



WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, INC.

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WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE 1989 REPORT OF WSO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A warm welcome to all to the thirteenth annual meeting of the World Service Conference. In many ways it hardly seems a year since we left here tired, yet with renewed energy and commitment directed towards what we believed to be "the will of the Conference" - some of which was put forth in direct mandates and projects, other goals and objectives more nebulous - all aimed towards fulfilling our dream of making the message of recovery available to addicts all over the world. In looking back over the past year I see where the Board of Directors has been successful in accomplishing our goals, and where we have fallen short. It is always so much easier to look back, in hindsight, and in evaluating the work done, to see how we might have done differently, done better, done more . . . with all that we have in front of us, it never seems we have accomplished as much as we would like.

Before proceeding with this report, I want to take a moment to extend my appreciation and thanks to Chuck Lehman, WSC Chair, and Bob Rehmar, Board of Trustee Chair, for their attendance and participation at meetings of the Board of Directors, and for their efforts at communication between the service arms. I also want to extend a huge thank-you and congratulations to the staff at the WSO for consistent, diligent, and hard work in service to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Their task is not an easy one. As individuals and as a group, they meet the demands and challenges of serving the Conference Committees and Chairs, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Directors and the Fellowship at large. They are to be saluted.

And I would especially like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Board of Directors: Stu Tooredman, Vice Chair (Simi Valley, CA), Martin Chess, Secretary (Eugene, OR), Robert McDonough, Treasurer (Arlington, TX), John Bramlett (Anchorage, AK), Mark Daley (Baltimore, MD), Mark Danielson (Fargo, ND), Don Davis (Reno, NV), Gerrie Durkin (Tucson, AZ), George Krzymynski (Honolulu, HI), Jamie Scott-Hopkins (London, England), and Oliver Stanley (Dublin, Ireland). I would like to commend the Board as a whole for their diligence and commitment. Board meetings were well attended, and members came well prepared for the work we had ahead of us. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the membership of this Board, and I am most grateful for the privilege and honor to have been able to work with, and for, you all.

This has been an exciting year at the World Service Office and for the Board of Directors. There was substantial turnover in the membership of the Board of Directors this year. Between 1983 and last year's Conference, the Board has lost only one or two members each year to resignation or to a decision not to serve a subsequent term. Last year, however, three members resigned and three chose not to accept reelection. The six vacancies created were filled with new members. The dramatic change in

Board membership guaranteed a new level of diversity and fresh discussion in Board meetings.

The Board continued its policy of sending directors to Conference committee meetings as a resource and observer of committee activities and discussions. Despite fewer Board members attending these meetings, we were able to remain current with Conference issues and understand the needs and activities of the committees. It is our hope and belief that this knowledge helps the WSO in its support and services to the WSC and its committee activities.

Several Board members were assigned by the Chairperson of the Board to meet with staff at various times in order to become more fully aware of specific procedures and policies within staff operations. As a result, we have been better informed and more able to adequately carry out our responsibility of overseeing the office. The most active standing Board committee is the Personnel Committee. It has continued to be directly involved in policy making and in recommendations with respect to important personnel issues.

There has been discussion among Board members to increase the clean time requirement for Board membership. The requirement since WSC 1982/83 has been a minimum of five years. The scope and degree of responsibility of the Board of Directors is such that we believe longer clean time may contribute to a spiritual balance and maturity that enhances the level of discussion and decision making. A proposal will be presented to the Board at its annual meeting this June to amend the by-laws, and gradually increase the clean time requirement. The plan that will be offered is to increase the number of years of clean time by one additional year every two years, starting with the first increase this year.

In this manner, the clean time requirement for directors eligible to serve beginning June 1989 would be six years. This would also be the case in 1990. To be eligible in 1991 as well as in 1992, a minimum of seven years would be required. In 1993 the requirement would change to eight years. This same procedure would be used until a minimum requirement of ten years clean time was achieved.

As required by the by-laws of the WSO, a report on the Board membership and terms of office is provided in the WSO Report, which is presented by Bob Stone, Executive Director of the Office. Please refer to it regarding both the one-year and three-year terms expiring this year. As you will recall, the one-year terms are elected directly by the Conference, while the three-year terms are selected from a pool of members elected by the Conference.

In the remainder of this report I would like to provide an overview of some of the major issues the Board and office were involved with, and additionally some observations I feel a responsibility to share with you.

For some time I have felt concern with how we (all of us) have proceeded in providing services. Our heart has certainly been in the right place, our intentions honorable; however, there has been a failure to stop, evaluate, and plan with coordination, short- and long-term goals and objectives, with financial and human resources taken into consideration in a meaningful and responsible manner. I don't mean this to be a criticism; as I stated, I know the guiding force is to make available to others what we ourselves have found, and to make it available to addicts everywhere. However, we have been advancing with such momentum (and in many directions) that adequate reflection and assessment have been sacrificed.

At last year's Conference, I sensed that a large number of RSRs and other trusted servants at the world service level were realizing the need to "inventory" their service activities. It was my hope that many of us would examine the work of our own boards and committees, not merely focusing on whether or not we are meeting the mandates given us, but whether we are indeed serving the needs of N.A. in the best manner possible; whether the mechanisms we have in place are accomplishing this, or perhaps hindering this - with a vision that would go beyond the constraints of the conference year. I have heard many N.A. members express concern in the following areas: is rotating the quarterlies achieving its original intent? Should regions be encouraged to send their members to WSC committee meetings if they aren't committee members? Are we focusing too much of our attention on world services, and thereby diverting too much of our human resources away from our local services? There exist a number of questions and issues which seem to confuse and divide our fellowship. Again, these revolve around the concept of service. Questions and issues such as group conscience; ultimate authority and delegated authority; our primary purpose (with respect to the groups, and with respect to our service committees and boards); how to act responsibly as trusted servants; the role of special workers; boundaries within which we serve. I could go on and on.

In my personal recovery and service work, I have continuously been in awe of the principles found in the Steps and Traditions, and the range and impact of their application. Nonetheless, I believe they have fallen short in helping us to understand the relationship of our services to the fellowship of N.A.

During the four years I have served on the World Service Office Board of Directors, the most perplexing issues I have encountered did not necessarily pertain to the operation or management of the office. They most often involved general interpretations that members apply when trying to fit the Traditions to the functions of the World Service Conference, World Service Office, or other fellowship corporations. There is almost universal disagreement regarding how the Traditions apply and don't apply. I believe the fellowship would experience relief and strengthened unity if we could adopt a set of principles that would pertain to boards, committees, corporations, directors, trusted servants and special workers.

I believe the Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service has been developing a paradigm, spiritual guidelines, if you will, to accomplish this end. I have reviewed a draft of their work and would encourage favourable consideration of their proposed Principles of Service. In reflecting back on many of the letters, discussions, conflicts and controversies that have involved the WSO (the board, staff or operation), I find within these principles of service a foundation with which these issues might have been easily understood, clarified or resolved.

Back to inventorying ourselves . . . I personally have felt disappointed with my inability to fulfill a goal I had set for myself, that of improving the communication both within the Board of Directors, and between the Board and the Administrative Committee, WSC Committees, and the Trustees, as well as out to the fellowship. At several Board meetings there was discussion supporting the development of another publication which could serve as a vehicle for addressing issues: the exchange of ideas, philosophical dialogue, problem-solving, etc. In other words, a means to facilitate communication amongst the fellowship, between the regions and world services. The Board asked the staff at the WSO to further this concept and present a mock-up and proposal. I hope this can provide a forum which is

not present, or necessarily appropriate, in either the *Fellowship Report*, the *Newsline*, or the *N.A. Way*.

In addition to the turnover in Board membership, there has also been a change of staff at the office. Many of the project coordinators were reassigned, and we have brought on many new employees. The Board approved the purchase of new typesetting equipment to better accomplish our publishing and production goals. We have also posted a position for a production manager. We have received resumes from several qualified applicants and this position should be filled in the near future. For a more comprehensive discussion regarding our printing and publishing, the *N.A. Way* magazine, and the support services provided by the office staff, see the WSO report prepared by the Executive Director.

As a result of a change in the Board composition and an interest in assessing our effectiveness, the Board exerted greater interest and involvement in a number of programmatic areas to which staff have been assigned. This contributed to continued improvement in accounting practices and in inventory management.

A more noticeable Board decision was the closure of the New Jersey branch of the office. The Board had elected to open the office with a two-year timeframe, and established several objectives for the operation. It was the Board's conclusion that the office had fulfilled its original intended goals with some success, and while it was moving forward in some very valuable directions serving P.I. and in an information-gathering capacity, it was neither administratively wise nor fiscally responsible to make the long-term commitment required by that direction. Additionally, as was reported in both the *Fellowship Report* and *Newsline*, we had concerns about the fine line our staff member would have to walk amongst our non-addict friends in educating them and informing them (i.e., attraction vs. promotion, advocacy, etc.) about Narcotics Anonymous.

There were other major issues that consumed the Board's interest and time. The most far-reaching decision concerns the European branch of the office. There is agreement among the Board that a branch office will have long term impact on the growth of N.A., and availability of services, in Europe. And although we have experienced both success and disappointment in this project, we remain committed to it. We were all disappointed that our original choice for a manager for this office did not work out. We have been conducting a thorough search, and expect to select a replacement soon. We now have office space in London with a telephone and some office equipment. It is currently utilized by our London Board member, as he is helping to keep things going while we find a permanent replacement for that position.

Another major issue the Board addressed concerned the printing of our Basic Text. As has been reported, we found it desirable to select a new printing facility. In addition to the Fifth Edition, we also undertook the production of a commemorative edition of the Basic Text. There has been an increase in sales requiring larger print runs, larger paper purchases, and closer management of the production cycle. Despite our efforts to increase our stock level so as to avoid running into a backorder situation, the increased purchasing level and production delays have frustrated our efforts. In the first quarter of this year we sold 174,253 books; we expect we will produce and sell over 425,000 copies of the Basic Text in 1989.

Another major area of Board involvement was relative to the WSO budget. As highlighted by the need to make decisions about the New Jersey and European offices, the Board was faced with the task of making difficult

decisions that established priorities for the expenditure of WSO funds. This led (as it does) to a discussion about WSO spending and its relationship to the Conference, the Trustees, and the committees for both branches of service.

The WSO has never refused to provide support services or money in response to any Conference or Trustee request. However, the Board is beginning to question how it will handle requests for financial support when there are little or no surplus funds available. This will be especially perplexing if there are conflicting requests from the Conference or Trustees, or if granting assistance would threaten other WSO activities. The issue of funding our service activities has been raised throughout the year. It is complex and deserves serious consideration. I would encourage the Conference to give attention to such matters as a Budget Review Committee, a fund flow recommendation, practices that may be adopted at all levels of service to ensure greater financial accountability, and ways to encourage more Seventh Tradition contributions.

For too many years the World Service Conference has limited itself to the work placed in front of it through the Conference Agenda Report. I would join others in suggesting that at this Conference we make every effort to set the direction and lay the foundation for an ever- and rapidly-growing Narcotics Anonymous. Our task is not necessarily just to argue over the fine points of this report or that motion. The task in front of us is to set the pace and the direction, to use all of the resources we have available at the world, regional, area and most certainly, at the group level in order that we may carry the message of recovery through Narcotics Anonymous to every addict, and give them the choice, the opportunity, to join us in recovery. That is our task . . .

and to that end I remain,
in loving service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "DONNA".

Donna Markus