

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa New Zealand - Australia - Bangladesh - China - Guam - Gulf States - Hawaii - Hong Kong India
Indonesia - Japan - Korea - Malaysia - Nepal - Nerf - Pakistan - Phillippines - Singapore - Thailand



#24, January 2006 Issue

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Hi and Happy 2006 to all,

It has been a big year with the World Convention held in the Asia Pacific in Hawaii. It was a very inspiring convention with speakers from every part of the globe. For those of you unable to attend it was a colourful, sunny and heart warming experience to hear people from Russia, Spain, Germany, England and even Iran. 2005 saw China joining the APF and we have been hearing great things about their growth. Fantastic!

As some of you may already know I will not be standing for the next Newsletter Chair position. The position would mean another two years and under normal circumstances I would not hesitate to sign up again. It has been a blessing for me to be part of the joy and gratitude I see in all your eyes and hear in all your voices and your written words. It has renewed my spirit of why it is such a blessing to be part of this fellowship no matter how much time passes in my personal recovery. I traveled for six months in 2004 around India and I have visited Thailand and Indonesia so many times over the years and never do I feel so alive as when I meet my family in recovery. Thank you so much. I have always felt safe and welcomed wherever I have visited thanks to NA.

I have been especially blessed these last few months by joining the NA World Service Office as a writer/editor. Wow! That rocked my world! So that is why I will not be able to be part of the APF on that level anymore. I am in California now and everyone here at the Office has been especially welcoming and I hope that my service here will help carry the message to all our brothers and sisters around the globe. We are truly a world-wide fellowship these days. And of course, it is a great honor for me to be the first Aussie to work at the office. As many of you know already we are all the same, so I feel right at home. It has been a huge transition but I feel I am with my family here.

I know that the next Newsletter Chair will carry on the message of recovery in our Asian Pacific areas. I know that we will evolve into a bigger and brighter future and we will find the joy that lies hidden beneath all the pain of addiction.

Blessings and namaste,

Catherine

Newsletter Chair

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Asia Pacific Statement of Purpose

The Asia Pacific Forum (APF) is made up of the NA Communities from the Asia Pacific Zone. These guidelines are devised to facilitate the agreed purposes of this service body. The following is the stated purpose of the Asia Pacific Forum, which these guidelines honor:

- 1) *We, the NA regions and communities of Asia Pacific, have joined to discuss issues of mutual concern, address our common needs, exchange ideas and share experiences to further our primary purpose.*
- 2) *This forum is intended to compliment the existing service structure of NA.*

Goals: To encourage, develop and support translations of NA literature into our languages:

- a) *To encourage and support translations of NA literature into our languages.*
- b) *Encourage and support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific.*
- c) *Encourage, maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and regions within this part of the world.*
- d) *To continue working with NA World services in our efforts.*

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

APF – Bangkok February 2006

NA World Services (NAWS) sessions will be held again during the APF this year. Three members from NA World Services will attend the APF, 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand. In addition, an all-day translation workshop will take place on Friday, 4 February, 2006, right after the APF and before the Thai convention that evening. The APF in Bangkok provides an excellent and necessary opportunity to address translation specific issues as well as broader related issues with representatives from many communities.

Representatives from several NA communities, (such as Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines), who have translations in progress and complex issues to resolve have been specifically invited. Several communities requested NAWS assistance in the form of a workshop.

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Public Information – Carrying the Message to Treatment Centres in Emerging NA Communities:

Public Information work not only has the promise of carrying our message of recovery to government, professionals and families and ultimately to addicts, it also offers us a chance to work together and build our local NA community.

Before we commence any PI work with treatment centres we need to consider exactly what we are realistically able to provide to their clients and their facility.

Are there functioning meetings that run on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in that part of the world? If there are, then clearly any presentation needs to be about NA in general and how the local recovery community could help their clients. We would set up a workshop for the staff; discuss what NA is and what NA is not, tell them about meetings and how members help each other, and start to develop a cooperative relationship with the centre. We can find information about this kind of presentation from the PI section of the NAWS website – www.na.org.

We would generally follow up the presentation by making arrangements to support people to go to local meetings, linking them with sponsors and so on. We may also set up a H&I meeting within the centre to introduce clients to the NA program before they start going to meetings.

If there are no functioning meetings nearby, we discuss whether there may be some local NA members who may be able to start up such a meeting/s. We would generally ensure that any new meeting was carrying a strong NA message before we made a PI presentation to the treatment centre and encouraged staff to send their clients along.

If we want to start a meeting we can get help from NA World Services at www.na.org. We can order recovery and service literature, find out if there is NA literature in our local language and get some advice and support if we are interested in translating the literature into the local language.

If there is no functioning NA community close to the treatment centre then we need to be very careful what we offer to them. Although we want to share the wonderful gift of recovery we can sometimes create problems for NA if we make promises to the staff that may not be kept. Any PI presentation must offer a realistic picture of exactly what the clients and staff can expect to find at a meeting and how much support they can expect to get from the local members.

If staff believes that NA has let them and their clients down they may be reluctant to send people now and in the future. We don't want to spoil our opportunity to carry the message so sometimes it is better to wait and do it right.

If there is no local NA community, it is possible for interested staff-members to set up an NA meeting and hand it over to clients / members when it is established. Support and information about this can be found at www.na.org. Having treatment centre staff start a meeting can be problematic because they may find it hard to understand the Steps, Traditions and Concepts and their clients may get confused between the treatment centre message and the NA program. However, many such meetings have been started this way and have developed into functioning NA meetings over time, especially if they have been visited or attended by members from other NA communities who have been able to help keep the NA message clear.

As you can see there are a number of things to be considered before we commence PI work, however fortunately there are many people and resources to help us for example, we can contact NA World Services through www.na.org and the Asian Pacific Forum on www.apf.com.au for advice and support.

If you want our assistance please let us know as much as possible about your particular situation so that we know how we can best support you. We are always grateful for the opportunity to work together to carry the NA message to addicts seeking recovery and to those that want to help.

Bella,
Australia
PI Chair

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

H&I

Hospital and institution subcommittees conduct panels that carry the NA message to addicts who often have no other way of hearing our message. Treatment panels are conducted for patients at addiction treatment centers, mental health facilities, and therapeutic communities. Correctional panels are held for inmates at jails, prisons, and forensic hospitals. The Hospitals and Institution Handbook, available by contacting the NA World Service Office, explains more about how to conduct panels, interact with facility administrators, and organize subcommittee work...

A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous, p54

A P P E N D I X

A Message of Recovery From H&I Service

I am addict and my name is Bob W. I have been an H&I Resource person since 2000. I have been active in H&I in the Hawaii Region for 15 years. Recently I was asked to write about some of my own Experience Strength and Hope with doing H&I. So besides introducing myself to APF, I will share some of my experience with H&I. Also if any of you need some help please contact me and I will be most happy to help you anyway I can. I have not received an enormous amount of requests from APF but have responded to some over the years. I also was able to do an H&I workshop at the first and fourth Bali convention.

I got clean Oct. 2, 1989 and quickly found a home in NA. In my early recovery I saw small groups of men getting to the meeting a bit late but looking so full of gratitude. They just had something that looked so attractive to me - they were the H&I guys and they came to the meeting after their H&I commitment. I knew the primary purpose of NA was to "Carry the Message" and that I could only keep what I had by giving it away. It just seemed that nothing in NA fulfilled the purpose more directly than H&I. Here was a group of NA members that took the message and brought it to the addicts locked up behind the walls. To me that was powerful. I joined H&I with about six months clean and my first H&I commitment was at a correctional facility very close to where I live. I was scared and did not know what to expect. I had all those prison thoughts running through my head. All the horror stories just attacked my brain.

A few H&I guys picked me up and we drove to the facility and pried me out of the car. Once in the H&I panel meeting I felt a comfort come over me as I realized I was in a room with addicts just like me. The only difference is they got caught and were all wearing red tee shirts with WCF on them. I was at home and I knew this is where my HP wanted me to be. Later on I did start to struggle with the fact that I never served time in a jail or a prison. I did spend one night before I got clean for being loaded and driving down the road the wrong way. Not exactly the crime of the century. I went to a Western States Learning days in California to learn more about H&I. After a presentation I approached the presenter and explained my feelings about doing H&I and not doing time. This NA member told me those men in the institutions already know how to do the crime and the time...what they don't know how to do is get clean and find a new way to live and that is what I have to offer them.

After that I have never felt bad about not having experience doing time. It became very clear to me that my job was simply to introduce the basics of NA, to those addicts who do not have full access to regular meetings. Sometimes I would leave an H&I commitment and ask my self, that if this was someone's first exposure to NA, did I leave them knowing what the NA program was - How it Works and How to find us?

I learned that H&I was not my recovery meeting but a service commitment. There is no anonymity in H&I. I became viewed by the public as a representative of the NA program. They know my name, address, occupation and that I am a member of NA. And there is no autonomy. We have to follow facility rules and regulations and operate under the direction of an H&I subcommittee. We are accountable to an Area, Region and NA as a whole. There is an H&I handbook and many, many years

of hard earned experience available. Many Areas and Regions put on workshops to attract new members to H&I as well as learn more on how we can be more effective. I have attended and participated in many. No matter how much I think I know I find I always learn more. I have a huge passion for doing H&I.

I have always been encouraged to do H&I by my sponsor. He has been a huge role model for me. With over 33 years clean, he has been continually doing H&I. He continues today to do H&I in his Area. One time we were about to take off for the World Convention in San Jose and my sponsor mentioned that he'd set it up to do some H&I at the local jail. I did not think much of it as the excitement grew about going to a World Convention. And to be honest I did not want to do an H&I commitment. I was going to hook-up with all my NA brothers and sisters and celebrate recovery. I am a very self centered and selfish addict at times and I forget that service work takes me out of myself and gives me so much gratitude and humility. I do a lot of H&I at home and I was thinking that this trip was for ME. I got checked into my hotel room and my sponsor called me about our H&I commitment and I did not want to go. He guilt tripped me like a good sponsor and we went. It was OK and was like any other H&I commitment except it was in another town and the panel members were from all over the country.

Many weeks later I was at home and received a letter from that same jail. The letter read, "My name is Frank and I was the white guy with all the tattoos and I want to thank you for visiting us during the World Convention. And I hope one day I can do something as unselfish as that." To be honest I did not recall Frank as we did our H&I panel to a room full of white guys with tattoos. The note touched my heart so much that I started to cry. I began to remember why I do H&I. It's not about me. Thank you Frank whoever you are.

I was having a real rough time somewhere around 10 years clean. My marriage was not doing well, work was kicking my butt and I just got diagnosed with Hep-C. I was feeling real sorry for myself. I felt life was not fair and I was falling into a state of utter hopelessness. So in my divine wisdom I thought I would go do some H&I. "That will get me out of this funk." I went and did a panel meeting at the very first facility that I started my H&I in. It was the Holidays and the meeting was very good. But I left still feeling the same.

So what was my solution - more H&I. I went to an H&I panel meeting at a correctional facility and it was crazy. There where Christmas carolers going through the facility and many other distractions. It was two meetings back to back and because of all the distractions, inmates coming and going, I was getting a bit irritated. The first group came and left and I was waiting for the next group and an inmate in the learning center where we held our H&I asked if I wanted a cup of coffee. I said sure, why not. This man who is locked up in prison during the holiday hands me a cup of some of the blackest, thickest coffee I have ever seen. As I held that styro-foam cup he looked me in the eyes and said, "Merry Christmas Bob, thank you for coming in to visit us." I sat in that room holding that cup of coffee as tears of gratitude and joy flowed down my face. I felt blessed and restored. All of a sudden the burdens of life were not so heavy any more.

I have always left an H&I commitment feeling much better than when I came. I come and I am tired and I feel that my life is so busy, what am I doing here... and the magic happens. I always share in prison that I would like to say that I come here to help them and I am hopeful that they get it or the seed gets planted. But the truth, I tell them, is that I do H&I so that I can have another day clean, another day of this gift and thank them for giving me this opportunity to carry the message of NA.

I share with them about a man I sponsor. He spent many years going in and out of prison. And this man was always going to do something different once he got out of the gates. But he always got out, got loaded and returned to prison. The first time he did something different before he got out was the last time he ever went to prison. The thing he did different was attend H&I meetings in prison and embrace NA. This sponsee of mine has not only never been back to prison but he has over 10 years clean and is very involved with the NA fellowship.

So, I guess the best thing I can give is hope. I have hope, that if this program can work for me and other addicts it can work for you. Somebody believed in me and now I can believe in others. But I also have to be realistic and remember part of the twelfth step that we tried to carry this message. I

am not responsible for who gets it. And sometimes if the only one who gets it is me, then I get another day and another chance to give away what was so freely given to me.

I had the opportunity to attend an H&I panel meeting in a Bali prison. We opened the H&I meeting to questions and answers. My heart swelled up as I heard these men ask in Indonesian, the same questions men ask in the prisons back home. And the answers seem to always be the same - because the ultimate recovery weapon is the recovering addict. I know from our experience we can tell them that the lie 'once an addict always an addict' is dead.

You never have to use again. No addict seeking recovery need ever die. We do recover. I see all this and more in H&I as we carry the message, that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.

Well, that is all I have for now. I could share about H&I for ever as you can tell. I wish you all well in your H&I efforts and all the service work you do.

Love and Aloha,

BobW

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

A Message of Hope From China

Dear Fellow Addicts,

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I am writing this report to you and the wider NA community. In July, 2005 Geoff .T & I (Debs .T), went out to meet with the doctors of a government drug rehabilitation center in Shanghai.

As we drove up to the entrance of the hospital there on the outside of the hospital was a small brass plated sign with that mentioned that this was a drug therapeutic rehabilitation centre. Ah! Awesome! Were our responses! The building was nothing like what we were expecting - the usual unfriendly concrete external walls with barb wire enclosing the top of the walls. Inside the opening to the main gate, there were poster boards with explanations about drug addiction and pictures of all the different types of drugs and how they are used. Our interpreter was waiting for us in the entrance to the main gate.

The security guard stopped us and after a quick negotiation we were ushered up the stairs to the doctors' office. We waited for the doctor we had made the appointment to see. As it turned out the hospital was a psychiatric hospital.

As we moved through the hospital, the nurses and doctors we passed asked about the two foreigners and what we were there for. There were quick exchanges of our purpose, as we moved on. At this point we were thrilled to get this far inside the hospital. The doctor arrived to meet us shortly after and took us to the last area of the hospital where behind iron gates, a common characteristic of China, we were met by another doctor who let us in. After a brief discussion with him he took us inside the rehab building. He was a very curious open-minded doctor who had read the literature we had sent and was 100% convinced it was the answer.

This building had a gym downstairs and dormitory rooms on the second floor, the doctors' offices and treatment rooms were on the next floor. We sat with the doctors for a while trying to get into what we were there for and how we would like to go about the presentation. The doctor got up and went to the phone to call the Head of the hospital. He came back to report that she was on her way to authorize our visit. In the meantime, we chatted about our purpose and the benefits of NA recovery and handed the doctors several copies of our Saturday NA meeting address. They gestured that they understood the importance of these meetings and would make these suggestions to their patients.

Once the Head of the hospital arrived it was a big no. But we were surprised we had been allowed to get this far. It is a start and we hope that we can get more support to follow this through.

In loving service

Debs

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

Letters from our Region:

Vietnam

NA is alive and well in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) Viet Nam!

After quite a while trying to get us noted as being alive in Vietnam we have arrived. This may sound funny to most readers but we are a small isolated group that has been in HCMC for about 4 years now. It is hard for us to get the message out, here as there are a number of small and large barriers to over-come.

The biggest hurdle is that it is where to meet. In the past some members have tried to reach out and even held meetings in their home, but this didn't catch on. Meetings are a new idea so it will take time before this happens, but I am sure it will happen. So we must meet in a cafe along the river. Oh, you have to come and see the view.

The next problem is the language barriers - but we are trying anyway.

We meet every Sunday at the Cafe at 12:30 PM. You can get our information from www.na-thailand.org. You'll find that you have friends here too.

Thank you for the fellowship all you members and please drop us a line or come on by, the best coffee in the world is grown here.

TTFN

Yours in Service,
Ford.

China

Greetings from China! Wishing you all a Happy Chinese New Year!

It's a very exciting moment for us here in China to be able to participate in the APF this year. Even though we are just a few here, we feel that we are connected and are a part of the big whole.

We have only one meeting a week here in Shanghai and the group is registered as Shanghai Serenity.

Deb's, one of our first member who came to Shanghai, China, in 1996 started having meetings with members in private homes, due to certain restrictions. The meetings didn't last very long as people moved back to the country that they had come from. We did attempt to start another and another meeting only to close it after a couple of meetings.

It's taken us nearly 8 years to get to where we are at, one meeting a week. We are in the process of forming a PI committee. We do have our own website www.nachina.com

This is where we are at today, hoping that the message of recovery gets to the addict seeking recovery in China.

In Service,

Love and hugs,

Geoff.T

Hawaii

Aloha All!

In the IP "Another Look," Jimmy K. talks about the concept of Goodwill. He says that goodwill means that I think that your beliefs and your opinions are as important as my own.

I believe that a loving God will always express himself in the group conscience.

With Love,

Archer K.

Australia

We have been doing workshops in the Australian Region on some of the discussion topics put forward to the fellowship by NAWs. As I live in Queensland and our Alternate Regional Delegate recently relocated here we have held workshops in Brisbane; the Sunshine Coast; and Townsville in far North Queensland. For small fellowships such as Townsville it was expressed that they really felt a part of the bigger picture. I attended with the RCM from Queensland, Kelly, and we had a full day of workshop on the Saturday with a lovely BBQ with the local members at lunchtime. On the Sunday morning we attended the local meeting before flying home. Service workshops in these remote areas are memorable - as visitors we were shown a lot of love and hospitality from the small Townsville fellowship.

We are fortunate in having Ron B, a member of the World Board, to facilitate the CAR (for the WSC) at our next Regional Committee Meeting to be held in February 2006.

Probably, the most fun NA social activity that I, as a member, have attended recently was a great New Year's Eve dance party at the Gold Coast put on by the Gold Coast Area in Queensland. The venue was an old musicians club and made for dancing or just lounging around listening and watching the performers and people dancing. Outside there was a large courtyard area where the hot summer's evening was enjoyed by a throng of NA members. Some people from a local rehab were able to attend and the whole atmosphere was friendly and fun. New Years Eve can be a challenging time for some so it was a great thing to have such a safe event to be at.

Happy New Year!

Kris,

Queensland

Los Angeles

NA speakers.com is a website that records NA members from around the world. To listen to speakers simply go to www.naspeakers.com We invite speakers from around the world when we know they will

be in the Los Angeles area on a Sunday night. I would like to issue an open call so that addicts from the APF will let me know if they are going to LA so we can try to arrange them to speak at our Sunday night Santa Monica NA meeting.

Jim,

NA Speakers

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

NA Community Membership

- 1) Each NA community has the choice to join this forum.
- 2) Each NA community belonging to the Forum can send a group of members to the Forum meeting: however only one delegate/representative per community can vote at the Forum meeting.
- 3) Ideally, the delegate/representative is given the authorization to vote on issues on behalf of their community.

A P F N E W S L E T T E R