
WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

NEWSLINE

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NA WAY MAGAZINE CIRCULATION AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The *NA Way Magazine* has been one of the services provided by the World Service Office since 1984. The first issue was published in September 1982.

When The *NA Way* began, the NA Fellowship itself was very different from what it is today. We were reviewing our very first book-length piece of literature. There were very few locally produced NA newsletters, and the ones we had were in English. The *NA Way* was a welcome addition to our array of recovery material. Response to the magazine was enthusiastic. Circulation went from a couple of hundred in 1984 to almost 10,000 in 1989.

We're sure that some of this rise was due to "marketing"--the group subscription drive, convention displays, sample *NA Ways* and subscription information included in group starter kits and other places--however, even more of our success was probably due to word-of-mouth. People who liked the magazine told their friends, and they told their friends, and so on.

However, since its peak in 1989, The *NA Way* subscriber base has slowly and steadily dwindled away. We haven't done anything substantially different as far as marketing goes. If anything, we've increased our efforts, both by trying the "networker" program for two and a half years, and by stepping up our sample copy mailings to the point where they're sent with virtually every H&I letter and other correspondence. We've also made efforts to improve the quality of the magazine by seeking out stories from places where NA is starting or growing, providing a forum for discussion of issues that will shape our fellowship in the future, and generally trying to make the magazine more interesting and easier to read.

We have a problem. It's the same one we informed you of last April: The number of subscribers is still dwindling. We're still losing more than \$100,000 of NA's money on the magazine every year. NA's resources are limited and we have to find a way to use them where they are most needed. However, we've had some time to think about how to solve this problem. And we've had some much-needed input from the fellowship. All we really had to do was hear what the conference had to say and follow our own mission statement.

WSO staff, under the guidance of its conference-elected board, will be exploring how we can develop a periodical that meets the needs of the NA Fellowship and furthers its growth. We cannot yet tell you any more about what this publication might be, because we haven't done the proper research to find out what the fellowship considers essential. But we can say that if the fellowship tells us it needs recovery sharing in print, the publication will have that. We expect that the publication will also be the means by which we can inform everyone about new literature, translations in progress or completed, the activities of world service boards and committees, issues for fellowship discussion, new trustee bulletins such as the one featured in this issue of the magazine, coming events, and more.

We think we can streamline current publications, combining some while eliminating the duplication of effort in others (e.g., calendar section published in both the *Newsline* and *The NA Way*), and thus come up with something that conserves NA's money, maximizes its human resources, and provides something new and exciting and valuable to all of our members. We will be working on developing a prototype of this new publication (we may even call it *The NA Way*) for presentation to the fellowship in the 1997 *Conference Agenda Report*.

At this writing, we are working on a plan to research our members communication needs, possibly by working with a group of regional service representatives. We will be listening very carefully to what our members tell us, and we will see to it that the publication prototype reflects that information. If you'd like further information about this process, please feel free to call or write us.

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REPORTS OF ILLICIT BASIC TEXT IN SOUTHEASTERN US

Just recently, we were contacted by a member in the Southeastern United States who informed us that an altered and unapproved version of the Basic Text that had been produced without permission was being circulated in a treatment center. Specifically, this document contains the bulk of the text that was printed in the Third Edition Revised, but with language from the Second Edition inserted into the essays on the Fourth and Ninth Traditions.

The fellowship has decided, through World Service Conference action, that it's important to have our message be consistent and recognizable as the NA message of recovery no matter where that message is carried. The fellowship has taken steps to ensure that even translations of NA's recovery literature undergo a rigorous review process to ensure that the message is not altered.

Members have contacted the WSO about infringements of NA literature whenever it is taking place, expressing dismay and demanding that something be done. We're hoping that we won't be forced to take all the steps required to protect NA's literature. We'd like to see this activity stop right here, right now. The WSO will live up to its responsibility to protect NA literature from infringement, but ultimately, only the fellowship can stop this infringement by no longer tolerating it.

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OUR BUSINESS IS YOUR BUSINESS

Newsline readers will recall the last issue of the *Newsline* which was devoted to summarizing the 1995 *WSO Annual Report*. There, you read our new mission statement, as well as our goals for the short- and long-term future. You also read about many of the services provided by the World Service Office to you and to our members around the world. We talked about the assistance we provide in the translation of our message into some thirty-nine languages, the administrative and clerical support we give to the World Service Board of Trustees' projects as well as other conference committees and the WSC itself, our continuing effort to help facilitate WSO-Europe and WSO-Canada operations, the ongoing responsibility of coordinating our world convention, our commitment to providing free literature to NA communities around the world, our task of producing communications periodicals to better serve you and the general public, our commitment to assuming the costs and responsibilities of maintaining our site on the World Wide Web, along with our ongoing dedication to producing high quality literature and getting it to you in a friendly, timely, and cost-effective way.

As you may have gathered, in the development of our business plan, your board of directors, and your staff at the office, are renewing our commitment to providing the best, most cost-effective, and helpful service we possibly can to you, our members. In order to do this responsibly, however, we need to inform you about the present realities faced by your World Service Office. The fact is, both Narcotics Anonymous and your WSO will, in the coming months, be faced with some decisions which will place renewed focus on our fellowship's way of thinking about our Seventh Tradition and self-support, as well as our collective delivery of services into the twenty-first century.

Rest assured, our commitment to developing and maintaining an adequate office-wide quality assurance program by 1999 will trim what little fat is left in our operations so that we will be performing at peak performance and giving our membership the biggest possible "bang for your buck." We will be seeking every means possible by which to get our own house in order. For example, we will strive to reduce the ratio of personnel expenses and production costs to sales income by about two percent over the next five years. We are absolutely committed to these goals, and will do all we can to achieve them.

However, as you've already guessed, all of our efforts won't be enough to ensure the responsible and prudent maintenance of your WSO into the coming century. In order to be responsible, we, collectively, must begin to ask and answer some tough questions, such as:

- **Does our fellowship value its WSO?**
- **Do we value and believe in the services it provides?**
- **Do we wish those services to continue?**
- **Is it responsible to allow our WSO to continue to operate with less than a three day prudent reserve of everyday operating expense?**
- **Is it wise to require the WSO to operate in constant crisis mode, financially, as a result of this lack of prudent reserve?**
- **Is it realistic to expect that our current level of service provision and its associated expense will be adequate to the needs of a fellowship whose growth is now exploding throughout the rest of the world?**
- **What do all these services have to do with our Fifth Tradition?**
- **Do these services relate to our Twelfth Step?**
- **Is it right to talk about money and our spiritual principles in the same breath?**

World Service Office management, the board of directors, and the fellowship at large has been asking the same questions for nearly ten years. Indeed, some of these questions are at the very heart of issues which have divided many of us nearly since our inception. However, the WSO has never really done an adequate job of informing you, our customers, just exactly what happens to all the millions of dollars that move through our accounts every year. But that's about to change.

In upcoming reports, we will be providing you with information regarding the financial and philosophical history of the WSO -- to let you know where we are today, how we got here, and where we think we need to go to best serve the fellowship. We hope as well that our newly adopted mission statement and business plan will make greater sense to everyone once they have received this historical background. Even as you read today's Newsline, comprehensive research is being conducted from WSO archives to supply you with information about the decisions, and the philosophies which informed them, which have brought NA worldwide, as well as your WSO, to our present reality.

We are therefore committed, over the coming months, to providing you with as much information as we can gather to help you make an informed decision about the future of the World Service Office. We pledge to do the following:

- **We will inform you, as precisely as we can, what services are being provided, how much they cost, and why we are providing them.**
- **We will tell you, as accurately as we can, how and when the decisions were made to provide such services.**
- **We will try to show, as honestly as we are able, how those decisions were informed by the primary directive of our program - to help carry the message to that addict who still suffers.**

If you hear a note of concern sounding in this issue of the Newsline, then you understand the gravity of the decisions we face as partners in the delivery of our message across the globe. The time for addressing some of the tough questions alluded to earlier is simply come. It has been coming for a long time. In the new partnership we hope to forge between the WSO and our members, we, together, must face up to the challenges which confront us. Such challenges, in the end, can only help us grow into a stronger, more unified force for carrying our message to addicts seeking a new way of life.

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DENVER SERVICE OFFICE WORKSHOP

The World Service Office, in conjunction with the WSO Board of Directors and the World Convention Corporation, conducted a workshop on offices and conventions during the weekend of 27-29 September 1996. At that meeting, the office staff distributed the first draft of a document titled A Financial History of the World Service Office of NA (referenced in this summary, and available from the WSO). Significant input was received from the RSO representatives present, and is being compiled in a complete summary of the weekend's activities by WSO staff. The following is an abbreviated summary of the WSO staff and board of director presentations.

Overview Presentation

The first presentation was made by two members of the board of directors, who gave a general overview of the WSO's mission statement. The presentation included a bit of WSO history surrounding the years 1990 and 1991, when the WSO experienced serious financial hardship as a result of declining Basic Text sales. The directors explained that studying these experiences helped the BOD to formulate the mission statement and goals for the World Service Office.

Pricing Policy Background Presentation

The next presentation concerned the history of the WSO's literature pricing policy (which consists of inflating the price of literature to offset expenses associated with providing services). The conclusion which was presented follows: The WSO executive management team, along with the board of directors, have recognized that the WSO, and world services in general, will not, eventually, be able to continue to provide their present level of services to our international fellowship on current income and donation levels.

Sales Policy History Presentation

The next presentation on the history of the WSO sales policy included information about the discount structure, the credit policy, and licensing agreements.

Recent Sales Figures from the WSO

This portion of the presentations concluded by stating that the growing trend of ever-dwindling resources in the face of an ever-increasing demand for services is a phenomenon being experienced by the entire non-profit industry. And certainly the WSO is suffering from that same trend.

Licensing Agreements and Credit Policy Presentation

The presenter then talked about the licensing agreements which had been negotiated between the WSO and the NA communities in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany. A full examination of the history of those agreements can be found in the Financial History document.

He then discussed the WSO's credit policy, emphasizing the office's difficulty with enforcing these policies with fellowship customers. It is true that the WSO's leniency on these policies has caused financial difficulties, however, given our mission, it has been difficult to justify taking a hard-line approach when such an approach threatens the ability of addicts to get our literature. However, the WSO has reached a point in its own financial responsibilities where it can no longer take such latitude with the credit policy. WSO staff then notified all participants that, beginning 1 November 1996, the WSO would, without exception, be strictly enforcing the credit policy for all purchasers.

Business Plan Presentation

Members from the board of directors then gave a presentation on the development of the business plan. The presenter stated that the board has understood the need for a business plan since 1989, but due to the financial crisis of 1990 and 1991, and then the continuing priority of the world services inventory project, the board of directors has only recently been able to develop such a plan.

WSO Goals Presentation

The next presentation covered the goals for the WSO, as developed and adopted by the WSO Board of Directors and WSO management. Those goals were completely stated in the last issue of the Newsline, and are available in the Financial History document as well.

What Happens Next?

Staff stated that, within the next two weeks, the RSO's could expect a letter requesting information regarding their office's operation. Some questions that the RSO's could anticipate included such issues as how much of the literature discounts to their office was actually reinvested locally in the form of providing local services. They could also expect a question regarding their local shipping arrangements, so as to perhaps assist the WSO developing a stronger position from which to negotiate national shipping arrangements. These surveys will be followed-up by telephone interviews. He stressed that the WSO would need appropriate contact information to be able to gather as much information as possible. Staff thanked the participants for their candor and input, and promised that a compilation of the weekend's activities will be developed and sent to them within thirty days.

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WSO ON SITE AT THE WORLD CONVENTION IN ST. LOUIS

For the first time since its inception, the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous had an added attraction this past September in St. Louis, Missouri -- the WSO was on hand at the convention, providing historical displays of early literature and service materials, as well as on-site group registration and general information about our fellowship and its primary service center, the World Service Office.

The WSO staff members who were present included three members of our fellowship services team: Jeff Gershoff, Elodie Micklin, and Elaine Adams. Jeff is a member with nine years clean, and has worked at the WSO for eight years. He started working in the group services department in 1988, and was shortly thereafter promoted to be the travel coordinator of the WSO. More recently, after a thorough application and review

process, he was promoted to the position of fellowship services team supervisor.

Elaine Adams has been working at the WSO for three years, and has been clean for five years. Elaine began as an employee in the data services department, and moved to group services when the increasing demand for those services required an expansion of that department. She was recently given the new assignment of providing staff support to the board of trustees.

Elodie Micklin is a bilingual member of NA (she speaks French and English) who recently celebrated her fourth year clean. She has worked at the WSO for two years in the group services department, but has been reassigned to the translations department. She has also been cross-trained to work in shipping, so that when the need demands, she can assist in getting your literature orders to you as quickly as possible.

All three staff members were recently interviewed about their experiences in St. Louis, and here's what they had to say about the WSO being available to our membership at the world convention--

Q: What do you think the WSO being there provided members that they wouldn't have otherwise had?

- Elaine: "The biggest thing, I think, was that members could put faces with our names, and begin to see the WSO more as people, and less as a company or corporation."
- Elodie: "I agree. So many people told us, 'Before I came here and met you all, I had bad feelings about the WSO. I thought all you did was spend our money, but now I see you're addicts, and you're working to help make NA better. I feel very good about the WSO now.' That was very nice to hear."
- Jeff: "People were really excited that we had a photo album there, which allowed the convention-goers to put faces with the names they've heard about over the years. They seemed really excited about that."

Q: Any specific situations that stick out in your mind from your experiences at the convention?

- Jeff: "I got to meet some of our Russian members, and find out how we can help them and provide services to them. That was quite an experience. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers in St. Louis who helped us do our job there. The people were wonderful! And we really thank them very much."
- Elaine: "I don't know about specific situations, but the best part for me was the fact that we got to interact with our members in person. We get to see the RSR's and trusted servants each year during the conference, and we get to talk to our members on the telephone. But it was really great to actually be able to meet home group members from all over the place, and sit and talk with them in person."
- Elodie: "I thought that providing the opportunity to let people update their group information worked really well, because they were finally able to see why it's important to keep their group information up to date. The other thing was, people really seemed fascinated by the fact that we have staff members who speak languages besides English. They really seemed to understand that the World Service Office is really the World Service Office."

Q: What features of the WSO onsite seemed to please our convention-goers the most?

- All three: "The ARCHIVES!"
- Elodie: "It was amazing. People would come in and sit for hours, watching the video, looking at the old literature and handbooks. Some people were even taking notes!"
- Elaine: "People really liked the keytags in so many languages too. Once they found out we were giving those away, people were flocking to the WSO onsite to get them. It was great."

Q: Anything that you guys will change or add next time?

- Elodie: "We could definitely have used more staff. It was sometimes frustrating to want to talk with people, but there were so many that we were often rushed. But it was really a great experience."
- Jeff: "Well [laughing], I think the people should have brought us more food. We were starving in there! But seriously, a lot of people didn't seem to even know we were there. Next time, we need to have a more prominent place in the program, or maybe be positioned closer to the registration area. By the way, make sure you put this in: We had a great time! And we hope that everyone who visited the WSO onsite at WCNA-26 had as much fun as we had. We loved meeting members of our fellowship from all over the world."

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NEW WSB BULLETINS

In addition to the bulletins we currently offer, two new bulletins from the board of trustees are now available. These were written in response to requests from the fellowship. The first, "Theft of NA Funds," provides specific and practical information on how groups, service committees, and conventions can go about protecting funds from theft or misuse, and addresses how to proceed when a theft has already taken place. The other bulletin, "Regarding Methadone and Other Drug Replacement Programs," speaks to the issue of membership, clean time, ability to serve, and other issues surrounding the topic of NA members on methadone.

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HELLOS AND GOODBYES

Since our last issue of the WSO Newsline, we have said goodbye to two long-term employees, welcomed three new staff members, and welcomed an employee back from a long leave.

At the beginning of the year, Executive Secretary Dottie Radatz informed us that she intended to retire at the end of June. Though we knew we would miss her, we were happy that she planned to engage in some well-deserved leisure. Dottie had been with the office for more than nine years, working in a variety of departments over the years, but mostly serving as executive secretary to one of the managers.

About the same time, Stephan Lantos gave us notice that he would be leaving at the end of June to start his own business. Stephan had also worked on a variety of projects during his time at WSO, identifying his time as project manager for the It Works: How and Why, Just For Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts, and Guide to Service in NA as most fulfilling.

We were pleased to welcome Jeff Baker, formerly the Second Vice Chairperson of the WSC and Resolution Group member to our staff. Jeff left his former position as an assistant professor of English at Millikin University in Illinois to assume various communication and editorial responsibilities.

As a result of some shuffling in fellowship services that was necessary to move forward with our plans to cross-train staff, we hired Tyne Bowman and Sara Hampton in July to work as assistants in the fellowship services team. Please join us in welcoming them to the WSO.

Last but far from least, we are delighted to have Steve Sigman rejoin us on a part time basis. You may recall that when Steve went out on leave, we had a great deal of doubt that he would return. Steve will be serving on the management team and contributing his years of experience gained from working closely with many different conference committees and boards.

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MONTHLY AVG.'S	SALES	EXPENSE	NET
1996 avg. YTD	\$411,503	(400,275)	11,228
1995 avg. months	\$494,871	(488,124)	6,746
1994 avg. months	\$472,048	(458,475)	13,573
1993 avg. months	\$458,917	(434,239)	24,678
1992 avg. months	\$406,237	(396,044)	10,193
1991 avg. months	\$357,328	(378,230)	(20,902)
1990 avg. months	\$370,665	(401,011)	(30,346)
1989 avg. months	\$430,504	(418,339)	12,165
1988 avg. months	\$358,694	(345,069)	13,625
1987 avg. months	\$278,405	(266,618)	11,787
1986 avg. months	\$217,415	(201,148)	16,267
1985 avg. months	\$138,265	(128,124)	10,141
1984 avg. months	\$ 69,126	(50,687)	18,439



Figures reflect combined WSO-Van Nuys, Canada, and Europe income statements for respective periods. "Sales" shows undiscounted total income plus other income. Discounts are included in the figures totaled in the "expense" column. 1992 and 1993 Canada and Europe data were converted into USA dollars each month at rates reflecting market conditions at the time accounts were closed. The 1994 figures are adjusted to reflect actual year-end closing figures.

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