• More WCNA 36 & Unity Day
• Selfless service
• Traditions Project Update
From the editor

What happens to your NA Way Magazine after you read it?

We’re always seeking ways to decrease costs, so, in 2011, we purged NA Way paper subscriptions and asked readers to re-subscribe—strongly encouraging electronic subscriptions. This saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on printing and postage. Since then, e-sub have increased, but paper subscriptions are also increasing. We realize many don’t have internet access, so they choose paper. What perplexes us is the continually growing number of subscribers taking both paper and e-subscriptions.

The preferred NA Way subscription is the electronic version. You get more in an e-sub with additional content that’s not included in the print version. It also eliminates printing and postage costs, allowing those funds to be used to carry the NA message in other ways. If e-subscribers print some or all of the magazine to share with others, we could eliminate thousands of paper subscriptions.

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De J, Editor

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the NA Fellowship in our quarterly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Subscriptions, editorial, and business services: PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9099.

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in The NA Way, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First name and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

Cover photo: Eduardo H, Uberlândia, Brazil
Hello. I hope this email finds you in good spirits. This is the hardest email I have written in a long time. I am writing it after thorough consideration. About three years ago, I had the most exciting experience in my life when I was called to be the regional delegate for Uganda in an NA workshop in Tanzania, where I witnessed the birth of the African Zonal Forum. I became part of this exciting service body.

Before The AZF, I hardly knew any recovering addicts outside my country or region except a few visitors who came looking for meetings in my home country. Now I am proud to say I have an NA family that I am sure genuinely loves me.

The AZF has contributed greatly to my region—things that we only dreamt of as young addicts desperately looking for a way out. Access to NA World Services was just a myth to us; we barely had any literature to run a meeting. We ran meetings in a trial-and-error format, hardly knowing what to do. When I attended the first workshop, I did not know what was expected of me as a regional delegate, what a zonal forum was, or what a service structure or system was. I was just an addict who wanted to stay clean. Today I can proudly say I was part of history being made when we set the vision and mission for the AZF.

The region that almost had no meetings or literature now has access to literature and stable meetings in two different cities, Kampala and Jinja. Our network is not limited to just our neighboring regions; it extends to the entire continent, to NA World Services, and to NA around the world. Because of the AZF there is hope for the still-suffering addict in Uganda, and I can foresee our vision becoming a reality.

It’s from this vantage point that I am writing this email. For the sake of fellowship development in my region, I have decided to stand down as regional delegate. This is because I have given it sincere thought, and I believe it would not be in the best interest of my region for me to continue being its representative because I now reside in a different country. I do believe a greater impact on fellowship development will be made with a residing regional delegate, especially with new meetings being born.

There are so many reasons I would want to hold on to this, especially after making a strong connection with you as my family. You have impacted my life greatly, so the fear of not being able to see most of you again is overwhelming. I have never met such great people, and you all are true to the bone.

From the first time I met most of you, you restored something I never thought I would have. You have made me believe anything is possible in recovery. The experience I have shared with you for the past three years is priceless. Strangers have become friends and family I never had. Serving with you has been the greatest gift recovery has given me. Writing this email is getting me emotional; it’s like I am walking away from family, and yet I have to look at the bigger picture. I truly want someone in my region to experience the thrill of serving with you guys so they know that dreams really do come true in recovery.

I know Uganda will be well served and represented by a member who will have a positive impact not only on our region but also on the continent at large. And I know this for sure: Because of the AZF there is hope for any addict in Africa with the desire to stay clean to receive the message of NA.
I plan to continue giving a hand where I can, especially during the internet video calls, until a new delegate is elected by the members. I will also continue to do service whenever I am back home, though not as a regional delegate. Currently I have taken up a service position in my new home group, and I feel excited to do service in a foreign land. And if there is any NA event in your community, I will be more than willing to attend, so don’t hesitate to invite me.

Thank you for being a great family. And thank you to members of the World Board and to World Services special workers who have been of service here and have believed in me and the rest of the AZF. I have come to believe that it is truly a small world within NA, so I’m not saying “good-bye” but rather “until we meet again.”

Hugs and love. Yours in service,
Peter N, Malmö, Sweden
(by way of Uganda)

Editor’s Note: Look for updates on the growth of NA in Africa in upcoming issues of The NA Way Magazine.

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Basic Caption Contest

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Basic Caption Contest. The winning submission is from Wilson A, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada:

Thanks for calling and—trust me—it will get better.

And here are some other notable entries:

I said call BEFORE you use!

Craig D, Washington, USA

---

Sponsor: I’ll pick you up at 6 for our meeting! Bring your Basic Text, the “flat book,” a notebook, and ink pens. See you then!

Sponsee: Oh Charlene, I have 30 days clean and I’ve read the steps! I just can’t go to the meeting; I have to brush my teeth, wash my hair, tweet, post, and…

Charlene L, Indiana, USA

---

Phoneline: Good evening, NA phoneline; how can I help you?

Caller: It’s 4:00 am on Sunday morning. Are you the answering machine or the late-shift volunteer?

Phoneline: I’m giving away what I got for free. How can I help?

If your local NA phoneline needs support, be a volunteer!

Nelson M, São Paulo, Brazil

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Here’s your chance to participate in The NA Way Magazine in a whole new way. Write a caption for this comic, send it to us, and you’ll be magically entered in our caption contest. We’ll choose the best (and maybe a few other really good ones) for publication in an upcoming issue. Your prize will be the satisfaction of contributing to the humorous recovery pursuits of fellow NA members—and seeing your name in The NA Way!

Email your entry with “Basic Caption Contest” in the subject line, and be sure to include your name and where you’re from in the body of the email: naway@na.org.
Hi, folks; I am Surojit, an addict. Many times I have contemplated submitting a write-up for The NA Way (a magazine I really have enjoyed reading over the years), but I guess I never got around to writing until now. When I looked at the suggested topics to share about at www.naway.org, “What does working the steps mean to you?” really caught my eye because the story of my recovery is wrapped up in those few words.

At the outset, I must confess that my road of recovery has been very personal and, I must say, a tad unconventional in the strictest NA sense. I wrote my first four steps in the rehab where I was admitted at the start of my recovery. When I came out of the rehab (a bit more than 19 years ago), I faced a life in ruins. No job, no money, and a sense of utter hopelessness and loneliness were pervasive in my life. I looked for a job while staying with my mother, but nothing seemed to work out. I kept going to NA meetings and I guess I was terrified of using, so I hung on closely with members and slowly, ever so slowly, life started knitting itself back into shape around me. I got a job, kept doing meetings, met a girl (who now is my wife) and started a relationship, and slowly started feeling that even an addict like me was worth something.

Three years passed, and I changed cities. Suddenly it seemed the clock had been reset. Fear again dominated my mind. I was staying with a friend and money was tight; I was looking for a job, was unsure of myself, and the NA community there was completely new, so I knew no one. That was the time I relived the experience of being a newcomer. Everyone in the meetings knew everyone else, and I was the one standing in a corner hoping someone would say hi. Eventually, I got a job, married the girl I had started a relationship with, and adopted a lovely little girl—and my life basically went for a tailspin. New job, new family, and all I could do was hang in there and reach a meeting almost every evening. That was the only thing that kept me sane and clean!

Around this point, for a long time, I had no sponsor (I told you right in the beginning I was unconventional, didn’t I?); however, just going to the meetings helped me a lot. I slowly gathered a bunch of friends and started feeling like life wasn’t all that bad—when suddenly, this sponsorship family that most of my friends came from decided that they needed to get rigorous with the idea that the only way to work the steps was to write them, have a sponsor, and have a firm belief in god. To my dismay, I did not match any of these three criteria. Being an atheist (it was like coming out of the closet; I finally could not stand faking it, so at around seven years clean I had started sharing that I was an atheist) was like the last straw to them, I guess.

So, suddenly I was ostracized by the same people who were my friends, and the next two to three years were the darkest period of my recovery. I was unsure of myself, feeling very alone, and wondering if all these people (my group of friends) had dropped me. They made strong comments about how I was not working the program, and suggested I was going to relapse. Just that thought sent shivers down my spine, and it did not help that at the same time things at home were not all hunky-dory, either. I was going through marital issues; we were having fights, and I was getting used to being a father. The thing I am glad I did was go to meetings regularly. If there was anything that kept me clean those days, it was that!

I slowly reached my spiritual bottom and started clawing my way upward. I changed my job, and professional success came my way. Monetarily, life got better. My wife and I started doing marriage counseling, where I learned I needed to see a professional about some of my childhood issues, so I went for the next
four years to therapy sessions. In all this time, my meeting attendance remained the same: three to four a week. Slowly, life started rebuilding itself around me; I made new friends in the fellowship, success at my profession helped me in rebuilding my confidence in myself, and the relationships with my wife and daughter got better and deeper.

Today, 19 years have passed; I still show up at meetings like I did earlier. My family is happy, with a lot of laughter at home. My daughter has started her first year of college, and at work I am now a senior and well-respected, successful professional in my field. I still don’t write the steps, as I don’t feel I need to. I have a sponsor whom I talk to, and I still don’t believe in god. Do I work the steps? Hell, yes, I do! Do I work the steps like a lot of people in NA would? No, I do it like Surojit would, and that is the main reason I wrote in today—to reach out to another addict like me who is lost and wondering whether he or she is working the steps. My message is that—in my opinion—you decide whether you are working the steps. I think writing is a tool, and sometimes we mistake the tools for the garden. I am not saying those who write are not working the steps.

Sometimes I resent the fact that those who write seem to insist (and yes, they do so vocally at times) that you are only working the steps if you write them. I almost went out because a group of people decided I did not fit their mold, and they went out of their way to make me feel like I was not working the program or steps. All I can say is that the path of the program, like any spiritual path, is a broad one, and each one of us has to find our own way to follow it, a path that works for us. I am glad I hung around long enough to find mine, and today there is laughter in my life and in my house because of that.

To me today, the steps are there from the time I wake up in the morning until the time I go to sleep at night. The steps are there for me in simple things like going for my morning walk, waving goodbye to my wife when she goes off to teach school, mentoring a new employee at work, sharing with a sponsee, smiling at people, apologizing if I have been wrong, and changing when I become aware of my defects. The steps are in the million little interactions that make up life: in waking up in the morning full of fears and still showing up in life; in sitting and listening at meetings, and reminding myself that I am just another member trying to stay clean. When I hear my daughter’s voice on the phone, excited about college life, and think of how I’ve seen her change in front of my eyes from this little girl who entered my life into this confident young woman going off to college, something whispers in my mind, “I guess you are working the steps to the best of your ability, and the results are all around you.” I am glad I hung in long enough to find my own path in the steps, recovery, and life. Today life has taught me and given me the confidence to say that I am living the program to the best of my ability. Sometimes my best is just good enough to get through the day, and sometimes it seems life is a cakewalk to waltz through. Either way, it’s my best, and that’s good enough for me.

I thank the meetings and the NA Fellowship for saving me and holding me tight through that dark period. I have come to realize that there are many different ways to work the steps in our lives, and each one of those ways is right. This is not a place to be a zealot and to deride others for not working or living the steps like I do; instead I rejoice in the diversity of understanding and I appreciate everyone for giving me their learning and paths to tap into. I grow as a human being in the process, and I stay clean day after day. Today I thrive in the differences and have realized there is no one-size-fits-all. Thinking in limited terms can drive people away, as almost happened to me many years ago. And nothing—no faith, no belief, nothing—is worth one addict walking away. We must believe as we choose so that no addict seeking to recover must die, even if they follow a path that differs from mine!

Surojit C, New Delhi, India

Tradition Ten: Supremely practical

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Traditions have come slowly to me over the course of my 22 years of recovery. As a result, I understand the importance of Narcotics Anonymous as a worldwide fellowship not having an opinion on any outside issues. I can remember in my active addiction having many debates, some that turned into very heated, divisive arguments or even fights, which ultimately often caused loss of respect for me and my debater. As I have come to understand NA as it relates to my spiritual development, I see that NA needs to maintain respectability in the community and the world at large in order to maintain its effectiveness. I am a member of NA and I value our impact on individuals seeking freedom from active addiction. I found that freedom in a fellowship that offers addicts spiritual principles, not individual opinions on issues of no consequence to our getting and staying clean!

Walston B, District of Columbia, USA
Reprinted from DC Link, DC Area Newsletter
When someone comes at me with an attitude, I get nervous. I appear unsure of myself. If I had an issue with a trusted servant’s report, instead of publicly humiliating or demeaning that person in the course of the ASC meeting, I would attend the subcommittee meeting to get more information and understanding. I could also attend the ASC joint administrative committee meeting. In both of those situations, after asking questions and gathering information, if I have concerns, I can express them there in a loving way, one member to another.

Calling an ASC or RSC trusted servant on the carpet like this dishonors the very concept of electing people we trust to do the job at hand. That is why we elect them. Trust is defined by some this way: If you trust someone, then you believe that they’re honest and reliable, unless you have reason to believe otherwise. NA trusted servants deserve better treatment and our respect. The Tenth Concept guarantees it. I know we are just human, but that doesn’t excuse harming others or their reputation. That is unacceptable in a spiritual program based on goodwill.

Anonymous, New Jersey, USA

In a fellowship such as ours, whose success is based upon mutual support and cooperation… respect for the individual is indispensable.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service, Tenth Concept

We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Wow, I never would have considered this without NA in my corner. This is a step of willingness. Knowing that I’ll have to make these amends in the next step is not a scary ordeal, as it surely would have been without applying the earlier steps in my life. I have faith now that with my higher power, I can make it through anything.

For me, it’s all about love and forgiveness. I know now that for me to forgive someone, it’s not so much about me being all right with what they did as it is about the liberation from my resentment toward them. Talk about freedom! By making this list, and becoming willing (there’s that word again—willing), I can do this step. I can clear away all the guilt and fear that was so prevalent in my mind.

One of the hardest parts is remembering all those I’ve wronged. Many years of life without any formal amends affords quite a lengthy list. As with any step, being willingly thorough is ultimately the key for success. Anything less is cheating myself of the freedom that is available to me. This step offers me a big change in my lifestyle. My life doesn’t have to be about clinging to the guilt and shame that I’ve held on to for so long. By continuing to make prompt amends now, I don’t have to worry about avoiding anyone I’ve wronged. I can be happy, joyous, and free. Once again, I’m grateful the chains of addiction have been loosened from my soul.

Rhett B, Virginia, USA
Reprinted from October 2014 Shenandoah Valley Area News,
We came together with the purpose of joining the Unity Day call, though we enjoyed ourselves all day, because the call was late afternoon local time. For those present in the main hall of the institution, the call itself was a touching and impressive experience. Above all, the only Hungarian participant we know of at WCNA 36 happened to be a former client here, so he heard us there in Rio. He was so moved that he contacted us immediately after the meeting. It really is a great honor to belong to this community. Thank you for making this possible.

Attila H, Kövágószőlős, Hungary

Unity Day: One Hungarian in Brazil

Hi, I am an addict and my name is Laci! Thanks for organizing WCNA 36 and all the services there. And thank you for the opportunity to write down my beautiful experiences with Unity Day. This was my second World Convention. My first was Barcelona in 2009, and the difference was that in Rio de Janeiro I was the lone member from my country.

I have been in recovery and clean for over nine years, and I started to learn English approximately five years ago because of NA. I felt a bit isolated at this convention because of the language difference, but I always got a lot at the meetings: greetings, hugs, questions about how I was doing and where I was from, etc. That was so great, and I felt the care of NA.

At first I was a bit disappointed at the geographic countdown because Hungary was never called out. I realized this was because I registered with a United Kingdom address, so there was no mention of Hungary in the countdown.

I knew there would be a shout-out from Hungarian NA members attending a Unity Day event in Kövágószőlős at the facility where I got clean and my recovery started. I would be attending the Unity Day event, so I was looking forward to this moment, though I was a bit skeptical that it would happen (it’s my character defect). But finally God showed me again how good he is. I was really touched emotionally with the shares and faces from the beginning of the Unity Day meeting and absolutely delighted when one of them talked about that facility as a friend of NA.

Well, when I saw my country and the town shown on the map, and when I heard my friends’ voices on the call, I just stood up and told everybody around me: THIS IS MY COUNTRY AND MY FELLOWSHIP! In that moment I found everything in that place, in that moment: the beginning of my recovery from the past and the lovely NA connections, friends, and very special feelings of my present life.

This way of life is so great, and I am so happy with it! I am grateful for my way, for my recovery, for my chance, and for the convention. The NA heart beats when two addicts share with each other, but when we do it across borders, with thousands of addicts, that is the big boom! 😊

Laci F, Reading, United Kingdom
(by way of Hungary)
Our main purpose in writing is to express our gratitude. For the first time in the history of the world, we had an NA World Convention here Brazil! Despite economic challenges in our country, the NA community in our country continues to grow in an impressive manner. The HOW Brazil Region (where I live) has a geographical span of close to 880 kilometers (nearly 550 miles), and we have 1,000 weekly meetings.

As 11 June 2015 grew closer (what we started calling “the great day”), posters began to arrive, social media heated up, and in our NA groups no one spoke of anything else. There was no way to not be captivated, and yet, we made an effort not to get involved because we didn’t have the means to be part of the celebration. The expenses were too great for us. We have been married for 15 years. I have more than 19 years clean and my companion has been in recovery for 18 years, so we hated to miss it, but what about our two children? What would we do? We went over the expenses again and it definitely looked like we would not be able to go.

But there was still a glimmer of hope because our program speaks of a higher power—loving, caring, and greater than us. And one fine day, one of my sponsees gave us two registrations. Such joy! But even with this, we were not sure we could go because we had to pay for travel and lodging expenses and arrange care for our children. Then another sponsee offered the possibility of traveling by car at a much lower cost, so then we only had to take care of lodging and the children. We reserved an inexpensive hotel close to the convention center and arranged for our children to stay with an aunt in the city. But then we began to question if we were doing the right thing, and even though everything seemed in order, we felt that we couldn’t just go and celebrate WCNA 36. Maybe this is this the part of our disease referred to in the “Recovery and Relapse” chapter of our Basic Text: “There is something in our self-destructive personalities that cries for failure.”

Then a few days before the start of the Convention, I received an email inviting me to be one of the speakers at WCNA 36. I was barely able to contain the joy I felt, and as we were celebrating, my wife received an email inviting her to share also! The only situation I remember experiencing with such mutual joy, love, and gratitude was the birth of our children. Our house was filled with gratitude, hope, joy, and love. We were very excited.

We went, we were of service, and we had so much fun during the entire convention. All of our expectations for the convention were far exceeded. We talked to fellow members from other countries that were far away from ours, with completely different cultures, and without being able to understand a single word of their languages, but we used the language of hugs and this language does not have any borders.

I still don’t know how many members attended this convention or if there was a deficit or a surplus for our Fellowship, but we would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts all the trusted servants who directly or indirectly gave us this great event. To say how much we love NA is unnecessary because this program has given us much more than just abstinence; it has made it possible for us to live and enjoy life. WCNA 36 was not just for my wife and me or for other individual members. This convention was for the entire NA Fellowship, and it has done a lot of good for our country. NA in Brazil was seen and recognized by national media. With this exposure, we can better spread the NA message. We can talk in any of the national networks about the gift we have received from practicing the NA program. And when we are asked what the "gift" is, we can point to the theme of WCNA 36 on our banners and posters; to the spirit of our songs, hugs, weeping, laughing, and prayers—that through NA, the gift is freedom—O Presente é a Liberdade! Viva NA!

Alexandre B and Mônica B, São Paulo, Brazil
WCNA 36
by the numbers

5,000 chairs for each main meeting
6,051 listeners to the first-ever live audio streaming of four main meetings at WCNA 36
4 main meetings
3 World Board forums
1 public relations forum
9 bilingual workshops
14 English workshops
14 Portuguese workshops

Saturday night main meeting speakers from
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Ikeja, Nigeria
Tehran, Iran
Moscow, Russia
Melbourne, Australia
Lisbon, Portugal

1,000s! of photos of Sugarloaf, Cristo Redentor, and Copacabana and Ipanema Beaches posted on social media

Unity Day telephone hook-ups:
88 correctional institutions
3 treatment facilities
29 NA groups/events
15 live Unity Day shout-outs from cities worldwide

6,125 miles (9,857 km) between Rio de Janeiro and Komló, Hungary, the Unity Day shout-out location farthest from Rio

$7,589.67 collected in Unity Day Seventh Tradition, including Brazilian reals, US dollars, Canadian coins, Euros, and Kroners

OTHER

55 miles (88.52 km) walked by one special worker throughout the convention center in four days

15,000+ steps walked per day by registration volunteer/special worker in a 20 x 30’ space:

Uncountable: Mosquitos that greeted attendees in the registration area
It is an honor for us to share with you our recent experience doing service here in Brazil. We are very glad to be able to say that we have accomplished much more than we were able to envision, and we are certain that this was not due to our individual capacities, but because we committed ourselves to following the simple guidelines of our spiritual principles. WCNA 36 proved to be a very important event in the history of NA in Brazil, and we are very grateful to the worldwide NA Fellowship for granting us this unique opportunity.

In the beginning of 2014, the areas in Rio de Janeiro demanded that our regional delegates ask NAWS about the public relations (PR) and public information (PI) work they felt needed to be done around WCNA in Rio, and wanted to let the Fellowship know that we were ready and willing to start working on that. Our staff at the World Service Office responded positively, since PR is an important part of the work done whenever a big NA convention is held anywhere. We started having meetings using the internet to devise a strategy and design several tactical actions to bring about good PI and media efforts, as well as to contact our local community’s long-established NA friends, such as addiction professionals in treatment centers and other important connections.

First, we agreed upon what our vision and mission for PR work in Brazil in general were. That was easy, since we followed the wording of the vision and the mission for our world services. Then, we surveyed all the work that has been done and established the main fields that would be priorities for PR work: media coverage, health, education, and justice.

For the past years, the regions in Brazil have been organized in a zonal forum, the Brazil Zonal Forum (BZF). This is a place for exchange of experience and mutual support in service efforts, but it also encompasses some work that has to do with the whole of Brazil, a country of continental dimensions. Hence, apart from the administrative officers, there is a position for each of two branches of service at the BZF: literature translations, to coordinate and help communication among the several literature translations committees (LTCs) in Brazil, and public relations, to take on any PR or PI work that is related to more than one region in the country.

Both these services, PR and LT, have the experience of using technology for communication among the several community leaders to enable the service efforts to come about. Very little can be done by a single person in such a position, and we soon figured out that following the principles of delegation, inclusion, teamwork, unity, anonymity, and selfless service was really the best way to accomplish things. Literature translations service has had a boost in recent years in Brazil since we have encouraged members from all around to participate in service, either by forming local committees at their regions and even areas, by holding regular weekly workshops, or by taking part in different tasks that were assigned through an email list, which enabled members who were far from a face-to-face meeting of an LTC to be a part of the effort and contribute with service.

Certainly, the group effort of the LTCs in Brazil had as one of its highlights the release, at WCNA, of our Sixth Edition Basic Text in Brazilian Portuguese. It is the first time we have had a complete Basic Text in Brazil. Literally dozens of members gave their energy and time for that effort, and we even had members who are professionals contribute their time for some of the work needed for this edition of the book, which normally would cost the Fellowship some funds. There are no words to express the gratitude we felt when we saw the Sixth Edition being sold by the multiregional literature distribution office for Brazil, the “ACS” (Associação para Comitês de Serviço), our incorporated office for the country since 1993. The office sold more than 3,000 copies at WCNA.

In PR, something similar was done. The idea was that a BZF PR chair should not take the tasks that came up into his or her own hands. Rather, he or she should first ask for the support of the areas and regions that could and would be willing to take on certain efforts that were identified as a need or that came about as opportunities to carry the message. This proved to work far better than we expected. When members were asked to come forward to help in a joint effort to do certain projects, such as compiling a meeting directory for NA’s Brazilian national website, literally dozens “showed up.” The task was then to coordinate work via the internet. In fact, Brazil’s meeting list at the World Service Office had not been updated in some ten years. More than 70 members volunteered to type and organize the meeting list, so that members could have a good list when they came from all over to visit Brazil at WCNA 36. This was accomplished.

Another task that the BZF’s PR team coordinated was creating a group to write the history of NA in Brazil. This proved to be a giant effort, with many long interviews to be transcribed and hundreds of documents to be organized. The work is still ongoing; a first result was shown at WCNA in the form of an exposition. This also was a team effort that could only be accomplished by the participation of dozens of interested members willing to give their time.

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As “our ultimate celebration” approached, we had a few tasks at hand: First, we needed to identify and contact the media that we had experienced to be “NA friendly,” as well as the media in general. Second, we wanted to have, for the first time, the experience of asking health and justice professionals who are NA friends to come and share with us at WCNA in a panel about their experience of cooperation with NA. Third, we wanted to invite our many friends in the community (when one has a celebration, it is common to invite your friends to the party) and this was the language we used: “We are having our NA World Convention in Rio, and we’d like to invite you, as a friend of so many years with the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, to come and participate at our event.”

NA was invited back to a meeting in Brasilia

So, we had everything planned for WCNA 36 public relations: We would invite “friendly” media for a lunch, hoping they could point us in the direction of other media contacts, too, but also making room for news pieces announcing the convention. On the website, we started preparing a “professionals panel” with three physicians (all specialists in the medical field of addiction treatment), one attorney, and a prosecutor involved in the establishment and diffusion of the Brazilian therapeutic justice program (our own type of drug courts), and we started inviting the many nonaddict friends of NA to attend the professionals panel, and maybe stay for the main speaker meeting. We also took on the job of contacting all institutions in Rio where H61 panels are held, in order to give them the opportunity to send their patients as newcomers to the convention.

It wasn’t all easy. For instance, at the lunch with the media professionals, only one journalist showed up. We didn’t let ourselves be dispirited by that fact alone, since we knew that media professionals are not easy to get hold of, especially the big media ones. And that single journalist was, in fact, working at one of Brazil’s main newspapers, and he also promised to get us in touch with some of his colleagues from the press. A big news piece was written in a very nice tone a couple of weeks before WCNA, and that triggered other media contacts for the event.

On-site, we were excited about what could happen. We tried to contact TV news and the press, but those are very difficult contacts to make. We sent press releases anyway, and waited. There were some TV crews on-site, covering the event in a proper manner, with the guidance of our NAWS staff at the convention, and we hosted a few newspaper journalists, even one from a famous worldwide French newspaper who attended the whole convention and wrote a very nice story, published around a month after the convention. We don’t know whether the media coverage was the best that we could make happen, but we surely know that our phonelines and website contacts increased by more than 20 percent after WCNA happened.

The professionals panel was a success. We had two physicians who are leaders in one addiction specialists’ association, the Associação Brasileira para o Estudo do Álcool e Outras Drogas (Brazilian Association for the Study of Alcohol and Other Drugs, ABED), another physician who is a professor of psychiatry at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a member of another addiction specialists’ association, and the therapeutic justice prosecutor. Around 40 professionals attended the panel as our guests, mainly from the addiction treatment field but also social workers and educators, and there were around 450 people in the audience. The panelists surprised us with the way they shared their experience in cooperation with NA, and they enthusiastically shared with us, in their own way, their explanation of how it works.

The high point in regard to PR, though, was the prosecutor’s participation. He demonstrated his interest in staying for the whole convention, so he stayed with us for the four days. We arranged a roundtable discussion meeting for him with PR trusted servants from all over the country who attended the convention to talk with him, which proved to be of great value. A true “NA friend,” he explained how those who have committed a drug-related small felony may to go to NA meetings instead of serving time. He was very familiar with our program, and he attended several meetings during the convention and was often seen around the corridors, enthusiastically chatting with our members.

As a result of the invitations to professionals, NA was invited back to a meeting in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, with the Federal Council for Drug Policy at the Brazilian government’s justice department. After hearing us out, they asked how we could better cooperate. We listed a few projects, like a nationwide 800 phoneline, putting signs on federal roads near towns where there are meetings, and door-opening contacts with the federal prison system. Also as a result of the contacts made for the professionals panel, we initiated participation at several conferences of healthcare professionals who specialize in addiction. The first of these was a roundtable of specially invited guests scheduled for September of this year.

WCNA 36 in Rio was, indeed, a big stepping-stone in the history of NA in Brazil. Members from all over Latin America and from all around the world were present. Newcomers were greeted and welcomed (the countdown showed this clearly), entertainment was a success, and the local fellowship participated and served. Rio de Janeiro and the whole of Brazil will certainly never be the same. The old lie is dying; we can feel it in the air.

César C, Brazil
Zonal Forum Public Relations Chair
Carlos P, Rio de Janeiro Regional Delegate
Traditions Project Update

The Traditions Project covered a lot of ground in the past two years, and we appreciate all who participated in the process. Review and input periods for the final two batches of material ended with input for Traditions Seven through Ten on 31 August 2015, and Traditions Eleven and Twelve and the closing section on 30 September 2015. The workgroup had its final meeting in mid-September, and will continue making revisions to incorporate Fellowship input into the approval-form draft, which will be mailed with the Conference Agenda Report in November.

There has been an ongoing evolution to the structure of the chapters and the overall workbook since the beginning of the project. We are striving diligently to create a piece that will meet the many diverse needs and wishes of our members. Based on ideas and suggestions from the Fellowship, there will be some further modifications to both content and structure as we progress toward the approval-form version. The biggest changes include simplifications of the chapter structure and an effort to reduce the overall length as much as possible. We’ve had to make some difficult decisions along the way, such as taking suggestions from some input rather than other input when multiple pieces of feedback contradicted each other. For each of these decisions, we were always guided by the question, “What will make this workbook the best piece of literature possible?”

The level of participation was impressive, with groups from many places sending input on a regular basis. Some had workshops at regular intervals, while others sent what they could when they could. We are very grateful for the hard work and support that have come from members, home groups, literature committees, and ad hoc review workgroups that participated in the development of this book. Your efforts shaped and improved the work immeasurably. As we all know…

It takes an entire Fellowship to create the best NA literature possible.

Participate on the project discussion board: http://disc.na.org/trads

Find complete project details, including materials to help you submit, at www.na.org/traditions.
Fellowship development

WSLD Purpose and History

*Western Service Learning Days (WSLD)* is an annual conference for members to learn and share about issues and solutions focused on NA public information/public relations, phonelines, web pages, outreach, and hospitals and institutions services. The event is hosted each year by a different area or region within thirteen western United States, two western provinces of Canada, and Mexico.

WSLD began in 1987 as Western States Public Information Learning Days Convention (WSPILD), in Fife, Washington. When phonelines service was included with PI on a world level, in 1991, WSLD evolved to include phonelines workshops. In 1996 the scope was expanded with plans to include H&I beginning in 1999. Northern California hosted the first (and last) Western States Hospitals and Institutions Learning Days (WSH&ILD) in 1997, which was planned as an event to coordinate with WSPILD 11. Beginning with WSLD 12 in 1998—a year earlier than originally planned—British Columbia held the first WSLD.

Originally WSLD included 11 western US states, and then expanded in 1991 to include Alaska and Hawaii. In 1992 British Columbia, Canada, was added to the mix; and in 1995 Mexico was included. For more information, including a list of WSLD locations history, visit [www.wsld.org](http://www.wsld.org).

WSLD 29: Welcome to Fabulous NA Service

It’s been ten years since WSLD was held in Las Vegas, a city with a thriving NA community that is proud to host the 29th WSLD. It’s a jam-packed weekend with opportunities for members to gain a better understanding of the different ways we deliver the NA message to addicts locally and around the world. This year’s event includes more than 32 workshops, three main speaker meetings, and an NA game show. Activity begins early Friday morning with a community day including invited professionals like diversional court judges, councilmen, and a medical professionals. These workshops address NA’s cooperation with community professionals to reach potential NA members. Attendees are expected from the all over the United States—especially the west coast—Canada, and Mexico, too!

Shelly S, Nevada, USA
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We’re always seeking ways to decrease costs, so in 2011, we purged NA Way paper subscriptions and asked readers to re-subscribe—strongly encouraging electronic subscriptions. This saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on printing and postage. Since then, e-subs have increased, but paper subscriptions are also increasing. We realize many don’t have internet access, so they choose paper. What perplexes us is the continually growing number of subscribers taking both paper and e-subscriptions.

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The 217 Group

All of our meetings were individual groups at one time, but about a year ago we combined into one group. The Thursday night meeting is probably the oldest in Springfield, although its name has changed through the years. The group name was originally Discover NA. (It was my original home group, and I have 22 years clean.) It started in a facility dominated by AA meetings, and there were some rough times in the beginning because of conflicting feelings between AA and NA members. There were problems with AA and NA literature being displayed on the same table during meetings, so we moved ours to a different table, and eventually we were given a room to use just for NA meetings. It was a joy to see AA members come into our NA meeting and discover that they felt comfortable and at home sharing there.

Today, meetings are held Tuesdays through Saturdays. We have some unique meetings, like our black light meeting. We have lava lamps and black lights in some of the ceiling light fixtures, and some of the posters on the walls have fluorescent paint, so they really stand out. We have a literature study, a couple of Just for Today meetings, and a candlelight meeting.

We hold our business meeting with anyone willing to participate the first Saturday of each month at 8:15 pm. The area service meeting is every other month, and we have rotating HG members attend as GSR. We have an average of ten to twelve members per meeting, and a couple of times a week we get an additional eight to ten from a treatment center. Although our groups are financially self-supporting, we found it difficult to keep up with purchasing newcomer keytags, so we recently started giving out a business card with an image of the white keytag and our group’s address and meeting times. To maintain and strengthen our relationship with the facility where we meet, we regularly clean up the inside and outside of the facility.

Sally J, Illinois, USA
The 2016 World Service Conference will be held 24-30 April in Woodland Hills, California, USA. A Guide to World Services in NA describes the WSC as

…the one point in our structure where the voice of NA as a whole is brought to view and expressed on issues and concerns affecting our worldwide Fellowship. The World Service Conference is not just a collection of regions; its concerns are greater than just the sum of its parts. The conference is a vehicle for Fellowship communication and unity: a forum where our common welfare is itself the business of the meeting.

We are currently drafting the 2016 Conference Agenda Report. The CAR includes material that will be considered at the WSC. Motions from the World Board will include one to approve the Traditions Book, which will be included in an addendum of the CAR in approval draft form. We will also be offering recommendations regarding the size of the World Board and Board member terms.

The CAR is mailed to each voting conference participant (regional delegates and World Board members), each RD alternate, and each region. The CAR will be published in English 25 November 2015, and translated versions will be available 24 December. Our experiment in the last cycle of providing a video regarding the Conference Agenda Report seemed to be helpful, so we intend to create a PowerPoint presentation and video again, which will also be available on the conference website. Additional copies of the CAR will be available for purchase from the WSO, and the CAR will also be available online at www.na.org/conference.

The deadline for RBZ submissions for WSC 2016 is 31 October 2015.

For more information, please visit www.na.org/hrp or email hrp@na.org.
The online calendar at na.org and the *The NA Way* Magazine calendar page are available to NA groups and service bodies registered with NA World Services to share information about multi-day events. Usually, events occurring between NA Way publication dates are published according to the schedule below. To enter events or to access event details, visit www.na.org/events.

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**Important Notice:** In order to comply with new privacy laws, beginning 1 April 2015, we will not be able to publish personal contact information in the online and *NA Way* Magazine calendars. However, the email address and/or website of the event or an associated NA group, area, region, or zone that is registered with NAWS may be submitted. In addition, the person submitting event information will be asked to acknowledge that s/he has read and agrees to our Privacy Policy before the event can be activated on the calendar.

**Canada**
- Nova Scotia 6-8 Nov; Canadian Convention 23; Atlantica Hotel, Halifax; www.canadianconvention.com
- Ontario 12-14 Feb; Toronto Area Convention 9; Toronto Downtown Marriott, Toronto; www.torontonaconvention.org

**India**
- Orissa 5-7 Feb; Indian Regional Convention 8; Blue Lily Beach Resort and Hotel Empires, Puri; www.naindia.in/rcnna-viii/
- West Bengal 19-21 Nov; Kolkata Area Convention; Lataguri, Jalpaiguri, Kolkata; www.nakolkata.org

**Mexico**
- Rosarito 6-8 Nov; Latin American Convention 12; Puerto Nuevo Hotel & Villas, Rosarito; www.clana.org

**Thailand**
- Pattaya 12-14 Feb; Thailand Regional Convention 9; Asia Pattaya Hotel, Pattaya; www.na-thailand.org

**United States**
- Alabama 6-8 Nov; Greater Birmingham Area Convention 20; Clarion Birmingham Airport, Birmingham; event info: 205.317.0267
  2) 15-17 Jan; Central Alabama Area Convention 19; Holiday Inn Airport, Montgomery; event info: 334.399.7386
- California 15-17 Jan; TAC Convention 16; Oxford Suites, Chico; www.tac-convention.com
- Colorado 6-8 Nov; Colorado Regional Convention 29; Westin, Westminster; www.nacolorado.org/rcnna
- Connecticut 8-10 Jan; Connecticut Regional Convention 31; Stamford Hilton, Stamford; www.ctnac.org
- Florida 20-22 Nov; Rainbow Weekend 18; Marriot North, Fort Lauderdale; www.rainbowweekend.org
  2) 26-29 Nov; Serenity in the Sun 34; Embassy Suites, West Palm Beach; www.palmcoastna.org
- Georgia 26-29 Nov; West End Area Convention; Renaissance Conference Hotel, Atlanta; www.westend.grsena.com
- Illinois 6-8 Nov; Greater Illinois Regional Convention 19; Wyndam Garden Hotel, Urbana; www.centraillinoisna.org/gircna
  2) 7-10 Jan; Chicagoland Regional Convention 28; Hyatt McCormick Hotel, Chicago; www.crcfna.org
- Maryland 6-8 Nov; Ocean Gateway Area Convention 18; Clarion Fontainebleau Resort, Ocean City; www.ogana.org/convention
- Michigan 20-22 Nov; Macomb Area Convention 5; Sterling Inn, Sterling Heights; event info: 586.258.6159
- Mississippi 31 Dec-3 Jan; Surrender by the Seashore; Ramada Inn, Gulfport; event info: 228.217.8286
- Missouri 20-22 Nov; Saint Louis Area Convention; Sheraton Chalet Westport, Saint Louis; www.stlna.org
- Nevada 6-9 Nov; Sierra Sage Regional Convention 20; Grand Sierra Resort Hotel Casino, Reno; www.sierrasagena.org
  2) 31 Dec-2 Jan; New Year New Life 22; Hanover Marriott Hotel, Whippany; event info: 201.968.6115
- New York 15-17 Jan; Nassau Area Convention 13; Long Island Huntington Hilton, Melville; www.nassaulna.org
  2) 12-14 Feb; Metro Area de Habla Hispana Convention 11; Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains; event info: 646.330.7382
- North Carolina 20-22 Nov; Spectrum of Hope 2; Clarion Hotel, Greensboro; write: Spectrum of Hope 2; Box 20022; Greensboro, NC 27406
  2) 8-10 Jan; Spiritually High in the Land of the Sky Convention 31; Crowne Plaza, Asheville; www.wncna.org
- Ohio 27-29 Nov; Unity Weekend 4; Radisson Hotel Cincinnati Riverfront, Covington; event info: 513.293.7250
  2) 1-3 Jan; Central Ohio Area Convention 26; Crowne Plaza North Worthington, Columbus; www.nacentralohio.org
- Oklahoma 15-17 Jan; Norman Winter Convention; Norman Hotel, Norman; www.nwc.wascokna.org
- Pennsylvania 19-22 Nov; Start to Live 33; Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Seven Springs; www.starttolive.org
  2) 20-22 Nov; Delaware County Area Convention 2; Clarion Hotel & Convention Center, Essington; www.nadelco.org
- South Carolina 13-15 Nov; Port City Area Convention 4; Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, North Charleston; www.portcityna.com
  2) 29-31 Jan; Upper South Carolina Area Convention 36; Marriott Greenville, Greenville; www.ccrna.org
- Tennessee 26-29 Nov; Volunteer Regional Convention 33; Music Road Resort & Convention Center, Pigeon Forge; www.vrcna33.org
- Utah 20-22 Nov; Utah Region Indoor Convention 17; Yarrow Hotel, Park City; www.uricna.com
- Vermont 13-15 Nov; Champlain Valley Area Convention 26; Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center, Burlington; www.cvana.org/convention
- Virginia 8-10 Jan; Virginia Convention 34; Richmond Marriott, Richmond; www.wavcna.org
- Wisconsin 14-16 Oct; Wisconsin State Convention 33; Holiday Inn, Manitowoc; www.wisconsinna.org
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