

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

Welcome to the January / February 2007 Edition of the Asia Pacific Forum Newsletter. This newsletter aims to provide you with information about our communities and activities and this edition includes the remainder of the community reports from the 2007 APF meeting and some personal experiences of members working the Third Step – ‘We turned our will and our lives

30th Edition

over to the care of God, as we understood him’

To find out more about the Asia Pacific Forum itself you can access our website on: www.apfna.org and if you want to access full versions of the community reports from the last APF meeting you can find them at: www.apfna.org/apf_minutes/downloads/2007/community_reports/

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:
 - a. To develop and support NA in this part of the world
 - b. To support translations of NA literature into our languages
 - c. To support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific
 - d. To maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and Regions within this part of the world
 - e. To continue working with NAWS in our efforts.

We turned our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood him

‘Stop Struggling’ Kimmy (Hawaii)

The 3rd step means to me making a decision to let go for the Higher Good which may not be my will. Surprise! In the 3rd step it says ‘...we...stop struggling’. ‘We trust...there is growth in taking action despite our fear or uncertainty....’

The action is always one of love...loving kindness toward others and maybe even more importantly, ourselves. We feed our faith tenderly, learning to trust our heart with difficult decisions, knowing there is no good or bad, only more insights to learn from.

Eventually I become closer to my own goodwill, my own God-consciousness. And though I may still make decisions based on my fear, my desires, and my self centeredness; it is difficult to do so without awareness. Awareness is only that...awareness. Taking the loving action is the key. No matter the pain, the giving up of desires, our wills ... this is what makes us

spiritual beings of the utmost use to God- Universe-the Higher Good and all beings.

The situations in my life where I learned these lessons were always heart-wrenching turns in the road, or times when acting without fear and doing the crazy fearless, unsafe thing gave me a glimpse of how my Life could truly be. When I listen to that voice inside that says ‘Fly!’ and don’t look down, live this moment because it will not come again, take that risk, make that phone call, listen to that dream, say that prayer, smile at whoever is in front of me, listen with my heart, speak my truth, when I truly listen to the higher voice inside (which is God-Spirit-All-That-Is), I feel connected to you with no separation.

My dis-ease is one of separation, feeling alone, acting alone, which in the end is the opposite of turning my will desires actions over to the care of Something Greater than myself; that Spirit that connects us through Love.

'Take my will and my life' Sam B (China)

Speaking for myself, Step 3 of NA is the end of the beginning! Working on Step 3 I recall my state of being was as a very scared person in a very scary world. I was so afraid of being rejected, even by God that I called the God of my understanding providence.

In reality what happened was that I experienced the beginning of the end of the way of life that I had known and began to really participate in the way of life I had chosen.

As time went on I came to live life on life's terms. I learned some humility, gathered some self respect. I began to practice spiritual principles in almost all of my affairs. Willingness was the key for me, as I could only suit up and show-up to learn that there is a Higher Power in my life, in our lives.

Everyone's right to Belief – Henry (Australia)

One of the biggest hurdles I had with the 12 steps was not the powerlessness of the first step, the fear of self-reflection in the fourth step, nor the looming terror of the ninth step. No, it was all that airy-fairy higher power business scattered throughout the rest of the steps.

Various pious-but-well-meaning members trumpeted that if you don't get a loving higher power in your life, you'll use.

What I did realise however was that as much as I found the whole need for a god/higher power/

Buddha/force outside myself/Easter bunny/whatever so intellectually lame and biologically ridiculous, I was somehow going to have to go with the flow. But how do I do that without abandoning my principles? Simple; ask my sponsor.

I was fortunate enough to have the late, great, much-loved and equally much-missed John L for my sponsor. He had his own belief system, and I was half-expecting a bit of proselytising. Instead, what I got was a fascinating discussion on the whole god/hp conundrum, and a crash course in understanding everyone's right to belief. He shared with me what worked for him, and gave me some much appreciated guidance and information. Most importantly, he told me to be true to myself and not censor myself.

As time went by and I learned how to feel, I experienced everything that the Promise of Recovery can offer. Guided by my Higher Power which I sometimes call God and never call providence anymore, I have come to understand that I am living the miracle and just beginning to blossom as the dream of being a responsible productive member of society. Thanks to working the 3rd Step of NA – Guide me in my recovery, show me how to live!

Continuing down the path of service I look forward to sharing this message, we come to similar understandings by, "Letting Go and Letting God" into our lives. As we work it because it works - we can all say that we have the 3rd Step of NA to be grateful for.

But it has nothing to do with gods or higher powers. I simply don't believe in these things. And I don't believe in miracles. And what is spirituality anyway? Sometimes I do things for people who are less fortunate than me because I can afford to. This to me is not spiritual; it's merely an obligation I have to my fellow man.

I believe we are collectively the real power in step three and frankly I find it somewhat depressing that so many of us will not take credit for the good we do. For instance, the general consensus in our fellowship is that if I were to walk out of the rooms tomorrow and start shooting heroin like a demon, then that's my will. However, if I were to then make it back to the rooms, somehow that's the work of some invisible, inexplicable entity who is so benevolent it wants to save my thieving, manipulative, junkie arse while some poor kid is dying a long, slow painful death from leukemia in the kids' hospital on the other side of town.

So, if you take offence at me standing in a meeting and saying I think the whole idea of a god is preposterous, then deal with it, because at the last census in Australia, 15.3% people said they didn't buy any religion whatsoever. I'm betting there might even be a few addicts in that figure, and I believe they have as much right to be in our rooms as anyone.

Don't give me what I ask, let me have what you will – Joy M

Awhile ago I was coming back fresh from a relapse. Yet as I look back I remember the immense help I received, thank you. My last relapse had done me a great favor; it broke down my ego and exposed my powerless state. My low self esteem prevented me from being able to take help from my NA fellows. I knelt down and prayed for faith and stayed at home for five days on my own, none other than God could repair my soul.

I prayed and hours turned into a day, and I felt that God has kept me clean for a day so I said "Thank You" from the depth of my heart. Another day followed and yet another. After five days I found the courage to go a meeting and seek help.

I went to the Orrissa area convention and shared in the newcomer and the burning desire sessions and the crowd cheered as if I had done something great. And yes, I actually had done something great. I had kept coming back, I had let God heal and protect me and I was 30 days clean

There is no better way to live – David (China)

My name is David and I am an addict who moved to China for work and to be with my wife who is Chinese. 2 years ago, I got a divorce and things really seemed upside down. I managed to stay clean through my higher power and a lot of prayer. Just I didn't know what to do after my divorce so I just let everything go to the best of my ability and allowed myself a chance to move on. The pain was lifted after awhile and I was back on my feet again.

Show me how to live Paul (China).

When I was almost 10 years clean in the Summer of 2006 and after 41 years of being a bachelor I was planning on getting married, but after I returned from a vacation my girl said it was over! She said that one of my NA friends had met her while I was gone and told her that I didn't love her, was just using her and wouldn't marry her: I felt shock and terror. My friends in the program had betrayed me. Not only that but what they said wasn't true.

I found that I hated whoever did this to me and never wanted to meet them again so I decided it

I started to see that my ego and my self-will had caused me to relapse. My intelligence had harmed me again and again. I was puzzled. Isn't my brain God-given? So I surrendered once again and then came the realization that "There is nothing wrong with intelligence provided you keep humility first!" Today my frequent prayer is - don't give me what I ask, let me have what you will. Today, God has brought me to my

Third Step.
I now thank God for each and every day- rough or easy, every feeling, sweet or bitter for through all these I learn and grow. I find peace and I am able to love myself, to receive love and to give love. I count my graces and it does not end and the day goes by, and there's no time to complain. I ring up newcomers, accompany them to meetings and afterwards I soothe them with a patient hearing and a few NA slogans if I can. Got myself a sponsor and took up some formal service in my home group; it feels absolutely superb. It rocks!

Just keep coming back – it works wonders!

There have been many times that I have let go but divorce was a very painful one. In the past emotions related to women have given me extreme pain that would drive me deeper into isolation and my normal reaction is to use heavily but by letting go and having faith that things would work out I made it through this break up clean.

Although I still take my will back from time to time I can see this does nothing but try to kill me and/or others around me. N.A. rocks; there is no better way to live.

was better to use and try my luck with other friends. But in my madness I decided to confront the whole NA group at once and beat the one responsible for telling these lies.

I asked them "who did it?? We went around and around and talked till late at night and after a few hours, I realized from looking at their faces that it was not one of them. They were actually trying to help me. It touched me deeply because I knew that threatening a whole group was not normal recovery behavior.

Eventually my ex told me it had been someone we both knew from business and not from NA and I have been clean ever since. I learned the meaning of the true meaning of third step.

If I wouldn't have taken my question to the group, I am sure I would never have returned to

NA. They listened and loved me as crazy as I was like NA groups tend to do. Take my will and my life-Guide me in my recovery show me how to live. The group once again showed me how to live. Thank you.

The Third Step - A true story – Archer (Hawaii)

I was newly clean and living in a small A-frame shack in the woods. I had just gotten a small TV as I pieced my life back together. That night I switched on the news to see coverage of a small boy who had been swept away in a flood. The firemen and police were up ahead in the wash ready to grab him, and as the helicopter's camera watched, a rescuer grabbed the boy's hand and just as fast, a log under the water knocked him from the man's hand and he went down and disappeared under the bridge.

As I was watching I was thinking, "I wonder if my abusive ex-partner was also swept away -- maybe he is suffering some where!" In that moment I cried. I realized I was so angry and resentful I could not even feel the horror of what I was seeing -- this small boy swept away. I was numb to life from my anger. I hit my knees sobbing and asked Higher Power to please help me to feel compassion; to please take my will and remove this anger.

I went to sleep holding on to my Basic Text life a life raft. Soon I began dreaming that I was walking up some stairs in a fog. It was cold and I could see nothing but clouds around me. I sat down on one of the steps and felt someone behind me. As I turned around all I could see were a pair of feet -- but they were kind feet. I put my head down on them and a hand came down and brushed my brow softly like my Mother used to. I felt at peace.

I was awakened by the telephone ringing. I groggily answered it and it was the voice of my ex. My heart began to pound! He said, "Please don't hang up. I know I am not supposed to call you. I want to apologize for all of the harm that I did to you. I am so sorry for hurting you. It was wrong." I was stunned! He continued, "I am clean now and in a program called Narcotics Anonymous."

In that moment all I felt was compassion, and amazement at the care of my Higher Power.

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

Community Reports

Iran joins the APF 2008 – Paolo (APF Vice Chair)

We are excited that Iran has decided to join the APF in 2008. This large and sophisticated NA community is very welcome and can contribute significantly to our other communities especially those who have to integrate the NA twelve steps with their religious beliefs and form of Government.

We can all be inspired by Iran as it is the fastest growing NA region in the world where it has grown so large that it has its own branch of NA World Services Office and can print 22,000 copies of the basic text in Farsi and the next week all copies are distributed.

NA Meeting In Wuhan China – Geoff

The NA meeting in Wuhan, China has been a direct result of the PI effort, that we did a couple of months ago in Wuhan, The meeting

got started with the help of Dr. Li, who runs a rehabilitation center and some addicts, who have been out of treatment for a couple of years. Dr. Li and the small group of addicts

have had the meeting running for nearly for 2 months with having very little idea of how to run a meeting.

Dr. Li who has been helping with getting the meeting started had a lot of questions about the meeting and wanted to know if they were doing it the right way and we helped as much as we could by phone and then decided to visit them to help them out.

I spent the whole day answering all their questions on running the meeting, God, 12 steps, 7th tradition, sponsorship, being clean, alcohol is a drug etc.

The word "God" was a big issue, as most of the people in China don't have a concept of God or

higher power. I did share about some of our members having a issue with this and some of them taking the NA group as their higher power, as they consider the group as bigger and much stronger then them and some believing and creating their own concept of some HP.

At the end of the day I was pretty exhausted with answering questions the whole day long and I pretty much got the drift of how the WSO staff members feel when they go around to different places and have to answer all the questions that we throw at them. Over all it was a great experience for me to be able to be of service.

China Update – Sam

NA China is a Regional member of the APF that now has 15 meetings. What we are most grateful for is that 5 of those meetings are conducted by local native Chinese in the native language. We feel and see the sight of the world vision of NA becoming a reality in China. We are prepared to continue to Carry the Message of Recovery the NA Way in China eg we held a

PI presentation at the Shanghai Addiction and Recovery Conference 20th of March 2007

Without the workshops and learning tools we gain through the APF and NAWS we would still be struggling and wondering how we could do that. Now thanks to our being prepared we are ready for the call to carry the message.

Indonesia Community Report

The Indonesian Fellowship currently has 22 meeting, 4 meetings in English and the rest is in Indonesian across the archipelago. There are 6 active communities within the Indonesian region and three of these have an existing Area-level structure. Average numbers of Indonesia members is 80 while there are around 30 English speaking/foreign members are concentrated in the island of Bali where there are the largest number with clean time and service experience.

Most of our new members are referred from treatment services, PI work has been sparse.

Our only subcommittee is the Literature Translation Committee and we have IPs #2,7,8,11,16,17 and 22 submitted for approval. We also want to translate the Basic Text.

We are working towards finalizing the draft of

an NA constitution (using our Steps and Traditions) so we can become an officially recognized body by the government; NA cannot legally enter a jail to do an H&I meeting without being listed as an official NGO so we have been using the name of a registered recovery facility which may be creating perceived affiliations. We have not been able to legally open bank accounts.

Attracting newcomers have been quite a challenge because of perceived Christian religious connotations within our large Muslim community eh the Serenity Prayer, the harm reduction campaign for HIV/AIDS, the skeptical medical community, and the general lack of knowledge about the disease concept. We also want to move the fellowship away from treatment centres and would like to focus on reaching out to female addicts

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newsletter@apfna.org

Personal recovery depends on NA Unity – a PI Report from Keshav Pokhara Nepal

I am a PI member for this area. Now days, the committee was running smoothly with discussing of guidelines and practicing 12 traditions and 12 concepts. We meet once in a week and already did PI in Chief District Office, Jail, Schools, and Organizations etc.

If there is any problem in home group meeting place, if a meeting place changed or newly started and if there are events then the committee formally works to help these situations. We also produce the meeting lists.

We coordinate our efforts with the H&I subcommittee for fulfilling our primary purpose. Now days other areas of Nepal are also interested to form PI sub-committees and we are helping them but at times we know that we can always improve our activities in the field of public relation.

On the celebration of 7 years since starting NA meeting in Pokhara, the ASC decided to have our first Annual Convention of Narcotics Anonymous-I and we decided to hold a PI community meeting on the 9th July, which was the date of the first NA meeting for Pokhara.

Major outcomes of PI Presentations:

- We became better able to inform people about NA, and we were able to solve the problem of meeting places, because we got new places;
- The convention succeeded without any interfere of Police and other local GO'S, NGO'S & individuals;
- We cultivated leaders by encouraging those who observed those presentations to be speakers of next presentation and built members confidence;
- We used Projector-Improved new techniques and prepared our papers which makes PI presentations more reliable and effective and gives members more confidence.

Lessons Learned:

- We should have patience, tolerate, consistent, humble, well dressed, look confident, respectful.
- Should be effort oriented rather than result;
- It is a process rather than an event;
- Follow up should be regular- After giving the letter again we should follow up for the letter.
- The meeting time should be out of office time and office days;
- It is effective to hold the PI community meeting in first day of an event before starting the event.
- Our Legal obstacle is that NA in Nepal is a non-registered organization.

And yes after the meeting, the old timers of this area are interested to join PI.

I am grateful to do service in the PI sub-committee, in which all of the members are in personal program and all have willingness to do effective NA service. We are doing our best for our unity. Yes, we are working on the principle that personal recovery depends on NA unity.

NERF Regional Assembly Update - Kamad

We are glad to inform you that we have concluded our 18 NERF Regional Assembly with a good note. In the past we faced problems from the general community which has compelled us to shut down some

meeting places due to our attitudes and behaviors but now after the series of workshops and meetings among the member we realized that we are beginning a new chapter in our recovery.

Nepal Literature Update

Nepal has in hand their very 1st translated IP, which is IP#1. World service sent the IP's out to them from the free literature fund just in time for their recent convention. We heard through the APF grapevine that the local fellowship was so excited that they spent 30 hours of translation time prior to the convention to work on 2 more IP's #7 & 22. These are both in progress and they look forward to seeing them soon completed.

Saudi News

For the last six months the number of NA groups has increased rapidly, as 7 groups started their meetings in different cities of the country. Three groups started in the western province, two groups in the south province, one group in the middle province and one group in the eastern province. Also an English speaking group with one meeting a week has begun meeting since last January in Dhahran city.

Report by the Delegate of JAPAN Masaru

After 20 years of waiting, **we have finally completed the translation of the Basic Text into Japanese.** Last September we had the fourth regional convention in Tokyo with approximately 800 participants. We also conveyed our message for the first time to prisons as NA.

We face some challenges including insufficiency of funds. Most of our funds come from the profit from the regional convention and any other income is very meagre.

We held a wonderful RSC meeting from June 15 to 17 where we tried the brainstorming process we learnt at the WSC and the APF; it was great.

The topics were “What is the primary purpose of Narcotics Anonymous?” “What can we do when someone stirs up violence or disruptions during the NA meeting?” “What is our common welfare?” and on the last day, we discussed “How can we effectively pass on the results of RSC meetings to each group?”

Australian Community Report to the APF 2007

We have approx-Groups 375/Meetings 385 within Areas 17 with an approximate membership of 2 - 3,000 spread out across the whole country. Our Region meets every four months and we pay the travel costs to attend. Apart from the usual subcommittees we have an Outreach Subcommittee that maintains contact with isolated groups and loner members.

We also have the Fellowship Service Office-which looks after literature stock & distribution and provides limited Admin support, for instance, where a legal entity is required e.g. Public Liability Insurance. Urgent business and

One of the exciting news is that a meeting was started last month – by female addicts in the rehabilitation center – and they regularly meet once a week.

Now we have around 60 meetings per week held by 19 groups distributed around Saudi Arabia.

(When we discussed our common welfare/unity I was personally deeply moved by a sharing of one of the members. I understood that I have been very childish and very self-centered for long years, but in this meeting, I realized that I cannot keep clean without a group. In order to keep our group alive, I need to reach out the still suffering addicts and to be of help to other members.)

And lastly, we want to meet the challenge of conveying the NA message to Korea. About 200 participated in the last joint seminar with members from Japan and NAWS. This event resulted in much joy. However, the impression we got while in Korea was that there is still little recognition of NA there due to confusion between NA and a TC. We must also overcome the language barrier. We appreciate the help we received from the Hawaiian fellowship to reach out to addicts in Korea.

There are 8 groups in Korea, each with its own meeting. At present there seems to be little difference between TC and NA but there is some improvement compared to last year.

subcommittee meetings are held between RSC meetings by telephone conference calls.

Our biggest recent achievements include wider Fellowship awareness of the APF, Regional Membership Survey and the development of a regional Resource pool to assist RSC activities. Our biggest challenges include finding the right person for the right service job, communicating and assisting each other across a vast continent and reviewing and implementing positive changes to our service structure.

We have had quite a challenging year dealing with personalities in the service structure. We allowed this to dominate our time & resources,

both at & between service meetings. Our lesson may be seen as what can happen when we drift

from the spiritual guidance offered by our Traditions & Concepts.

Hello from Guam – Where America's "Just For Today" Begins – from Frank

NA in Guam was born in 1987 and although Guam is listed by WSO under the Hawaii Region we are represented at the APF.

We have two NA Groups and schedules are distributed to the courts and treatment services. Meeting attendance is around 12-15. Our HELP Line started in 1994 but has been disconnected due to lack of funds. We have 2 weekly H&I meetings at the local hospital.

NA attendance has varied through the years and peaked at around 30-50 per meeting. Our challenges include keeping old-timers at our meetings and in service, our requirement that people must have 3 months clean and sponsor

to chair a meeting means that the same members keep doing this service. We collect enough funds to keep our services happening.

Because of our involvement with the APF we've regained contact with our region (Hawaii), received literature contributions from them and now have direct contact with world services...put it this way, before the APF we had no literature and no money...now we still have no money (lol), but we have literature and a better concept of service.

The APF has taken the service which was in my mind and has placed it in my heart, and for that I am truly grateful.

Upcoming Events

Many events and celebrations are happening all over the APF throughout the year. You can find out about them by visiting the APF website on: http://www.apfna.org/Global_Pages/Events.htm

The next APF meeting will be held in [Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia](#), on March 18-20 2008 with a Malaysian convention held at the weekend. The APF will begin 9AM on Tuesday the 18 March till the evening of 20th of March.

We are in the final negotiations with the Grand Seasons Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. We want to thank NA KL for all their assistance in Hotel selection and site preparation for APF 2008.

For further information on NAKL's Convention visit their website www.nakl.tk

APF Newsletter

The APF Newsletter assists the NA communities in the Asian 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 focused 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.

We invite you to send articles and reports for the next Edition to: newsletter@apfna.org

From the APF Newsletter Committee

Thank you to everyone who assisted us to develop this edition of the APF newsletter. We will be reviewing the purpose and focus of the newsletter at the next meeting of the APF in March 2008 in KL. This newsletter was compiled by the APF Newsletter Committee consisting of: Bella (Aust), Geoff (China) Sue H (Australia) David K (Malaysia) Danny U (Indonesia) and Ron B (Australia)

This edition is the last one for my service commitment (Bella) as Newsletter Committee Chairperson, thank you for letting me be of service. Thank you also to Sue H who is completing her term of service for the newsletter.

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