued in collaboration with the Malaysian Fellowship. We are hoping that this work will be completed soon. We are planning to have NA meetings running every other night soon.*

*Our big news is that one of the largest social services agencies in Singapore is trying to introduce NA into all the Half Way Houses they manage. It plans to use NA.*

#### **A PERSONAL STORY FROM THE THAILAND CONVENTION**

*February 1998:*

*Thankyou everyone in the Thailand NA community for putting on the recent convention. I was overwhelmed by my experience there. It was even more emotional for me because my roommate began to withdraw from drugs on the Friday of the convention and was very sick. I spent my time moving between visiting him in our room and attending the convention where I experienced the NA miracle of recovery. I was so moved by the courage of everyone there who had worked hard to get clean that I felt very fortunate that I had been given the support to make the decision to get clean for myself when I did. The meetings were inspirational and it was wonderful to be there and be a part of it.*

*I can get so bored by myself and my own story and to hear how people are doing it over in that part of the world reawakened.*

#### **LETTERS TO THE**

#### **NEWSLETTER:**

*Hi Guys Congrats for the Newsletter*

*I stumbled across the APF web site a little while ago and I am very impressed - its great to see the Fellowship have such a slick and informative on-line presence.*

*I'm going to spend the rest of the year bumming around Asia (tough break). I'll contact you about meetings and conventions and to find out if there is anything I can do to help.*

*Keep coming back Alistair (Australia).*

*I think it is very cool what you guys have done within your Zone. Maybe someday the rest of us can follow your example. I just received a copy of the Newsletter and I loved the stories from the different countries. Really makes it sink in that this is a WORLD WIDE Fellowship and not just American*

#### **SERVICE WORK IN MALAYSIA:**

*The Kuala Lumpur ASC has been meeting regularly for the past year and a half. We formed the ASC when we started another Group after the APF Forum meeting in Kuala Lumpar in 1996 suggested the importance of having a meeting in the local language - Bahasa Melayu.*

*The Raja Chulan (English speaking) Group which meets Wednesday and Friday nights has existed for some time and the Chow Kit Group started in 1996. This meeting is in Bahasa Melayu and has a good attendance. This meeting is held right in the middle of "The Action" on a Tuesday night and there's always newcomers. In the last New Year Speaker Meeting the room was fully packed with more than half the fellowship having to stand. This Group intends to start another meeting soon.*

*Another Group which also conducts its meeting in Bahasa Melayu has been meeting for about a year.*

*The existence of the ASC has boosted service work. PI, H&I, Translations and Literature Committee members are carrying the message to addicts.*

*Public Information: PI has been active for over a year with some major breakthroughs. We have built a good relationship with the Malaysian Government Narcotics Agency and some Non-government agencies.*

*Hospitals and Institutions: There has been a H&I meeting going for almost 2 years. Some people have been released and are now going back inside to carry the message.*

*The meetings are eagerly awaited by the inmates and we get good support from the prison staff. In several meetings the sharing has been very emotional especially from those who were ex-prisoners.*

*We have made successful presentations to 50 Narcotics Agency officers, the Agency for Aftercare, the Agency Director for KL City and the Health Ministry.*

*Translations: The committee was formed in 1995 shortly after the APF Forum in Kuala Lumpur. Since then several IPs and part of the White Booklet have been completed. A lot of the material in draft form has been used by both addicts and professionals.*

*We have translated IP 1,8,16,22,23, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, New revised Glossary, Serenity Prayer and Narcotics Anony*

#### **PUTTING ON THE INDIAN REGIONAL CONVENTION IN CALCUTTA:**

*My name is Sunil. By gods grace and NA I have been kept away from that first drug for 9 years on the 14th April this year.*

*I have always thought that service is recovery and recovery is service. That the best way to keep what I have is to give it away. I was given the opportunity to Chair the Indian Convention Committee.*

*I am grateful to say that we had over 150 registrations, which was very good. We got participation from most of the Areas in India and people from the APF. This shows us the bond that exists between the communities in NA.*

*We only had approximately 5 months to organise the whole thing yet we had the flyers out by October and announced the event through the website. This way everyone knew that we were definitely hosting the event.*

*In order to generate extra interest in the Convention we held our first 2 day Campout in September. We had good participation from our local members who attended the 2 scheduled meetings and all the entertainment and activities we organised.*

*We think that it encouraged more cooperation and involvement in local service.*

*One of our main problems was that we had a lot to do, very little resources and not enough committee members. We hear that this is a common problem all over the world.*

*We were familiar with the venue because we had held 2 Area Conventions there before. It has easy access and good dormitory accommodation.*

*The food created a lot of discussion, who wants this who wants that, trying to cater for tastes from all over India. We ended up making 9 dishes and left it at that but it was difficult to assess the quantity we needed.*

*We received a lot of inquiries before the convention about the event and Narcotics Anonymous. We were able to direct them to the right people. We intend to hold a PI meeting very soon and have many questions about how to do H&I work.*

*I can tell you that the convention was a success.*

*We were very grateful that we could host the APF Meeting, it was a tremendous experience for us. I don't think that we will experience anything as exciting for another 10 years. It gave us the opportunity to give something back to the APF. We enjoyed meeting with everyone and having the opportunity to understand what is happening outside our country.*

*Thankyou to everyone who attended the convention from other countries. It was amazing.*

*I'm Sumit, an addict who by gods grace will turn 5 years clean on the 26th February this year.*

*After the last Indian Regional Meeting in Bangalore we made a list of all the Calcutta community members who wanted to help with putting on the Regional Convention. Most of us had never been involved with organising anything this big.*

### **THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**

*The APF meets twice a year to discuss issues of mutual concern, exchange ideas and share experience. We want to support the development of NA in the Asian Pacific area. This area is growing fast. We help growing communities by maintaining communication among members and in supporting Outreach, H&I and PI activities in this part of the World. We work with World services in these efforts. The APF Newsletter is part of this work. You can contact the APF through the Contact list in this newsletter or directly to me APF Newsletter Editor Bella A bellron@eagles.bbs.net.au Thankyou to all the people who wrote their community reports for the APF meeting, wrote us letters or allowed themselves to be interviewed for the Newsletter. Thanks to the usual Newsletter Crew: Ron B for interviews and photocopying, Sue H for moral support and email, Kristian P kristian@web21.net for the website and email and new team members A ♀ a and Alan for layout. Thanks for reading this Newsletter. Please pass it on to other members and contact us if you can help with stories or distribution.*

**FINDING A MEETING IN NEPAL:** *We were in Kathmandu in January and really needing a meeting. We knew that there was a meeting listed at a local Rehab so we headed there for some recovery. We were welcomed and the residents got out a box of NA literature and set up a meeting for us. I was able to share in Nepali which was good practice for me and the clients in the Rehab seemed very interested in what we had to say and were able to identify with us. All the members there can read simple English but find it hard to share in it. Much like the translations issues mentioned by Roy from Japan in the last issue of the APF newsletter, translations into Nepali will be a large and complex task. Culture really does produce language and so many of the basic concepts in our literature don't really exist in the Nepali culture. For instance there is no Nepali equivalent of "Sharing". This may lessen as the fellowship grows. At this stage most members are definitely city dwellers and we have yet to take the message to the villages where there are real issues with basic literacy. Illiteracy brings its own problems with passing on the clear NA message, including the Steps. Thanks for sending us copies of the NA newsletter.*

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