



NA WORLD SERVICES

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Date: 28 January 2002
To: WSC 2002 Participants
From: World Board
Re: Reprinting *Miracles Happen*

The coffee table book, *Miracles Happen* was first printed in 1998 and introduced at the World Convention in San Jose. At that time, the WSO printed over 11,000 copies, which are now just about completely sold out. The book is a collection of photos, documents, and brief historical accounts of NA history compiled from the NA World Services archives and has certainly generated interest. Most of the feedback has been strongly favorable, but there have been concerns voiced as well. Since this item was intended as a specialty item, not a piece of recovery or service literature, the review or approval processes that our recovery and service materials go through were not applied. Some of our members expressed concern about the development process. Some also expressed concern about the content of this book, saying that some of the historical discussions overreached a bit and could be interpreted as NA's opinion on outside issues. During discussions at the 1999 World Service Conference, the World Board stated its intention not to reprint this book. This was processed as "lessons learned," and we all moved on.

Meanwhile, the reaction to the book itself has been quite positive. We have sold nearly 11,000 copies, and we have received considerable feedback indicating that this book is well-loved and appreciated by many NA members. There are two world conventions coming right around the corner, where specialty items like this book are very popular. So now we're in the unenviable position of having said at the microphone of a World Service Conference, amid some controversy, that we did not intend to print it again; subsequently, however, amid very favorable reaction to the book—which we see as a service to our members desiring to understand our roots—we'd like to print it again. The World Board discussed this at its January meeting and felt the best approach to this would be to simply offer a full discussion of this issue here and to seek your support at the upcoming conference to continue printing *Miracles Happen*.

The first order of business in preparing for that discussion was to take a serious look at the concerns raised in 1999 to be sure they had been or could be addressed. There were, as we said above, concerns about both process and content.

We believe the process concerns are addressed by a combination of two things. First, this book arose from a unique historical situation. Much of the archives of our fellowship had been a part of the estate of one of our founding members and were unavailable to us until 1997. At that time, world services was afforded an opportunity to purchase irreplaceable artifacts from our early history for the fellowship archives. We at NAWS were excited

and grateful to be able to see these pieces of our history, and we knew they would have the same effect on our fellowship as a whole. And yet, reality at that time told us that it would be a long time before our focus and resources would be directed to an account of our history. The concept of a coffee table book was conceived as a way both to make some highlights of this archival material available to the fellowship—in many ways, we were motivated by the joy of sharing with you this treasure—and to minimize the financial impact of this unplanned expenditure of some \$50,000. The 1998 World Convention in San Jose looked like the perfect opportunity to accomplish both of those goals, which is why world services acted so quickly to get the book in print.

Secondly, all projects such as this one are now handled through a planning and budgeting process that includes conference approval, so the procedures for handling a project of this nature are much more clearly spelled out.

This combination of unique historical circumstances and the implementation of our new project planning process, we believe, make this a one-time exception to normal processes that will not happen again.

But what about the concerns raised by some members that portions of the content of this book are questionable with respect to our Tenth Tradition? The World Board looked carefully at those concerns at its January meeting. The portions of the book in question are where it attempts to put the miracle of the birth and growth of NA in context with the history of hopelessness of addiction before NA. The World Board looked very carefully at the concerns that had been raised and agreed that there are a few places where the book's characterization of historical events, if taken out of context, could give the impression that NA is stating an opinion on an outside issue. We believe that the questionable material represents a very small portion of the overall book and can be easily corrected.

The approach we wish to take, and for which we will be seeking your concurrence at the conference, is twofold. One, we intend to add a preface to the book stating clearly that any historical background material contained in the book represents an effort to provide context for the pictures and stories in the book, and should not be seen as an expression of opinions or positions by NA. Two, we intend to make a few edits or deletions from the book to ensure that none of the material could be excerpted and misconstrued to be an opinion on an outside issue.

So with a few minor edits, the addition of the preface, and the acknowledgement that this book and the circumstances surrounding it were unique in our history, we believe that the time has come to let this book become an ongoing part of the WSO inventory. We will be seeking your concurrence for this at the 2002 World Service Conference to reprint this book with the changes noted on pages 4, 6, 7, 10, 22, and 26. In order for you to evaluate the material, we have attached a copy of the text from *Miracles Happen* with our proposed changes noted.

Summary of Proposed Changes to *Miracles Happens*

Addition

Page four:

The pre-1953 information in this book is presented to offer the reader some publicly held perceptions about drugs and addiction. This information is extracted from various referenced sources or paraphrased from public documents. None of this material reflects the opinion of NA.

We hope each reader finds the gratitude we found for those that came before us in their perseverance so that we all could find a way to live free from the horrors of addiction.

Deletions

Page six

But many poor women of that time who did textile work in their homes had few alternatives but to “dope” their children with opium—~~“Quieting Syrup” indeed.~~

Page seven

~~In reality,~~ [Some critics have held that the](#) legislation brought to bear on the “drug problem” has in many ways been responsible for the hopelessness that characterized the disease of addiction for the first half of the twentieth century in the United States

Page ten

~~The idea, apparently, was for addicts to “sweat out” their addiction with clean air and hard work.~~

Page twenty-two

~~Not surprisingly, i~~It was shortly after this point that reports began to filter out that the group was having major difficulties.

Page twenty-six

~~The treatment, it seems, had been less than effective.~~