

# ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa New Zealand - Australia - Bangladesh - Cambodia - China - Guam - Hawaii - Hongkong - Indonesia - India  
Japan - Korea - Malaysia - Maldives - Nepal - Nerf - Pakistan - Philippines - Singapore - Saudi - Thailand - Vietnam



*Welcome to the 25th APF Newsletter.*

*In February 2006, 20 APF communities met in Bangkok Thailand to share their experience, strength and hope, discuss issues of mutual*

*interest and elect trusted servants. This newsletter includes highlights of community reports and of member's personal experiences. You'll also find details of NA activities in our Zone. Ed*

## **APF Statement of Purpose**

The Asia Pacific Forum is made up of NA communities from the Asia Pacific Zone.

1. The Regions and communities of the Asia Pacific have joined together to discuss issues of mutual concern, address our common needs, exchange ideas and share experiences to further our primary purpose;
2. The forum is intended to compliment the existing service structure of NA;
3. Our goal is to develop and support NA in this part of the world;
  - a) To support translations of NA literature into our languages;
  - b) To support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific;
  - c) To maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and Regions within this part of the world; and
  - d) To continue working with NAWs in all our efforts.

## **Report of APF Administrative Committee Meeting 10.2.2006**

Chair: Tali (Hawaii), Vice Chair: Paulo (Philippines), Treasurer: Danny (Indonesia). The following is an edited version of their report:

We would like to thank all the members of the APF for another successful and insightful APF meeting. We had 20 countries represented at the APF meeting and will endeavour to maintain effective communication with the communities throughout the next year, aiming to respond to all contact within 48 hours.

Our first activities for this year include updating our letterhead by adding the new communities and also updating the APF contact list.

We also discussed all the feedback that we received regarding the last meeting and will work with you to make changes to best meet the needs of the delegates in future including reading one page community reports, limiting workshops and increasing the opportunities for delegates to interact, spreading the business sessions throughout the meeting and closing with personal sharing.

Our next merchandising activities will include printing APF T-Shirts using the current Japanese Design. Next year we will solicit new APF T-Shirt designs before the 2007 APF Meeting. We are hoping to sell T-Shirts at the World Service Conference held in April in California. Paolo has offered to read our APF Report at the World Service Conference.

We would like to thank Risa (outgoing Chairperson) and Yoji (outgoing Vice-Chairperson) for their work for the Zone.

## **Delhi Convention (India)**

Our last convention was held at the "Retreat & Study Centre", Shenshai, Old Mussouri Road, Dehradun, 260 Kms NW of Delhi.

Approximately 450 Recovering addicts along with 30 family members attended the convention making this the largest gathering of addicts in India ever. We had members from the USA, the UK and 12 of the Areas in India.

The highlights of the convention consisted of great Speaker sharings, interactive workshops, an awesome fireworks display after the countdown & a touching puppet show / play on the disease of addiction scripted and acted out by addicts from Delhi.

The good thing this time was that all sessions were well attended & also that there were a lot of new comers both at the site as well as sitting in the sessions. The event was a success and we all had a great time with a lot of recovery, fun & games.

*In loving service, Amitabh*

## **Reports from APF**

### **Aotearoa - New Zealand**

Our community consists of 4 Areas who take it in turn to host our Regional Convention. We also hold annual Area campouts. Once a year we hold a Regional Gathering where all GSRs and interested members get together to identify what they wish the Region to do to serve them.

We have developed a new service position, the Public Relations Coordinator, in response to workshops held regarding PI. We've created a history book about our community. We also have an SMS - text based meeting.

We need better leadership development and role models for newcomers in service, more people in service generally and a higher public profile.

### **Japan Report**

We are experiencing some difficulties with translation activity especially after Roy's death and difficulties with PI work as we need translations of PI service material. Our fund flow is poor, however some translations are complete and we have a new PI committee.

**Hosting the APF**

When we found out that we were hosting the APF 2006, I was concerned I was not smart enough to take care of all the details and as it turned out I wasn't either but somehow it worked out. I found the venue by default and just decided to use the same venue the NA Thailand Convention Committee had already found.

One of the challenges I had was with the room reservations because we didn't know who was really coming until the meeting itself. Some people just "turned up" at the last minute and we were lucky to have a hotel that was prepared to be flexible, although it cost us unnecessary expenses.

It is hard for the Admin Committee and the host people to make arrangements and develop an agenda without forward planning and reliable numbers. Having said that – it was great working with Danny who was doing his best to manage everything.

On the first day I just had to remember that I had a higher power and everything was gonna work out even with me trying to make it do so. There were things that came up every day that needed attention eg people changing rooms and multiple minor hotel details etc but the biggest issue was copying community reports. I really needed a full time assistant to do that.

On the last day I felt a bit disappointed that I'd spent too much time stressing out and not enough "letting go" and enjoying the APF.

For anyone hosting the APF in the future I would advise them to find committed volunteers and delegate responsibilities! The host delegate will need a minimum of 2 assistants just to take care of the basic stuff that I foolishly thought I could take care of myself. I would get the Admin committee to give a firm agenda early on so you know what was required from the venue and make sure that any venue you use is willing to be flexible and able to manage changes to numbers etc with little notice.

*Jimmy B (Thailand) host delegate*

**We thank Jimmy for all his hard work organising the 2006 APF. Ed.**

**H&I in Changi Prison (Singapore)**

May the Higher Power bless you all. I want to share about the first time that NA had access to the Changi Prison in Singapore.

On June 9<sup>th</sup> 2005 I took a bus, a subway, another bus and a long winding walk to arrive at the Admin office in this very high tech prison. I arrived and was introduced to the high ranking officers and welcomed warmly by a senior staff member who oriented and briefed me about the prison system.

It is not my style to prepare a speech and before I shared about my own experience I broke the ice with the individuals by getting them to laugh, talk about their feelings and join me in spontaneous humour in response to their sharing. In this way I can build up people's self esteem and start to develop a reciprocal relation with them.

I like to throw some ideas around and ask questions about what they want to talk and hear about, and you know, we always seem to hit the bull's eye. The topics included: change, dealing with people, places and things, faulty belief systems, inadequate coping skills, unmet needs, character defects, recovery and recovery stories.

Staff were present for this first session and I got no break between that session and the next. I had only had one strong coffee for the day and couldn't even smoke because of the presentation and if you know me, you know that I smoke. It was funny because I was so busy with my work that I really wasn't hungry, thirsty or needed to smoke. All I could see was that the addicts really wanted to change and this really moved me, I felt truly fulfilled.

I was asked to have lunch with the staff and we discussed the meeting and the arrangements for ongoing meetings in the prison. My permanent appointment is on the third Monday of every month from 1.30 to 4.30pm. By the time I left I had been in Changi for about 5 hours but I was happy because it was all part of my own road to recovery. The journey continues one small step at a time,

*Love Nor*

**APF Reports cont'd****China**

We still have one meeting a week in Shanghai, China. We had started a second meeting, but had to close it after a few weeks due to lack of support. We don't have any local addicts as yet come our meetings. We have taken some steps to carry the message to the local community in Shanghai.

We have asked the WSO office to contact the Foreign Affairs Office in Shanghai to make carrying the message possible in Shanghai. We are also following up all PI opportunities. Our Website is still running.

We do not have any locals in our meetings and have a number of Government issues / limits that we have to work with including language and translations issues as interpreters work under strict government scrutiny. We have been invited to Southern China to do a PI presentation and are working with NAWS to fund this activity.

**See a report of this presentation on the next page. Ed**

**Guam**

Active attendance at present is 8–10 members per meeting, members 10–15 altogether. Many of our older cleaner members have moved away or are not attending meetings.

We plan to restructure our service committee. We have activated our email address, started meetings in the local prison and have sent a delegate to the WCNA and the APF. We are seriously committed to service.

Our challenges are a lack of trusted servants, getting locals to stay in meetings and we have no women in our meetings. We have no literature or key-tags, no phone line and no post box and we need advice regarding H&I and young people.

**A Public Information Experience in Kunming (China)**

Kunming in Southern China is the capital of Yunnan Province and is a real hotbed of narcotics activity fuelled by the cheap supply and availability of hard drugs in the area known as the Golden Triangle. A number of treatment centres exist in the area.

On Sunday Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> 2006 Nick R and I, Geoff T, travelled there on the invitation of Population Services International (PSI) Yunnan, China, to hold a PI presentation on the 20th with the different NGOs, addicts and the Public Security Bureau (Police).

Geoff T chaired the meeting and Nick R. shared his experience, strength and hope translated by a staff member. The presentation was well received, they were excited to know about NA and find out how to start meetings at the different centres in Kunming.

After Lunch break, we had a workshop about starting an NA meeting. 25 people attended; a few NGOs and lots of addicts. Everybody was excited about NA, asked lots of questions and the information was well received.

We then modelled a NA meeting using the sample meeting format. All of the addicts had a couple of years free from drugs and were very keen to learn about NA and find out how meetings are conducted. We had a very successful meeting and talked about commitment to the group and also got them to elect trusted servants, talked about the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition and got their agreement to pay rent to the facility. The group decided to hold the meetings on every Sunday at 4pm in the PSI Centre. The PSI staff members agreed to make the facility available.

The next day we held 2 NA meetings modelling the meetings for the 20 addicts present. We shared about different types of meetings, speaker, topic, general sharing, steps & sponsorship meetings. We passed on a lot of hugs, till it got contagious and they loved it. We had one meeting and then we took them out for lunch on the street, to give them a feel of the meeting after the meeting.

After lunch every body was eager to get back and soak up information. All the meetings we had were 1½ hrs long and we had to have a translator interpret for us. They had a lot of questions about the program and the problems that they face in staying clean. Their problems were so much like what others addicts go through in countries where there is no support to help them survive. We felt really emotional and shared our experience, strength and hope with them. We saw hope in their eyes. It was very, very rewarding and fulfilling to experience it.

After the meeting we got together with the newly elected trusted servants and checked their understanding about running the meeting and their roles and commitment etc. We had accomplished our goal in facilitating the setting up of a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. It was time for us to leave and it felt really emotional saying bye to all and hugging everyone. The message was carried and the journey will continue..... Just for Today.

We made some additional commitments to the newly formed group regarding literature and trying to help with Chinese speaking sponsors as knowledge of the steps is very limited at present. We also feel it is necessary to follow up with a second trip in 6 to 8 weeks time to reinforce and support this newly fledged outpost of recovery.

*In loving service to NA, Geoff. T & Nick. R*

**Upcoming NA Events**

Bali (Indonesia) Narcotics Anonymous is hosting our 6th annual Area Convention. This year our theme is "12 Steps to Awakening" and the event promises to be our biggest and bestest convention yet. This year we are running the celebration in early June, the best time of the year weather and surf wise. For further info, please go to: [http://www.na-bali.org/english/events/eng\\_bali\\_convention.htm](http://www.na-bali.org/english/events/eng_bali_convention.htm)

The 2006 Hawaii Regional Convention will be held that last weekend of October on the Kona side of the Big Island. Go to: [http://www.na-hawaii.org/Global Pages/Regional\\_Convention.htm](http://www.na-hawaii.org/Global Pages/Regional_Convention.htm)

10th Aotearoa New Zealand Regional Convention "Choose Freedom", Arts Centre, Christchurch City New Zealand, Friday 20th to Sunday 22st October 2006. More info available at <http://www.nzna.org/events.html>

**APF Reports cont'd****Bangladesh**

Two and a half years ago our NA group had 10 members only however now we are 250 altogether. There are NA meetings in various cities in Bangladesh and some meetings consist of 50 members.

We have a service committee with five members who organise a weekly NA meeting that focusses on the 12 steps of NA and spiritual values. We are looking forward to being linked in with the Asia Pacific Community and learning how to grow our community and service structure.

Lack of funds and coordination between the NA communities within Bangladesh is a challenge. There are a number of commercial rehabilitation centres in Bangladesh but few not for profit ones which limits referrals to NA.

**Cambodia**

We have difficulty attracting newcomers from the local community, currently the meetings are supported by expats, the language/translations issues create problems and trying to do PI work in the local language is difficult. Our members are scattered all over the country and have little time or limited energy to do all the PI and H&I work that is necessary although we are fortunate to have members in 3 main centres.

**Hawaii**

We have 5 Areas. Our RSC rotates between the islands / Areas and meets quarterly for 2 days. Each area has its own H&I, PI, Activities, Literature committee and so on. Each Island has an annual "Gathering" as well as other celebrations of recovery eg a Convention and Learning Day.

Attracting newcomers into service and attracting enough locals / indigenous members to our meetings is difficult. We do have some locals at meetings.

**An interactive workshop in Pakistan explores local issues**

NA Pakistan (south) conducted a Brain Storming Workshop on Sunday, 29th February, 2006 in Karachi on the topic of "Challenges, Resources and Needs" in our NA community.

I wrote an email asking for member's experiences and guidelines for these workshops and am very grateful to Turkey and Australia for answering and providing me with useful information and support.

There were 63 participants. It wasn't open for non-addicts. It was our first attempt to workshop solutions to problems in our community and it worked!

It was wonderful experience for participants and the coordinators of the workshop because it was a two-way or interactive learning process. It was especially good because the Area and Region participated. I really want to send a big thankyou to NAWs, the APF and the EDM because we couldn't have done it without your help and guidance

I will share about another achievement of our local fellowship. We held a workshop on local service structure on March 12th 2006 and distributed the draft translation of "A Guide to the Local Service Structure of NA".

*In loving Service, Wajid.*

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***APF delegates elected a new website chair and the following is his first report. We want to extend our thanks to the outgoing website chair Vikram (India).***

Aloha Ke Akua. I am your new APF Webservant, Charlie Q., from the island of Maui in Hawaii and I hope that my website design & implementation experience will be helpful to the APF Fellowship.

The APF meeting delegates voted to change the domain name of the APF website so we now have a new domain name URL - [www.apfna.org](http://www.apfna.org). The old site address, [www.apf.com.au](http://www.apf.com.au) is directed to this new address on the Internet. We have also made some changes to the website to make it quicker to upload, especially if you are working at an internet café or have a dial up connection. We've restructured the site with some old and familiar but easy to use site pages and all information on the site should be current and up-to-date.

If you see something is not right, or not current, you can contact the webservant at [web@apfna.org](mailto:web@apfna.org), and I will respond quickly to your mail.

*Mahalo to you all for letting me be of service, Charlie*

**The Nepal Convention, Pokhara, March 2 - 5 2006**

The name of the convention was NRECNA-1 and theme was "One World, One Disease, One fellowship". It was held at Camping Chowk, Lakeside, Pokhara.

There were 284 official registered members but more than 350 members were present including members from Bangladesh, USA, Thailand, Finland, Germany, India, the Middle-East and of course Nepal.

We had speaker meetings, topic meetings including "Living the Program", "Sponsorship" and "Service in NA", "Gifts Of Recovery" and "How it Works", and we had a Participation Speakers meeting on the last day where any NA member could submit their name and be selected to share. We also had a women's meeting because there were 5 women present. We had a meeting in English for members who couldn't understand Nepali and we had a moonlight campfire sharing meeting, a newcomer meeting, a discussion Meeting on the Twelve Concepts and leadership in NA, a PI meeting and last we had a Question/Answer meeting and a burning desire. The highlights of the event were the Speaker Meetings which were very touching, the Countdown (my usual favourite), the women's meeting, the Translation Workshop, and the entertainment.

The convention committee did the great job and the venue was mind-blowing. There were many newcomers and we had five one-day-clean members present there at the countdown. The whole event was well organised and I would like to give my gratitude to all the fellowship for their great effort

And our next NA regional event is going to be in my area (Eastern ASC), as "Get Together" followed by the RSC meeting in the first week of June. And about our next Convention: we decided at our last RSC to hold it with the next APF.

*Love and hugs, Kiran in fellowship (Nepal).*

**APF Reports cont'd****Australia**

Our fellowship has 371 meetings a week, most of which are in cities. The communities vary from one meeting a week in the Northern Territory to 103 weekly meetings in Sydney. Travellers can link up with loner members for a meeting.

The RSC meets every 4 months and consists of 15 RCMs, subcommittee chairs and the Admin Committee. We do H&I meetings across the country managed by the Areas who also have phone lines and PI committees.

The size of the country makes service and mutual support difficult and our rural meetings struggle. It's a challenge to maintain the continuity and consistency of service work and service committees. We have difficulty attracting and retaining indigenous members, women and Asian members.

**Pakistan Report**

We are a baby community here in Pakistan, started in 1994, and have 24 groups altogether. We have no meetings on Sunday still.

It was a great achievement to form an Area called the Pak Area however we have had

many difficulties and are re-forming our subcommittees after this APF meeting.

Our translations committee has experienced internal conflict and has stopped working on translations projects for now and our PI work has stopped because we do not members who have received training in this work. Our H&I committee work is difficult because one service we were in communications with would not accept members into their facility who were employed by another service.

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*Email articles or stories of recovery for the Newsletter to <[newsletter@apfna.org](mailto:newsletter@apfna.org)>*

**APF Reports cont'd****India**

We have 12 ASCs, 88 Groups and 150 Meetings per week with approximately 2500 members regularly attending meetings. The Regional committee meets twice a year and rotates between areas with most people travelling for 2 days on average to attend. The meeting lasts 3 days and is followed by a convention hosted by the Area. We held a translation workshop funded by NAWS in 2005 and we're planning to assist Nepal to form their Region.

We have a large diversity in languages and culture and have difficulties with outreach due to the size of the country. There is also a big urban – rural divide and it is difficult to take the message outside cities. We experience a lack of continuity in services. We have also sought to separate treatment and NA issues through guidelines relating to trusted servants who work in treatment. Although there is good H&I work being done there is still reluctance for private rehabs to refer to NA. IP #1 in Tamil has been sent for approval.

**Indonesia**

NA started here around 1996 and started to grow 2 years later with the increase of rehabs using the 12 steps as part of treatment. Today there are approx 34 NA meetings throughout Indonesia in 3 different areas.

We have 3 Areas and 3 prison H&I meetings. We held our first H&I workshop prior to the Kadebotabek NA convention and are strengthening our service work by establishing PI and H&I subcommittees and making NA a legal organisation to enable us to broaden our service particularly related to formal institutions eg government.

Even though we have done good PI work to educate facilities about NA and the concept of non-affiliation we have experienced confusion regarding funding. We find it difficult to attract newcomers and to get them into service. The country is very spread out creating communication and travel problems. We have held 2 x Area conventions, our translation glossary has been approved and we are working on translating literature into Bahasa Indonesia.

**Malaysian**

NA Kuala Lumpur became an Area on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2005. We have 3 meetings a week in KL, 1 meeting in Johor Bhru, 1 meeting in Kuantan and 1 meeting in Penang. There are approximately 37-70 members attending regularly.

We carry out H&I work regularly in treatment centres in KL and they are sending their pre-release residents to meetings. We are also holding regular H&I meetings in hospitals. We have made some PI presentations and are working on translating Just For Today into Bahasa Malaysia/Melayu.

NAKL organized and hosted its very first [one-day] Convention on 4 Feb 2006. It was an unqualified success with 120 attendees including members from NAWS, USA, Australia, Bali and Singapore and 53 newcomers. We now have plans to set up a new

group in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, next to the Convention venue.

We experience the challenge of poor exchange rates so literature is expensive, and our hope is that one-day we will be truly self-supporting and not have to rely on NAWS.

**Nepal**

NA has been active since 1998 and since then it is growing steadily. There are 31 meetings each week and the total estimated numbers of recovering addicts are 1000.

Finally we have been able to form our Region. We are still receiving a lot of help from NAWS and are trying to raise funds to be self-supporting, however we often have to use these funds for rent and NA events. We have been able to translate 6 #IPs and the Step Working Guide with NAWS help.

We have 5 Areas, are doing PI work and are having another convention this year. We are not a registered organisation with the government and this creates problems and we need literature translated into Nepali. We have difficulties attracting people into service, need more leadership in this area and to know more about the Traditions. Many of our members work in treatment and this creates difficulties for them in meetings and confusion around therapy and NA language differences.

**North Eastern Regional Forum NERF (India)**

Our Region consists of 7 North-Eastern states of India. Our first group formed in 1988 and formed an Area Service Committee in 1991 along with H&I and PI subcommittees. Today we have 14 groups and may have more than 700 members.

We have organised 15 Regional Assemblies since NERF was formed in 1997. We host campouts and conventions and the Imphal area has successfully translated 15 IPs, the entire key tags and are now translating Guide to Local Service. This Area has a functioning H&I committee however we have a shortage of members for PI work as a result of concerns for anonymity.

It is difficult to attract new members because the attitude of the general population towards addicts is very negative and we want to develop better relationships with rehabs to increase referrals. Communication is difficult in NERF because the roads are poor, travel expensive, with political instability and there are more than 32 ethnic groups with different dialects.

**Pilipinas**

There are now 3 areas representing the 3 major island chains and we have a total of 15 groups who have 50 meetings. We believe that NA grew at about 20% for 2004 – 2005 and estimate we have 500 active members with an additional 500 semi-active members.

Each NA Area holds a Unity Day each year. We have an annual Regional Convention with about 200 addicts in attendance. We have translated the NA



white book with Pilipino stories and are now in the process of having it approved. There is 1 or 2 H&I panels each month in the region. A presentation to the Dangerous Drug Board and Department of Health in conjunction with NAWs has paid off because NA now carries the message to Government rehabs. We also provide outreach meetings in depressed squatter areas in Metro Manila. Our PI and H&I efforts in Mindanao have made this our fastest growing Area. SMS or Text is a Philippine pastime and the most widely used form of communication and we are using our hotline via a cell phone to be able to reach majority of recovering addicts.

We need better infrastructure and more members in service. Our rehabilitation services do not refer people to NA and we have few funds and literature.

#### **Saudi EM**

Narcotics Anonymous started in Saudi Arabia in 1993. Since then the NA message has spread out and reached different cities in Saudi Arabia and now there are more than 12 groups in 8 cities, more than 80 meetings per week and around 500 recovering addicts.

Two area service committees were established in year 2005 after disbanding the Gulf ASC, they meet monthly and each has 4 subcommittees at least; H&I, PI, Translations and Helpline.

Our service work needs consolidating, resources and training, especially about H&I, and our service structure needs support and development. Although we have experienced recent rapid growth in our membership we still have no women in our community. Fellowship accomplishments include translating the "Guide to Local Service", The Steps Working Guide, the Just For Today Video and #IP 1 and 22 into Arabic and still working on #IP 7 and other materials. We have also held workshops and learning days for our groups and are developing service guidelines.

We want to be a part of big service body, to hold the first Saudi convention in year 2006, to promote the value of the service being presented by our service structure and to one day host the APF.

#### **Singapore**

There are presently five weekly meetings in Singapore. The Fellowship is still small in numbers though consistent and marginally growing in attendance

We conduct an NA awareness meeting at Pertapis (Half way House) particularly focused on inmates who

have little or no knowledge of NA, they later attend our fortnightly H&I presentation. We also receive regular referrals from the Community Addictions Management Program.

We are having difficulties with attracting newcomers and retaining old timers. Unfortunately NA is seen as not valid because it is western and religious and connected with rehabs. Singapore is 65% Chinese and this community tend to look after their own members. We have worked to reunite the NA fellowship to develop a cohesive service structure and have recently gotten access to Changi prison for H&I meetings due to Nor's hard work.

**See Report on Page 2, Ed.**

#### **Thailand**

We have 13 meetings a week across the country with approximately 39 members attending however this number can double during the high tourist season. All meetings are English speaking and there are only 3 – 4 Thai members attending.

We have no national service structure but members of the groups communicate regularly. The Thai website and phonenumber are maintained by the Bangkok members. Since the last APF we started planning for the 2006 APF meeting, setting up an emailing list so that information was available to everyone. This is now used as a tool to facilitate discussion of issues. We are hosting a PI presentation after the APF and hope that it kick-starts our H&I efforts.

We have difficulties attracting Thai members to meetings and need some material explaining more about NA in the Thai language. We need a more stable and developed service structure to unite the groups, find ways to manage our service efforts, and develop a good profile in the Thai community.

#### **Vietnam (Ford):**

Our challenges are that the literature is all in English (I IP in Vietnamese), our meetings are supported by ex-pats with very few locals attending and if we use interpreters at meetings it makes the process and the meetings very long. We must deal with government issues because Vietnam is a communist country and the government must censor translated material and we need funds to do this. Some NGOs want to set up recovery centres and are interested in having NA involvement.

We have one meeting in a bar, which although accessible has no privacy. Many of the ex-pat members have a lot of clean time and NA experience.

**Email articles or stories of recovery for the APF Newsletter to:**  
**<newsletter@apfna.org >**

## Highlights of the Asia Pacific Forum

*We asked some of the participants for their personal experiences of the last APF*

### **Paulo – Philippines**

I want to thank Jimmy and NA Thailand for hosting the APF meeting. It was very well done and a lot of work but you made it look easy. The APF workshops provided our community delegates with ideas and formats to host similar workshops in the Philippines and we plan to duplicate the workshops in our Pilipinas convention to help with the vital work of PI, H&I and Translations.

The Convention was simply inspiring, we loved the sharing and particularly liked the part when Phyllis from Hawaii did the country roll call.

Thanks and kudos to the outgoing APF Chairperson Risa, the APF grew in your tenure of service. Thank you also for your support and trust in electing me secretary of the APF, I will do my best to serve you.

### **Ford from Vietnam**

It is important for those of us living in isolation to meet others, and staying in close contact with the fellowship in Thailand and Cambodia is very important to us in Vietnam, as they are our closest NA neighbours. It is great to be able to put faces to names and e-mails as we have been emailing each other regularly. Emails are brief and meeting each other and talking gives us the opportunity to add depth to these relationships and support each other. It was also good to be given information about service at the meeting.

### **Mahmoud from Iran**

I am happy to report that we have more than 40,000 recovering addicts in Iran but wish that we had more women in NA. We would be grateful to hear from women from other NA communities who could offer support to any women wanting recovery in our country, especially any traditional Muslim women. The growth of NA in our

country has been assisted by our relationship with local Muslim spiritual leaders who have told us that they believe that NA principles and Islam are the same.

I always enjoy meeting addicts from other countries and am grateful to have participated in the APF meeting as a non-delegate. I invite everyone to come to Iran to visit us and share your experiences with us at our conventions and workshops.

### **Hamish – Aotearoa New Zealand**

I loved experiencing the spirit in the room, spending time with other delegates, getting to know them and having the opportunity to be inspired and to be of help to others. It was wonderful to spend time with people from very different places and to find out just how similar we all are.

### **Geoff from China**

I have enjoyed the positive energy in the room for the meeting. Being with so many people with so many ideas gives me a new perspective on my recovery and my small NA community. Sometimes we can feel very alone and isolated in China but when I come here I am inspired and can really believe that we can grow. I have made some good connections with people and have heard some good ideas and suggestions for service and feel less alone.

### **Khalid from Saudi**

It was really useful for me to learn how to use workshops at the APF meeting to discuss service. I intend to use them when I go home. We have much service work to do in the Gulf States as we have had area service for many years but have just started 2 x ASCs both in Saudi and intend to become a Region maybe next year. I think that we could use the workshop format to work towards developing the region and also learning days, workshops and Traditions workshops. We would

also like to be able to share guidelines with other communities.

### **Dominic from Cebu**

The best thing about the APF meeting is that it brought addicts together and closer to NA, to learn what recovery is like for other people in other communities and to find out that it is really the same in many ways; we all go to meetings, work with a sponsor etc.

### **Kamal from India**

I enjoyed the opportunity to let go of myself and my opinions to find out about the other communities and their activities more deeply. The diversity of experience and views were interesting to me and I thought that the discussions worked well. I was amazed by the growth of NA in Iran and felt the hair stand up on my arms as Mahmoud described their rapidly growing community. Just to hear about it made me wish to find out how they did it so that we might experience such growth in our own countries.

### **Krissie from Australia**

It was interesting for me to find that even though we come from such diverse cultures, many of us face the same challenges. For example I found out that India and Australia's large areas create similar struggles for the meetings in the rural areas. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet everyone and learn about various communities and was really impressed by the recent growth in the Saudi and Iran NA communities and the energy that George has been putting into H&I work in the Philippines. I was sad to hear that Roy from Japan had died.

This forum is a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with each other, but it offers so much more and is important to the whole NA community.

### Question Corner: Attracting and Retaining Local Members

Question Corner, a new section, will appear in the next newsletter. It will be a forum for discussing issues of importance to members. Tell us about your experiences and thoughts on the questions. The highlights of your responses will appear in the next Newsletter.

Our first issue, the difficulty of attracting and retaining local members, was referred to in many community reports. We'd like you to think about the following questions and discuss them in your NA community.

- Why do many APF communities find it hard to attract local members?
- How has your community tried to attract and retain local members and what were the results of your efforts?

We look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

What questions would you like discussed? Let us know and we may include them in the next issue.

Send any material to < newsletter@apfna.org >

### Next Edition

In response to issues raised at the last APF meeting we have decided to focus on women in recovery in the Asia Pacific Zone in our next edition as well as general news and reports about NA recovery and service activities in our zone.

Send us a letter or article from or about women recovering in our communities. We hope to hear from you before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Send material to < newsletter@apfna.org >

### The APF Newsletter

The APF Newsletter assists the NA communities in the Asia Pacific Forum to communicate about their activities between APF meetings, and provides information regarding Narcotics Anonymous in Asia and the Pacific to NA members and the public via the APF website.

The APF Newsletter is focussed on providing a description of the activities of the APF NA communities and committee members, and includes personal stories of recovery and the service experience of the members within the APF and other NA communities.

The current APF Newsletter Committee consists of Bella A (Australia), Geoff T (China), Anindita (India) and Sue H (Australia).

We would like to thank Catherine (USA, ex-Australia) our outgoing Chair (Editor) and the members who have taken the time to send us letters and reports; your work and help is greatly appreciated.