

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa . New Zealand . Australia . Hawali . Hong Kong . Japan . Philippines . Singapore
Bangladesh . Nepal . Indonesia . India . Malaysia . Thailand . China . Pakistan

a network of  communities

REACHING OUT WITH H&I

Aloha, I am an addict and my name is Bob. First of all I would like to thank the APF for allowing me to be of service as APF H&I resource. My only hope is that I can be of some service to the NA fellowship. A fellowship that has truly saved my life. As far as I can see and have been guided, my role is to provide H&I guidance and support throughout the APF community. I am here to be of service. You might be wondering what kind of help I can provide besides moral support. Well I thought that I would give you a little background on my personal experience with NA H&I service. I have been involved with H&I from the beginning of my road to recovery 11 years ago. Here in my Area H&I has been active for 16+ years. It began like most HI service with a connection on the inside and the willingness of a few recovering addicts. One of them is my own sponsor who is still doing H&I work. Recently we did some service together. Over the past 16+ years H&I has grown in the Oahu Area to over 30 commitments each month. That is HUGE considering we only have maybe 30 NA groups(meetings) a week on Oahu. I have served twice as the Oahu Area H&I Chairperson. Also in the past 11 years I have continuously been a panel member, leader and coordinator. On an Area and Regional level I have participated and conducted H&I workshop learning days activities. I also had the pleasure of attending two Western States Learning Days Conventions. One of tremendous support and help for me was held in the MECCA of NA H&I, Southern California. Not only is World located there but also a large amount of H&I service experience. The types of H&I I have hands on experience range from prison panel meetings to inpatient treatment center H&I informational presentations. It is truly through the informational work of H&I that I see a real connection with PI. No matter if it's H&I or PI we become visible to the public. And it's through this connection that I have gotten involved with some Area PI service. The audience may be different but the mission is basically the same. As an addict at world once told me "it's important to let our audience know that NA is a breathing and living fellowship"..let's give it the life it deserves. As you can tell I get a bit passionate about all this.WHY? Because I have found no better way to fulfill the primary purpose of NA than H&I/PI service work. It's about being proactive and I feel it is our greatest reaching out vehicle. The H&I work being done in the APF community has truly drawn my interest. A few years back I got an opportunity to visit someone in a Thai prison. It was an incredible experience. I even made my sponsor take my picture next to a sign reading "Mens's Prison for Addicts". I was so

filled with emotions that I knew some day I would get involved somehow. We almost made it into a Bali Prison with the local NA H&I but the prison was closed to us due to a holiday. The was a sad moment for me. I always kid people that prisoners are dying to get out and I'm dying to get in. I was able to put on an H&I workshop at the 1st NA Bali convention. I truly admire the newly born NA fellowship Bali. They are bringing into the prison and that is awesome. There was a time in early NA when our trusted servants (mostly ex-convicts) thought that NA might grow faster from behind the walls. And history proves true as today many many addicts are introduced to NA through H&I. We must also give thanks to PI for making many communities aware that NA exists and H&I is available. Hand in hand we stand in some of the finest institutions throughout the world.

I also want to mention to all of you that I don't know everything about H&I and rely on experience of others, NA service material and our local H&I subcommittee. I have at times even called World for help, advice and guidance. There is no reason to recreate the wheel, there is a lot of experience and help out there. Recently I called the APF PI resource P.T. And we had an awesome share on the phone. I will keep in touch with him.

Over the past years I have collected various pieces of service material and I would be more than happy to share it all with you. My goal is to put together an H&I package and send a copy to each APF delegate. This package will contain material other than H&I handbook, sample panel formats and some of our local area H&I materials. Hoping you take and use what you can and leave the rest. I am a true believer in doing what works best in a particular location. At this point I am not familiar with your government and cultural experience. But I am willing to learn and would love you to share your experience with me.

I wanted to write a bit about H&I/PI similarities and cooperation. I feel it is so important we all work together. When I look at the purpose of H&I, Why is H&I needed? "The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the NA message of recovery to Addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I meetings/ presentations except for those in longer term facilities are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program" Just like PI service I always think about information, I always think about the basics and introduction to NA. After I leave an H&I commitment I always wonder 'Did I leave that inmate or patient with a clear understanding of who we are, what we

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are about and how to find us? And maybe most important...what we have to offer'. I always try to remember that H&I is not a regular NA meeting, it's an NA service commitment. That puts a lot of similarities between H&I and PI. We both go out in view of the public, basically losing some if not all of our anonymity. More often we are under the auspices of an NA subcommittee. We have to abide by facility rules and regulations. Our behavior, appearance and reliability directly affect the public's view of NA. So it's best to be mindful of things we may not be aware of at a regular NA meeting or activity. This is truly a shared experience, service material and

an active H&I subcommittee come to be great guiding lights. Regardless of the audience we still stand before a group of people and basic presentation skills can apply. So important to have a plan or format and be aware of who the audience is. So we can see there is so much H&I and PI have in common. In fact many H&I opportunities would not be possible without PI efforts. Fellowship cooperation is one of our greatest strengths.

In closing I just want to express my warmest aloha to all of you, my APF family. Hopefully I can provide some information that will be of value to your service efforts. Thank you again for allowing me to be of service.

Love, Bob W

The Miracle of H&I

The first time I heard members use the acronym H&I, I thought it was some secret society of NA members. I asked how I could join that special group of members. Contrary to what I thought H&I was, I learned that H&I is a committee of NA members that carry the message of recovery into hospitals and institutions. I learned the message we carry offers the opportunity to each individual to improve the quality of his/her life inside and outside the facility they are in. H&I carry the message of recovery by utilizing the 12 steps and 12 traditions. I am always grateful that in spite of my self-centeredness a group of H&I members in Boston took me under their wing and educated me about H&I. I spent three years doing H&I with these wonderful members. Thank you!

My active addiction took me to a lot of places and one of those places was the correctional system. I never attended NA meetings when incarcerated because there were no meetings in the facilities I was in. I don't know if it would have made a difference in my using but I never got the opportunity to find out. Today I get choked up with tears and so overwhelmed when I meet women who were introduced to NA while incarcerated. They actually go to meetings when they get out. They stay clean! Their eyes shine and they want the NA way of life. What a gift that it is so freely given.

I live in Hawaii now and am involved with the H&I committee there. We have a great bunch of recovering addicts who are very dedicated to carrying the message of NA. Oahu was the First Island I lived on and there are two female correctional facilities located there. I hooked up with an H&I member, completed the 2-day training and began going into those facilities. I now live on the Island of Kauai and we have one female correctional facility. We struggle in getting meetings into the facility consistently because NA is not well received. We have a group of 5 women who call each Thursday and try to get in. These dedicated women show up and when we get in we have a meeting. We are not giving up! The women in the facility asked that we do a step study meeting using the Step Working Guide. It's a great meeting and women are leaving the facility, staying clean, going to meetings and getting active in service. I can't believe how this all happens! We carry the message to give back what we have been given and the Higher Power guides us all the way. I've been involved with the APF (Asia Pacific Forum) for about 3 1/2 years. When in Indonesia last year we attended meetings in Jakarta at treatment centers. The meetings were filled with standing room only, addicts wanting to get and stay

clean. At the Jakarta Convention I met a woman who was bringing NA into the women's prison in Bali. I asked if I could go in with her. She invited me to come when I got back to Bali. We met in the morning to wait an hour to check in at the gate. I was a little fearful because I didn't speak the language nor did I have any idea of what to expect in their prison system. Fear for me is sometimes the motivator for faith and trust in the process. They called my name and I walked through the door, which closed behind me. Anxiety kicked in and I waited for the rest of the group to be called and I followed them. We ended up in a large room in a big circle filled with male inmates. This was the men's meeting. The leader read from an H&I Format and it turned out that a few months ago one of our H&I members from Hawaii (Bob W.) had been there and assisted the H&I Committee in the development of the format. My anxiety left me and I felt like crying. The realization of how big the message of recovery is filled my heart with joy. I felt so safe so loved to be there. Here we were far from home with the blanket of NA around us. The woman I was telling you about motioned for me to follow her and we went to the women's section of the prison. We entered a room with no less than 30 women. A few of the women could speak English and they translated along with the women I was with. Fear reared its ugly little head and I started wondering what did I have to share? I don't know the hardships these women have had to face. I haven't been sitting in a prison for 4 months waiting to go to trial. I felt like a failure and at that moment the teacher appeared. A woman sat down next to me and said she had been inside for a year and asked me if NA was real? She said, "I haven't used for 6 months and I don't believe NA meetings will keep me clean when I get out." She asked how long had I been clean and did I go to NA meetings? At the time I was 15 years clean and attending 4-5 meetings weekly. She laughed and didn't believe it. I was asked to tell my story, which is really your story. The women who didn't believe me sat next to me and offered to translate. The meeting ended and other women shared their hope, courage, and strength. They described how to stay clean one day at a time in prison. Some of these women had no idea when they would be getting out. The woman who became my translator walked with me through the prison yard to the gate. We talked about life and death and staying clean. She told me if I could stay clean she could because I wasn't that tough. I don't know what she meant but it worked for her. I left her there but she is always in my memory and I pray she stayed clean. Somehow those

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OUR CHAIR SPEAKS

Greetings to my brothers and sisters in recovery. I am happy to confirm that the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum (APF) will meet in Byron Bay, Australia, this coming January 29-31, 2002. This will occur prior to the Australia Regional Convention, February 1-3, 2002. The APF Administrative Committee is deeply grateful for the support shown by the Australian Region to the APF in arrangement for our meeting. We are looking forward to their uplifting hospitality during our stay in their country. So what are we going to be working on at this meeting? At the moment we are working on the agenda for our meeting. Briefly, we will be reviewing our vision and mission of the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum, approving our guidelines and electing trusted servants for the future. If you have an issue or concern that you desire the APF to discuss, please contact me as soon as possible.

One of the stated goals of the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum is to "... support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts in Asia Pacific." The APF has in the past directly and indirectly supported such efforts as a public information event in Singapore and a fellowship development trip to Pakistan. One of the perceived advantages of a forum (in my own opinion) is the ability to support the kind of development that outside the criteria of World Services of Narcotics Anonymous.

But the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum has the same problem as World Services: limited financial resources. And because of the short time between our meetings this year (8 months), the APF is unable to support any activities other than the meeting and travel costs.

The Asia Pacific Zonal Forum has trusted servants with a wide variety of service experience including PI and H&I. Yet their activities are restricted to being resources of information. I personally would like to see them (and others within the APF with appropriate experience) be supported to give more direct assistance to member communities of the APF.

Without significant funding, it is improbable that this will happen in the near future. Since the majority of our funding goes to support the annual meeting, it is my belief that the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum needs better guidance in deciding the location of its annual meeting. Better planning of our annual meeting within Asia-Pacific will greatly enhance our ability to further our aim of helping NA grow. The process we have to choose the meeting site is very casual in its approach. I believe our decisions can be better made if we place guiding principles on paper such as location cost factors, peak and low seasons for airfares, Asian-Pacific holiday periods such as Chinese New Year, Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious holidays, the need for fellowship development within the NA communities hosting the meeting, and possible coordination and assistance with local H&I or PI events. I also suggest that the APF plan for the next two meetings, rather than going year to year. This is the experience of the EDM and it works very well for them.

In the early years of the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum, translations of NA literature was directly supported with funding, along with communication of the Regional Delegates within the APF to World Services. At our last APF meeting it was mentioned by the Indonesian delegate that it was puzzling that the APF

did not have a trusted servant position to be a resource for the APF communities.

One of the benefits of the change to World Services in 1998 was the redirection of funding and staffing to better support the translation efforts of NA as a whole, especially those efforts within the APF communities. Yet it seems that the Asia Pacific Zonal Forum has not concerned itself greatly with translations since my direct involvement with it since 1998. Once communities are linked to Narcotics Anonymous World services (NAWS), there seems to be good professional ongoing translations support from NAWS as long as local communities maintain contact. The APF has only facilitated indirect support by providing a venue for face to face interaction of the parties involved. Is there a need for such a position? Do APF communities feel that we can provide a service in this area that NAWS is not already providing? An example of the help that a trusted servant concerned with translations at the APF is the difficulty of three NA communities working on Chinese translations of NA literature: Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. All of these communities desire translated materials but are not in a position to do so by themselves. An APF trusted servant could work with them as a communications and resource support person. Perhaps we can do better to help these communities reach out to Chinese addicts in the Mandarin and Cantonese languages. As you may remember from my previous article in the APF Newsletter, I attended a "Zonal Forum" hosted by the EDM in Montreal, Canada. (For your information, the Quebec Region is a member of the EDM.) There were members of North American Zonal Forums besides those of the Europe attending the EDM. The discussions we had about the Zonal Forums in general and their future in NA service fascinated me. There was quite a bit of discussion about the implications of Resolution A that was passed at the 1998 World Service Conference (WSC).

This resolution's intent is to guide the Fellowship on the goal of changing the character of representation at the WSC to be smaller in number and to reflect geographic, ethnic and language differences. Many of those in attendance felt that not much work has been done since 1998 to support Resolution A and were resolved to further this discussion at the World Service Conference in 2002. We can discuss this subject at our meeting in Byron Bay if people wish.

As I write this article there is open warfare within Asia, the implications of which are worldwide in scope. This will greatly affect our members' personal ability to travel and increase our risks as travelers. I encourage all Asia Pacific Zonal Forum members to be cautious in their travels, to allow their Higher Power to guide them during these turbulent times.

In my years as a trusted servant at World Services, I learned that we came together at the World Service Conference as "NA communities" and not as nations under national flags. For us the foundation of our unification and identity is our common primary purpose of the NA program.

I look forward to us coming together to further the growth in our NA communities by discussion of issues of mutual concern, addressing our common needs, exchanging ideas and the sharing of experiences to further our primary purpose. I look forward to our meeting and may the blessings be for you in your journey through this life.

Erik, APF Chairperson <bullit@desperados.com>

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The Miracle of H&I

women changed my life. I left the prison believing if she could stay clean so could I a day at a time. Service in NA has given me many teachers. I never know who will carry the message of NA but the teacher always appears. In our "Just For Today" meditation book, August 31st reads, "Recovery has given me freedom. I will great the day with hope, grateful that anything is possible today." H&I are a special group of people; it's no secret though. We all need each other, "Keep Coming Back."

Tali of Hawaii

The Asian Pacific Forum Newsletter presents the experiences and opinions of individual 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.

Narcotics Anonymous at Darwin meets every Saturday at 6 p m. Uniting Church Hall, 21 Cummins St. Nightcliff, Darwin, Australia. For any information please email: nadarwin@hotmail.com

Networking with NAWS: 2nd India Regional Convention

by APF Special Reporter

The 2nd India Regional Convention provided an opportunity for not only members from India but also those from surrounding countries and communities to meet with NAWS trusted servants, and to network with each other.

Members from **Pakistan** had planned to attend but were unable to get there, mainly due to visa problems concerning the political situation with India. Two members from **Sikkim**, an isolated area in the north east of India attended and reported on their fellowship. Regarding language and translations, they mentioned that the Nepali dialect in Sikkim was similar to that spoken in Darjeeling. **Darjeeling** members expressed similar problems to other isolated areas. (Availability of literature, funds and members with knowledge of how to do service are the main challenges) It is possible that they can work with Sikkim fellowship on translations. World Board Member Larry R. gave them a copy of 'Translations Basics' and glossary with explanations.

Nine members attended from **Nepal**, reporting on their Kathmandu meetings and the new meetings in Pokhara. Again, many spoke of similar concerns, lack of literature, funds and service experience, but a strong desire to see their fellowships grow. Sixteen members attended from the North East Regional Forum or NERF. All very enthusiastic to learn and attend workshops.

Members from Dhaka and Chittagong in **Bangladesh**

reported on the history of NA development in Bangladesh and gave an overview of current activities, providing some clarity to do with previous lack of information and confusion about this country. Meetings are happening in Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi. Although some are in treatment centres, there are indications that more will open independently.

This was the first time that people from all these outlying communities had come together. Invitations had been sent out on behalf of the APF, and NAWS assisted by funding some of the community participants. APF Vice Chair Ramesh AR helped facilitate the workshop sessions along with NAWS personnel Larry R and Geoff G.

Workshops on the fundamentals of NA service and Public Information were conducted on two separate afternoons, many of the above communities had excellent representation and participation. As well as that a lot of time was spent in informal meetings and one-on-one sessions.

There were many questions on H&I, PI and a whole variety of service related topics. It seems that the high level of interest in these workshops was triggered by the presence and experience of visiting Trusted Servants. The workshops were very successful in that members from Nepal, NERF, Bangladesh and India took away with them valuable experience, although this was the only between-meetings activity involving the APF last year.

From the desk of the APF Newsletter Committee

Recently, nomination request letters for various positions at the World Service level were sent to members all over the world. In India, some members received it on 15th October 2001, the last day to send in a reply. To meet this deadline, a member from India faxed his nomination, which is a costly affair in India, without consulting his sponsor, spouse or employee as suggested in the letter. A few other members too received this letter on 15th October 2001.

In the past, many letters have reached members and service committees in India after the deadline date. The sad part is that World Service undertook a project called the Communication Task Force (CTF) in 1999, to look into communication between World Services and Regions. One World Board Member and one special worker traveled to India to look into this matter. Yet the situation is still the same.

The sadder part is that when this was brought to the notice of HRP (Human Resource Panel), it seemed more of a botheration to them. HRP gave a week to reply without looking into the reality of ANTRAX and a War in this part of our world. During normal times, it would take at least two weeks for a letter to reach World Services from India. Not everybody can afford faxes in India and e-mails are luxuries because of constant power cuts and power failures. It was only after further request that the deadline was pushed forward to another week.

If World Services is interested in receiving inputs from members living in third world countries, simply give more time to respond and mail letters earlier. This will truly make us a World Fellowship.
