

WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

This report provides information about some of the items that will be discussed during WSC'92. Since there is a limited amount of time available for panel discussions, even in an eight-day conference, we would encourage everyone to read and discuss the available material. The discussion process will be greatly facilitated if conference participants come prepared to offer their concerns, their comments, and especially their solutions. The better prepared we are, the better use we can make of our time.

We are unsure whether some of these items will be discussed during our own panel time or if they will be combined with topics being addressed in panels conducted by other committees or boards. More information will be available in the March annual reports. Our "A" panel session for *Conference Agenda Report* business at WSC'92 will focus on the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust and the proposed WSB policies and guidelines. Complete information on these two items is available in the 1992 *Conference Agenda Report*.

The Multinational Development Forum

The second Multinational Development Forum will be included as a part of this year's conference. This two-day event will begin the conference week, with one-and-a-half days being used for presentations, discussions, and working groups. Later in the week,

another half-day session will be held to review the 1992 conference's impact on international development and formulate some ideas for the future.

Last year's forum was focused on broad discussion about how local NA communities and world services can share their experience, strength, and hope with each other to help carry the recovery message worldwide. As a result of the forum, conference participants decided these discussions must continue but that greater involvement was needed from representatives whose communities would be directly impacted by conference decisions. Having representatives in attendance from outside North America who could share with us what is helpful and what is a hindrance was also seen as a necessity.

This year, the WSC is funding the travel and lodging for eleven representatives from around the globe who have never been able to send someone to the conference before. The countries that have been invited are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, France, India, Israel, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

Letters have been sent to all NA communities, whether invited to attend or not, requesting input to the agenda for this event. To date, we have kept the agenda broad in scope, identifying only two topics--the provision of services for the worldwide fellowship and the development of NA around the globe, now and in the future. We welcome input to the agenda and will compile everything that is received into a finalized agenda at our February board meeting in Montreal.

This effort to facilitate wider participation in the WSC is a first. We believe it will have a dramatic effect on the direction taken by world services. We encourage all NA communities to discuss the MDF between now and the conference meeting this April.

Traditions Ad Hoc Committee

We have developed a release schedule for both the review and approval forms of the traditions. As you know, the review and input form of Traditions One through Six has been out since early April 1991. During a meeting to be held later this month, we plan to factor in the input we have received. After that meeting, we will be mailing out the first approval draft of Traditions One through Six to the trustees and members of the WSC Literature Committee, with input due by the end of April 1992. A compilation of the input received on these drafts will be sent to trustees and members of the WSB Traditions Ad Hoc Committee by the end of May. At our June meeting, we plan to spend an entire day reviewing the approval form of the first six traditions. We then plan to have a meeting in September to review the revised approval drafts of Traditions One through Six, as well as to review the available steps drafts. The traditions ad hoc committee also plans to meet later in September to factor input into Traditions Seven through Twelve. The first approval draft of Traditions Seven through Twelve will be mailed to WSB and WSCLC members, with input due in late October. A list of input received will be mailed to the trustees and traditions ad hoc committee members at the end of October. Once the input has been factored in, we will spend one day of a regular trustee meeting (probably in late October or early November 1992) reviewing the approval form of all Twelve Traditions. We have not yet determined whether we will try to coordinate the release of

this portion of *It Works: How and Why* with the WSC Literature Committee's work on the steps portion or whether we will release it separately. We have attempted to keep the review process open as long as possible. Most of the input already received has not conceptually changed the material contained in the drafts. The difference between the review and approval forms is expected to be minor. As a result of the minimal revisions, we are planning to ask for a relatively short approval period. The release dates for the review and approval forms are definitely what we are proposing, even though we are not completely certain what will be required for full board review.

We hope to discuss this issue during the conference. We are also hoping to combine the discussion of the traditions release schedule with the WSC Literature Committee discussion on the steps agenda. We are hopeful that the approval version of the traditions portion of *It Works* will be out in time for action at WSC'93.

Prejudice in NA

A position paper on this topic was released by the World Service Board of Trustees during the 1990-91 conference year. It was printed in the *Conference Report*, the *Newsline*, and *The NA Way Magazine*. It was prepared from a discussion held during a July 1990 open forum held at the WSC workshop in Arlington, Virginia, USA. We have encouraged this discussion throughout our fellowship since that time. It is difficult to hold this type of discussion at the conference, but we believe it could help begin a dialogue that could continue in fellowship forums all year. We encourage local discussions and are hopeful that ideas on how we can address this problem will be brought to the conference. Additional material from the trustees follows this report (p. 26) as a basis for your discussion.

Fellowship funding concerns

The current problems being experienced with finances at the group, area, and regional levels, as well as at the WSC and the WSO, indicate this is an area we must address. Two of the papers following this report (pp. 27-32) are intended to be a part of the discussions we hope to begin this year.

The trustees have received many letters during the past few years on funding practices currently being used in different areas and regions. Additionally, members have been calling the World Service Office with questions on funding NA services, fundraising protocol, what contributions should be made to whom, misappropriation of funds, and many other such subjects. A short, fairly routine letter was developed to send to members in response to questions such as these. Over the past year, we made a decision to expand this letter and develop it into a position paper from the World Service Board. After the board discussed what needed to be included in the paper and how to approach this issue in a way consistent with the Twelve Traditions, development of this project was assigned to the WSB Literature Review Committee. The paper which was developed has been approved by the trustees for distribution to the fellowship.

Additionally, two motions on funding NA services were referred to the trustees during the 1991 conference meeting. After full discussion by the entire board, development of

responses to these motions was assigned to the WSB Internal Affairs Committee. A paper has been developed covering both motions, with the recommendation that no action be taken on either of them. This paper has been approved by the full board. An expanded paper on direct donations to specific projects, such as translations, is being developed and should be available for distribution prior to the conference.

Participation and representation at the WSC

The issue of voting rights at the World Service Conference continues to be raised each year. As agenda items for the upcoming year were being discussed at our June 1991 meeting, it became apparent that this issue is one which needs full and open discussion throughout the fellowship. We determined that we did not want to release a paper on this topic just prior to the conference, as we did in 1988. Development of a paper discussing this topic was assigned to the WSB Internal Affairs Committee after discussion by the full board of the issues involved. During our October 1991 meeting, further discussions were held and a decision was made to present a paper outlining the opposing viewpoints instead of a "position" paper. We are hopeful this topic will be given consideration by members at the group, area, and regional levels. We know the paper includes only a partial discussion of the topic, but hope it will be helpful. The paper appears following this report on pp. 33-36.

Thoughts on the world services budget process

It is not easy for the trustees to lay out our plans for the next conference year. It is and has been the board's desire to facilitate better long-range planning, communication, and goal setting within our board and the conference. The decisions that will come out of this year's conference could greatly impact our plans for the next year. The best that we can provide at this time is an outline of what we would like to see occur.

During this past year, we found ourselves locked into the specifics that were decided at last year's conference regarding the budget. There was no latitude for adjustment as the year evolved. It is our hope that we are not put into this position again. To begin setting priorities through the adoption of fixed and discretionary budgets was a step in the right direction for the conference. The fact is that not everything can be anticipated by any of us in that one hectic week. The way the budget was approved set up a "hit list" for fixed items to be cut only if funding was not available to cover those items. The discretionary items were prioritized by the conference, but items on this list could only be considered for funding after all fixed items were covered. The Interim Committee believed that they had been mandated to follow those two lists exactly as approved, and did so all year.

We, as a board, left last year's conference with a clear idea that our two top priorities for the year were the traditions project and the Multinational Development Forum. Because the MDF was listed as a discretionary item, funding could not be assured for any of the expenses associated with this event. This included the translation of correspondence and reports on the first international forum and the allocation of staff support for this project throughout the year. The Interim Committee and the WSO staff

did the best they could with limited resources, based on the decisions made at WSC'91. We understand the financial condition of both the WSC and WSO, and our issue is not with them. Rather, we believe that what would have allowed us to make the best decisions possible, given the limited availability of resources, would have been for the World Service Board of Trustees to have been allotted a budgetary allowance for each quarter to be used at our discretion.

There were many times during the past year when we could have decided to cut travel, a meeting, or administrative expenses on our fixed budget to insure that a discretionary item could be covered; however, we did not have this latitude. This was most evident in a couple of areas, the first being items associated with the MDF; another was the inclusion of WSC committee chairs on trustee committees to help begin long-term planning, more effective communication, and the reduction of duplicate efforts. Even if we found a way to cover both fixed and discretionary items with already-approved funding, we did not have the ability to make those changes.

Two items that will be discussed at this year's conference could have a dramatic impact on how the World Service Board of Trustees would choose to spend its available funding this next year. The first is MDF'92. We cannot know what will be necessary or appropriate for follow-up on this year's event until after it happens. The second is a discussion that has occurred in the WSC Administrative Committee regarding multiregional forums or service weekends to be held throughout the USA in the coming year. This would provide an opportunity to discuss a variety of issues and topics concerning our fellowship that currently do not happen on any wide-scale basis. We are extremely supportive of this idea and would do everything we could to help such events occur if the conference approves the idea. It might be necessary for us to cancel one regular board meeting in order to send participants to each of these events.

Please keep these thoughts in mind as you prepare for WSC'92 this April. The trustees believe that our budget process must be the servant of our fellowship, not its master. We must find a way for the conference to give the Interim Committee clear direction on budget priorities while also building enough flexibility into the process so that world service work can be developed throughout the year.

I am aware that both the *January Conference Report* and the *1992 Conference Agenda Report* contain an incredible amount of material to be discussed in workshops in your local NA communities. We are at the point where we must begin to deal with a number of difficult and challenging issues if we are to change and grow. This is never easy for us, either as individuals or as a fellowship, but the results always seem to be worth the struggles. I truly believe that, together, we can accomplish anything, if we use the principles we have been taught in our recovery and come together in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and love. Thank you for your support and encouragement to the board throughout the year.

Becky Meyer, Chairperson

TRUSTEE DISCUSSION PAPERS

FREEDOM FROM PREJUDICE

While we may not have adequate time at this year's conference meeting to do more than allow for open discussion on this and other issues, the board of trustees hopes these points will stimulate dialogue and that discussions will continue throughout the year at fellowship forums. As a board, we are committed to furthering these discussions to help us, as a fellowship, find solutions. Following are the proposed discussion points:

How can the conference and its participants effectively address the issue of prejudice within our fellowship and set a course toward freedom from prejudice?

Discuss the challenges facing a spiritual fellowship that exists within cultures and societies heavily weighted with prejudice.

As NA members, as sponsors, as members of home groups, as leaders in the conference, what can each of us do to contribute to the fulfillment of the words from our White Booklet, "Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identify, creed, religion or lack of religion."

Unity, not uniformity, is vital to the growth of NA. As we recover, we emerge as beautiful, distinct, unique children of God. As a conference, how can we set the example by nurturing unity while encouraging the magnificent diversity manifest in Narcotics Anonymous worldwide?

How do we greet newcomers who may not meet "the image" we have of an addict in our particular NA community? We will not have to cultivate our "tolerance" if we can learn to apply the principles of acceptance, love, and compassion first.

What about PI and H&I efforts? Are our communities working to reach all kinds of addicts from all walks of life? Who isn't here?

How do we, as a fellowship and as individuals, deal with the inherent prejudices within our fellowship and within our own hearts?

Specifically, we need to encourage discussion of prejudice within NA as it has affected and is affecting the following:

Gay & Lesbian Addicts	Hispanic Addicts	Asian Addicts
Women Addicts	"Older" Addicts	Black Addicts
Handicapped Addicts	Overweight Addicts	Addict Professionals
Language Differences	Religious Differences	Atheist/Agnostic Addicts
"Anyone-Different-From-Us"		

This is only a beginning, but it all starts with a first step, doesn't it?

THE GENERATION OF FUNDS (FUNDRAISING) AND THE SEVENTH TRADITION IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

This article was generated by the World Service Board of Trustees in December 1991 in response to the needs of the fellowship. It represents the views of the board at the time of its writing.

Questions about fundraising and how fundraising relates to the traditions, especially Tradition Seven, have been asked on numerous occasions in the past few years. As groups, areas, and regions grow, the perceived need for finances to help fulfill the Fifth Tradition may also grow. When the cost of ancillary services--such as helplines, meeting lists, and literature for use in H&I meetings, among others--is considered, many groups, areas, and regions find themselves in the position of needing or wanting more funds than are provided by members' donations to the "basket" at the group level. It is at these times that questions arise as to how to fund the services that help carry our message to the still-suffering addict. This article will attempt to answer some of these questions as well as offer some simple guidelines about raising funds. We will try to provide a brief historical perspective on fundraising in NA, look at some of the problems that may result from various efforts, and strive to show the relationship of Tradition Seven to this issue.

In looking at this topic, it is helpful to understand how fundraising started in our fellowship. Many early groups held a variety of activities such as dinners, picnics, and other social events to promote recovery, unity, and a sense of belonging. While these activities were not specifically intended to raise funds, a number of them turned out to be financially successful, allowing the host group to purchase additional literature or other supplies for their meetings. As the fellowship grew and the need or want for additional services became greater, the purpose of some of these activities changed; instead of celebrating recovery, they were designed to raise funds.

As the fellowship continued to grow and more area and regional service committees were formed, the focus continued to change--in some instances, to make up for the perceived lack of funds being donated from the groups' Seventh Tradition collections. As time went on, more and more service committees began relying on this form of funding, reaching the point, at times, where the success or failure of an event such as a convention determined the area or region's ability to provide services and participate in the fund-flow. In other instances, groups, areas, and regions had such success with their social events that they began to put an extraordinary amount of time and effort into these activities, becoming invested in having a "successful" convention, dance, or campout.

A considerable number of problems arose from such practices. The accountability of service committees to their groups was affected as the committees began to rely upon these events instead of on contributions from the groups' Seventh Tradition collections for their funding. In some cases, the various service bodies began to get diverted from their original purpose by "money, property, and prestige." Some groups and service committees began to amass huge "prudent reserves," in some cases amounting to many thousands of dollars. For some groups and committees, this "prudent reserve"

grew so large that the body holding it did not have to rely upon contributions for upwards of six months or more, despite the fact that in various fellowship service publications the recommended amount for a prudent reserve is one month's expenses. Merchandising efforts became a "business" in some cases, leading us away from the spiritual focus of our program. It became harder and harder to insure that donations to our fellowship came only from our members at various social events. And some members began to raise concerns that we could be perceived by those outside our program as a fellowship that is more involved with social functions and merchandising efforts than with helping addicts recover from the disease of addiction. As these problems became apparent, members began to share their concerns and started questioning the need for such practices. Some of the questions focussed on the relationship between Tradition Seven and fundraising.

While this tradition specifically talks about self-support--declining donations from outside sources--some of the principles underlying the tradition, such as simplicity and faith, may prove to be of assistance in answering questions about funding our services. Our experience has shown that, as recovering addicts, all of our needs add up to the need for ongoing freedom from active addiction. To attain this freedom, we need the principles contained in the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of NA, recovery meetings where we can share our experience, strength, and hope, and other recovering addicts to help us apply these spiritual principles in our lives. These three things are simple; they do not require us to obtain college degrees or expend vast sums of money.

In our active addiction, most of us seemed to have one thing in common: self-centeredness. As we begin the recovery process, we learn that we "keep what we have by giving it away." We start to learn the value of being a contributing member of our fellowship and of society as a whole. We begin to learn the simple truth that if we want to keep attending NA meetings and help carry the message, we need to contribute our fair share financially as well as with our time and energy. Self-support, within the context of Tradition Seven, goes far beyond mere financial support. Along the way, we learn that contributing our fair share is one way in which we can express our gratitude for what has been freely given to us. Over time, we develop faith that as long we are doing what we're supposed to--practicing the principles of our program--the God of our understanding will take care of us and show us a new way to live.

When looking at the needs of the group, simplicity once again comes to mind. Our needs are simple: a place where we can hold our meetings, literature to help carry our message, and, in most cases, simple refreshments. We do not need spacious, luxurious meeting facilities, excessive quantities of literature, or refreshments of every type to attract addicts to our meetings. The simplicity of our message and the effectiveness of our program is sufficient. We do not need large financial reserves if we have faith that the God of our understanding will take care of our needs. Our experience has shown that when a group's financial needs are not met, and that fact is communicated to the members, those needs are generally taken care of. The simplicity of our needs is reinforced by the simplicity of our primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Our experience has shown that we must carry out this simple task to

the very best of our ability, for it is the very essence of who we are and what we do in NA. We have discovered that if everything we do is done to fulfill that purpose, generally, we will find the funds necessary to do what we must.

Many groups and service committees have decided to avoid controversy by simply seeking to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. In this manner, they rely solely on attracting new members to their groups by striving to strengthen their personal recovery, working and living NA's Twelve Steps. As new members are attracted, groups grow, Seventh Tradition collections increase, and more money is available for group needs. Accordingly, excess funds are accumulated and passed on to the area, the region, and world services, as per our suggested fund-flow system. (For further information on this topic, please refer to IP No. 24, "*Hey! What's the Basket For?*") As services are funded more efficiently, the NA message of recovery is carried farther and better than ever before. The result is that more addicts seek recovery through Narcotics Anonymous and more NA meetings begin. This approach is seen as practical and realistic by many members of our fellowship. These members have reported that frustration over lack of funds and the sense of urgency to raise money can be counterbalanced by the spiritual unity which results from this focus on our primary purpose.

One of the things that has become evident over the past few years, however, is that large segments of the fellowship want activities and merchandise. If we don't assist in these efforts, members may end up conducting them on their own. Whenever this has occurred, the resulting problems have had considerable impact on all elements of NA, affecting our fellowship's overall success in achieving its primary purpose. We strongly believe that fundraising activities which divert us from the spiritual nature of our program are inappropriate and should not be encouraged within the fellowship. Social activities designed to enhance recovery and further unity and members' sense of belonging, however, are not only acceptable but should be encouraged.

We believe that fundraising for the sake of fundraising is questionable, at best. There may be times, however, when a group or service committee finds itself in extraordinary financial constraints and begins to consider holding a fundraiser. At such times, we suggest that careful attention be given to the following questions: Are the funds collected from ordinary Seventh Tradition contributions enough to support the group or service committee's actual needs? Are *wants* supplanting *needs*? Is the need for the fundraiser of such a nature that not holding it will result in our primary purpose going unfulfilled? In addition to these questions, we recommend that all aspects of sponsoring a fundraising event be carefully considered.

When these events are held, members of the hosting group or service committee should examine the event with respect to all our traditions, lending their collective experience, strength, and hope to these examinations. One of the major points to consider is the motivation for holding such an event. An examination such as this helps keep us in tune with our principles. The following general concepts have arisen from the experience of our fellowship, and we present them here as starting points for your consideration:

1. Fundraising activities at an NA meeting are not usually appropriate because they may detract from our primary purpose and can present an inaccurate impression of the NA message, especially in the eyes of the newcomer or the nonaddict visitor.
2. In order to follow the guidance of our traditions, a fundraising event should be planned and held by and for Narcotics Anonymous members.
3. In order to conform to the ideals of the Seventh Tradition, donations from nonmembers should not be accepted.
4. Since there are often times when we sponsor activities where there is a fixed charge for full participation, the term "donation" should not be associated with these types of fees. In this way, we are not confusing contributions with assessed charges for activities.
5. It must be determined whether the local NA community is willing and large enough to support the event.
6. All aspects of the fundraising event should be consistent with our goal of encouraging recovery from addiction. We should avoid hosting events which might encourage gambling, appear to offer "something for nothing," or award prizes that are either not recovery-oriented or that otherwise may be seen as being inappropriate. For example, a raffle prize such as a car or a television might make someone's living circumstances more comfortable, but at the same time may not be directly related to his or her recovery, whereas a prize of NA literature or tickets to an NA workshop or convention would be recovery-oriented. It should also be noted that, in many USA states and in some other countries, raffles are illegal. It may also be helpful to consider whether raffles--and especially cash raffles or lotteries--appeal more to the spirit of self-interest than the spirit of voluntary support implicit in our Seventh Tradition.

All of the solutions we see to the problems addressed in this article involve communication. We believe that improved communication about the needs of our service bodies would result in increased support from NA groups and members. Improved communication would improve the accountability of the service structure to our groups and members. Finally, we believe that improved communication would help us maintain our focus on spiritual principles like faith and trust, leading us away from fear, distrust, and self-centeredness.

DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS

At last year's World Service Conference, a number of motions were referred for recommendation to the World Service Board of Trustees. Among them were two motions related to the direct funding of NA services by NA groups:

"That the WSC encourage funding all levels of service by direct group contributions."

"That the WSC create a translations fund which only groups and individuals can make direct donations to."

1. *The fund to be administered by the WSO.*
2. *Priorities for translations to be determined by the Translation Committee."*

We believe that there are valid reasons to actively encourage the discussion of direct group contributions within our fellowship. We believe that further discussions may show that a direct group contribution plan might stand a better chance than the "fund flow" plan of providing adequate funds to each level of our service structure, while at the same time maintaining group autonomy, reinforcing the responsibility and authority of the NA group in service matters, providing motivation for regular fellowshipwide communication and service accountability, and promoting NA unity. However, we do not believe that earmarking direct contributions for specific purposes--whether for H&I, PI, or translations--allows the service structure sufficient flexibility to effectively coordinate the responsibilities assigned to it.

The earliest editions of our fellowship's service manual recommended direct group contributions to each level of service. Those manuals suggested that, after a group had paid its bills and set aside a little extra money for emergency use, "excess funds should be diverted to help NA 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."

It wasn't until 1982, when the World Service Conference approved a revision of the service manual sections on the group, area, and region, that groups were encouraged to donate all their excess funds to the area committee. Area committees were then to donate *their* excess funds to the region, and the region's excess was to flow on to the world. This is the "fund flow" plan for funding NA services.

Various problems have been noted over the years with the "fund flow" plan. First, the *funds* often *don't flow*; they are frequently used up at the area or regional levels, leaving little or nothing to fund regional or World Service Conference operations. At the regional level, this has led to increasing dependence on profits from fundraising activities such as conventions, dances, memorabilia sales, and NA literature markups, and decreasing reliance on group support. At the world level, this has produced a stagnant budget and periodic shortfalls at a time when global NA growth rates are skyrocketing.

Direct group contributions to all levels of service may provide a more stable financial base for our service structure. Each group would decide what proportion of its excess funds it would contribute to its area committee, its regional committee, and its World Service Conference. Each level of service would be guaranteed a source of income as stable as the NA Fellowship itself. With this stability, service committees might be able to reduce their reliance on fundraising activities for operating income, thereby increasing their ties directly to the NA groups they serve.

Certainly, if an area committee found in any given month that it had surplus funds, it would be encouraged to directly donate them to other levels of service. The same would apply to contributions of regional surpluses. However, if an area or regional committee experienced surpluses month after month, it would probably want to inform the groups it served of the situation so that those groups could adjust their contributions accordingly. This would maintain the integrity of the direct contribution system while making allowance for periodic cash flow fluctuations.

Direct group contributions would reinforce the autonomy of the NA group. Each group would determine for itself how much it would give to each element of the service structure, based on its own evaluation of how well those elements were meeting the group's needs and the needs of NA as a whole. Our groups have created a service structure to serve their collective needs in better carrying the message, and should have responsibility for and authority over that structure. A direct group contributions policy may put the groups in a better position to carry out their responsibilities and may provide them with a better opportunity to financially impact the service structure.

If the groups were funding each level of service directly, all service bodies would thereby be encouraged to communicate effectively and directly with the groups. This would allow groups the most flexibility in deciding where their money goes. If groups were not aware of the work or needs of a particular service body, the chances would be great that they would choose not to participate in funding that body. Direct funding would also provide a way for each level of service to determine the level of support they had from the groups. If funds were not coming in, service committees would be able to infer one of three things: either the groups didn't have the money available, the groups didn't understand or know about what services had been requested, or the groups didn't support the work that was being done. As you can see, direct funding would also give the groups a greater opportunity to make their voice heard in service matters.

This is not to suggest that groups earmark contributions for translations, PI, H&I, or any other special purposes. The groups have created the service structure not only to deliver services on their behalf, but to *coordinate* those services. In delegating to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill its responsibilities, the groups have also delegated the authority to coordinate the allocation of service resources at each level of service.

In studying the financial condition and means of funding employed by several other fellowships, it became obvious that we are not alone in facing a money crunch at all levels of service. Direct contributions are not a magic answer that will relieve us of all our financial concerns. Our responsibility as members to fund the services we request is an issue that needs broad discussion. If we truly believe that the solution to our financial difficulties rests with our membership, then it makes sense to put the responsibility and ability to impact finances directly in the hands of our groups.

These recommendations are provided for information purposes only; they are not intended as a mandate given by the World Service Board of Trustees to the fellowship. We are not suggesting that we implement a direct group contributions plan at this time, but that this idea be a part of the discussion that we must begin to have as a fellowship concerning the funding of our services. We believe that a direct contributions plan could play a part in helping us to provide greater financial stability through enhanced group autonomy, responsibility, and authority. It might also encourage better communications between the service structure and the groups, provide more direct means of service accountability, and better promote the NA unity upon which our personal recovery depends.

PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING AT THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

For over ten years, Narcotics Anonymous members have debated who should participate in the decision-making processes of our World Service Conference. Some believe all conference decisions should be made directly by the NA groups, and only by the groups. Others believe all conference members should fully participate in all phases of its decision-making processes, from discussion to voting.

As a fellowship, we have recognized no hard and fast participation rule to be applied throughout Narcotics Anonymous. In 1989, our World Service Conference overwhelmingly approved a motion which replaced restrictive language on local voting in the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure* with words that allow for variation in local practice:

"GSRs are the only voting members at ASC meetings; ASRs are the only voting members at an RSC meeting..."

was replaced with,

"Although individual area and regional guidelines differ regarding which participants may vote..."

Regarding participation in the voting of the WSC, however, it's been a different story. From 1982 through 1987, various motions accompanied by heated debate were presented to limit WSC voting to RSRs. A 1982 motion, tabled until 1983, was opposed by fully two-thirds of the voting participants. Each of four motions related to conference voting made in 1984 were defeated by an average of 80% of all voting participants. The following year, when yet another voting rights motion was made, fully two-thirds of conference participants objected to even considering it. With that, many members believed the matter to have been settled. They were mistaken.

In 1987, another motion was made to restrict conference voting rights to RSRs. Tabled to the next year, the motion appeared in the 1988 *Conference Agenda Report*. A package of papers for and against the motion was widely distributed by the WSC Policy Committee, and the World Service Board of Trustees prepared its own statement on the matter. Following fellowshipwide discussion of the issue, the conference defeated the motion, 27 participants (36%) voting in favor, 40 against (53%), and 9 abstaining (12%). A breakdown of the voting revealed tremendous disparity of opinion between RSRs and the other conference voting participants. RSRs were split fairly evenly on the motion, with 27 voting yes, 24 no, and 7 abstaining. However, the trustees, conference administrative officers, and committee chairpersons were in virtually unanimous opposition to the motion, 16 voting no and 2 abstaining. RSRs cast *all* the votes in favor of the motion; 40% of the no votes were cast by non-RSRs. Clearly, the issue had not by any means been definitively settled.

Three years later, the motion to restrict WSC voting rights to RSRs was revived. The conference participants had not been given the opportunity to discuss this issue for any significant length of time prior to voting on the motion. The motion was introduced at the

very end of the last of seven long conference days. Voting on the 1991 motion showed an overall 12% increase in support of restricting conference voting rights over the 1988 vote, with 35 yes ballots (48%), 28 no (38%), and 10 abstentions (14%). RSRs voted 31 yes and 21 no with 5 abstentions, an increase of 10% in support of voting rights restrictions. Most significant, perhaps, was the marked shift in votes cast by conference administrative officers, committee chairs, and trustees. A quarter of these trusted servants voted in favor of the 1991 motion, while none had approved the 1988 proposal; less than half voted con, and almost a third abstained. Lack of adequate discussion might account for some of the shift in favor of voting restrictions, but certainly not all of it. The movement to limit conference voting rights to RSRs, decidedly *not* laid to rest with the 1988 WSC meeting, appeared to be gaining strength.

Clearly, the question of who should vote at the World Service Conference is still an open one, requiring further discussion. It is our hope that your NA community will discuss this issue thoroughly. Our board believes that the voting rights issue is by no means a simple one, but that there are many subjects which need to be considered in relation to it. This issue will be a topic at one of the WSB panel presentations at WSC'92. To the best of our ability, we have presented below some of the arguments we feel need to be addressed in considering the issue of voting rights, along with brief summaries of the opposing points of view on each subject. While these are not the only arguments, they demonstrate the polarity of opinions held by members within our fellowship. We hope you find these summaries useful in your community's discussions of voting rights as you prepare for the World Service Conference meeting this April in Dallas.

Group conscience

RSR-only: "Our Second Tradition says that God speaks to our service structure only through the conscience developed in our groups. The decisions registered at the World Service Conference should reflect only the gathered conscience of the groups as expressed by the votes of RSRs."

All WSC participants: "The World Service Conference develops a group conscience when its members gather to consult their consciences, seek God's guidance, and make decisions. That group conscience is developed from discussion among all members of the conference, and is expressed by the combined vote of all conference participants."

Authority of members, groups

RSR-only: "Unlike some organizations, our members and our groups bear the final authority in NA. Only those representing members and groups should vote at the conference. If trusted servants other than RSRs vote at the WSC, they dilute the authority of the NA groups."

All WSC participants: "Members and groups are responsible for our common welfare, and group autonomy should not affect NA as a whole. With full participation, the interests and authority of members and groups at the conference is spoken for by RSRs; specialized experience of other trusted servants is blended into the WSC mix; the result is a balanced conference decision-making process which best serves our primary purpose."

Leadership

RSR-only: "Our 'leaders' are only trusted servants, taking their guidance from the conscience of the groups. In giving conference officers, committees, and trustees direction for the fulfillment of their responsibilities, only RSRs should vote because only they speak for the groups."

All WSC participants: "We carefully select our WSC leaders to serve us. When the conference makes decisions, we want full access to the insight and specialized experience of conference officers, committee chairs, and trustees. We allow them to participate fully in all phases of the WSC decision-making process."

Direct representation

RSR-only: "Because NA service authority arises from NA members and NA groups, conference decisions must be made on a representative-only basis. Other trusted servants should not vote on WSC decisions because they do not represent the conscience of any NA groups."

All WSC participants: "If the WSC was NA's government, passing laws and levying taxes, we would want representative decision making at the conference. We would also want a better-proportioned breakdown for representation; today, a region with 60 groups has the same WSC power as a region with 600 groups. However, the conference's concern is not to pass laws and levy taxes, but to serve. A mix of representation and specialized experience produces the most balanced conference decisions for NA."

Accountability

RSR-only: "When committee chairs, trustees, and WSC officers vote in service decisions, they set their own terms for how accountable they are to be held. This is inappropriate. Officers, trustees, and committees should take their direction from decisions voted on by those representing the groups--the RSRs--establishing the degree to which those trusted servants will be held accountable for their duties."

All WSC participants: "Unless conference officers, committee chairs, and trustees take part in voting on WSC decisions, they cannot be held accountable for the consequences of those decisions because they are not co-responsible for them."

Inclusiveness, equality, anonymity

RSR-only: "All NA members take anonymous, equal part in the conference's decision-making processes by voting in their home groups. When RSRs vote at the conference, they express the collective group conscience of all NA communities equally. To allow other trusted servants a special vote violates the spiritual principle of anonymity, setting a few members up with rights not given most members."

All WSC participants: "Officers, committee chairs, and trustees should have the same rights as representative members of the WSC. To exclude them from full participation in the conference makes them less than equal members of the WSC, specially set apart from other members. This is inconsistent with the spirit of anonymity."

Balanced decisions, primary purpose

RSR-only: "Our primary purpose is served best by balanced decisions. Balanced service decisions can only be made by those who do not have a personal stake in the outcome. Conference decisions made by NA group representatives--RSRs--are balanced because they are objective."

All WSC participants: "Representatives, trustees, committees, and officers all have stakes in the decisions of the conference. All of them, however, serve first in the best interests of NA as a whole. The insight and experience of both RSRs and other trusted servants are necessary parts of balanced service discussions and balanced service decisions."

Nature of the WSC

RSR-only: "The World Service Conference exists to carry out the directions of the groups. RSRs bring NA group votes together at the conference. Discussion is necessary only to provide new information."

All WSC participants: "The conference exists to draw together the best information available on issues at hand. For good decisions to be made, everyone must have the ability to cast a vote based on the information presented in conference discussions, not solely on prior instructions."

Partial participation

RSR-only: "Trustees, WSC committee chairpersons, and conference officers should offer insight and information in the discussions that shape a group conscience, but only RSRs should vote in expressing a group conscience."

All WSC participants: "If it is important to include trustees, committee chairs, and WSC officers in discussions, then it is equally important to include them in the decisions arising from those discussions. Otherwise, WSC votes do not represent the full circle of the conference's group conscience, but only a piece of it."

"...Ought never be organized..."

RSR-only: "Responsibility, not authority, is delegated by the groups to the World Service Conference. Decision-making authority resides only with the groups. By restricting conference voting rights to RSRs only, we keep our groups directly involved in all our fellowship's decisions."

All WSC participants: "When groups do not delegate decision-making authority to the conference, they must become highly organized in order to assess WSC issues and make decisions. This distracts the groups from their primary purpose."

We hope the preceding examples of some of the differing viewpoints throughout our fellowship have assisted local communities in their discussion of this topic. Since there is representation on both sides of this issue within the World Service Board of Trustees, the WSB could develop a comprehensive paper after the WSC'92 discussion, presenting both pro and con viewpoints, if the conference believes such a paper would be helpful.