

## Public Relations

The 2011–2012 fiscal year marked our third fiscal year of reduced PR activity due to budget constraints. However, we were able to realize participation in one additional international conference during this year. We are mindful of our slow progress toward public relations activity while drug use continues worldwide and pharmacology advances continue in the treatment of addiction. Meanwhile, the United Nations 2010 Drug Report (the most current report for FY 2011) indicated the US and Canada have seen an increase of problem drug users who abuse synthetic opioids/prescription medicine, particularly in the age group of 50 and over, while Europe continues to see heroin as the most popular drug of choice. In Southeast Asia, crystal methamphetamine is the primary drug of abuse. The need for Narcotics Anonymous to be seen as a stable, accessible, and reliable recovery option worldwide remains. At the International Society of Addiction Medicine Conference in Oslo, Norway, NA represented the only drug-free recovery approach present to provide information to physicians; medication-based addiction treatments, on the other hand, were very well represented. Our presence in Oslo helped our relations with the Norwegian government; the Director for Substance Abuse for the country requested a presentation, as did a treatment center that primarily employs drug replacement as their treatment method. That particular institution was interested in Narcotics Anonymous due to requests from patients for abstinence-based approaches to recovery.

Information from the March 2011 NAWS Environmental Scan demonstrated a relevant need for NA to remain visible and interact with treatment and healthcare professionals. Funding for treatment is often linked to drug replacement therapy, particularly in countries that have government-sponsored healthcare. We attended the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) conference, which was a mirror to ISAM yet on a larger, national scale. The ASAM conference validated our need to maintain a presence; 90% of exhibitors were pharmaceutical companies. Many physicians stopped by to tell us that they were grateful we were at the conference because abstinence-based recovery options had been lacking. At the ASAM conference we met two physicians who are recovering in NA, one of whom does administer drug replacement medication, but whose patients are drug-free by the time of discharge. The second physician brainstormed with colleagues about how to portray abstinence as a recovery model. Many addiction professionals (approximately 60% of ASAM physicians) prefer the use of drug replacement medications to an abstinence-only approach. With the continued medicalization of addiction treatment and the widely used ASAM and National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) definition of addiction as a brain disease, NA needs to remain vigilant with informing medical professionals as well as government agencies that Narcotics Anonymous is a viable abstinence-based community resource for recovering addicts. The demographic profile of addicts attending their first meetings is changing over time as many more are arriving on medication given to them in

### **Trend**

(from the NAWS Environmental Scan)

**There is a growing perception that addiction is treatable through medication—and that NA is not a resource for those on medication.**



treatment. Cooperation with healthcare professionals and a welcoming atmosphere from members will help NA to be that community resource for addicts. We know there are many other recovery options available, but our goal is to make it possible for addicts to find a home in NA.

Governmental relations are key in many countries. We have reported about the growth of NA in Iran through public relations efforts with the government, and this has also held true in other countries. NA Spain has continued its relationships with government officials since the PR efforts that took place in preparation for WCNA 33, and the UK has formed strong, ongoing cooperative relationships with government. Southeast Asia is one area that has continuing drug use and where many addicts have not found NA. Southeast Asia has minimal NA presence; NAWS presented at the International Federation of Non-government Organisations (IFNGO) conference, which was held in Malaysia in 2011. We had not attended this conference for over ten years, and coming back provided an opportunity to interact with many professionals in treatment and government, including police from Malaysia and treatment professionals from Thailand and the Philippines. These professionals were interested in our literature, and the president of Thailand expressed interest in NA to help his citizens.

Public relations service work is not confined solely to government, healthcare, and treatment. PR is a valuable service with drug courts because of the number of potential members they refer to meetings, and they continue to proliferate with new initiatives for veteran and reentry courts. As of 2010 (most current numbers) there are approximately 2,316 active drug courts, 31 US reentry drug courts, and 62 veteran drug courts. Additionally, the National Drug Court Institute figures indicate that 15 countries use the drug court model. Research demonstrates the efficacy of drug courts and their cost-effectiveness in lieu of incarceration. NAWS continues to attend their annual drug court conference to build cooperative relationships with these professionals and to learn of challenges they have faced in referring potential members to NA. With all the initiatives for veterans, veteran drug courts are growing, and they will be having their own annual conference. NAWS is considering a second cooperative venture with the physician researcher we partnered with for a member survey. The target group for the member survey will be recovering veterans, but all members who attend a meeting will be encouraged to participate. This second survey is in the early planning stages, and the survey itself hasn't been developed. We are providing advance notice due to the numbers of veterans who may be referred to NA from the drug courts.

The criminal justice aspect of PR, which encompasses incarcerated addicts and those on parole or probation, relies on effective cooperation with professionals in that field. As mentioned above, reentry courts may contribute to increased numbers of addicts in meetings. Building and maintaining cooperative relationships with professionals in criminal justice is one of the first steps in welcoming these potential members to NA. In an effort to support members who provide services to incarcerated addicts, we have resources such as *H&I Basics* and Chapter Six in the *Public Relations Handbook*, "Criminal Justice." We also have a publication for incarcerated addicts, *Reaching Out*, which has implemented improvements based on suggestions from a workgroup and supported by the board. Online subscriptions grew from 5,221 to 9,109, and paper copies by mail total 10,871. This periodical is a resource that can be used in public relations work, as it gives professionals a chance to read that members who heard the message of recovery "on the inside" are staying clean and becoming productive members "on the outside."





## NAWS Membership Survey

At each world convention since 1996, we have distributed a membership survey, and more recently we have also offered it online for members who did not attend the convention. We distributed surveys to attendees at the Friday evening speaker meeting at WCNA 34 in San Diego, in September 2011, and made it available online through 31 January 2012. We had the largest number of respondents ever—17,492. The surveys returned certainly bury the myth that there is no recovery in NA, as the average length of cleantime among respondents was 10.87 years. No drug came out as a clear-cut main drug of use, but the top two (within a percentage point of each other) were stimulants and opiates, and this statistic actually is similar to those found in a recent UN report on drug abuse. In this survey we also asked about medication use, and 47% of those who responded to the survey stated they had taken medications for health maintenance and mental health issues. We have the 2010 *In Times of Illness* for member support and the SP NA *Groups and Medication* for group support. Even though we as a fellowship have no opinion on outside issues, the issue of medication tends to spurn members' comments. As a fellowship, we are aging, which is a factor that may contribute to an increase in health issues. NA's newest piece of recovery literature, *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*, offers life experience as we continue in our recovery.

The *Membership Survey* also illustrated that members experience marked improvement with family relationships, social connectedness, stable housing, and employment. Most professionals realize that using addicts do not function in society particularly well, yet they are more interested in how we have improved to become productive, contributing members of society. The *Membership Survey* is a resource for public relations efforts; professionals in the fields of treatment, government, healthcare, and criminal justice are keen on the facts in the survey as it provides them with information about NA in an unbiased manner.



## Member Survey

The NAWS Membership Survey was validated through the member survey which was administered by NA members at the group level in the states of Pennsylvania and Florida and in Los Angeles County. This was the cooperative venture with an independent, nonaddict physician researcher. The member survey mirrored the results of the *Membership Survey*. Most professionals want to be assured of the reliability of data they are presented with, and this independent member survey, which validates our own NAWS Membership Survey, helps provide that assurance. Our desire to form cooperative relationships with researchers is not new, and in fact the perceived benefits of doing so were even highlighted in the *Public Relations Handbook* when it was approved at WSC 2006. This researcher's outcomes will be published in a medical journal in the near future. This cooperative effort is a first for NA—a nonaddict physician researcher reporting about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous to his peers in the medical field. This action may help raise the credibility of NA in the eyes of the medical community. With the continued medicalization of addiction treatment, these types of cooperative relationships with physicians who are familiar with NA's effectiveness will be vital to the continued growth of NA worldwide.

**Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.**  
**Approved World Board Minutes**  
**5-7 January 2012**



Friday 6 January

**Strategic Planning Session II**

**6. II Strategic Planning Session**

The day was spent in a Strategic Session Planning session.

Saturday 7 January

**Corporate Responsibilities**

**7. Financial Overview of NA World Services**

A financial overview was provided.

We will continue with the same level of activity, cutting costs wherever possible; however, we will be looking to see what more we can do with PR because keeping our contacts is important. We ended year on a slight positive financial note.

Having this meeting early in January didn't allow for staff to complete the November financials, although summary was emailed to the Board.

There was some discussion about the fund flow chart and finding additional ways to get members to comprehend the importance of including NAWS in their contribution decisions.

- **Audit**

Audit will be sent to the board

**8. Other corporate responsibilities:**

**a. Production Items**

The revised *Social Media* pamphlet passed out to the board.

The reformatted *Just for Today* gift edition is currently on hold due to increasing paper costs. We are also going to have to renegotiate paper /book production costs in Iran because of paper costs being incredibly high. Nothing else noted.

**b. Website revision**

The revised Narcotics Anonymous website presented to the board, the board informed that two board members are being used to guide direction because of their experience. Input:

- Combine *literature* and *products*. It's confusing that those are in two different locations or suggest *literature* as an icon and *other products* inside that as another icon
- Would like a different color scheme maybe find a different blue or green
- Working on writing changes to the shopping cart
- Include a same code on each page – make sure that stays the same (for example green bar)
- Replicate the front page – words not icons so we don't have to go back



**Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.**  
**World Board Approved Minutes**  
**7-10 March 2012**

APPROVED

JUL 14 2012

BY: 

**Wednesday 7 March**

**Key Messages and IDT's for the 2012-2014 Cycle**

**Present:** Antonia Nikolinakou, Paul Craig, Arne Hassel-Gren, Odilson Gomes Braz Junior, Franney Jardine, Mary Banner, Jim Buerer, Mark Hersh, Inigo Calonje Unceta, Piet de Boer, Tom McCall, Ron Blake, Sharon Harzenski-Deutsch, Ron Hofius and Ron Miller.

**Staff:** Anthony Edmondson, Becky Meyer, Eileen Perez and various staff member joined for the Key Messages session.



**Key Messages**

Jim DeLizia began discussion with points about key messages; a key message is an important concept or a perspective that we want the audience to understand. A key message is clear, concise, can be adapted, it's powerful and compelling.

**First Exercise**

Each table is to take a large post-it and write down key messages from their assigned Issue Discussion Topic. We need to first decide what the need for understanding is, followed by concepts that put a shape around the information. When doing this, we need to think about what we need communicate, who do we need to talk to about this and what language/words will help with this? Issue discussion topics are:

- NA Vision
- Self-Support
- Principles before Personalities
- Group Conscience, Delegation, and Accountability
- Collaboration

After we complete the exercise, each table will read their post-it results

**Self-Support** supports NA as a whole. Altruism concept, spiritual experience of loving our fellowship, less about self and more about support, the inherent joy not obligation with support, the FD vision, the buck stops here, connecting the resources, all groups are self-supporting, receiving benefits, how much is my recovery worth, what opportunity does it give me. The idea that self-support is receiving support which is self-support meaning when we are in need we go to a meeting, spiritual independence. A sign of a mature membership is a membership that is less selfish and not about us, doing personal service, having a better attitude and better actions.

**NA Vision**; fulfilling our primary purpose was the focal point, we build an understanding of our primary purpose and our vision, understanding the link between filling our primary purpose and vision of NA service, the fruit and the seeds story, the power of collaboration, together we can, the vision statement is the report card and functions as our standard for prioritization and fulfillment of it. We are the living carriers of the vision which is directly related to our responsibility. Inspiration and empowerment keep coming up throughout.

Saturday 10 March

Debbie H and Stephan Lantos joined the meeting.

## Financial Overview and Update

The Executive Director went over the financial statement through June 2012.

- X • Through January, we were about \$1M down in terms of income. If you go down to the bottom line, because of the convention, the year to date is positive. If we continue to maintain the use of cost, we have the capacity to weather extreme downturn in money.
- X • Basic Text Sales down
  - With the World Service Conference coming soon, our accounts payable will be much higher than usual.
- X • Donations are down \$100K which is typical for the conference year.
- X • Outstanding literature accounts: the Regional Delegate is now also involved when dealing with service offices that have a large debt amount.
  - o We are also getting many more delegates participating on the Webinar with the service offices.
- X • Translations cost continue to grow and we have less income.
- X • In the NAWS report at the conference, we will convey that we've received notice from all our book publishers that costs are going up significantly. Our projected amount for production in our budget is not enough. This means we then must change the paper we use to make our books and possibly how books look. With the increase in costs, we may possibly have to increase our cost of the Basic Text.
  - Right now we have approximately 87 operating days and this number fluctuates.
  - We are going to have to raise the price of the book in Iran because the publisher is raising her prices as well.
  - Month to month we are carrying a bigger payable – and that is just the reality right now.

The board thanked staff for the monthly financials emails - very helpful. The Board will receive the updated financials at the conference.

Staff has done a remarkable job in controlling costs and the board acknowledged the great job staff has done with this.

## Audit

The World Board accepted the June 2011 Audit as presented.

## Website/IT

An email regarding some issues happening with IT forwarded to the World Board.

- Meeting locator has been revised and attached to Google maps.
- New NAWS webpage shown; we are using several people in the fellowship to help us make sure this is working properly and is user friendly. We are working subsections, and there are only two icons not functioning at this moment which are Literature and News.
- The meeting search will not look the same because it uses a different java for its function.
- We were accepted by Google for nonprofits.

Items requiring a WB decision are indicated in blue. Items for discussion are in purple.

APPROVED

**Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.**  
**Approved World Board Minutes**  
**11-14 July 2012**

OCT 27 2012

BY

Wednesday 11 July

**Board Reboot day with Jim DeLizia**

A full day was spent with Jim DeLizia reviewing and discussing World Board roles and responsibility, being a strategic board, decisions making process, Service System project focus and work plan for 2012-2014.

**Present:** Tana Agostini, Mary Banner, Ron Blake, Jim Buerer, Inigo Calonje Unceta, Paul Craig, Irene Crawley, Paul Fitzgerald, Odilson Gomes Braz Junior, Bob Gray, Sharon Harzenski-Deutsch, Arne Hassel-Gren, Mark Hersh, Franney Jardine, Tali McCall, Ron Miller, Tonia Nikolinakou and MaryEllen Polin

**Staff:** Anthony Edmondson, Eileen Perez, Becky Meyer. Other staff members joined for portions of the meeting.

**Introduction – Who are we?**

The focus and opportunity of the 'Reboot' Session

*In what way do we need to 'flex' our style to better understand and work with the other style?*

*What are the challenges and what, as a board, are we going to do to maximize how we need to operate*

**Team Elements**

Clear purpose and direction - **measures goals and results**

Clear roles and responsibilities - **mutual accountability for success of others**

Team skills and behaviors - **sense of shared leadership**

Operating Values - **team performance standards, e.g. operating values**

**Board Role, Focus and Perspective – How do we do our work?**

**Define the NAWS Leadership Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations**

**Need for further discussion clarity**

- Format timing and continue of board reporting on EC meeting
- Timing/process for new decision making at the conference
- Leadership development with the board – making
- Better way to facilitate strategic and philosophical discussions
- Process/Tool to address strategic issues
  - Prep time in between meetings
  - Discussion process agreement, questions etc.



# Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

## Approved World Board Minutes

24-27 October 2012



Further discussion took place and the meeting ended at 5:30pm

Thursday was spent in a day with Jim DeLizia. The WB operated as the workgroup for the Service System project on this day and no decisions were made.

### Friday 26 October

#### SharePoint Training

Staff joined the meeting to help answer any World Board questions on SharePoint. A training and walkthrough was conducted.

Action: World Board will let staff know what they prefer on the SharePoint site. WB will go on the site testing its features, etc.

#### 'Service Man' idea Discussion

This is only the beginning of an idea that is being presented, not something needing an approval. Service Man presentation; as an RD always tried to find service tools that would help with workshops, learning days, etc. On various occasions has been asked by other members involved with PR to create a tool that could be used to help with things like workshops, training, identifying material, etc. On the website we have a large list of existing resources material provided by local communities but finding something specific is often difficult. The essence of 'service man' is how we make these resources available.

The idea is to create a brand that can be used both domestically and internationally, be it for a conference, workshops, learning days, etc.

Decision: The World Board supports the direction of the 'Service Man' idea as a brand; the Board will be kept up-to-date as this continues to develop.

#### Current PR issues and plans for research

Staff recounted the story how the physician researcher and staff were introduced at ASAM and how project for researching Narcotics Anonymous came about. The surveyor's results passed out.

Decision: Board agreed with continuing to work with doctor doing survey. Everyone agreed to not publish or name the doctor conducting survey.

#### PR Issues

Hazelden has been one of the largest supporters of abstinence based treatment and 12 steps; by the end of the 2012, they will be moving into the Suboxone treatment for addiction. What this means is that most likely all those facilities funded by the government will be strongly encouraged to incorporate medication into their treatment of clients. Current medical statistics shows this medication 'normalizes' people. At the same time ISAM and ASAM (all addiction professionals with the best intentions) know the only thing that medication is good for is short term stabilization and that without a 12 step recovery program, it is not a long term solution.

↓ Hazelden called staff yesterday regarding *Time Magazine* calling them and in turn directed *Time Magazine* to call Narcotics Anonymous. Magazine stated that they read bulletin #29 on our website



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that said we don't welcome people on medication. Bulletin #29 was written in the 1980's and is not in line with our most current literature. *SP NA Groups and Medication* and *In Times of Illness* which speak of drug replacement medications. How do we resolve Bulletin #29?

Issues 1) how are we going to respond to the public 2) what we do or don't say to doctors and medical professionals 3) what do we want to do about the posted material on our website (old/outdated).

Another matter: recently assisted in PR training with Swiss fellowship, cautioned them about NA not having an opinion on outside issues (medication), expressed that we typically refer people to the stories in some of our literature and also honestly told them that some groups are more welcoming than others about this issue. However long term challenge is as a worldwide fellowship-what is and isn't done to make people on medication feel welcome. We say *anyone is welcome* but most in the fellowship are not welcoming. How do we create a cultural shift in dealing with this? Many long term treatment centers are going through this change and for us to ignore the change would not behoove us.

Question posed to the board- *do we need to keep bulletin #29 up on the site*. No straw poll taken, discussion followed.

Decision: World Board will continue discussion regarding the removal of bulletin 29 via email. It will also be part of the Environmental Scan in January 2013.

Decision: The World Board review bulletin 29 and decide whether it reflects the beliefs of what Narcotics Anonymous should say about this issue.

Action: Provide bulletin download information, how many bulletins we are thinking about taking down and bring issue back up for discussion-January 2013.

### Traditions Book

This is the beginning discussion for Traditions Book. Today the body will be brainstorming 3 questions, review the Traditions book project themes and affirm the 2012-2014 Traditions Book Plan and Strategy.

In the first small group session the board will *share personal learning experience related to the principles in our Twelve Traditions. Sharing any experience with these principles is fair game – NA service at the group level or beyond, or in personal relationships in or out of NA – as long as it relates to the Traditions. Be sure to note whether NA literature was useful in this lesson, and if so, which piece of literature and how it was helpful.*

Once first session completed everyone moved on to question 2; *what are some ways that a literature resource could help recreate those learning experiences with the Twelve Traditions for other members?* And question 3 *what ideas do you have about what a Tradition book should or should not look like?*

Action: Create a bulletin board for project in 2013 when we enter into the second phase of this project.

Introduction to NA meetings questions will be sent to the board before going out to the fellowship. (Decision)

Regions and zones go through a variety of different processes when forwarding names to the HRP for consideration, and some choose not to forward any names at all. Some service bodies, we know, will not forward candidates who have not served on that body. Some zones meet only twice a year. If the timing of their meetings is not synchronized with the timing of our elections, it may be difficult for them to throw their support behind a nominee. Many candidates are reluctant to ask their region or zone for support until they know they have made it through the HRP process and by then, it may be logistically impossible for them to garner an RBZ nomination. In short, RBZ-recommended candidates go through very different processes depending on which service body is doing the recommending.

One of the things we'd like to talk about at this conference is how to minimize the unintended consequences of RBZ nominations being noted on the ballot. When conference participants look at the ballot and see that some candidates have two or three RBZ mentions and others have none, it is easy to draw conclusions that may not be at all accurate.

Not receiving a zonal or regional recommendation for nomination does not necessarily mean that a zone or region considered a candidate and decided not to forward him or her for possible nomination. It may mean that a particular candidate's zone or region doesn't have a process to make RBZ recommendations, or that the candidate doesn't serve at the zone, or perhaps serves at the zone but no longer serves at the region. It may simply mean that the candidate didn't bring up the issue to his or her zone or region. By regarding candidates with more RBZ recommendations as necessarily superior, we are, without meaning to, punishing members who aren't as likely to put themselves forward for consideration. And we all know plenty of people we respect as leaders who fall into that category. That's what we mean by "unintended consequences."

## Election Issues

We've also talked quite a bit at past conferences about the consequences of conference participants' voting behavior, and we tried to get more information by sending out an election survey early this cycle. The ongoing dilemma of the HRP and World Board is getting new candidates elected to the board. At the last conference there were nine board seats open; five board members got reelected, and one new candidate was elected. At the 2008 conference, there were four open seats; one board member was reelected and one new candidate was elected. (Page 31 of the HRP Report gives a more detailed breakdown of figures for those two elections.)

It takes a 60% majority to elect someone to the board, and not all conference participants understand that the ballot acts as a yes/no vote. In other words, if you turn in a ballot, you have functionally voted "yes" or "no" for each candidate on that ballot. If you leave a blank space next to a candidate, for the purposes of determining a 60% majority, that counts as a "no" vote. There still seems to be some confusion about these issues, and we want to talk further about the challenge of electing new board members at this conference.

## Orientation Part II: Regional Proposal "Experiment"

We decided to extend the opening orientation session at this conference and have a "part two" because there are a couple of subjects that we think need more focused attention. This second orientation session will be specifically focused on issues related to nominations and the "experiment" we are undertaking with regards to regional proposals and consensus-based decision making.

### Regional Proposal "Experiment"

At the last WSC, a motion was made and committed to the board: "that the World Board, using WSC participants, develop a plan to implement a Consensus Based Decision Making process that, among other



things, would eliminate the use of motions at the WSC.”

At the same conference, participants were straw polled about whether they supported an experiment to discuss ideas from regions rather than regional motions, both in the *CAR* and in new business. There was no opposition to trying such an experiment. You’ve seen some of the results of the process so far, when you read and discussed the regional proposals in the *CAR*. So far response has been positive overall about the experience of discussing proposals rather than motions in the *CAR* and the prospect of discussing proposals rather than debating motions at the conference.

As we wrote in the *CAR*, we see this as a part of the first stage in changing the process of how we make decisions at the conference. We are taking the next steps toward consensus-based decision making. If you’ve been to a conference in recent years, you know we have a discussion session before each of the business sessions where we discuss and straw poll each item of business. At this conference, we hope to build on the success of those sessions and make most of our conference decisions in the discussion session.

### **The Process at this Conference**

The first order of business in Old Business will be a motion to adopt this experimental process for the duration of the 2012 conference. We will have an opportunity to explain the process to participants face-to-face during this Orientation Part II session, discuss it together, and answer any questions.

Explained briefly, here’s the process we are proposing: There will be no new main motions or amendments at this conference.

The only motions that will be decided in formal business are the *CAR* motions and resolutions (which are a form of motion), and the new business motions related to the budget and project plans. Those motions will be introduced into business as amended through discussion if there is conference

support for an idea that would change the motion.

The only other formal business will be elections. Everything else—new proposals and ideas for changing motions—will be handled in the discussion sessions.

Instead of submitting motions and amendments by the Sunday (old business) and Wednesday (new business) deadlines, participants will observe the same deadlines but will submit proposals and ideas for changing motions/resolutions/proposals. The board is trying this experiment, too. Except for the motions to approve the budget and project plans, any business that needs to be decided, like regional seating or the future of proposals and CBDM at the conference, will be decided through discussion and straw polls, not new motions.

The description of new business in *A Guide to World Services in NA* now seems to apply to both old and new business.

The discussion on these items typically requires a much more fluid process than items in old business. Ideas are discussed and are often adapted and changed as the discussion begins to frame the will of the body. This is especially true for items being considered for the future or still in some stage of development. This can seem uncomfortable or strange to those of us only familiar with more formal processes. Straw polls and questions are used frequently to try to mold and frame the ideas being considered. Often the conference chooses not to hold any discussion on those items it does not wish to entertain.

CBDM can be a very creative process that captures the ideas present in such a way that the result is something different and better than the original proposal. It is more time-consuming but ultimately a more effective process than simply voting.

*GWSNA*  
“Consensus-Based Decision Making”

It has become our practice at the conference to consider and shape ideas in a discussion session that allows the conference to share

# 2012 Conference Report

Conference Schedule

thoughts and ideas outside of a parliamentary session. At this conference, we are also trying to make more decisions in the discussion session through use of straw polls rather than ratifying decisions in a formal business session.

We will continue to use the closing session of the conference to straw poll ideas and gain consensus on moving forward.

The details of each of the business and discussion sessions—old and new business—are described later in this *Conference Report*.

We are excited to try this experiment. It moves us much closer to a being a truly discussion- and consensus-based decision making body.

## Deadlines

The old business deadline is at 6:00 pm. This is also the deadline for nominations and resumes.

Zonal forums who wish to meet should sign up at the WSO onsite office by the end of the day Sunday for meeting space on Tuesday night.

(The word "consensus" derives from the Latin cum, meaning "with" or "together with," and sentire, meaning to "think" or "feel." The root of "consensus," therefore, means to think or feel together.) Consensus is based on the belief that each person has some part of the truth and no one person has all of it (no matter how tempting it is to believe that we ourselves really know best!). The consensus process is what a group goes through to reach an agreement. It is how we manifest the idea "together we can do what we cannot do alone" in a service setting.

This foundation is the very essence of what the conference is about. As stated above "the conference is a vehicle for fellowship communication and unity: a forum where our common welfare is itself the business of the meeting."

GWSNA,  
"Consensus-Based Decision Making"



The public relations session will feature several aspects of public relations efforts taking place in local communities and at NAWS. Part of this will involve highlighting some local NA community PR efforts, from creating audio and video PSAs to holding professional days at regional conventions. Trusted servants are enthusiastic in their efforts to reach still-suffering addicts in their communities. Regional reports indicate that 91 communities have active PR/PI subcommittees. In the 2006 regional reports, there were 37 active PR/PI subcommittees. During the last six years, members have become increasingly energetic in their efforts to make the public—including potential members and professionals who work with addicts—aware that NA offers addicts an opportunity to experience freedom from active addiction. These efforts by PR/PI trusted servants are helping NA thrive in communities around the world.

## WCNA 34—San Diego

We held two professional workshop panels at WCNA 34. One panel was oriented toward drug courts, with two judges offering their perspectives and passion for helping addicts who choose drug court. Members in attendance were able to interact with these judges—asking questions and describing the challenges they face interacting with drug courts in their local service efforts. The second panel was focused on criminal justice and included two directors of rehabilitation services from the largest prisons systems in the United States: Texas and California. The director from the California Department of Corrections Rehabilitation had formed strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with the H&I and PR committees of Northern California. As a result of this cooperative relationship, the California DOC Rehabilitation Director was able to have *all* 33 California institutions on the Unity Day call. This effort made it possible for more than 8,000 incarcerated addicts to hear a message of recovery. Some of those inmates were so inspired by

the call and the chance to connect with the worldwide NA Fellowship that they wrote a thank-you letter to the California Department of Corrections executives. That letter will appear in the April 2012 issue of *Reaching Out*.

## NAWS Professional Events

While we were able to attend a few professional events this fiscal year, we may need to strive for more consistency in our attendance if we hope to enhance NA's reputation as a viable, stable, and credible program of recovery. The addiction professionals who attend these events are human, after all, and are therefore susceptible to the "out of sight, out of mind" attitude. When other twelve-step fellowships along with a host of pharmaceutical companies are present at conferences these professionals attend, but NA is absent, they are less likely to think of NA when they think of viable programs of recovery. Also, NA misses the opportunity to interact and inform professionals that we are an abstinence-based community resource for addicts. When NAWS attended the American Society of Addiction Medicine conference, some physicians were dismayed that there were so many pharmaceutical companies and so few drug-free alternatives available for their patients. They thanked us for our presence.

At the International Society of Addiction Medicine conference, which was held in Oslo, Norway, in September 2011, we were able to interact with professionals including the Director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse in Washington, DC and the Executive Director of the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities from New York. Dialogue with these professionals did not happen by chance; we were introduced by a medical researcher who is a past president of ISAM and with whom we partnered to conduct a member survey at the group level. Additionally, we attended an abstinence-based treatment workshop at ISAM. We partnered with NA trusted servants from Oslo who also met professionals from that city. One of these

professionals worked for a drug replacement treatment center; however, a few of their clients requested abstinence and this prompted the professional to ask Oslo members for a presentation.

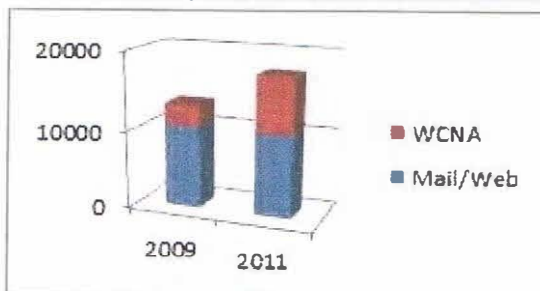
The NAWS Executive Director was invited to present information about NA to delegates attending the International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations, which was held in Malaysia in November 2011. This conference attracted prime ministers, police personnel, and treatment professionals from Southeast Asia, Australia, and the United Kingdom. There were so many requests for NA literature from these attendees that we ran out and needed to fill requests by mail after the fact. We received a thank-you note from a prime minister in Thailand who wants to learn more and offered NAWS a meeting with the president of that country.

From each and every conference attended, there are interactions with professionals who learn more about NA and become willing to refer their addict clients and patients to NA. NAWS' efforts may mirror the outcomes of local NA members who attend health fairs and provide presentations. These efforts help the still suffering addict find recovery in NA.

### 2011 Membership Survey

We will be highlighting the 2011 membership survey in the PR session at the WSC. We received a total 17,492 responses, which is 33% more than the 2009 survey.

**Survey Responses Collected**



The predominant difference was the WCNA respondents. This year, 6,972 responses came from WCNA 34, and 10,520 online/mail/fax responses were collected. In

contrast, we received 2,588 surveys from WCNA 33 in Barcelona, Spain. Institutionalized members also increased their participation; in 2009 we received 54 surveys and in 2011 we received 153 surveys from members. We are grateful for the members who participated and helped us realize 5,570 more survey returns, which is the most we have ever received. Thank you!

As those of you who submitted surveys might recall, we continued to ask questions centered on quality of life before recovery; 48% indicated that they were unable to maintain employment, residence, and family relationships. Conversely, 95% indicated family relationships improved, 76% noted improvement with employment, and 80% had stable housing after coming to NA. Many professionals have expressed interest in the connection between recovery in NA and improvement in overall quality of life. We look forward to illustrating the 2011 survey results for you at the conference.

### NAWS Member Survey—Cooperative Effort with Researcher

At the 2010 International Society of Addiction Medicine Conference in Italy, NAWS was introduced to a past American Society of Addiction Medicine and ISAM President, who is a physician and medical researcher with New York University. This physician proposed a survey of NA members because there has not been an independent research survey conducted about NA, and professional peers tend to listen to each other's research more carefully than research from outside their community. The aims of the survey were to address the nature of long-term membership in Narcotics Anonymous and the nature of spiritual experience and mutual support within NA. The survey and proposal were presented to the World Board, and in the spirit of cooperation, we decided to move forward. A paragraph in the *Public Relations Handbook* references this type of cooperation. "Another aspect of cooperation is when an organization outside of NA wants to research the effectiveness of our program. NA members



# 2012 Conference Report

Conference Schedule

may decide to cooperate in outside research projects."

There were NA member coordinators in three states: California, Florida, and Pennsylvania. Ten NA groups participated in a question-based survey that mirrored the NAWS Membership Survey. The surveys were anonymous and open to any member with a day clean. Members were free to opt out, and the surveys were completed either at the close of the meeting or before the meeting started. Prior to participating, each group made a decision as to whether to complete the survey, and ample notice was given about the due date of the survey. If an attendee had responded to the questionnaire at one meeting, he or she was instructed not to complete the same questionnaire if they were present at another meeting where the exercise was carried out.

The researcher has preliminary results, but we are still waiting to receive a final report, which may or may not be completed by WSC 2012.

## Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

At the past several conferences, we have designated Wednesday afternoon as a time to take a break from conference business and enjoy some fresh air and fun at Calamigos Ranch. This opportunity for off-site recreation provides everyone with a chance to relax and recharge, coming back to the conference Thursday ready to go forward with our work. While the cost of this excursion is a topic that has been discussed by the conference as a whole, a straw poll at WSC 2010 indicated that the conference finds value in the mid-week respite.

A half-dozen buses, each "hosted" by a board member, will take all conference participants and alternate delegates to Calamigos Ranch, where we will have a buffet-style barbeque lunch. Funded conference participants have already had \$25 deducted from their advances for the cost of this lunch. We are asking alternate delegates to contribute \$25 toward the cost as well.

After lunch, at 2:30, the ranch will be open to all who want to attend, regardless of whether they are conference participants.

Bring a camera, some sunscreen and sneakers, and get ready for some fresh air and sunshine. And football (soccer), if that's your thing.

## Deadlines

**The deadline for new business is at 6:00 pm upon our return from Calamigos Ranch.**

## Free Evening

Tonight is one of those rare occasions during conference week: free time. Rest up, because we have a lot to get through in the next couple of days.

Regions and zones go through a variety of different processes when forwarding names to the HRP for consideration, and some choose not to forward any names at all. Some service bodies, we know, will not forward candidates who have not served on that body. Some zones meet only twice a year. If the timing of their meetings is not synchronized with the timing of our elections, it may be difficult for them to throw their support behind a nominee. Many candidates are reluctant to ask their region or zone for support until they know they have made it through the HRP process and by then, it may be logistically impossible for them to garner an RBZ nomination. In short, RBZ-recommended candidates go through very different processes depending on which service body is doing the recommending.

One of the things we'd like to talk about at this conference is how to minimize the unintended consequences of RBZ nominations being noted on the ballot. When conference participants look at the ballot and see that some candidates have two or three RBZ mentions and others have none, it is easy to draw conclusions that may not be at all accurate.

Not receiving a zonal or regional recommendation for nomination does not necessarily mean that a zone or region considered a candidate and decided not to forward him or her for possible nomination. It may mean that a particular candidate's zone or region doesn't have a process to make RBZ recommendations, or that the candidate doesn't serve at the zone, or perhaps serves at the zone but no longer serves at the region. It may simply mean that the candidate didn't bring up the issue to his or her zone or region. By regarding candidates with more RBZ recommendations as necessarily superior, we are, without meaning to, punishing members who aren't as likely to put themselves forward for consideration. And we all know plenty of people we respect as leaders who fall into that category. That's what we mean by "unintended consequences."

## Election Issues

We've also talked quite a bit at past conferences about the consequences of conference participants' voting behavior, and we tried to get more information by sending out an election survey early this cycle. The ongoing dilemma of the HRP and World Board is getting new candidates elected to the board. At the last conference there were nine board seats open; five board members got reelected, and one new candidate was elected. At the 2008 conference, there were four open seats; one board member was reelected and one new candidate was elected. (Page 31 of the HRP Report gives a more detailed breakdown of figures for those two elections.)

It takes a 60% majority to elect someone to the board, and not all conference participants understand that the ballot acts as a yes/no vote. In other words, if you turn in a ballot, you have functionally voted "yes" or "no" for each candidate on that ballot. If you leave a blank space next to a candidate, for the purposes of determining a 60% majority, that counts as a "no" vote. There still seems to be some confusion about these issues, and we want to talk further about the challenge of electing new board members at this conference.

## Orientation Part II: Regional Proposal "Experiment"

We decided to extend the opening orientation session at this conference and have a "part two" because there are a couple of subjects that we think need more focused attention. This second orientation session will be specifically focused on issues related to nominations and the "experiment" we are undertaking with regards to regional proposals and consensus-based decision making.

### Regional Proposal "Experiment"

At the last WSC, a motion was made and committed to the board: "that the World Board, using WSC participants, develop a plan to implement a Consensus Based Decision Making process that, among other



things, would eliminate the use of motions at the WSC.”

At the same conference, participants were straw polled about whether they supported an experiment to discuss ideas from regions rather than regional motions, both in the *CAR* and in new business. There was no opposition to trying such an experiment. You’ve seen some of the results of the process so far, when you read and discussed the regional proposals in the *CAR*. So far response has been positive overall about the experience of discussing proposals rather than motions in the *CAR* and the prospect of discussing proposals rather than debating motions at the conference.

As we wrote in the *CAR*, we see this as a part of the first stage in changing the process of how we make decisions at the conference. We are taking the next steps toward consensus-based decision making. If you’ve been to a conference in recent years, you know we have a discussion session before each of the business sessions where we discuss and straw poll each item of business. At this conference, we hope to build on the success of those sessions and make most of our conference decisions in the discussion session.

### **The Process at this Conference**

The first order of business in Old Business will be a motion to adopt this experimental process for the duration of the 2012 conference. We will have an opportunity to explain the process to participants face-to-face during this Orientation Part II session, discuss it together, and answer any questions.

Explained briefly, here’s the process we are proposing: There will be no new main motions or amendments at this conference.

The only motions that will be decided in formal business are the *CAR* motions and resolutions (which are a form of motion), and the new business motions related to the budget and project plans. Those motions will be introduced into business as amended through discussion if there is conference

support for an idea that would change the motion.

The only other formal business will be elections. Everything else—new proposals and ideas for changing motions—will be handled in the discussion sessions.

Instead of submitting motions and amendments by the Sunday (old business) and Wednesday (new business) deadlines, participants will observe the same deadlines but will submit proposals and ideas for changing motions/resolutions/proposals. The board is trying this experiment, too. Except for the motions to approve the budget and project plans, any business that needs to be decided, like regional seating or the future of proposals and CBDM at the conference, will be decided through discussion and straw polls, not new motions.

The description of new business in *A Guide to World Services in NA* now seems to apply to both old and new business.

The discussion on these items typically requires a much more fluid process than items in old business. Ideas are discussed and are often adapted and changed as the discussion begins to frame the will of the body. This is especially true for items being considered for the future or still in some stage of development. This can seem uncomfortable or strange to those of us only familiar with more formal processes. Straw polls and questions are used frequently to try to mold and frame the ideas being considered. Often the conference chooses not to hold any discussion on those items it does not wish to entertain.

CBDM can be a very creative process that captures the ideas present in such a way that the result is something different and better than the original proposal. It is more time-consuming but ultimately a more effective process than simply voting.

*GWSNA*

“Consensus-Based Decision Making”

It has become our practice at the conference to consider and shape ideas in a discussion session that allows the conference to share

thoughts and ideas outside of a parliamentary session. At this conference, we are also trying to make more decisions in the discussion session through use of straw polls rather than ratifying decisions in a formal business session.

We will continue to use the closing session of the conference to straw poll ideas and gain consensus on moving forward.

The details of each of the business and discussion sessions—old and new business—are described later in this *Conference Report*.

We are excited to try this experiment. It moves us much closer to a being a truly discussion- and consensus-based decision making body.

## Deadlines

The old business deadline is at 6:00 pm. This is also the deadline for nominations and resumes.

Zonal forums who wish to meet should sign up at the WSO onsite office by the end of the day Sunday for meeting space on Tuesday night.

(The word "consensus" derives from the Latin cum, meaning "with" or "together with," and sentire, meaning to "think" or "feel." The root of "consensus," therefore, means to think or feel together.) Consensus is based on the belief that each person has some part of the truth and no one person has all of it (no matter how tempting it is to believe that we ourselves really know best!). The consensus process is what a group goes through to reach an agreement. It is how we manifest the idea "together we can do what we cannot do alone" in a service setting.

This foundation is the very essence of what the conference is about. As stated above "the conference is a vehicle for fellowship communication and unity: a forum where our common welfare is itself the business of the meeting."

GWSNA,

"Consensus-Based Decision Making"