



The N.A. TREE

**The Service Structure of
Narcotics Anonymous**

An open letter to the members of Narcotics Anonymous

November 17, 1975

Dear Fellow Members:

Again, the groups in our area are being asked questions like: "Hey, what's this GSR we're supposed to be electing next week, what does he do?"; "Where does the money go, what's it used for?"; "Now that I've been elected Secretary, what do I do?"; "What's the WSO?" Most of the answers we've heard to these questions and others like them have been based on good guesses, opinion, or misinformation. There doesn't seem to be anywhere in N.A. where this kind of information is set down in plain terms.

Gathering together what we could find in old ditto sheets, letters, tapes, from the literature of other fellowships such as ours, and from our own experience, we have tried to find answers to some of our own questions and to clarify some of our misconceptions. The following is a pamphlet about the service structure of N.A. as we understand it. Its purpose is to express, in simple terms, basic ideas about how we as members and servants of N.A. relate to each other and to N.A. as a whole. It is our hope that this pamphlet will become a part of our literature, available to all members; and that, in some small way, it will help ensure the continuation and growth of our fellowship.

Yours in fellowship,

A GROUP OF CONCERNED MEMBERS

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P.O. Box 622
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DEDICATION

This presentation of the Service Structure of Narcotics Anonymous is dedicated to the following proposition:

To assure that no addict seeking recovery need die without having had a chance to find a better way of life, from this day forward may we better provide the necessary services.

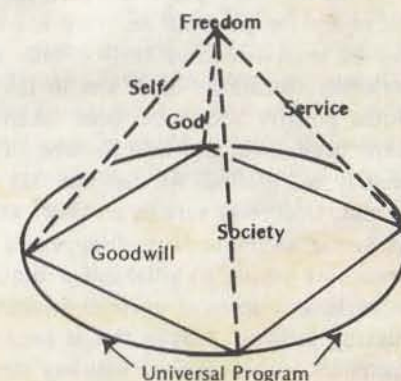
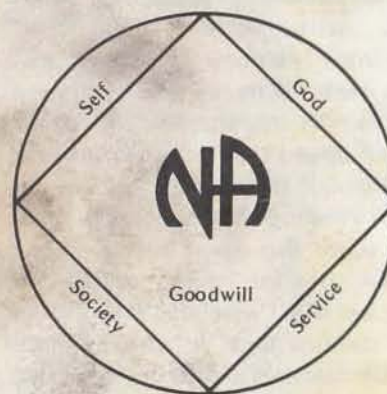
OUR N.A. SYMBOL

Simplicity is the keynote of our symbol; it follows the simplicity of our fellowship. We could find all sorts of occult and esoteric connotations in the simple outlines, but foremost in our minds were easily understood meanings and relationships.

The outer circle denotes a universal and total program that has room within for all manifestations of the recovering and wholly recovered person.

The square, whose lines are defined, is easily seen and understood; but there are other unseen parts of the symbol. The square base denotes Goodwill, the ground of both the fellowship and the member of our society. Actually, it is the four pyramid sides which rise from this base in a three dimensional figure that are the Self, Society, Service and God. All rise to the point of Freedom.

All parts thus far are closely related to the needs and aims of the addict seeking recovery and the purpose of the fellowship seeking to make recovery available to all. The greater the base, as we grow in unity in numbers and in fellowship, the broader the sides and the higher the point of freedom. Probably the last to be lost to freedom will be the stigma of being an addict. Goodwill is best exemplified in service and proper service is "Doing the right thing for the right reason." When this supports and motivates both the individual and the fellowship, we are fully whole and wholly free.



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this pamphlet is to express, in simple terms how we, as members and servants of Narcotics Anonymous, relate to one another and to N.A. as a whole; and to present an ideal Service Structure for N.A. in such a way that we can strive to improve our fellowship, and better fulfill our primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

N.A. is a Twelve and Twelve program borrowed from the A.A. fellowship. In fact, three of the first committee of five were also members of A.A., who wanted to make this proven program of recovery available to addicts. So why, you may ask, don't we just use A.A.'s structure and be done with it? This would probably be a good idea except that we are not A.A.; our needs, despite the similarities, are to a certain extent different. (As addicts, the progression of our illness is normally much more rapid than alcoholism. How many alcoholics have you heard who have at some time in their lives been reasonably successful in business or family relationships? On the other hand, how many addicts have ever had anything even resembling a successful business or family relationship? This is just an example of how our basic patterns are subtly different.) We are precluded from directly using any part of the A.A. program other than the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions; and finally in order for N.A. to survive we must be autonomous, we must have a fellowship and program of our own.

In the early days of N.A. we had what have been called "rabbit" meetings; held sporadically in different places at different times. At this time with only one or two N.A. meetings in existence, a specific structure for N.A. wasn't needed and really wasn't wanted. Soon N.A. grew, and permanent meetings were established, but because these were few in number and all located in the Los Angeles area, there was still no real need for any established service structure. However, N.A. has continued to grow. As groups began opening up in population centers other than Los Angeles, we began to feel the need for some kind of structure. Intergroup or General Service Committees came into being in various locations, each trying to take care of business on a local level, without too much regard for N.A. as a whole.

In the last 5 years, however, this approach has sort of backfired. The unity necessary for personal recovery has been in short supply. Each group or area moved in its own direction — usually apart. The very existence of N.A. was again seriously threatened as it was in the 1950's when the traditions were ignored. Some positive action has been taken to try to solve this problem; conventions have been held, a World Service Office opened, and lines of communication shakily established. We can see that these attempts have paid off to a certain extent. Groups in various areas are starting to work together, much of the petty bickering seems to have disappeared and it seems that many members, in all areas, are trying to establish a better environment for sobriety in N.A. The strength and unity of purpose evident at the last N.A. Convention shows we are making progress. Maybe this is because for the first time, we now find many members with long-term sobriety active in the meetings and in the fellowship.

It's no longer a rarity to find members with years clean rather than only weeks or months. Perhaps some of the personal maturity gained in living drug-free has started to have an effect on N.A. as a whole.

Despite this progress, we are still at a very critical stage of the "coming of age" process. Today large, active fellowships are developing in several population centers and new groups are starting up in many areas throughout the United States and in foreign countries. N.A. is growing, and with this growth the need for unity and communication increases. The old adage that a house divided cannot stand applies to N.A. as well as any other group. Right now we don't seem to have any unifying structure or clear-cut lines of communication for N.A. as a whole. What structure there is, only functions on a local level and our vital lines of communication have often been both hard to locate and as changeable as the weather. It is our sincere hope that this presentation of the service structure of our fellowship, as we understand it, will help to fill in some of the gaps that separate us; and that in this small way we can contribute to the growth and future of N.A.

Introduction to Second Edition

This is the second printing of *The N.A. Tree*. You may notice that there have been some minor changes in the text of this edition. These revisions are in response to suggestions from the fellowship. All written suggestions which were received at the *World Service Office* prior to June, 1976 have been seriously considered. (Incidentally, *all* those suggestions were very good ones and have been incorporated in this edition.) It probably should be noted that one of the responses which was considered does affect the nature of the structure slightly. In the first edition, it proposed that the Group's GSR should attend both Area and Regional Service Committee meetings. The question was raised that (however good this system might be for us today), if a region contained several hundred groups, wouldn't the resulting Regional Meetings be just as chaotic as the ones we have had? This response went on to suggest that the Regional committees should be made up of representatives from the Areas; just as the Area committees are made up of representatives from the Groups. This is something which wasn't considered in the early drafts of *The N.A. Tree*. We feel that this is an especially valuable suggestion and have modified the *Tree* accordingly.

Hopefully, you as members, will continue to review existing literature and make positive contributions so that we can upgrade what we have or create new literature. If you have a suggestion about literature that you truly feel would benefit the fellowship and the newcomer, please put it down on paper and send it to the World Service Office, as others have done.

Thank you,

Literature Committee, Narcotics Anonymous

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the groups springs from our traditions. As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience, our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A., as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

It is necessary that we be aware of these principles in all our N.A. work and especially whenever our actions could in any way affect N.A. as a whole. Any undertaking such as this pamphlet must, if it is to be valid, have as its foundation all of these traditions. The N.A. pamphlet says: "There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery, this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles." The Traditions are spiritual principles and we have tried in writing this pamphlet to keep these principles in mind.

The First Tradition, of course, is the main purpose of this pamphlet. A service structure for N.A. is necessary for our common welfare and to promote

personal recovery. Unity within fellowship is the goal we hope can be achieved by the implementation of this structure.

Much thought has gone into the structure to be described in this pamphlet. One of our primary aims has been to lay out the structure in such a way that the integrity of the conscience of each group is maintained throughout the service arm of N.A. The Second Tradition also describes the nature of those members active in N.A. Service as trusted servants and only by emphasizing this relationship between the group and its representatives can the principle of democracy and group conscience, which we have tried to build into this structure, work. We find it necessary to stress that adherence to the Second Tradition is of the utmost importance, without it no effort to strengthen N.A. as a whole can be successful.

The guarantee that our society will remain an open fellowship in which recovery is available to all and not limited to a select group is one of the principles (Third Tradition) which the implementation of a formal structure can help to ensure. We hope that N.A. will never become weighted down with the rules, regulations, requirements, initiation fees, selective membership, and discrimination which prevent recovery and which have, in time, destroyed most programs designed to help addicts.

Tradition Four talks about the autonomy of each group, except as it affects other groups and members. Again this Tradition can be strengthened by lines of communication and unity, freeing the individual group from the arbitrary actions of another group.

Our primary purpose, as expressed in the Fifth Tradition is, along with some of the other Traditions, the reason we are writing this pamphlet. The hope that we can, in some way, carry the message of recovery more successfully and on a broader scale has been our motivation.

The Sixth Tradition concerns the use of the name Narcotics Anonymous. Formal service structure with active member participation can help prevent the misuse of our name and guard against the problems of money, property and prestige and their ultimate weakening of the fellowship.

Undoubtedly one of the most widely used terms in N.A. is the "7th Tradition." Most groups, in fact, even call the collection which is taken during most meetings the Seventh Tradition. This is unfortunate, the Seventh Tradition is not a basket with money being put into it; it is a principle — probably the most widely confused and abused principle within all the 12-step fellowships. Few of us, it seems, have given much thought to this principle and its far-reaching consequences. The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous were not adopted by the fellowship until 1950 and during the 15 or so years prior to this adoption A.A. was not fully self-supporting. Numerous cash gifts from non-members and organizations were accepted, loans were taken, a cash advance on Big Book sales was accepted, stock was issued, and money came from many sources outside the fellowship. Because of the "strings" so often attached to free or easy money, A.A. had to pay its dues for this outside support. All the Traditions are there for good reasons and the reason we must be fully self-

supporting is obvious in the history of A.A. It is, in more than any other way, through the practice of this principle that our fellowship maintains its freedom. The acceptance of a service structure for N.A. will give us a guide to what needs to be supported, a context in which one can see where the money goes, a chance for the group to use its funds to benefit N.A. as a whole, and some checks to help prevent our contributions from supporting someone's habit or paying someone's rent.

Tradition Eight describes the nature of people who will make up this service structure. That they should be non-professional just as we are individually non-professionals in our 12 Step work is obvious, and for the same reasons. The nature of professionalism contradicts the principle of giving freely of one's self for the common good. This principle of giving and sharing is, of course, one of the cornerstones of our program and recovery.

The Ninth Tradition has been the topic of considerable deliberation in the preparation of this pamphlet. How can we propose a structure without proposing organization? The Tradition states that we ought never to be organized, but that we may create service boards and committees. This seems to be, at first glance, almost a contradiction in terms, but somehow we must untangle this mess. We ought never be organized and disorganization is killing us. What can we do without violating this Tradition? We feel that the key to this problem lies in understanding the purpose and nature of the structure we propose. First of all the purpose of this structure is service. Most of us realize that in order to keep our meetings going there are some necessary functions which must be performed, this is service. The development of lines of communication within our fellowship is service. Providing for 12 Step work is service. This Ninth Tradition says that we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. Most of this pamphlet deals with just that. But what about mapping it all out with charts and descriptions, and everything, isn't that organization? The purpose of laying out these boards and committees in an orderly form, showing what they do, and how they relate to each other is not organizational in nature, but informational. What we are presenting is not an organization, but a method; a method by which the services necessary to N.A. can be performed with a minimum of confusion. In this sense, this service structure is fully in keeping with our Ninth Tradition.

As with other Traditions the Tenth Tradition is supported by the service structure. With such a structure functioning within our fellowship we are assured that no one person can express his personal opinions in the name of N.A. as a whole.

With a service structure, public relations as discussed in Tradition Eleven becomes a group matter rather than a personal one. With the group conscience working as the basis for decisions concerning public relations the chances of inadvertent anonymity breaks are greatly reduced. The individual who is going to publicly break his anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, or TV because of self-obsession, in one form or another, is going to do so despite traditions, service structure, group conscience or the advice of his friends. In

establishing this service structure we do not vainly hope to prevent this type of anonymity break, we do, however, hope to minimize the occurrence of the accidental anonymity breaks which result from lack of information and guidance.

That leaves us with the Twelfth Tradition. We, as a group, feel that this tradition, as it relates to this topic and to N.A. as a whole, is self-explanatory. We pray that in implementing this service structure, principles may always be placed before personalities.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Considerable thought and discussion took place concerning which words should be used to describe our structure. It seems ironic that, while we were in agreement about the structure itself, we went "round and round" about the words. The irony, of course, is that it's the structure which is important, not the words. Some felt that we should use the same terms that other fellowships have used, others felt that we should use government terminology. Both of these suggestions, as well as others which came up in the course of our discussions, have merit; but neither fully serves the purpose. First of all, this structure of ours isn't exactly like any other and it can't just be plugged into an existing framework. Secondly, the use of someone else's terms would not be in N.A.'s best interest. N.A. is a fellowship unto itself; and it is of the utmost importance that we maintain our own identity.

For the purpose of this work, we decided to use the simplest possible terms which were meaningful to us all. Geographically we chose to use the words Area, Region, and World. These designations can be thought of as roughly equivalent to the telephone company divisions in the sense that they are meant to represent population rather than location. This is important because we are, and deal with, people not places. Furthermore, we tried to avoid using terms such as "organization," which might imply a lack of adherence to our Traditions. Instead, we used words like Service Board and Service Committee which could not be construed as a violation of the Traditions.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that some of the service arms which we describe in this structure are not a part of the N.A. program. They exist separately and are designed to provide services to the program. The Narcotics Anonymous program consists only of 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and addicts helping each other. We have described three types of service in this overview; these are Personal Service, General Service, and World Service. In general, the Personal Service one or more members can offer directly to the addict who still suffers is a part of the program. It is in the nature of our 12th Step work. General Service and World Service, however, are not primarily involved in this type of direct service. Rather, they are designed to support our program of recovery by providing the services necessary for our members and groups to survive and grow.

If you as a member or as a representative of your group need more information or clarification on any part of this pamphlet your World Service Office will be more than happy to help. Get in touch with them by writing: WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, P.O. Box 622, Sun Valley, California 91352.

The Member

The front-line, so to speak, of N.A. Service is the individual N.A. member. Anyone can be a member, the only requirement is the desire to stop using. For the group's purpose, a member in good standing is a self-admitted addict who is living a drug-free life by practicing the principles of Narcotics Anonymous. One qualifies by taking the First Step and remains a Group member as long as he or she is clean and desires membership. The services that each of us provide are the most important in N.A. It is the member who carries the message of recovery and works with others. Without an active membership there would be no need for the rest of this service structure, there would be no N.A.

The benefits of membership are clear to us all; a drug-free life, the chance to grow, friendship, and freedom. However, membership is not without its responsibilities. It is the responsibility of each member to maintain his or her personal sobriety; to share freely his experience, strength, and hope with the addict who still suffers, and to work to ensure that that which was given freely to him remains available to the newcomer.

Before coming to N.A. most of us realized that we could not stay clean alone. The gathering together of two or more member addicts for the purpose of learning how to live a drug-free life by practicing the principles of N.A. constitutes an *N.A. Meeting*. When these meetings are held regularly, they can become a Group.

The Group

An *N.A. Group* is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time, provided that it follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions (having no outside affiliations and receiving no outside financial support) and is duly registered with the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. A Group cannot be recognized as an active part of N.A. unless other groups and the World Service Office know it exists and can make contact. Unregistered groups are better than none at all, however, they limit their effectiveness by isolation. The Group is the second level of the service structure of N.A.

The primary purpose of an N.A. Group is, of course, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. However, it also provides to each member the chance to express himself and to hear the experiences of other members who are

learning how to live a better life. There are two basic types of groups; those which are open to the general public, and those closed to the public and for addicts only. Meetings vary widely in format from group to group. Some are participation meetings, some speaker, some question and answer, some special problem discussion, some topic discussion, and some have a combination of these formats. Despite the type of format a group uses for its meetings the function of a group is always the same, to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery, and to promote such recovery. The Group has proven to be the most successful vehicle for 12 Step Work. After sharing one's personal experience, strength and hope, the most valuable thing a member can do is usually to bring the suffering addict to a group meeting. In this way the group meeting becomes a place where the newcomer knows he can come for help. Often the first thing that can open the doors of recovery for the addict is the recognition of himself in others. The Group provides a setting in which the newcomer can find this identification by hearing a number of recovering addicts rather than just one or two.

The Group is the level at which we first find some of the mundane business of N.A. being taken care of. There is rent to pay, literature to buy and distribute, refreshments to be provided, a meeting hall to be kept clean, a time schedule to follow, announcements to be made, and many other things to be done for the maintenance of the Group. The Group must stay in contact with other Groups in their local area and with the rest of N.A. so they can find out about activities, learn of new groups opening up, get new literature, and find out what's happening in N.A. This is also the first level at which fellowship funds are handled, and the correct use of this money is essential for the preservation of the Group. In general, there are many uninteresting things that a Group must do, in addition to its meeting, which are necessary for survival.

We have found that most members who attend group meetings just aren't interested in the "business" of N.A. As a result, a few dedicated members who are willing to do something for the group, usually have to do most of the work. It is at this point that the principle of the trusted servant comes into being. Although most addicts don't want to help out with the work, they are at least willing to delegate this responsibility to someone else. This seems to be part of the nature of the addict. These members who have been drafted to do the work make up an informal *Steering Committee* out of which come the group officers. For the purpose of most groups these officers usually consist of a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a General Service Representative (GSR). Some groups, however, have additional officers, such as a Program Chairman to arrange for speakers or decide topics to be discussed, depending on their specific needs. Group officers other than the GSR normally serve for a period of one year and are elected by the group as a whole. One of the pitfalls which has caused many N.A. groups to suffer or even fold has been the election of officers who were unqualified to serve or did not have a history of sobriety. Often N.A. elections have seemed to be popularity contests rather than the selection of trusted servants. The officers of a group must be chosen with great care because of the responsibilities that

their offices carry and the potential effect bad officers can have on their group.

The *Group Secretary* is responsible for the day-to-day functions of the group. It is his primary responsibility to assure that the group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to. He selects a leader for each meeting, makes sure the coffee gets made, keeps the meeting records, arranges for group business meetings, arranges for the celebration of "birthdays," makes sure that the meeting hall is left in proper order, and answers correspondence. This job is important because without a good Secretary a group has little chance of attracting new members.

The *Treasurer* of an N.A. group is responsible for the funds which come into the group from the collection and for the distribution of these funds. The money collected in our meetings must be carefully budgeted. There are numerous expenses necessary for running a group.

The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all the group's financial transactions, he or she maintains the group bank account, and distributes monies to pay the rent, purchase literature, provide refreshments, buy supplies, and cover the costs of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs. In order to maintain our fellowship and freedom, the monies which come from group collections and member contributions must always be used to further our primary purpose. A group must first support itself. After paying its bills, any remaining funds should be placed in a group bank account and a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 or 3 months built up. After this "prudent reserve" has been established, excess funds should be diverted to help N.A. as a whole. A group can do this by contributing to the area or regional committees which serve the group or through contributions directly to the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. One of the biggest problems we have faced has been the misuse of group money. Thousands of dollars in needed funds has just sort of disappeared. This abuse limits what N.A. can do and for the individual the dues have usually been very heavy; obviously, the Treasurer has a grave responsibility and much thought should be taken in selecting a member to perform this function.

The *General Service Representative* is the vital link between his group and the rest of N.A. He is the formal line of communication whose purpose it is to represent his group's conscience in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole. Because the role of the GSR is so important to the success of N.A., this servant will be discussed in some detail in the next section of this pamphlet.

As a general guide, we have found that the group Secretary and Treasurer are most successful if they have certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

1. The willingness or desire to serve.
2. A history of sobriety (we suggest a minimum of 6 months continuous freedom from drugs — including alcohol).
3. A good working knowledge of 12 Steps of recovery.
4. An understanding of the 12 Traditions.

5. Active participation in the groups they are to serve; preferably some experience with the group's Steering Committee.

These assets do not guarantee a good servant, however they do help to ensure that those we choose will be capable of doing the job. Normally, group Secretaries and Treasurers serve for a period of one year at which time they are succeeded by other members who have been elected by the group. Of course, the use of drugs while serving as a group servant constitutes an automatic resignation for that officer. One of the responsibilities of group officers not often talked about, is to train group members to replace them. A group can be strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. Another valuable lesson we have learned is that the continuity of service can be aided by staggering the election of servants, and overlapping terms of service. (Example: A Group Secretary might be elected in November to begin serving in January and the Treasurer elected in March to begin in May.) Remember, choose your trusted officers well, it is you whom they will be serving.

THE GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

As we have said, the *General Service Representative (GSR)* is the line of communication between the group and N.A. as a whole. He or she is the link that binds the groups together in the performance of our primary purpose. It is his responsibility to keep the group informed and to express the group conscience. In all matters affecting N.A. as a whole or other groups he is, in fact, the voice of his group. Finding good GSR's who will take an active part in the business of N.A. is probably the most important thing we can do to improve the fellowship. Active representation, more than any other thing, can strengthen the ties that bind us together, and promote our common welfare.

The GSR speaks for his group at Area Committee meetings. He takes part in the planning and implementation of the N.A. functions which affect the members of his group. As a result of this participation he can keep his group informed about what is happening in N.A. A group member should always be able to go to his representative and find out about activities, other groups, and about N.A. as a whole. Although the GSR is no expert on N.A., a member should be able to come to him to get guidance or information concerning how N.A. works, the Traditions, and how he can get more involved. The GSR is an active group member. He serves on the Steering Committee, helps train new officers, and is normally the mail contact for the World Service Office and other groups. He is responsible for maintaining the group's 12 Step list. Often the GSR's phone is busier than that of any other member; he is the contact for his group. As if this weren't enough, the GSR, in most groups, is also responsible for the literature. He makes sure books and pamphlets are available, and that new publications are presented to his group. He also encourages members to submit their stories and thoughts to the WSO for incorporation (anonymously, of course) in the N.A. Newsletter or pamphlets in production.

A group's General Service Representative normally serves for a period of two years. The first year he or she is an alternate who can take over in case the voting representative is ill or cannot, for any reason, continue to serve. The second year, he becomes the voting representative, taking over the full responsibilities and functions of the office, and in turn is helped by a newly elected alternate. This "apprentice" system serves two purposes: First of all, it helps to provide a continuity of service which never leaves a group unrepresented; and secondly, the year spent as an alternate provides the training necessary for a good GSR.

As you can see, the role of the GSR in N.A. service is not a simple one, or one to be taken lightly. The election of good GSR's and alternates is probably the most important thing that you, as an individual, can do for N.A. as a whole. In choosing your representative, remember that he or she is your voice and your ears in N.A. If you wish to be well represented and well informed, it is your responsibility to elect the best possible nominee. For this reason we suggest that candidates for GSR should have:

1. A commitment to the principle of creative action through service.
2. A minimum of one year of continuous cleanliness.
3. Experience as a group officer.
4. A good working knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of our fellowship.
5. An understanding of the service structure of N.A. and the nature of the GSR.

These qualifications are not, of course, hard, fast rules, they are however, some of the things you should consider in the selection of your representative. The General Service Representative, as we have described him, is your link to the rest of N.A. He is also the tie that binds the personal service you and your group perform to the next type of service which is offered by N.A. — General Service.

PERSONAL SERVICE

The Members, the Meeting, and the Group provide what has been called *Personal Service*. This type of service is in the nature of the one-to-one, addict-to-addict relationships so important for our initial sobriety and recovery. It is at this level that we find personal identification, the hope necessary to continue, and the first introduction to the program of recovery.

GENERAL SERVICE

Thus far we have been dealing with the personal services that one member or a few members can offer the newcomer in his search for recovery. The next type of service found in N.A. is General Service. *General Service* provides

the support necessary for groups of N.A. members so that they can act together for the common good. A new idea in service also begins at this level, this is the concept of community service. This kind of service not only helps the addict who still suffers but also makes available, to the society it serves, a workable program of recovery for the drug addict for whom other types of help have seemed to be just so much wasted effort. Narcotics Anonymous exists in many areas as an obscure unrecognized drug program, about which little is known. It is important that we stop hiding, we have nothing of which to be ashamed or afraid. It is a fact that most communities in which active groups exist, acknowledge the often surprising, success of our fellowship and are grateful to have our groups around.

General Service is divided into sections, the Area and the Region. These are both geographic and functional designations. The Area is designed to provide service to individual groups with specific needs and the Region is established to serve many groups with common needs. This difference in function is important to keep in mind as we discuss these two levels of service because in many ways they provide very similar services.

In 1969, N.A.'s first committee, specifically designed to fill our General Service needs, was established. This group and others like it have contributed greatly to the growth of N.A. However, today it is no longer enough to have a few members getting together to keep their groups going. N.A. has grown and is continuing to grow. The absence of effort towards some necessary functions, and duplication of efforts towards others seems like an old friend to many of us; a cure causing worse problems than the illness.

A "*Designated Area*" within N.A. is any local area, community, or town with a significant number of N.A. meetings. We have found it convenient to think of an area as any community or communities which comprise a single telephone directory. This concept seems adequate for our needs today, however, any set of groups within definable geographic boundaries who need to function together as an area can be a designated area.

The "*Designated Region*" is a broader geographic unit made up of one or more areas. Normally we consider a region to be any state within the United States or any foreign country. Again, the definition of a region is ultimately one of need, any N.A. areas which can show this need can be considered a designated region. A good example of this, as it exists today, are the Northern and Southern regions of N.A. in California. In the future, it may be necessary to break this down even further. A definition of a region might then be any geographic unit comprising a single telephone area code. We feel it necessary to stress that for the purpose of N.A. the designations of area and region should always be based on specific need rather than resentments, insanity, or personalities.

AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE

An *Area Service Committee* (ASC) is a committee made up of representatives (GSR's) from all Groups within a designated Area (provided that it is duly

listed with N.A.'s World Service Office) which meets monthly for the purpose of serving the specific needs of its member groups.

Our experience has shown that from time to time our groups have problems which they can't handle on their own. In the spirit of our fellowship, we, as individuals seek help from one another to deal with our living problems; just so, groups can find help from other groups. For this reason General Service Committees have been established. However, most of the problems a group faces are of such a nature that another group located many miles away can be of little assistance. Only a nearby group can help and for this reason our General Service structure is made up of both Regional and Area Committees. The Area Service Committees are made up of representatives from all the groups in an area and are designed to support their member groups.

Isolated groups often have a hard time of it because there is no one nearby to whom they can turn. For this reason it is to the groups' benefit to put forth as much effort as possible towards starting other groups in their Area; and, once this is accomplished, establishing a new ASC as soon as possible. Often isolated groups have had to temporarily sit in with another Area's Committee or even act on its own in order to provide the necessary services. Experience has shown us that this can sometimes be a very rough road. If your group is of this isolated type, it is of the utmost importance that you keep in especially close contact with your World Service Office and other groups even though they are located elsewhere.

Because groups, just like individuals, find it hard to survive alone, one of the most important functions of the ASC is to encourage new membership. This can, of course, be most successfully accomplished by active 12 Step work. For this reason, each ASC should maintain an accurate 12 Step and Sponsor list, put together a notice of its meetings and post this notice in places where people can see it, provide for periodic public service announcements, keep in contact with local authorities and referral agencies, and perhaps arrange for an answering service to take calls which can then be referred to members on the 12th Step list. In our Areas this type of service is provided on a personal basis and our primary aim is to bring the newcomer into our fellowship in the hope that he too can benefit from our program.

Another major function of our ASC's is in providing activities which may make cleanliness more attractive to the newcomer, give the member an opportunity to learn how to function drug-free on a social level, and which gives us a chance to gather together to celebrate living. These local activities could include dances, picnics, parties, dinners, breakfasts, round robin meetings, and any other functions which the committee feels would benefit its groups.

The third and most important service which the ASC provides is that of Group Support. Whenever a group has a specific problem or need which it has not been able to handle on its own, it can come to its Area Committee for help. These problems are almost limitless in scope. However, we have learned that we can get much accomplished when we work together.

The ASC often performs other functions which are of help to the groups.

This committee helps new groups get started or gives aid to floundering groups. It might scout an area for potential meeting places; might help a group which is short of funds set up a "work party" system in lieu of rent; might encourage members of other groups to attend meetings which need support; or might keep a stock of literature which the groups can purchase without waiting for mail to get to and from the WSO. The point is that the ASC handles whatever functions are necessary or helpful to its groups.

In order to provide these services the ASC needs the support of its groups, the active participation of its GSR's, certain facilities, and qualified leaders. The group supports its Area Service Committee both financially and emotionally. It takes money to provide the services we have described. It is the groups' responsibility to offer this support. When an ASC is first formed this need for funds may be minimal. Just enough to pay for a post office box, the rent of a hall once-a-month, and to serve coffee. However, as an Area grows so the financial needs of the committee also grow. In order to provide a full line of services it requires a steady, reliable input of money. Some Areas have tried to provide these funds through their activities or by holding "round-robin" types of special meetings, or by any number of fund raising methods. All these alternate courses of financial support are helpful, however, the bulk of the responsibility still falls on each group.

The active participation of each group representative is essential for a successful ASC. Each GSR must keep his group informed and must represent his group's spiritual conscience in all committee decisions. In addition to this a GSR participates in helping to carry out the ASC's other specific functions. The planning and implementation of activities, the attracting of new members, and the aid given to groups with special problems are services which require much more effort than a monthly meeting. Most Area Service Committees have found that a subcommittee system is necessary to provide these services. A subcommittee does the footwork necessary to implement ASC programs. These subcommittees normally deal with a single service, such as 12 Step work, and may meet or do work as needed during the month between regular ASC meetings. It is the GSR's who make up these subcommittees and do the work.

There are certain facilities which are necessary to the services provided by the ASC. In the beginning they may simply be a permanent mailing address (usually a post office box), a bank account, and a place to hold meetings (often a private house). As the membership and number of groups within an Area increases, or when the groups decide that they need a broader spectrum of services, more facilities are needed. These might include a telephone answering/referral service, a ditto machine, a typewriter and adding machine, and a place to store literature, among others. As an Area grows still more the members may decide to consolidate and improve these facilities by opening and staffing a local office. At all times, however, these facilities must reflect the needs of the Area if they are to be an asset to the groups rather than a burden.

In order to coordinate these services, each ASC elects officers. These officers include a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an

Area Service Representative. The Area Service Representative (ASR), serves his Area just as a GSR serves his Group; and like the GSR he is an important line in the chain which binds each member to the whole of N.A. The Chairman conducts the monthly meetings and is responsible for correspondence; the Vice-Chairman coordinates subcommittee functions; the Secretary keeps an accurate record of what occurs at each meeting; and the Treasurer keeps track of the finances. Their functions and responsibilities are very similar to those of the group officers. These officers are elected yearly from among the active General Service Representatives. They do not normally represent any group and have no vote in the committee.

REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Area Service Representative attends the quarterly meetings of the Regional Service Committee. The *Regional Service Committee* (RSC) is a committee made up of the ASR's from all the Areas within a designated Region. This service committee is designed to provide service to its member Groups and Area; and must be duly registered with the World Service Office. The ASC and RSC are similar in nature and purpose, however, their functions are slightly different. While the ASC serves the specific needs of the individual groups, the RSC serves the common needs of its Areas. One of the primary aims of the RSC is to unify the Groups and Areas within its jurisdiction. Another aim is to carry our message to addicts who cannot attend our meetings. A third basic function of this committee is to contribute to the growth of N.A. as a whole; both by helping to support our World Services and by initiating much of the work to be finalized at our World Service Conference. Ingrained in these basic functions is, of course, our primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The desire to more effectively achieve this purpose is the reason that our Service System, including the RSC, exists.

Just as the ASC often deals with problems that the groups cannot resolve on their own; so the RSC tries to solve problems which the groups and their area cannot deal with. This is especially true when these problems involve several groups or an entire area. This is one way in which the RSC strives for unity. Another unifying function of the RSC is that of communication. The RSC provides a meeting place for Areas and a stepping stone to other Regions and N.A. as a whole.

The RSC is also responsible for major activities such as conventions, retreats, and round-ups. These also can be considered functions to stimulate N.A. unity. Most of us have, at some time, attended an activity of this type; and we are aware of the unity, creative action, and fellowship they can create. We encourage each Region to hold at least one major activity each year. These can be as simple as a camping trip or as involved as a convention; it doesn't really matter, they all provide the same stimulus. Usually the planning and implementation of an event such as these is left to a Regional subcommittee specifically

established for this purpose. We have found that a subcommittee system is even more important at the Regional level than it is in our Areas. This is because the region covers a greater number of meetings and only meets every few months. By necessity most of the work (excluding major decisions and matters of conscience) must be done by subcommittees. Only the initiation and finalization of a project actually takes place in the general RSC meeting.

Our traditions say that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. This is just as true for the RSC as it is for any group. All RSC functions have this purpose as a goal, however, some functions relate directly to carrying the message. As we have noted, the Areas basically work to bring the addict to the fellowship, through public relations, public service announcements, and advertising. The RSC's basic means of attracting addicts is to take the program to the addict. Institutional work is the responsibility of the RSC. This work is usually handled by one or more subcommittees. This type of "out of the fellowship" work is very important, but often very touchy. Most of the violations of our Sixth Tradition inadvertently occur during this type of work. Drug Programs, Mental Health Groups, hospitals, criminal diversion courses, drug and alcoholism schools, and other organizations who have requested N.A. speakers or panels for the benefit of their patients, residents, or members have at times used the N.A. name as part of their publicity. This type of misuse should, at all times, be avoided. It doesn't do their program any good and can easily become a threat to N.A.

Another important part of the RSC's function is to contribute to our World Services. Regional support in the nature of funds, ideas, and confidence is essential to the work of our World Services. Any excess funds which accumulate at the Regional Level should be contributed directly to our World Service Office. The RSC, itself has little need of monies; since it does not have any stationary facilities. Monies are needed for major activities, however these are ideally self-sustaining; with enough left over from one activity to secure the next. The RSC does, however, need money to operate; there are expenses. Large quantities of literature are often supplied to institutions and hospitals; most RSC's normally publish quarterly meeting directories; most Regions sponsor their delegates to the World Service Conference; and groups of any kind require miscellaneous funds for postage, stationery, supplies, and the like. Your RSC needs your support and the support of your group.

Most of the suggestions, ideas, and literature presented at the World Service Conference are initiated at the regional level. These are submitted in writing prior to the conference in order to be placed on the agenda.

Like the ASC the RSC elects officers each year. They include a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Their functions and responsibilities are identical with those of Area officers. The RSC also elects a Regional Service Delegate who speaks for his region at the World Service Conference. He is the counterpart of the GSR, and will be discussed more fully in the next section of this pamphlet.

Both the Area and Regional Service Committees are autonomous just as

the groups they serve are. The first thing a group of any kind must have, if it is to establish its identity, is a mailing address. Once they have this, the next thing to be done is to register with our World Service Office. A group or committee must be registered in order to be listed in our World Directory and in order to receive the information and support available from the WSO. The final thing that must be done when forming a group or committee is to set down some kind of framework within which to function. For our groups, this is usually a simple format which describes the type of meeting to be held and how to proceed in holding it. Our committees also need a format in order to keep their meetings orderly, however, in addition they need some kind of guidelines in order to maintain their service functions.

Meeting formats vary widely from group to group however, meetings usually consist of a statement defining the group, readings from our pamphlet, the body of the meeting, announcements, a collection to support the meeting, and a closing prayer. An ASC meeting might consist of a definitive statement; the reading of our Traditions, old business (including work in progress and subcommittee reports), new business (including a report from each group), announcements, a collection, and a closing prayer. ASC meetings are generally fairly flexible in their formats in order to deal with the wide variety of problems which might come up. RSC meetings, on the other hand are usually pretty well structured. The format of an RSC meeting is virtually identical to that of an Area committee meeting. However, the RSC deals primarily with common problems, on a broader scale. Some regions have found it valuable to conduct their meetings by a prearranged agenda. During the time since their last meeting, the officers of these meetings have been in touch with Area Officers and collected topics for discussion and problems to be considered at upcoming meetings. In this way group and Area problems can be dealt with on a priority basis, and similar problems can be combined to prevent duplication of effort.

As we have said, each service committee should have some kind of guidelines to ensure that its services continue to be provided regardless of changes of officers or representatives. Some committees have by-laws to fulfill this purpose. We feel, however, that the locked-in rigidity implied by the term "by-laws" doesn't represent the function of these committees accurately. We must always remain flexible enough to handle whatever comes up. For this reason, we suggest that the term "guidelines" be used instead. These guidelines should include a description of the committee, its purpose, the scope of its service, and should define the functions and responsibilities of its members, officers, and subcommittees.

The General Service Committees are the real working body of N.A. It is these committees which can contribute more to the growth of N.A. than any other parts of our service structure. However, in order to function they need active support: your support. Choose your representatives carefully; participate in group functions; get involved in N.A.; seek to serve where and when you can. The work's hard and often there seems to be little getting accomplished. However, your personal return will be a thousand-fold.

THE GENERAL SERVICE DELEGATE

The *General Service Delegate* (GSD) is to the Region what the GSR is to the Group and the ASR is to the Area. The GSD, as a representative of his Region, speaks for the members and groups within his region. The primary responsibility of the GSD is work for the good of N.A. as a whole by providing two-way communication between his Region and the rest of N.A. The GSD attends the annual World Service Conference and takes part in any decisions which affect N.A. as a whole. The responsibilities of this servant don't begin or end with the conference, being a GSD is a year 'round job. He attends all RSC meetings and as many ASC meetings as possible; serves on one or more conference committees; receives conference information and requests from the WSO; works closely with Regional Officers and subcommittees; and is a source of information or guidance in matters concerning the Traditions or N.A. as a whole.

Each year the Regional Service Committees nominate potential General Service Delegates from among the qualified members in their region. These nominations are then taken through the Area committees to their groups for a conscience vote and thus choose their Delegate. The results of this vote are reported back to the RSC and the nominee who receives support from the most groups becomes a Delegate for the following year. A GSD normally serves for a period of two years; the first as an Alternate Delegate, and the second as a voting Delegate.

We feel that in order for GSD's to do a good job, each nominee should have the following qualifications:

1. A commitment to service.
2. Service experience.
3. The willingness to give the time and resources necessary for his job.
4. A minimum of five years of continuous abstinence from drugs.
5. A good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of our fellowship.

Our General Service Delegates should be selected from among our best informed, most trusted, and most active members in order that they may best serve our needs and the needs of N.A. as a whole.

WORLD SERVICE

The final type of service which N.A. offers is *World Service*. These are the services which deal with the problems and needs of N.A. as a whole and which N.A. as a whole offers to its members, its groups, and to society. The basic purposes of our World Services are communication, coordination, information, and guidance. We provide these services so that our groups and members can

more successfully carry the message of recovery, and so that our program of recovery can be made more available to addicts everywhere.

Our World Services include three specific service bodies; the World Service Office, the World Service Board, and the World Service Conference. These three branches of service are interrelated and work together to benefit N.A. as a whole. The World Service Office is the "heart" of our World Services; the World Service Board, the "soul," and the World Service Conference, the "mind."

Within our World Services we again find new service concepts developing. First, our World Services work for the good of N.A. as a whole. Although all parts of our service structure affect and are affected by N.A. as a whole, only at this level do we find service bodies designed to deal with problems which involve our entire fellowship. A second new concept found at this level is that of the non-addict servant. These individuals have valuable skills from which our fellowship can benefit; and they can often give us viewpoints which are not clouded by the disease of drug addiction.

Our descriptions of the arms of N.A. World Service will be necessarily brief. At this date our World Service System is in a developmental stage, and we feel that any attempt at a full description of these services could, perhaps, limit their potential effectiveness. Each branch of World Service functions within its own framework; and these guidelines, as they develop, will specifically define the nature of our services. For the purpose of this pamphlet we are presenting a brief overview of the major functions and interrelationships of our branches of World Service.

THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

Probably the single busiest part of our service tree is the *World Service Office* (WSO). WSO functions as the "heart" of N.A., circulating our lifeblood to and from all groups and members within our fellowship. WSO is the contact point and the distribution point.

One of the most important functions of the WSO is to link our wide spread groups and members into a single cohesive fellowship. The WSO stays in close contact with our Groups, Areas, and Regions. This contact is maintained through correspondence, our quarterly newsletter, and through the delegates and representatives of our service structure. WSO offers considerable aid to new groups, existing groups with special problems, institutional groups, groups outside the United States, members who travel extensively, and loners. This aid is in the nature of sharing the experience which other groups and members have reported to the WSO and by putting those who seek aid in touch with other groups or members within our fellowship.

Another major function of WSO is the publication and distribution of literature. This office publishes yearly a World Directory, quarterly Newsletters, all World Service Conference material, and new literature in both English and

other languages. In order to provide these publications, WSO needs both financial support and the input of literature drafts from our members, groups and committees. WSO is also responsible for the printing, warehousing, and distribution of all existing literature. Additionally, a number of information kits such as our starter kit are available. As a sideline to its literature, the WSO also offers reel-to-reel and cassette tape recordings of important N.A. functions, personal "pitches," typical meetings, and discussions on various topics.

Another very important function of our World Service Office is to coordinate our World Service Conference. WSO is responsible for the planning of the Conference itself, selecting a suitable site, locating lodging, arranging for meals, establishing the agenda, notifying the delegates, and administering all the details necessary for the Conference to take place. If and when N.A. has a truly international convention, the administration and coordination of this event will also be the responsibility of the World Service Office.

In order to provide communication, coordination, information, and guidance services, the WSO must keep extensive files of correspondence and other records. These files include letters to and from those who have contacted WSO; a file of all correspondence with each N.A. group; a record of all starter kits sent out; the name, address, and telephone number of all GSR's and GSD's; and the addresses of all General Service Committees and their officers. Along with these files and records, WSO keeps the archives of N.A.'s history. These archives contain relevant documents, newspaper articles, photos of original meeting places, etc. Records such as these are necessary so that we may learn from our past mistakes, stay in contact with all of N.A., and serve our fellowship.

One of the most difficult jobs of the World Service Office is dealing with public anonymity breaks. Due to the nature of our fellowship no part of our service structure should ever function as a disciplinarian; this would not be in keeping with our basic principles. When public anonymity breaks do occur, the WSO does function in an educational role. We try to explain to the individual or group and the media involved that actions of this type are in violation of our Traditions; and that this type of publicity can potentially cause grave problems which could threaten the survival of our fellowship. It is never our place to attempt to punish, we can only try to prevent the reoccurrence of this type of problem.

The final WSO function we shall discuss is that of public relations. Much of our mail consists of requests for information from individuals, agencies, and other drug programs. It is our policy to answer each inquiry; however, we stress that our function is not informational or referral. Our program is principles and people. Our relationship with those outside our fellowship is cooperative and our Traditions make it clear that we must stay unattached if we are to survive.

All these functions make it necessary for our World Service Office to be more of a "business" than a part of the fellowship. WSO is separate from N.A. but works for N.A. WSO functions as a non-profit corporation; with managers, departments, administrators, paid employees, subsidiaries, and the like. Our office is administered by our World Service Board and acts upon the directives

of our World Service Conference. WSO is truly a business; its raw material is the program; its product is sobriety; and its function is service.

THE WORLD SERVICE BOARD

The *World Service Board* (WSB) of Narcotics Anonymous has the broadest scope of any branch of our service structure. The responsibility of this board is to help deal with anything that affects N.A. as a whole; both internally and externally. All things which may endanger the existence of our fellowship or limit our growth are of concern to the WSB. This board does not, however, govern. Its nature is that of a custodian; providing guidance. The members of the World Service Board are known as Trustees and consist of both addicts and non-addicts. Their only purpose is to serve the best interests of our fellowship; and through the World Service Conference we give them the authority to do this.

Like the World Service Office, our World Service Board functions as a corporation apart from our program *per se*. All the actions of the Board are guided by our Traditions. Although the primary aim of the Board is to ensure the maintenance of the Twelve Traditions, they also serve in many other capacities and have other responsibilities.

The WSB is responsible for the administration of our World Service Office. In this capacity they strive to increase the effectiveness of its many functions and coordinate its activities. In order to perform this function and others the WSB utilizes a subcommittee system similar to that used by our ASC and RSC; the main difference is that the Trustee committees are permanent while the General Service subcommittees are usually set up to deal with specific needs and disbanded when their job is done. The standing committees of the World Service Board indicate the major functions of the Board and include: public relations, finance, literature, institutions, policy, planning, and nominations.

These committees meet throughout the year and are composed of Trustees, members, and an occasional non-addict. Committee members are selected on a "What they have to offer" basis, and each brings special skills or experience relevant to the committee function.

The internal structure of the World Service Board is different from the rest of our service branches. The Trustees do not represent; they serve. This service is for an indefinite term; however, each trusteeship is reaffirmed yearly to ensure the continuation and quality of service. The WSB works closely with the World Service Conference and conference committees, but functions within its own guidelines. Its day to day activities are its own province. We, as members, have given the Board the right to act on our behalf, so long as its actions are within the framework of our Traditions. The Trustees do not, however, have the authority to control N.A. or change the nature of our fellowship. Our second Tradition ensures that major policy decisions can only be made according to the spiritual conscience of our entire fellowship. This means that each of us, through our service structure, maintains the right to have a say in what happens in N.A.

THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

The final part of our service structure is the *World Service Conference* (WSC). It is the nerve center, the brain, of our fellowship. Our conference is the one time each year, when all our service branches come together forming the complete N.A. tree. Unlike all other branches of N.A. service, the Conference is not an entity; it is an event, the coming together. In the spring of each year the Regional Service Delegates, the Trustees of the World Service Board, and the manager and directors of the World Service Office meet to discuss questions of significance to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

The conference itself can last up to a week; however, the planning and implementation associated with the conference is a year-round proposition. The WSO is responsible for the administration of the conference itself. The Trustees, and directors who attend the WSC must spend time in preparation; studying problems to be discussed and gathering information upon which decisions can be based. Each delegate must be knowledgeable about the needs and feelings of his region, and be prepared to contribute to the conference.

The conference usually begins with an opening meeting which includes opening ceremonies, an overview of topics to be presented, and a review of the meaning and effect of the Twelve Traditions.

From this general meeting the conference splits up into eight committees at which all suggestions, questions, and problems which have been submitted are discussed. These topics can include anything of major importance to N.A. as a whole.

These committees include: the literature committee, finance committee, World Service Office Committee, World Service Board Committee, public relations committee, institutions committee, Conference report committee, and the Conference Planning Committee. Each delegate serves on one committee; each committee contains at least one trustee; and those committees which have equivalents in the WSO or WSB meet in conjunction with them. The purposes of the committees are to discuss all input within their scope; resolve items which do not require major policy decisions; and prepare resolutions for policy items. These resolutions are designed to occupy as little general meeting time as possible and include a simple statement of the resolution, arguments for and against, and the facts which support these arguments.

After the agenda for the general meeting has been prepared from resolutions gathered from the committees, all conference members get together as a body once again. At this general meeting each resolution is presented and considered. Some resolutions can be acted upon by the conference and some must be taken back to each Region, Area, and Group for group conscience decisions.

The World Service Conference does not speak for N.A. as a whole. The voice of N.A. as a whole can only come from fellowship-wide group conscience. However, the conference can, because of our service structure, initiate action which will benefit all members.

Once the conference has considered all resolutions and decided which required group conscience votes and which were within the realm of conference action, the committees meet once again to plan for the implementation of the conference resolutions. The committees decide which branch, the WSO, the WSB, or the RSC's can take the most effective action. Based on these decisions, directives are drafted and submitted for final approval.

Then, finally, all conference members meet together once again for the closing meeting. At this time the directives are approved and the closing ceremonies take place.

It sounds like the World Service Conference has a lot of power . . . this isn't true. All conference matters are dealt with in strict accordance with our Traditions and the Traditions clearly define the powers of the Conference; each Conference member is a trusted servant and has shown an understanding of our traditions; and all items discussed in conference originate within the fellowship. Due to its very nature, the Conference is the servant of the fellowship.

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Everything that occurs in the course of N.A. service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It was for this reason that we began this work. We must always remember that as individual members, groups and service committees, we are not, and should never be, in competition with each other. We work separately and together to help the newcomer and for our common good. We have learned, painfully, that internal strife cripples our fellowship; it prevents us from providing the services necessary for growth.

It is probably obvious to you that many of the responsibilities and functions, which we have mentioned, just aren't getting done today. It has not been our intent to condemn the good work which has been done and is being done. Rather, we hope to clarify what needs to be done so that we can provide better service. The service structure of Narcotics Anonymous, as we have described it, does not exist in N.A. today. It is an ideal towards which we can strive, and in so doing, make recovery available to a greater number of addicts.

SERENITY PRAYER

GOD . . .

Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change . . .

The Courage to change the things I can . . .

And the Wisdom to know the difference.

We cannot change the nature of the Addict or Addiction . . .

We can help to change the old lie "Once an addict, always an addict,"

by striving to make recovery more available.

God, help us to remember this difference.

