



# September 2011 Northern California RD Report



## EDM/ECCNA - Malmö, Sweden



I want to thank you for excusing me last month so that I may attend the European Delegates Meeting and 27<sup>th</sup> European Convention in Malmö, Sweden. This was a fantastic experience, which included a sort of techno “River Dance” clean time countdown that lasted almost as long as the Saturday main meeting itself. Iceland was funded to participate in the EDM, and it was exciting to meet and develop a friendship with their Delegate. As I’ve previously reported, they are, obviously, a very isolated NA Community and have had their share of struggles maintaining an NA identity in the shadow of AA. They are having their share of troubles getting the Basic Text translated into Icelandic, and I’ll report more on this next month. I’ll serialize the community reports over the next couple of months. Here’s just a few for now:

### **French Speaking Switzerland Community Report Highlights**



We have 17 meetings: 8 in Geneva (the English meeting became bilingual), 5 in Lausanne, 1 in Vevey, 1 in Yverdon, 1 in Sion, 1 in Sierre. 4 ASC a year rotating in French speaking Switzerland and SC meets 4 times as well in between. ASC includes GSR’s, SC, H&I and PI&RC.

- Beginning of June we had our first ever ASC at the same time and place with the Swiss German area. We had the opportunity to gather all around the table. Yaël and Oliver made a presentation of a possible new structure for a Swiss Region! Positive feedback from present members: a Swiss Region will make us stronger, especially for the PI&RC. We are getting towards UNITY! Has to be reported to all groups: propositions and remarks are welcome during our national convention in October where we will all meet again.
- Questions to the other delegates:

*Closed NA meeting in a treatment centre: How do you deal with patients who have and share about other addictions than drug & alcohol?*

### **German speaking Region Community Report Highlights**

We have 256 meetings in 87 cities. Our RSC meets three times a year, at every first weekend of March, July and November. 7 areas right now but the German speaking part of Switzerland is looking for a way to form a new region with the French speaking part of Switzerland.

- The LTC has finished the “Info about NA 2010” and the “H&I Basics”. The revision of “It works how and why” will soon be done.
- We have problems in 3 areas with violent and disruptive behavior



## Isreal Community Report Highlights

We have 265 weekly meetings. We have 7 areas in the Israeli region 6 regional subcommittees in addition to the delegate, alt and the steering committee.

Several PR presentations and workshops were held as usual one of them in Eilat. We built a stand in the national addictions convention, literature was sold and we did some good PR work.

We were asked by the H&I subcommittee to make 4 presentations for the stuff inside some jails. We have a good relationship with H&I and we work together with the stuff in jails. We have just finished to record for the radio a public announcement to promote NA in Israel, it was made in Hebrew and Russian we are waiting for the re decision. The committee decided to produce a short film about NA in Hebrew and to place it "YouTube", for better attraction on line.

We have 16 weekly meetings in 6 prisons all over the country with 50 NA members doing service work. The relationships with the authorities of the prisons and institutes are very good and we have overcome a small setback we had after the ECCMA in Israel. We are planning to have 75 inmates coming to the regional convention at the "crown plaza hotel in the dead sea" on the 1 of September. We have a new and good cooperating relationship between H&I PI& and the staff of the prisons, results are good and tow new meeting were opened in Hadarim prison which is a big detention camp.



- The old version of In Times of Illness has been sent to print as an unapproved draft. The new version is in last proofreading stages and will be sent to WSO.
- SWG: we have finished the work and sign-off. We are waiting for the approved literature to arrive.
- It Work: How and Why: to WSO request, we have proofread the book and sent it to WSO.
- Translation Basics: translated and proofread, will be sent to graphic design. Following its publication, Israel LTC will hold a workshop for the fellowship.
- The Basic Text, Sixth Edition with worldwide stories: working in small teams to translate and edit the stories. The new version will replace the BT with no stories.

## Lithuanian Region Community Report Highlights

We have 17 groups and 40 meetings per week in Lithuanian Region. The Lithuanian regional committee meets 4 times a year and organizes annual regional assembly. The strategic planning that was presented as a tool at previous meetings was not followed up strongly. It seems it is not so easy to re-organize, but some committees have applied it in the reports. H&I Committee with Vilnius and Kaunas subcommittees is an active committee, consuming most of our funds.



Literature Committee - the idea to partially pay the literature to NAWS has been discussed. We decided to pay 20 % and also donate the extra funds. The Translation Committee is editing "Just for today" and it is taking more time than the committee planned. We have sent the part of the book (January-April) for approval to NAWS.

Our Fellowship development committee-stopped functioning so well, there is only one trusted servant left and he did not attend the regional meeting. There is some good news about Klaipeda. They were almost disappearing from Lithuanian NA map for few years and did not attend the regional meetings. This time a new enthusiastic group of trusted servants came and reported on their activities. It was decided to hold a regional meeting in Klaipeda in October.

- Attending Gintaras Baltic Convention July 20 -12th (a few newcomers were sponsored to attend)
- Attending Latvian FD mission August 20-21 (we will sponsor some trusted servants to go there)

### **NA Malta Community Report Highlights**

We have 7 Groups and 12 weekly meetings of which 3 are held on the sister island Gozo. Meetings are held in 2 different languages: Maltese and English. Last November it was decided that a new meeting should be opened in Gozo.

The P.I. Sub-committee is going through a change and trying to see what the fellowship's needs are and start working on a plan. The committee held meetings for the public during our last convention which went well and helped to make NA more visible.

H&I is now meeting on a regular basis and the committee is more organized. We are currently attending 6 Institutions holding approximately 13 meetings a month and our panel leaders are doing a great job in carrying the recovery message. The women members were holding a meeting in a women's institution which has stopped and they are trying to get it started again.



Literature Translation Committee still meets on a regular basis; it has finished the last review of the White Booklet and sent it to NAWS for final verification. Hopefully it will soon be available for our members. We have started translation of the basic text. After the convention profit we have allocated a budget for LTC to get help from a professional translator to speed up the process.

Convention Committee: The last convention was a great success. The fact that the EDM was held in Malta helped a lot. Our newer members had the chance to see what it means to be a worldwide fellowship. It was also good from the financial side; we actually made a good profit, which isn't normally the case.

At the moment the fellowship is stable. Although we have many members doing service, including a lot of our newer members, we still need some more commitment in meetings. It would be a good idea to have some service workshops from our more experienced members. More of our members have a sponsor and are working the steps, which is a very good sign for our young fellowship.

### **NArkoslavia Community Report Highlights**

We have 12 groups, 21 meetings in 5 Areas in 9 cities. Belgrade, Novi Sad, *Obrenovac (Serbia); Zagreb, Split, Pozega (Croatia); Podgorica (Montenegro);* Sarajevo (Bosnia); Ljubljana (Slovenia), Skopje & Rabbit meetings (Macedonia); Skype meeting "We, right on time - late night meeting" - Monday in Domestic,



“our”, language. Each group has a secretary who is also a GSR and one area service representative (ASR) who is participating in regional service committee meetings which are held over the Skype and at Regional conventions twice a year. Each group has a treasurer with one task to maintain self support principle. Area has divided services: phone lines, web servants, subcommittees for translating literature (LTC committee), H&I and PI. Committee for organization of regional summer convention is gathering when it is needed.

In Regional service structure we now have: Regional delegate, Alt Regional delegate, Secretary (Minuteman), Treasurer, and Fellowship development team. We, as a region, can help each other in Fellowship development, more than in any other part of service. Because of different laws, borders and language, we cannot develop H&I, PI or LTC together. But in FD we think that we can do plenty of things. With help of EDM we started to do FD activity and that gave us lot of energy to make FD team with the same purpose as EDM has. Fellowship development team started to collect information about Areas and Groups that need any kind of help. Soon they will make plans and Area representatives will make decision where is help most needed.

Summer regional convention was held in Trogir, 10 -12th June 2011. There was around 150 addicts from all over the world and lot of people who are willing to help in further development of our region. We are very grateful for all their help in experience, literature, sponsorship, guidance and money for newcomers.

During next couple months we are going to organize Regional service meetings on Skype. Next live Service meeting is on January 2012, in Belgrade (Serbia) at the Winter Regional convention. Fellowship development team started to collect information about Areas and Groups that need any kind of help. Soon they will make plans and Area representatives will make decision where is help most needed.

Next Winter Regional Convention will be held in January 2012 in Belgrade, Serbia. That is an opportunity to hold couple of workshops with variety of topics.

Biggest issues in all Areas are still traditions, Group conscience and service structure. All groups struggle with self support, lack of people who are willing to do service but still we have lot of energy to help a newcomer and to carry the message. We think that organizing workshops, FD trips, sharing information and better communication will make some progress in all of those areas.

#### **Update: First Western Russia Regional Convention - ECCNA 28 Moscow**

Michelle S, our previous NCCNA Chair, is continuing to serve as the primary convention contact for Robert N, and the rest of the ECCNA/WRCNA Committee from Moscow, Russia. Robert was elected by the Western Russia Region of NA to head up the committee for first Western Russia Regional Convention (WRCNA), to be held in Moscow in August 2012. This will actually be in conjunction with the European Delegates Meeting and will be somewhat of a hybrid convention with ECCNA as a means of getting



them off the ground. The Western Russia Region had decided that their convention committee will be structured along the lines of NCCNA. They had downloaded a 2006 version of the NCCNA Handbook and Guidelines and have created a Russian translation of these documents to work with. They have a lot of questions about committee positions and processes. Michelle has done a great job keeping up with a flurry of emails, and even made time, along with Traci, to go to dinner with some of the Russian members during WCNA.

The Russian Community is struggling again with Translations issues. The Western Russia RSC will be meeting In a couple of weeks in Astrakhan (about 1,000 miles from Moscow), to again discuss the glossary term they will use for Addict (The debate is between “Narkoman” and which literally means “drug man”, and another term that means more like “dependent.” The debate has been heated for some time.

### Service System Input Summary through June 2011



This summary captures the limited amount of input received on the second draft of the service system proposals, along with any input received after the January Board meeting, but before the March rerelease of the proposals (unless it refers to ideas that are no longer part of the proposals). Input was received from area and regional workshops in Oregon, California, the Carolina region, Kentucky, Colorado, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and South Brazil. We also received input from the Plain States Zonal Forum, a Texas group, and a member in California.

#### **General Points**

Many delegates and interested members are active in facilitating discussions about the project. One US delegate stressed the importance of “presentation, presentation, presentation.” Some communities are still relatively uninformed, but some are making real progress on discussing and experimenting with the ideas.

Many of the same benefits and concerns that we heard after the initial release of the proposals continue to be expressed. Some of the more common ideas are:

- The fact that we have a very diverse fellowship and ideas in the proposals that work in one place may not work in another, although this would appear to be the case with our current system as well. As usual the opposite perspective is also expressed that the proposals are more flexible at the local level, yet offer greater consistency throughout NA.
- The fear that splits and disunity will develop between communities that adopt the new ideas and those that don’t.
- The perception that the project is being forced onto the fellowship from the “top down,” along with the belief that adoption of the proposals will increase governance within NA and separation from World Services.
- The continuing expression of the “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” perspective

- Concerns around accountability to groups and how they will be involved in the decision making process. One ASC (San Jose) went as far as to request that the project be halted as it reduced the voice of areas and groups, as well as not offering any improvements to current services.
- Some members asked for more specific examples of what the project ideas would actually look like in their communities, while others stressed the importance of group autonomy and the idea that any changes must be determined by them.

### **Group Support**

GSUs continue to gather pace as an attractive option in many communities. The input mentions the importance of groups within the system as they are the source of all our resources and energy. In particular rural groups have been mentioned as ones that may particularly benefit from GSUs. For example, widely spaced groups on New Zealand's South Island are experimenting with the linear model for their GSUs in order to combat the travel distance they encounter.

The GSU's focus of strengthening and increasing groups appears to be clearly understood by many members. The idea that a GSU will provide a more effective forum for group issues was also expressed several times. In addition the idea of additional discussion at the GSU was offered, e.g. a Traditions workshop, along with the possibility that a GSU could promote training and mentoring.

The dominant opinion at this point appears to be that GSU boundaries should be formed by groups and members. Some suggested a coordinated effort by an existing ASC might be most effective, examining where the locations of groups are to determine where the boundaries should logically fall. Some of the workshops expressed a concern that GSUs may be formed along racial and economic lines. This was balanced with the belief that a GSU will build unity between groups, and that an LSU will be more diverse as it will consist of an entire county or city.

A concern was raised that GSUs may not be heard in larger forums, but this appears to demonstrate an, as yet, unclear understanding of the relationship between the GSU and the LSU.

The idea of holding the GSU meeting at the LSU location, but at a different time was offered from one workshop. Ideas for funding the GSU included:

- A basket could be passed at the meeting for self-support
- The meeting could take place at an existing group and rotated throughout the year
- The meeting could take place at a public venue (restaurant or park)

It was also mentioned that more clarity on the different options for funding a GSU is needed.

### **Local Services**

Local service remains the most relevant part of the proposals for many NA communities, particularly when the discussions about the proposals have taken place at locally based workshops. Some input reflects the fact that members have little understanding of the other parts of the proposals, and no direct involvement or concern with them.

Several pieces of input understood that the LSU was intended to be more efficiently sized and to operate more effectively because of its focus on NA business and clearly defined tasks, along with the participation of more experienced members. Some input offered the thought that a central talent pool will enable skilled members to be available to many different areas, potentially offsetting the negative influence of less qualified but domineering local members. One piece of input suggested that we rename “business meetings” as “service meetings.”

Concerns around adding a layer of service, negatively affecting communications, and straining human and financial resources continue to be expressed as they were in the previous summary. Other input offers solutions to the shortage of trusted servants such as getting burnt-out members back into service, modifying the proposals to require fewer trusted servants, and remembering why we are of service, although none of the input has offered a clear idea of how to accomplish these solutions.

Ideas offered for the process of forming LSUs are:

- It should be a function of the state body
- Areas and groups should decide
- Geographic boundaries should determine them

The Plain States Zonal forum offered some ideas on an annual assembly at the LSU level. They expressed the same concerns as we have already heard that assemblies can be expensive and entail long travel times, but also the potential benefits of increased efficiency and greater involvement by groups and members. They also expressed the concern that the loss of standing subcommittees could lead to complacency in some areas of service provision.

One delegate asked for clarity on whether both groups and GSUs would send delegates to an annual assembly.

The terminology in the proposals continues to be an issue for some - New Zealand has adopted the terms “Group Forum” and “Local Service Forum” because, they explain, the word “unit” can be seen as a derogatory term.

### **Intermediate Bodies**

Many members remain “fuzzy” on the specifics of intermediate bodies. There is some consistent explanation of what they are not – replacements for existing regions – but there seems to be little input about what needs they could fill other than “filling gaps.” The idea was expressed that a more complete and expanded explanation of the role of state/national/province bodies will make it less likely that members see a need for an intermediate body.

Some members are confused as to how the LSU and the intermediate body will interact with each other.

Cultural divisions were suggested as one way to create the boundaries of intermediate bodies within states, e.g. New York City vs. Upstate New York, or Northern California vs. Southern California. Although these are also geographic boundaries, the input seems to be offering the idea that there are

cultural differences between different communities and that these are as important as geographical factors.

Ideas offered for the process of forming intermediate bodies are:

- It should be a function of the state body
- Areas and groups should decide
- An additional intermediate body should be formed once the number of LSUs within an existing intermediate body reaches a predetermined point

### **State/National Services**

The input that these will help provide a variety of statewide services was expressed again, although other input couldn't see how a statewide service body would function or how representation would work in large states. Others believed that a statewide body would ensure that no parts of a state (or country or province) were left uncovered by NA service bodies. One piece of input suggested keeping the US regional structure the same, but creating single-state service bodies to deliver statewide services. These bodies would either be formed of several regions, or consist of part of a multi-state region.

Border communities continue to be a concern for some members as it is unclear which service body they would attend.

Some input asked what the role of incorporated bodies would be in a revised system, whether it would be advantageous for service bodies to incorporate, and whether states that currently have more than one RSO should continue to do this.

### **WSC Seating**

The understanding that we do not need so many RDs to express the conscience of a state was expressed in workshops in Texas and New York. This isn't a universal belief, but does appear to have some supporters at least, even in states that currently have multiple regions. The Staten Island workshop discussed the idea that information dissemination, not representation at the WSC, is where a larger number of trusted servants are needed.

Some input expressed the view that state/national/province seating will create inequitable representation because larger and more densely populated places will be represented by the same number of delegates, or roughly the same number, as smaller places.

Some input questioned what would happen as NA grows, asking how we will identify and resolve issues related to this factor. It was also asked what new seating criteria we might need. The idea of representation based on population was offered more than once, but was also dismissed by others as impractical in an anonymous society and too similar to the US system of government. One piece of input from Brazil suggested that different countries could have different seating criteria, e.g., the US could be seated by state, while Brazil could utilize geographic boundaries or number of meetings as the determining factor. Input from the Southern Brazil regional workshop stated that they did not feel that Brazil should be represented by a single delegate because of the size and diversity of Brazil.

Reducing the costs of the WSC to NAWS by requiring regions to fund RDs, again, was offered as a solution more than once.

One different option for determining US seating that was suggested was to put all the names of the regions into a hat and then draw names for the 50 available WSC seats.

### **Processes**

We have yet to hear much about new processes; the structural elements of the proposals seem to still be the main topic of discussion in the fellowship. One delegate suggested that we will need workshops to further explain strategic planning at the local level and, in particular, how groups can be involved in the environmental scanning process.

Some pieces of input stated that groups and areas should determine how fund flow and literature distribution should work. One workshop expected fund flow to work much as it does now, with the addition of the GSU as a link in the chain. Several pieces of input suggested that groups could use a variety of sources to obtain literature much as they do now, or utilize new methods like ordering collectively as a GSU or asking a larger group to help out in case of an unforeseen shortage.

Communication ideas mentioned were:

- Using alternative methods like online service meetings
- Increase transparency and open channels of communication(although no specific way to do this was offered)
- Create liaison positions between service bodies

### **Suggestions**

Some miscellaneous specific suggestions were offered:

- Create a glossary with more basic terms than the one we currently have for the project, e.g., delegate and representative
- Explain new ideas by using equivalent examples from our current system, e.g. Administrative Board = Admin of RSC/ASC
- Overlap service terms to allow for mentorship
- Employ the Fourth Concept when selecting trusted servants
- Synch planning cycles throughout the system
- Keep regions, areas, and groups the same; add continental body for each of the seven continents. Seven delegates could meet at the world level.
- Require RCMs to call all GSRs once a week to establish:
  1. Relationship
  2. Camaraderie
  3. Better communication
  4. Knowledge of group issues

## Implementation

The idea of implementing the proposals in phases, with workshops for each of these phases, was offered more than once. In particular it was suggested that the first phase of implementation should be for the GSU and LSU, especially as these are the parts that seem most relevant, and most understood, by the majority of members. The idea of separating the WSC seating issue from the rest of the proposals was offered. Some input stated that seeing the value of the ideas in the proposals is essential to them being implemented.

### NAWS Fiscal Update:

Fiscal year 2010-11 closed 30 June 2011, which represents one year of our WSC approved budget. We did not meet the approved budget with fellowship contributions; yet, we are closer this year than 2009-10. NAWS ended the year in the black for the first time in several years. Although donations and literature sales improved slightly this year, cutting costs coupled with prudent fiscal management were the primary factors in reaching this accomplishment. NAWS is aware that our literature sales were artificially inflated in June, as service offices planned ahead and made larger purchases before the price increase took effect 1 July 2011.



However, Just for today, NAWS is able to suspend the Emergency Action Plan. We have money for 65 operating days on reserve. This was made possible with continued support from the fellowship and an austere program at WSO-Chatsworth where we now function with nine less staff members. Minimally, the aim is to hire two staff in the upcoming fiscal year. NAWS remains cautious and conservative, yet we may be able to provide increased public relations activity, which has been nearly non-existent, and may be able to expand fellowship development efforts in our ever growing worldwide fellowship.

The self-support IPs #24 and #28 may be a valuable reflective and action resource with contribution discussions. We continue to embrace our vision that one day addicts throughout the world will be able to experience recovery in their own language and culture. Freedom from active addiction is an energizing force. We will continue to ask members to *Invest in Our Vision* and contribute to our fellowship.

Thank You for all you do in service,

*(More ECCNA Community reports will follow next month)*

Matt S



***Invest in Our Vision***

NAWS online Contribution Portal: <http://www.na.org/?ID=donation-external-index>