

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

A Network of  Communities

Asia Pacific Newsletter

27th Edition

Diversity Edition

Welcome to the January 2007 Edition of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) Newsletter; the theme for this edition is "Diversity". The APF is made up of NA communities; we are listed on the masthead of this newsletter, and although we come from different places and live with different customs and cultural traditions we are able to work with each other to carry the message of Narcotics Anonymous.

Those of you who are familiar with our newsletter will know that we always carry reports and updates about our communities; however this edition will also focus on providing you with individual recovery stories from members throughout our Zone. We hope that you enjoy reading them.

If you enjoy reading this Newsletter and believe that other people would like to read it, please print copies and take them to your home-groups and service meetings for distribution.

Asian Pacific Forum Statement of Purpose

The Asian Pacific Forum is made up of the NA communities from the Asian 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 our efforts.

Minutes, reports and other information about APF activities are available on our website:

www.apfna.org

Hi from Calcutta

Hi, I'm an addict Bablu, clean today just becoz....

When I first got the message of NA I was confused by what I saw and didn't really want to stop. This state of mind made me lose many years of more using before NA finally caught up with me and I was desperate to somehow quit using. But it took another 6 years of making meetings using, doing conventions using, regularly detoxing and long rehab stints, before I finally understood that using just once would simply not work, no matter how hard I tried.

I do not consider those years wasted as I learned the hard way what worked and what did not. For me, personal experience counts and I am grateful to God for keeping me alive while I continued walking the edge. The fact I have once been declared "clinically dead" when I had been clean for 5 months, did not stop me from relapsing on my 10th month for just one night. I went on to celebrate my bogus 1st year clean since I was desperate and thought I had everybody fooled. On my fake 14th month I found a bag and I used it (only once) and went on to a meeting and shared about my discovery and how I had flushed it down the toilet. Yes, I had everyone fooled as I continued my daily meetings and I wasn't scoring or looking for stuff, I just had happened to "find

it" at home that's all. Well, then as I continued my own brand of recovery, it suddenly blew up in my face before could I pick up that elusive 18th month chip. And it turned out to be my worst serial relapse.

I finally surrendered on my 45th birthday inside another rehab. I could not seem to find peace while using nor could I find peace in being clean. It was horrible.

I needed to break my drug obsession and fill that massive void with something constructive & worthwhile. Something which I would enjoy doing and I found it in NA service. My family's love, the daily meeting charge, the fellowship's unconditional support, all went in helping me get better as I stayed clean, by God's grace. I took up home group service earnestly, got into "Hospitals & Institutions" (H&I) service with total commitment, went for ASC meetings, even found myself a sponsor.

If I had thought my using was deplorable, now the time had come to prove to myself I could make my recovery one based upon responsibility. I did not require to blow my own trumpet, I just needed to walk the talk and by God, I'm still walking. Anything less than 100%+ was not for me. I wanted to be happily OD'ing on my recovery because any other lesser way I knew would not

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work for me. It made me question myself about going to any lengths and I always found I could go a wee bit extra & I did. This was vital for me to live and enjoy life without the use of drugs with humility & responsibility so to speak.

Having worked the 12 Steps with my sponsor I am able to practice the principles of NA in my daily life. My addict wife has always stood beside me & encouraged

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me to do more. Our 9-year old daughter is a source of tremendous satisfaction & joy for me. I feel that the book "Miracles Happen" ought to be renamed "Miracles Unlimited." My recovery is a series of miracles way beyond my powers of imagination & that's saying something for an addict like me. I thank our Program for helping me become a clean citizen of the Worldwide Fellowship of NA. Today, I am free to be me.

The Story of an NA Member, Ali Y from Saudi

I grew up in a very conservative family. I was the eldest son and the second among all offspring of my parents. My father was tough, imposing his strong personality on all of us. He always wanted to steer my life in the direction he saw fit, considering that he was the father. His viewpoint was that he knew what was best for me. However, that exceeded all limits, to the extent that I had totally lost my freedom. That situation greatly upset me.

When I was young, I did very well at school. However, when I reached intermediate school and became an adolescent, my performance at school started to deteriorate steeply. That was due to my pre-occupation with trying to evade the restrictions imposed by my father, who continued to put several kinds of pressures on me. With these restrictions, I had to avoid my friends, if any of them were around. My greatest concern was how to get rid of such restrictions.

At last, relief came in the form of a new job. The best thing about it was that it was in a remote area where I could be away from home for two weeks, followed by one week's leave.

There, I started a new stage in my life. I felt free and started to smoke, although I was not an avid smoker. I did that just to satisfy myself and to do everything that made me feel free. My father used to punish me on the

pretext that I was smoking, at a time when I wasn't a smoker.

I did not stop at that, but I continued to exercise my freedom (and getting even) in many ways, including travelling abroad and using all kinds of drugs, especially heroin. I went too far in that direction.

After several years of using, I found myself in a dilemma and started to seek solutions to escape the perils of addiction. I was admitted to several hospitals and enlisted the help of many persons, but ultimately I used to take advantage of such assistance and all my attempts failed. Then, I met a person while I was in a drug rehabilitation institution in 1993, who told me that "I cannot, but WE can", "I am not bad, but I am ill" and "I am not responsible for my illness, but I am responsible for my recovery".

That person introduced me to the NA program. I have repeated those words to my younger fellow addicts who were using with me. Since that day, I enjoy the gift of recovery, together with my fellows. I broke the chains of addiction and became addicted to the NA program.

Now, I have a wife and a daughter. I also have a good career job. I actively participate in NA in order to deliver the message that saved me to each addict who is still suffering.

I Kept Coming Back – David K

The first thought that kept coming back to mind every morning I awoke was the same... where, what, how... Money was never enough and getting it was a daily showcase of manipulation and lies. Then there was the persistent toil to keep my secret safe from my co-workers, loved ones and the rest of the world.

I fitted the common profile of a 'Malaysian drug addict': 20-35 years in age, coming from a broken family, low education, mixing with the 'wrong crowd'. However I believe I could have had all the riches, education and the best family and friends in the world and still ended up addicted.

The addiction surfaced when I was a child. I could not seem to eat enough food and by the time I was three, weighed sixty pounds. I would eat and eat and would be unable to stop till I vomited, and then I would start again once the nausea faded.

I remember barging into the kitchen one day and downing what I thought was a glass of iced water sitting

on the counter top. It was my grandfather's samsu – a potent 100 proof concoction – and after I picked myself off the floor, I remember feeling high, and it felt good and I wanted more...

At the age of 23, and six months after finally becoming a full-blown heroin addict, I was ready to quit.

I had, in that brief period, left my job, sold all my possessions and was onto selling off my mother's jewellery. Even with incontrovertible proof, I would deny till my last breath that 'anything was wrong with me'.

Looking for a cure, I came across by pure chance, an article in a magazine, which related one addict's success at kicking the habit through something called a 12-Step programme. I ran my finger down those twelve printed steps and balked at the number of times I saw the word "God". This God bxxxxxxx was not for me and so tossed the magazine and the programme out the window for the next thirteen years.

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I remember getting hazy flashbacks of that magazine article while riding the train back into town after my release from prison. I was on the way to score and yet again try to make a fresh start trying to control my intake lest it controls me.

After two weeks of this, my mother sat me down and asked me to try something new and stay at a rehab centre. It was not that I was suddenly so willing to listen to her advice; it was the opportunity to get money for transport and 'supplies'.

So I went about tossing aside one prospective facility after another when the last centre I visited appeared somewhat different from the rest. It was a small private facility, which followed the 12-Step programme.

Realising I was yet again on the brink of full-time drug usage, I decided to give it a go.

On the evening of my first day there, we loaded up into the van for something called an NA meeting. There I observed those who claimed they managed to stay clean, some for up to fifteen years.

Of course I did not believe a word they said. These frauds were probably going to shoot up the minute they were out of sight, I concluded.

But staying at this rehab facility, I was made to 'keep coming back' as they put it, and soon I began to really listen and come to believe that long-term abstinence from all drugs was indeed possible. These guys were not lying after all, and this gave me some hope that maybe I could be like them.

The only barricade was the unwavering belief that my life thenceforth would be a boring, monotonous, dreary trudge. The prospect of never being allowed to get high ever again was heart wrenching.

I continued to attend NA meetings diligently upon discharge, but refused to honestly face the fact that I needed my fellow members' help in coping with life clean. No one was 'good enough' to help me, I felt.

I would go to meetings and share my in-depth knowledge about the program, but never wanted to share any of my frustration – that I was clean but I was not happy.

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I found a job but hated that no one in my office wanted to do as I told them to. People continued to get on my nerves easily but I never wanted to reveal this, as I wanted to maintain my image of a "cool dude". My compulsion to use, which had actually never left became stronger and it was a matter of weeks till I relapsed again.

However, this time it was different. I had discovered much to my chagrin, that the NA program had planted a seed within me and I could feel its overwhelming presence coming back poking and prodding at my conscience every time I took my fix.

If I was oblivious to a way out as I had been in the past it would not have been so painful, but now, with the knowledge that there was a program that could work if I let it, gave me the impetus to drag myself out of this misery one last time. The God that I baulked at all those years ago returned with a loving hand to lead me back to the light.

Upon discharge from a detox ward, the first thing I did was attend an NA meeting. There I finally broke down and pleaded for help.

It has been six years now. I still have until this day, my 'sick days' where I begin to believe that I am all-powerful and all knowing and that people would make my life easier if they just behaved the way I wanted them to. But I know if I keep coming back to my 12-step program I will re-awaken yet again.

I believe the people, places and things that life has provided for me are all there to offer me lessons designed to make me stronger. I have come to believe that God is loving me now and so there is nothing and no one that life could throw at me that God and I could not handle. Because of this, I have found happiness.

Living clean, instead of the boring trudge I had anticipated, has afforded me an unfathomable serenity borne of a conscious contact with a Higher Power. And to maintain this connection with the God of my understanding, I shall keep coming back

Translations News from Nepal

We are moving ahead with our translations. We have submitted our Glossary of NA terms to NAWS and have finished our IP#1 and are preparing to send it to NAWS for approval. We are working together in a Translation Coordination Committee (TCC), where LTC representatives from six of our ASCs have divided the translation job amongst themselves eg IP#1 to Pokhara, IP#7 to Butwal, IP#22 to Dharan and so on. As they finish their tasks we again meet in the TCC and finalize the work. This way of working has reduced the potential conflict when seven groups of the same language work on the same piece. Thanks everyone for your support, Sushil

Email articles or stories of recovery for the APF Newsletter to:

newsletter@apfna.org

A Member's Report from the 5th Jakarta Indonesian NA Convention

A celebration of recovery and service was held in Jakarta, the capitol of Indonesia on the 17th on the 19th of November 2006. Members from many parts of the archipelago including Jakarta, Bandung, Bali, Borneo and Surabaya joined together with convention hoppers from Bahrain, Finland, Hawaii, Saudi Arabia and Spain to share their experience, strength and growth. The spirit of recovery was not only cherished by the men and women from NA but also embraced by their families, parents, and friends who showed great enthusiasm as recovery partners. "We are grateful that about 300 people attended our convention", said Nino the Convention Committee Chair

Attendance by international members created different feelings and vibes for local members. True evidence that NA is a universal program was present, especially for the new comers. More over, the fact that 5 members attended from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia diminished worries that NA is only a western based program which cannot work in the eastern culture.

Despite the challenge to communicate in multiple languages, there was the one common language of recovery shared during the 3 day event. Topics such as "Answered Prayers", "Recovery Just for Today", "Higher Power Among Us", "Recovery & Relapse", "Honesty - Open-mindedness - Willingness", "12 traditions", "Working the Steps" complimented each other together with the Main theme of "Enlightenment". Other topics such as Candle light Odysseys, and "Loneliness & Sex" were the meetings with highest attendance.

In Indonesia, convention get-togethers are the time where members from the NA communities of our vast archipelago have the chance to mingle and celebrate recovery together. Distance and separation of islands have become the main challenge for our fellowship in Indonesia. That's why every NA Convention in Indonesia is a chance for the Regional Service Committee to gather together and discuss service related issues and activities.

Johane's story – Bali - Indonesia

I was born in central Java, a middle child with one brother and a younger sister. When I was about five years old my parents moved to Jakarta and brought me with them. I started to hate my father so much then because he often had arguments with my grandpa. I didn't really understand what they were arguing about but all I know is that every time they argued my father also got angry with me afterwards. My grandpa was the opposite of my father; always nice to me, buying me toys and chatting with me. That's why I decided to take up his side and never listened to my father and rebelled against him.

Neither of my parents are addicts but all of my uncles were hard drinkers. One was a drug addict and another was a "bum" loitering in bus stations. Now both of them

During the convention, the Indonesian RSC took the opportunity to meet and discuss the growth and challenges of NA in Indonesia. Issues such as registering NA Indonesia to the local legal system and the progress of translation work were some of the keys issues discussed during the meeting besides the reports of growth and challenges from the different Areas. The Indonesian RSC also elected a new secretary Risa A and new treasurer Ari P. Acknowledgement of the growth of NA communities in Indonesia was followed up by an idea to host a service related workshop. The idea came up since the representatives of the areas felt that the growth of NA groups in their areas could be strengthened by better understanding of service work. Members of the RSC also hope that such a workshop could plant more seeds of leadership for NA in Indonesia.

The recovery spirit which was built during the convention reached it's climax at the closing ceremony. Members from other areas and other countries were asked to share their experience during the convention at the podium. The message to keep carrying the message was shared when a letter from Habib, our fellow recovering addict from Iran (A fellow addict who got the chance to be clean in Central Prison of Qazvin for 84 days) was read. Because no matter how long someone is clean, they can carry the NA message and change the life of an addict.

After a spirited countdown where members got to announce their clean time and sign the convention banner, the 5th Jakarta NA Convention was closed by the Serenity Prayer read in English, Indonesian, Spanish, Arabic, Finish, Sundanese and Javanese. It doesn't matter what language one speaks, but when one speaks the language of recovery and does the work to the best of their ability, it's a fact that an addict IN ANY CULTURE can stay clean, Hanya Untuk Hari In (Just For Today in Bahasa Indonesian). In Loving Service,

Risa A

have died, one shot by the police and the other committed suicide because of drugs.

When I just started using I didn't know that I would become an addict because I was so afraid of the word "narcotic". That fear came from when I was a kid I saw my neighbour busted by the police for drugs. When I asked my mother what happened to that man she replied that it happened to the man because of "narcotics" and she told me "don't you ever try that thing".

But I did the exact opposite of what my mother told me. I hung out with friends who hated their fathers also and found a common bond in that hate. We also drank and smoke pot together, and hanging out with those friends make me not want to go home. My father was always angry with me for hanging out with these kids and one

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time he tied me up to a big tree next to our house for that. I got a big resentment toward him and never spoke to him after that unless it was absolutely necessary.

I dropped out of my High school because I didn't like some of the kids and teachers there. I kept coming to school late or would cut school altogether and I told my mother I don't want to go to school at all. My mother forced me to keep going to school and so I moved to another school with such a bad system that kids never showed up in class except for final exams. I also tried my first hit of heroin in this school and I immediately felt a fulfilment I never felt before and thought that I had finally found what I need.

My mother died of cancer right after I graduated from High school. I was devastated and I started blaming myself after that. I thought that she was distressed watching my behaviour as a heroin addict on top of all the arguments she had with my father. I remembered she just kept quiet and looked sad.

After her death my brother asked me to live with him in the island of Bali as he was afraid that I would get much worse in Jakarta. But it is the same story in Bali. I tried Methadone, getting help from a priest, and relocating for a while to Jogja, another town, but nothing worked. I kept changing jobs, stealing from my friends, and even stole my brother's wife's jewellery. Around that time I met an NA member who told me how he recovered from that program. He offered to take me to meetings

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but I initially refused, thinking that I could still handle it on my own.

My life kept on falling apart and a friend died from an overdose. Finally, one night I prayed while crying to god, asking him to help me stop using. The next day, I ran into the same NA member who had offered to help me before, and this time I said I needed help, so he took me to a rehab.

I was introduced to NA in this facility. I liked the program in this rehab where I learned about addiction and myself, and to do the Steps of NA. I felt like I was watching a movie of myself as I was doing the Steps with the guidance of my Higher Power; I could clearly see the bad and good side of me.

I am more than two years clean now, and this is the longest clean time I ever had. I love my life now. I am talking to my father again; I know I can't change him, but I can change myself to love him. Sometimes I get scared I might lose all these gifts, but a lot of support from the fellowship of NA has been giving me courage.

I just recently lost my job, but its ok with me. I believe that as long as I take care of my recovery my Higher Power will take me to a better place just like he brought me to NA.

I'm still learning about my self everyday. Like an old timer once said, it's a lifetime process and I should keep on learning. And NA is teaching me how to survive.

NA China's Public Information Activities August 2006

NA China's P.I. Committee were presented with the following two opportunities for service in August:

1. The Director of a Halfway House was interested to know more about NA. The meeting was inspired by an article in the Shanghai Daily newspaper about the first halfway house opened up in Shanghai. We followed the article with a phone call to the reporter and got the contact of the director. After a few calls to the director we were given an appointment to meet with her at her office.

Nick. R, Yo Shi (NA visitor from the U.S) and Geoff.T visited her office. We ended up having a meeting with the social worker working with addicts whom we had met earlier in Feb'06 We talked about NA and recovery and were given a few new contacts of a Shanghai private hospital treating addicts and a doctor of medicine working with addicts.

2. On Aug 14th, the director of the Day-top Centre in Kunming invited us to introduce NA to the social workers and agencies of the 5 districts in Shanghai and some of the government officials of Shanghai at a 3 day

event held for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

However we were told two days later that the Public Security Bureau objected to our presence. Day-top representatives asked us to come and meet people in their hotel room. We talked with a staff member who was also an addict and another social worker and they were impressed with what we said about NA. The social worker promised to try to help us in getting in touch with people working with addicts in Shanghai.

Our efforts will continue as new opportunities will be presented to carry the message to the still suffering addict in China. Hopefully one day the doors will be open to us as we continue on our journey of giving away what was freely given to us. One thing as a result of this is that it is becoming increasingly more evident for our need to align ourselves with the bureaucracy and hierarchy that exists here in China. With the help of NA World Services, we need to start going through "the hoops" if we are to grow with local addicts.

In loving service; Geoff. T (PI Chairperson)

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newsletter@apfna.org

Update

First of all big NA hugs from the NA Kathmandu fellowship. In these last two years NA has been moving so fast; three years back there was just two meetings in Kathmandu but now we have 14 meetings each week including a woman's meeting. We have lots of newcomers who are very interested in service but we are still developing our service structure. The average number of members in a meeting is 25-70 and the woman's meeting generally attracts 4 to 12 members.

We need learning days and workshops and we wish that the oldtimers came to meetings more to help us, but they are busy with their personal responsibilities. Sometimes it is hard to organise activities without them. However we still try and we held our 4th annual Unity Day campout in September with the theme "Unity Breaks down Barriers" where 210 members attended from Kathmandu, Chitwan, Darjeeling (India) and Chicago (USA) and now we are going to change our

Area Service Committee service structure and have elections.

Of course the best news for the Nepal fellowship is about hosting the SEVENTH APF CONFERENCE in Kathmandu. It is the second time that the APF meeting has been hosted in Nepal and we are very happy to have the meeting here because we believe that it will help the growth of our community as well as the Asia Pacific Forum itself. We are also hosting our second regional convention in Kathmandu in conjunction with the APF meeting and we believe that this event will be an opportunity for many recovering addicts to join together to share each other's experience, strength and hope.

So this is our HOPE; that the meeting and the convention will be one of the best events in the history of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. - Therefore we welcome all fellow addicts from around the world!!!! We need you!!

In loving service; Suyash, Chairperson NAKTMASC

Paolo's Experience at the World Service Conference (WSC)

My first impression of the WSC was in 2004 where I was greeted by the tons of notes mailed to me by NA World Services; previous agenda, accomplishment reports, conference track materials, revisions on the Sponsorship book, regional reports, financial reports, etc. In my mind, there can't be this much paper just for me to help addicts recover, how will I ever get through with this material? To top that, there are emails on travel arrangements and hotel bookings. I was pleasantly surprised that I was able to get through the papers and arrive in LA.

I knew then that the WSC was different than any NA activity that I would encounter.

On the conference itself, I was quite surprised at the number and diversity of the addicts in the WSC, each with their story to tell about service and their commitment to the still suffering addicts. I had heard the horror stories of the heated debates that last till midnight during the WSC but each time I have been there 2004 and 2006, there have only been constructive debates and great service. The schedule is kind of hectic but quite manageable. I like the fact that the hotel was nice and we were given ample allowances for good food in the WSC.

My experience with the APF delegates is like having a home team right there in the WSC. I immediately bonded with them and felt that I could trust these people and let my guard down. With so many new faces and different people, the APF delegates were someone I could talk to and ask questions about what was really happening in the sessions that I didn't understand at first. We supported each other in the debates, taking turns to reinforce our position especially with topics that had an international scope with an emphasis on Asia. The APF delegates were friends with whom we each

shared a common bond, a warmer smile and similar experiences; almost like a special club minus the secret handshake.

The APF meeting in the WSC was for me the most enjoyable part of the WSC. We were able to talk about issues during the WSC which were related to the APF. We shared our experience with each other and renewed our commitment to be of service to the APF in our own way and in our own regions too. Of course during all these, we also talked, caught up on our personal lives and shared a lot of laughs.

My most challenging experience was when I was caught in an issue which involved two persons from the same APF region in the WSC. It was my first conference and I didn't know the policies and procedures.

Another challenging experience was to understand and speak up during the debates in the WSC. Many delegates have very strong opinions on issues and it can be a very intimidating experience.

My most rewarding experience I had was finding and making friends and with the APF delegates, we ended up even better friends. Also, I saw the service structure in action and how it serves the NA members.

My advice to new delegates to the WSC:

1. Read the literature NAWS sends you and if possible ask a past delegate to explain what it means so that you can avoid becoming overwhelmed;
2. Make your travel arrangements so that you can arrive a few days early to get over jet lag;
3. Be open to all the new experiences and friends;
4. If you have a room mate in mind, go for it; and
5. Have fun!

The Little White Book and other Vietnam News – Ford from Vietnam

Xin Chao everyone.

What is the importance of the Little White Book?

This is the question that I ponder as I write this short piece. The Little White Book was for me the most important piece of literature that I could get my hands on when I came to the fellowship more than 25 years ago. It was transportable, useful for quick relief from the onset of cravings (I could readily see I wasn't experiencing something new, others had before me), and it was educational in recovery terms and methods.

So when it comes to producing one for Vietnam I quickly remember all these things. Unfortunately, another member already had material translated into Vietnamese. This translation was done by Vietnamese expats living in the USA.

First problem, I cannot get them to proof read materials produced in Vietnam as they are not here and the member who solicited their help is currently so busy I cannot pin them down to apply pressure to get anything done.

The next problem arises from the current translation of the White Book, it is a literal translation. So what's the big deal, well Vietnam has over 50 Ethnic groups who all speak a slightly different Vietnamese from each other. They all understand the predominant dialect of Vietnamese, but it isn't how they say things.

This in its self isn't that big of a problem, as the Kinh the main Ethnic group is the main language. However, they speak two distinct dialects, first there is the Hanoian accent and then there is the southern accent. So in speaking the language it can be a little confusing too. The written language is supposed to be all the same.

Now the problem at hand is really none of the above, it is simply one of getting the translated White Book proof read by someone who understands the realities of the current Vietnamese culture, make it culturally sensitive so that the current government can accept it and get it printed. Not a biggy right. Wrong! This has become a nightmare for someone as impatient as me.

For more than two years (more like four years) I have been trying to get NA and recovery programs in general as accepted alternatives for change and a better life for the scores of addicts here in Vietnam. *I now know what a salmon feels like trying to get back to its birth place swimming upstream.* But we cannot get people to help when they say they will help, we cannot go to meetings without something to show them, we cannot go to addicts to help them unless we can translate for them as we have no materials to give them, and we cannot look like an international organization when we have

meeting only in English because we have no member from the host country. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!

So if there is anyone out there who can read and speak Vietnamese and who knows the culture here, not the Vietnamese culture in the USA and are willing to help proof read the material already translated in the literal sense. Please contact me at na.vietnam@gmail.com two years is a long wait.

On the lighter side, the meetings have a regular attendance with alot of clean time, but we are all expats. NA is alive and on line here in Vietnam, please get this message out in all your publications and announcements, we have done all we can do for now...when we have more materials to pass along I am sure we can do more.

Update

As you will read we have been as active as we can be in developing translated materials, we have translated the white book and it has now been sent in for approval.

Following this we have been approached by two treatment programs to help them in their recovery programme. We were also visited by one of the programs at an open meeting so I gave them as much material as I could get my hands on from our supplies. (If any group can donate any material for us

to give out, please bring it to Nepal and I will be happy to bring it back from Nepal.)In this we included the unapproved version of the white book so they could use it as a basic guide until it becomes approved or re-written. We have also made several attempts to go to their centre but something has always come up. We have not forgotten them nor have they forgotten us.

I am sure that we will establish a meeting in the facility and maybe they (patients) will leave and establish meetings in their home towns. Right now there is something like 22000 people in treatment centres just here in Ho Chi Minh City. A Vietnamese group has just opened in this city, it is a mixed group but it is a good start.

We have also been approached again from a treatment programme that we were working with before...but they asked us not to come because our material talked about God. They seem to have a change of heart along with a new treatment centre, backed by a Vietnamese from over-seas. We will meet them as we can also.

Before you gasp, please remember there are only a few of us who are members of NA. We get a lot of cross-over members at meetings, but the few of us who are NA members also have jobs and in my case a family to support, so we do what we can when we can. So things are slow, but they are moving in the right direction.

I hope to see all of you in Nepal in March.

How Many Ways can I Say Thankyou to Narcotics Anonymous – Tali from Hawaii

First of all I want to thank those many members in Narcotics Anonymous that were there before me. Without your dedication and love I wouldn't be walking around the planet today happy and filled with freedom. Thank you!

You know how we gather after the NA Meeting and have the second meeting? A few months ago I was on the mainland of the United States and a young man introduced himself to me. He was from Laos and was just completing treatment. He asked, "Do you think I could go back to my country in Laos and help the addicts there?" What an inspiration this young man was, he carried the message of hope and love to me that night. He and I have very diverse life experiences. I'm from Hawaii and he was from Laos; his age was 20 my age 57; our higher powers were different and his second language was English. What did we have in common? We both had experienced the miracle of our 12th step. We were clean and wanted more. We had hope and freedom! We also had the 12 Steps and loved Narcotics Anonymous. Our similarities were certainly greater than our differences. The above scenario is an example of how our Diversity becomes our greatest strength.

The similarities you and I have make us one with a single purpose in mind and that is to stay clean "Just For Today." Our World Vision Statement is to carry our message to any addict Worldwide, who knows when or how that happens? I only know that is does and am proud to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

The NA Group is the strongest vehicle we have in carrying our message. I have been given many opportunities over the years to participate in our primary purpose.

One of my greatest joys has been to travel and meet the many men and women in NA. My first time attending the APF was in Thailand 10 years ago. We had a convention at that time also. A group of us women decided to have a women's meeting which we held in my hotel room. There were a group of social workers among other Government Officials who attended the convention. The social workers had never attended a women's recovery meeting before and asked if they could attend. Of course they could, we had 17 women from all over the world in that small hotel room crying, hugging, and sharing the HOW of our program. The social workers expressed that they had never considered women having addiction problems similar to men. We left some hope, trust and faith behind. Ten years later the APF met in Thailand again, this time we had a women's meeting as part of the convention with 30-40 women in attendance. The social workers were there and treatment services are being provided for women in Thailand. Our common cause brings us together, we are united through our collective experiences and it is in those experiences that we carry our message to the still suffering addict.

Have you ever heard the door of the jail close behind you? When in Bali a group of us were doing some H&I in the jail. The jail had these big huge steel doors that looked heavy and solid. It was outside those doors that we sat around waiting for our names to be called out to go in. My name was called first. I walked through the door and it closed into what seemed like another reality. I have worked in jails for over 20 years in a number of different settings in many different capacities but I was not prepared for what I was about to see. Open air courtyards covered in barbed wire with troughs in front of the jail cages to wash them down. This was also where the rice was placed to eat. The guards told me to follow them or rather waved me along. We didn't speak the same language so communication consisted of body language. Pretty darn amazing really. I was getting kind of scared because I don't see any of my fellow NA members. We ended up in this big open air area with 60 men sitting on chairs in a circle. I was handed a format and sat there waiting for my friends. My friends came walking in one by one and we began the meeting. I was told that we started out with the men's meeting and then we would be escorted to the women's section of the prison. When I began reading the format sounded familiar. The format was familiar because previously my friend had been at the jail doing an H&I meeting and had left the format behind. We had great meetings with interpreters with lots of questions. We were one and the arms of NA reached across the ocean for me that day.

My recovery is vast with all those miracles just waiting to happen. I learned to surf when I turned 53. I surf with many individuals that are younger than me and we love it. My friend from Cartagena Columbia arrived in Hawaii to surf for 10 days before the World Convention. He spoke no English but we shared the unspoken language of love for NA. We went to meetings and surfed till we dropped. I share this with you because I have gotten to live my dreams in NA; my life is big, diverse and filled with much more to come.

In NA we pass down our steps, traditions, cultures and customs to generate the coming together of our Worldwide Fellowship. Honouring our differences teaches me about you. When you share with me I learn more about the importance of respect and integrity. My recovery becomes centred around a Higher Power. The emotional events we live through together as individuals offer me an understanding of my own humanness. The many experiences my Higher Power has given me has opened my heart to the greater whole. I appreciate and believe our immense diversity in Narcotics Anonymous is our greatest strength and opportunity for growth.

Can that young man from Laos carry the message of recovery home to his country, you bet he can! He will get the help and love he needs from our fellowship to do this because that is what we do. And I will be listening.

A Letter from the Maldives

The NA Fellowship in Maldives is very good and widening fast. We started NA meetings here on the 2nd of February 2006 and there are 2 meetings (NA-Male and Light of Life) going on in Male', the capital Island of Maldives, and 3 meetings going on in 2 different Drug Rehabilitation Centres. We are starting another meeting at a new DRC next month. For the time being there are about 150 addicts participating in 5 meetings in a week.

I would also like to tell that we are not practicing Tradition 7, passing the basket yet but we are conducting a business meeting late in November in which will try to implement other things. The literature translation is going on and we are now reading Dhivehi, the local Language, text during 4 meetings and the English text during 1 meeting.

We are also looking forward to participating in the APF/Nepal next year.

My Story – Mohamed Rashid (Rado) - Maldives

I am the eldest member of a middle class family of 5 more brothers, 2 Sisters and a mother and Father. During my school days at the age of 15 I started smoking and after few days started smoking marijuana. It went on for years and neither my family nor my old friends knew about it. After a few years I switched to hash oil and that became my choice of drug.

I completed my studies and joined the Police in February 1988. I was given a scholarship to Mysore, India, for a year and one of my colleagues there was a marijuana addict and we enjoyed smoking for the year. After the completion of my training I came back and was given a double promotion and I was a leader of the Police Headquarter at Maldives. After serving there for 7 and a half year I resigned for fear that my addiction could be revealed. It had remained hidden till then. After my resignation I went to a rural island and started living there as a teacher cum Investigating Officer of the Atoll Office (similar to the Office of the Governor in other countries) but that was my turning point. Until then my addiction problem had some limits within me, but due to some friends my addiction became full blown and I switched to Heroin due to the non-availability of hash oil.

I came back home and my physique, behaviour and attitude was so changed it only took few days for my family and friends to know about my drug addiction problem.

After few years and tremendous effort from my family I agreed to go for a pilgrimage to Mecca since we are Muslims and have strong faith in Allah. The day I left for the Journey I was loaded and it took a month for my pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. My withdrawals were experienced in Mecca and later I felt OK and decided not to use heroin. But I had another reservation; I believed that it was heroin which ruined my life not

drugs because I was OK while I was on hash oil. The night I came back home I justified to myself that I will use heroin tonight and tomorrow I will use hash oil believing that a single fix would not lead to withdrawals. But the next day and the next dayand back to the cycle. I wanted to stop. I lost everything. I have hurt all those who love me. Lying cheating and manipulating was my routine job. I stole everything that I could carry from home. My wife was so desperate she took all her belongings to her sister's house. I only lived for drugs and drugs were the only things which kept me alive. After a hard year I was arrested and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. Fortunately after few months in Jail I was sent to rehabilitation after a tremendous effort from my mom, dad and wife. I finally decided to stop. I was 35 years old and had 4 children with a wife who I never hugged even once. My eldest daughter was 16yrs. and never said "I love you" even once. Her grand mother looked after her. My wife was the best thing which happened to me; she was there with me through the hard time and during my jail days too. My father had a stroke and got sick because of me. I believe that I was responsible for so many other events in my family.

Since my rehabilitation program I am still clean today and today I am running an anti-drug NGO which helps addicts recover. It's more an after-care centre and working here helps me with my own recovery.

I don't want any child or youth to waste their life on drugs like I did and that's really important to me.

I am now 38 + and in 4th year of recovery is running now.

I still get cravings and triggers to relapse but my peers and NA helps me to sustain my recovery. I am working my recovery just for today

I Believe You Can Change – Nor from Singapore

My natural mum is my dad's second wife and when she found that she was pregnant she promised to give me away at birth to his first wife who was infertile. She tried to break her promise because she loved me so much but by the following week boils had started to sprout out all over my body. She panicked and took me to see a bomoh (Malay village doctor) who was able to tell her about her broken promises, and that the only cure was to give me away with my hands and legs tied

with strings. Broken-hearted, she did what he suggested and I quickly recovered.

Then my new mother gave birth a year later and I was given back to my mum. It seemed like I was treated like an object. My dad left my mum without saying good-bye. Shouldering the responsibility of caring for four children she packed up her belongings, leaving Malaysia to travel to Singapore to find my dad. She lived in a land where she had no one to turn to for help.

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She juggled her work as a domestic servant and role as a mother and no matter what it took, she sent all four children to school.

As a young boy I attended school and Islamic studies and was a top student but when I was in secondary school I failed to cope with the workload. I watched my mum suffer and I left school and started to work to support her. Working and being exposed to bad influences, I unwittingly embarked on the road towards addiction.

It seemed that I was always angry. I was an abused child, growing up without a complete family and needing a lot of love. These unfulfilled emotional needs created emptiness in my life. Sometimes when I was using my mum denied my existence and locked me out of home. Once I slept in a car park for two months, alone and fearful I often thought of taking my own life. I cried alone.

I used alcohol, marijuana, opium and heroin. I used these drugs even though they made me sick at first and interfered with my relationships and important occasions. The first time I suffered withdrawals I didn't know what it was until the symptoms were relieved by another spiked cigarette. I started to use more and more.

I got married so that my girlfriend didn't have to abort our child and life was OK for awhile. I had a beautiful wife, a handsome baby and a decent job. But at the same time, I was suffering from the pain of addiction. I tried very hard to quit but all my efforts were futile. No more spiked cigarettes; now I was chasing the dragon.

I made extra money by selling drugs but the more money I made the more I used. I lost my job and hurt those who had loved me. Drugs were my priority and I was a slave. I lied, conned, hustled, stole, cheated and shed crocodile tears. In the end, life became meaningless.

Finally I was arrested and three months later I was released. Six months later I relapsed and was admitted to a Rehabilitation Centre. On release I made up my mind to call it quits but I was alone and isolated. I started to work and made a lot of money but started drinking heavily

I went to prison again for minor offences. I did this to avoid admission to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre again but I was readmitted to this centre repeatedly because I couldn't maintain my recovery. I kept drinking and I hated my life.

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On the day before my sixth admission I wrote a suicide letter. I felt that I had reached the end of the road. I was done with my vicious cycle of agony, pain, humiliation, depression, insecurity, anxiety, fear and hopelessness. Alone and desperate, I wanted to die. I embraced death as a form of shutting myself out from reality but I was a coward.

One phone call away was the turning point of my life. On the 22nd Oct 1994, I embarked on a journey to recovery. Once in a while I read that letter because it reminds me of what I became.

I was selected for a Therapeutic Program and was introduced to NA. I fell in love with the fellowship and became an active member and a trusted servant of this fellowship. NA taught me to be compassionate. It taught me the meaning of life and it has also taught me to recover by practicing the "Serenity Prayer", The Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. I am overwhelmed by the power of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous and have undergone a metamorphosis. I am flying without wings.

Today, after 12 years clean, I am now working with addicts and I use my own life experience to show others that recovery is possible. The joy I get from this work cannot be measured. I have enjoyed professional successes and have been privileged to represent my community at the APF in Australia and to share at the 50th NA Anniversary in the US. But it is pay back time for me to make amendments before I safely arrive at my final destiny. I mean RIP: Rest In Peace. RIP: Recovery In Progress. RIP: Resurrection In Paradise. To sustain these RIPs is not an easy process.

The Serenity Prayer has a powerful meaning that helps me in my recovery and I use it when I struggle to be a "normal" person. As a recovering addict, I am aware of my weaknesses and have to work to stay clean a day at a time. Addiction is a disease that requires a lifetime of nurturing spiritual therapeutic values. Just as not taking proper care of a small wound on a leg could develop into gangrene one puff of Heroin could cost me my years of freedom.

Five years after I got clean I finally earned my mother's trust. I made amends and finally the strings that tied my hands and legs were untied. I was free from being the unwanted son and I have become her beloved son now.

I am aware that age is now catching up with me but I am not frightened of death. I wish to die clean; closing my eyes with a loving heart, knowing I shall close the final chapter of my life in peace.

Upcoming NA events

BACNA XIII

Since the inception of NA in Mumbai [former Bombay] - India, way back in 1983, the fellowship of NA Bombay has successfully hosted twelve NA conventions and a few Campouts.

We as a fellowship have witnessed lots of ups & downs in recovery and service. But, in spite of the rigmaroles of life, NA members took time, to come together once in a while, to share their Hope and Strength, Joy and Happiness and more importantly to thank our Higher Power for being with us all along.

BACNA is a time to celebrate our recovery, a time to get together, meet distant friends and remember those whose memories still reside in our hearts. The fellowship of NA Bombay takes pride in hosting a convention. It brings addicts from within the India region and from across the Seven Seas to experience the togetherness. It's one event that everyone longs for.

Our theme, "Back To Basics" was inspired from the fact that, many of us felt that over the years we drifted away from the program basics and that we need to keep things simple. Simply by following the basics of the program we find that we have hosted twelve conventions and are truly "Back To Basics".

"Back To Basics" will be held on the 11th, 12th and 13th Jan 2007 at St Mary's Villa, Shooting Point opposite the Khandala Railway Station, Khandala, Maharashtra, India.

You will find information on the Bombay Area website : <http://nabombay.org/> - <http://nabombay.org/bacna.htm> or email us on : bacna@nabombay.org / bacna13@gmail.com

In Loving Service; Sunil B, BACNA XIII Convention Information Chair

Orissa, India Convention "Dare To Dream"

The Orissa Area of Narcotics Anonymous, India is hosting their Convention from February 9th - 11th 2007 in the open air amphitheatre, beside the Konark Sun Temple. Email queries to Oacna_1@yahoo.com

The 2007APF Meeting will be held March 13-15,2007, in Kathmandu, Nepal at Club himalaya,nagrkot

16 March 2007A Literature Translations Workshop Hosted by NAWs

The 2nd Nepal Regional Convention NRECNA-2

Theme: "NA On Top Of The World" will be held March 16 - 18, 2007, at "Hotel Space Mountain"

Nagarkot, Bhaktapur (Kathmandu) Nepal. Inquiries to nrecna_ktm@yahoo.com

Please check out the APF website at www.apfna.org for further details of this event.

A Reminder for Communities Seeking to Attend the Upcoming APF Meeting

Just a reminder for all communities who are intending to attend the APF Meeting in March, remember that you can get funding for only one delegate per community. If your community cannot afford to find their own delegate to the meeting please complete the funding assistance form on the APF website and contact the Admin Committee if you require assistance. All APF communities need to consider hosting fundraisers and consider passing on your seventh tradition funds to help pay for this essential but expensive event. The APF website is 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).

Thankyou to everyone who submitted articles for this newsletter We have saved some material for the next Newsletter because we received so many wonderful reports and stories.

Send material to < newsletter@apfna.org >