

The Impending Crisis Redux

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*“People want to know how much you care
before they care how much you know.”*

Introduction

The Impending Crisis attempts to tell the side that has been left out for over twenty years, not to be upsetting or negative. Surely there has been a degree of glossing over details and deletion of important information over the last twenty years, so some of this material may seem biased or upsetting. Should this be the case, please refer to study materials and consultation with some long term members who can verify or deny the items that concern you. It is better for us to deal in truth than to enjoy pleasant fantasies. Do pray a lot while reading this material.

People sitting in a circle among their peers, people who know and love them consider and discuss things that might be done to help. Occasionally, they come to a resolution and pass along a vote, motion, suggestion or request. They know in advance that their concerns and issues will be taken seriously, because it is a matter of faith and they are part of a greater whole. They do not act capriciously or come from base motives. They are prayerful and believe themselves to be guided by a loving God of their understanding. A single man or woman carries word of their concerns or decisions to an assembly where votes are tallied and decisions determined from the input or responses of members. This process can involve tens, hundreds, thousands of hundreds of thousands men and women. When accord is reached, great unity can act to change lives and bring hope to the hopeless.

About the time I was entering college, I read the first editorial in an underground newsletter, *The Great Speckled Bird* a.k.a. "The Bird" in Atlanta in the 1960's which made clear from the beginning that the newspaper would have a bias so as to present views and opinions not be found in other newspapers. The point of this document is to bring into print things I have said and heard for years and years. Since a corporation controls the copy and policies in all the official Fellowship publications, we are quite happy to present another view in this, our unofficial/official publication. Pro-fellowship side views of issues and concerns of NA members allow a freedom of expression and experience that is not covered else where. The main issue at present is the corporation trying to change our service structure in the United States of America.

Remember, when many of us got clean, there was no book, no large Fellowship, only a few hundred meetings and so forth. We made specific prayers of selflessness that blinded us to ego and we did not divert our attention to 'play it smart,' we just prayed for strength and guidance to do God's footwork. Suffice to say, this did arouse envy and jealousy in others. The growth created a new, vocal, more educated Fellowship.

When working on the Basic Text during the 1978-80 fiscal year, we had fantastic problems with the minutes of the First World Literature Conference at Wichita. The next year, we had toughened up our attitude towards what was possible and not. So, when the Conference at Lincoln began, we announced minutes would be taken as we proceeded. There was an immediate outcry, "We can't do that! That's impossible. No organization does the minutes that way." Whew, it is hard to believe just how much this upset some people. As the Chairperson, I said, "Well, you may be right but we're going to try anyway, ok?" They couldn't say anything to that so that's what we did.

The minutes of the morning session were on the tables as members filed in from lunch and the afternoon minutes were on the tables after dinner. That's how we did it. The members who complained just shrugged but it saved us a ton of trouble at Lincoln, Memphis, Santa Monica, Warren, Miami, and Philadelphia. We even pasted them on the walls at the access points of the building where we held conference. I don't recall anyone complaining about inaccuracies in the minutes and it certainly went a long way to keep peace in the valley as we proceeded. Also, we gave away copious copies for attending members to take home with them. Remember, they paid a registration fee of \$12 and bore the expenses of their travel and food. We gave them copies to offset the Monday morning effect of, "God, I had the weirdest dream last week. I thought we were writing a book!" The copies not only gave them evidence in being able to read through the newly written chapters, we gave them plenty to give to their friends! Of course not many members know these factoids but it is part of your heritage and you should know it.

I have only recently discovered there are corporate activities all over the planet that seek to own community water supplies - including Atlanta, Georgia! In South America they call it 'selling the rain' - where they dry up available water supplies to force populations to buy the 'corporate' water! They call it 'privatization.' People in some cities died fighting for the right to drink water from a stream! NAWS, Inc. is attempting to do the same thing to us. We are not against the good folks who work at WSO. It is up to NA members to keep world services spiritual by advisement and election processes. Surely you know general corporate trends will creep into NAWS, Incorporated. Only watchfulness and positive action will preserve the spirit of NA. It is not improper or negative to keep NA spiritual! Without the watchers and occasional readjustments, NA will drift, in purpose and focus, off course.

One over-simplified version of what's happened is that the members who were more experienced with surrender and spiritual principles zoomed ahead and built the new Fellowship in the early nineteen eighties. Those who were left behind were horrified and confused and put forth terrific energy to capture positions of perceived power and control, to restore order as they saw things. While some had long time recovery, they did not write the book, *Narcotics Anonymous*. Any society has polarization. This means a measure of disagreement among members is healthy. Their lack of experience and knowledge has been passed down to members coming into NA ever since. The idea that the Fellowship is not adult in nature is perpetuated by those who don't quite realize the Fellowship wrote its Book!

There are several ways a society can be formed. It can arise out of common cause, forced regimentation and either the breaking down of larger groups into smaller societies or the reverse: the gathering together of smaller groups into larger assemblies. The groups can be held together by force like a military state or share a common goal or vision that is strong enough to make common cause and hold them together. In NA we share the pain of active addiction and the trials and joys of recovery. NA is people. NA is addicts seeking recovery - not a service board, committee, literature or any other thing. NA is people like you and me.

Of course, it often goes without saying that our surrender and our recovery depend very much on how we feel about NA. This underscores greatly what we euphemistically call our NA politics. These conflicts of policy injure our ability to carry our message by bringing outside issues into sharp focus. Naturally there are at least two sides of the coin: those who have a correct notion about recovery and NA and those who fail to understand. In general, you are better off if you can really see both sides of the coin whether you agree with them or not.. If you think there is only one side that is right, you are leaving out the all mighty X-factor.

But the most important information for NA will always be the how and why of spiritual living. There is a vast difference between the person who uses anger to fire their enthusiasm vs. a person who disagrees and tries to work towards a point of remedy. There must be a hundred thousand NA members out there who have the knowledge and information awaiting an opportunity to help make it better. There are probably twice that number who know better and refuse to do anything because they are bogged down in fear and resentment. Certainly those who hide out in other fellowships do nothing to help. As others have shared, AA never had another program to run to!

While our Traditions stress the importance of keeping our groups together, the Second Tradition warns us of people who would seek to govern rather than serve us. We are abjured against lending our name to outside enterprises. It also stresses that while we as members, and as a Fellowship, have the inalienable power to create service boards and committees - they must remain directly responsible to those they serve. They serve our needs; we do not serve their needs. Neither can they rule, censor, dictate or decide things for us. When the voice of the NA Fellowship gets forgotten or played down, we have the option to correct or replace the service body.

A major flaw exists in the poorly written 12 Concepts of NA. It says the Concepts were written to guide our service structure - implying the 12 Traditions only address group needs. This is where our service structure took a wrong turn. This is the focus of the Crisis. **When more members realize this - the crisis will no longer be impending, it will be here!** When you realize you have done something wrong, you have to stop doing it, admit you have been wrong and get the word out to others who don't yet know better. It is not about blame, it is about integrity and protecting ourselves from random error or human failings.

Narcotics Anonymous is not the WSO. Narcotics Anonymous is a 12 Step spiritual fellowship of men and women with a desire to stop using and find a better way to live. World Service Office is a business entity we set up as a service office to fill literature orders and conduct our official business for us and at our own direction through the World Service Conference.

There would be little need for this essay if there was no conflict hurtful to our mission and our unity in NA. Sometimes I think God may have set it up this way. If so, God also

impels us to do what we can to resolve at least the larger issues so that a pattern consistent with our goals and aspirations emerges. We absolutely do not have to agree on everything. Ever since we wrote our Basic Text and expanded our way of life all over the world, it has become more obvious that we have some trouble with the bureaucracy attached to our primary service center. No one complains about literature orders getting filled and many services have maintained a high standard of excellence over the years. There are however certain matters that seem to come up repeatedly. Conflicts of interest, mis-information, irregularities with minutes of WSC by WSO staff, and other problems have upset and demoralized members over the years. The only maneuver by the corporation is to avoid embarrassing mentions, deny or mislead those who question. Unfortunately this leaves the door open to recurrence. . They may complain but if corrections are not made, they just walk away in dismay or disgust. The issues here is they know if they are not taken seriously.

Narcotics Anonymous Continuum

Only a thief would take something leaving nothing in return.
- from Nick Verdi - *fine art painter*

The basics of recovery are the same today as they were fifty years ago. The basics of recovery will be the same fifty years from now and on into the future from there. Addicts discover it is the disease and taking away the illusions without replacing them with factual information would be a disservice. Once a newcomer starts asking good questions, there is no end to their potential for recovery. The acts associated with using are found to be causing the problems. For this to lead to recovery, you discover, and admit, that you are powerless over your addiction and that your life has become unmanageable. Pretty simple isn't it? But people die every day for the lack of this knowledge.

The way to peace in exploring and considering the many wonderful and exciting things that have happened to bring NA to the stage of today gradually gives you a rich field of ideas reflecting the diversity and ingenuity of our membership. If you were to list all the people, places and things associated with the idea of NA, it would fill volumes! Somehow our disease makes it seem possible that NA is just a big dream and that it could all suddenly go poof and be no more. Well, that is just impossible. Of course people kind of go nuts once in a while. Believe it or not it is normal! Everybody does it, even non-addicts. Our NA history shows that spiritual principles prevail.

In our NA history, we include diversity, not black list the people who see things differently. NA is for all addicts seeking recovery. We draw the line that they of their own volition must achieve cleanliness which is the real denominator of sincerity. We must stand apart from any organization that wishes to control us. The future is open to those who build on bed rock of total abstinence, a voice in NA and the sharing through gratitude that has characterized NA all along.

For a spiritual Fellowship like ours to exist, we need to constantly bear in mind that our lives are at stake. While there may be pressures and adverse conditions we have to deal with, we have already dealt with worse - on many occasions. It used to be, not long ago, we were not welcome to hold a meeting in many places. Of course the big pharmaceutical companies are going to react to our path of total abstinence with horror! They believe everybody needs a few drugs. Whoop-ti-dew! Doesn't that just make your little heart jump and twist? One has to have survived our own insanity as well as the world's. People in the business of selling drugs will always see us as customers.

The Basic Text employed a conference method wherein all members of NA were completely welcome and privy to any sort of information they desired. This proved to be highly productive and it was amazing how some of the newer members went straight to effective solutions and made many contributions. This is where our principle of inclusion first proved itself workable and practical, keeping faith with the democratic processes stressed in our early NA service writings. It was of course also very attractive and somewhat comforting to members with more clean time who could perhaps appreciate more fully the miracles they could see unfolding after thirty years of waiting for a Basic Text.

I first got into world services when I was five years clean in 1979. My perspective is probably very different from someone getting clean and into service after 1990. People with little clean time say there is no difference between someone with a little vs. someone with a lot of clean time. Those with clean time and recovery know better. Recovery teaches us the error of our ways and so long as we remember the lessons, we don't have to keep making the same mistakes. Also, many times we know what to do next. After many years in service and recovery, someone told me about the two NA's: the spiritual and the corporate. It made sense that some members would migrate to the business-like aspect of NA functions, events, logistics and similar concerns. Others were more interested in the spirituality of the program, personality change and learning the important lessons of living clean. The principles of honesty, open-mindedness and the willingness to try ay seem general and vague but when applied to hundreds of daily situations, they become very pertinent and well defined. Each viewpoint created over

time its own little world. The two were seen as complimentary while any conflicts were seen as poor understanding that would be corrected as an individual learned more about NA.

It may be important to realize that NA in America and more especially the growth of NA was related to other events taking place in society. It was not until 1964 that freedom of speech became a legal reality in the United States when the Supreme Court struck down the 1798 Sedition Act which forbade spoken or written criticism of the government, Congress, or the President. After the First World War, for example, Eugene Debs was arrested for making a pacifist speech [page 269, *Understanding Power*, Noam Chomsky]. He was a presidential candidate sent to prison for ten years because he gave a speech against making war. America is unique for its hard won freedom. Think about it. There was a reason no one would admit to being an addict in the early days. Suffice to say, people have been fighting for these rights for hundreds of years and NA is one of the blessings born out of their struggle.

The start point for the modern form of NA was the creation of a service structure in the mid 1970's. It took several years to partially implement the written service structure. It expanded NA on the principle that each and every member of NA has a say in their Fellowship. This healthy form of personal responsibility enhanced and ennobled the volition in each member that grants them membership identifying through aspiration and pain. All of NA rests on their shoulders.

At the point where the writing of the Basic Text was completed, there were only three Regional Service Committees fellowship-wide. With the creation of the Basic Text, a large number of participants got quite an education in NA, our 12 Steps and our 12 Traditions. With the Text done, we expanded our primary service center, WSO with a vastly increased cash flow. We went from three Regions to twenty-eight in one Conference year. Unfortunately, a sort of gulf grew between the volunteer service workers of NA and the paid WSO staff.

As one member put it succinctly:

"Part of the Group's responsibility is to provide the service structure with direction as well as the human and financial resources to accomplish the expressed Will of the Groups. Our service committees and the service structure as a whole has a responsibility to carry out the will and spirit of the Groups. Only the Groups have a right to vote. All other votes must faithfully represent the expressed will of the Groups. Members vote according to their will or what they think best for themselves or the group in which their Fellowship GSR has already

expressed their personal vote and must then carry the Group's conscience to the Area. ASRs (RCMs) must in turn carry their Area's position to the Region and so on down the service structure to the WSO who in turn have the responsibility to govern and direct world services in the name of the Groups. Our Second Tradition makes this clear.

"Sound like a pipe dream? It's what was promised to me when I came in."

A strange animosity grew between the two viewpoints. An example of this were the typos in the original printing of the Basic Text. The unpaid, grateful members who wrote the Text were blamed for the typos by the paid WSO staff. Nobody thought it through at the time that WSO was in charge of production and the literature service volunteers had no opportunity to proofread the document before WSO issued the print order. This type of confusion fueled the separation of the two classes of workers: the volunteer and the paid professionals. And of course the problem was never rectified or amended, with the knowledgeable members insulted and the WSO staff blithely unaware. The spiritual service volunteers are still active in NA today and do much needed work.

Cutting costs would seem a solution. Who would over-spend? Not our trusted servants, I hope. Are there any other people who have a say in NA? Are they subject to the 12 Traditions? If not, they are not NA. If they are not directly responsible, they are not NA. Fiscal responsibility with regard to our copyrighted materials requires prudence in spending. Nowhere in our service structure is there justification for excessive spending beyond our means. Should such spending occur, it might be an indication that someone within the system has other goals in mind than the Fellowship's welfare.

God, like water, finds Its own way. Where it is blocked, God will back up and move through every crack available. In time, God always wins. When our service structure became the play thing of a tiny group of people, the energy began to find other ways to flow and move into the lives of people who depend on It. Mentation or thought processes will never beat out the spiritual. Mentation is the tiny mind of man. Spirituality hooks us up to the universe. There is a *defacto* service structure already in place. Your reading this essay is an example. When structural service began to flop as the energy that comes from group conscience fell off, people in NA found new ways to meet their needs. The accumulation of information and contacts has resulted in an unexpected boon for Fellowship communications. We used to have to construct expensive and burdensome committees to collect, discuss and propose solutions.

Now we can just do what we are doing here: sort it all out on a big screen, worldwide

Fellowship computer screens! In a few months, the Fellowship will begin reviewing just how much is being spent on the marketeering to change our service structure. Members in the NA Continuum are watching intently. They just haven't quite figured out that they are the ones really in charge.

Service in NA used to be great fun! The spirit of the thing, the newness, the feeling of doing something good and unique to addicts who were discovering how to live clean, help others and grow spiritually. Make the atmosphere stifling, attract officious types with delusions of management, create a jigsaw puzzle of policies that makes it hard for someone to get involved, and suddenly service isn't so much fun. We call the problems associated with conflicting policies "politics." The joy of giving rarely comes into play. Onerous rules outweigh the accomplishments. Any bureaucracy gets old. It takes a lot of talent and energy to keep it going. Our trusted servants in many, many cases have been subjected to hundreds of hours of listening to members who didn't take the time to study and ask endless questions they wouldn't have asked if they had attended one or more learning days before taking up the service committees time. The Regional servants who take time from work and family to spend long days away from home with no regional motions carried at the WSC. It is easy to see where they feel like a big rubber stamp for whatever the corp thinks is best that year. It is deadening to lose your say in things that directly affect your life and well-being. .

Corporate Narcotics Anonymous

Ask yourself: what does NAWS actually do for you? Surely you can think of some good things! We wrote a book with no NAWS. We carried our message to the world with no NAWS. What do we need someone to tell us what to do for? We do need a WSO. We do need a Conference to bring together all the Fellowship periodically. Why do we need a ten or twelve person service board that actually created itself with no guidelines? If you do not know this is true, check out the facts.

Officiousness has never been the NA way of doing things. We do not accept leaders by right of title or position. If they cease to serve by example, well, that's it, isn't it? We have no big shots or little shots in NA: one shot and we're all shot. Democratic processes save time and match up human aspirations with organizational goals and accomplishments. Leave people out, the system is left out and becomes irrelevant. This invalidates the collection of funds and expenditures of those funds. There is no support for a motion that

is forced on a surrendered and unsuspecting Fellowship. It only has force if the people are kept in the dark. It is one of those things where the only way to win is do not play the game. Working for change in a system from the inside where the very mechanisms of positive involvement and change are damaged doesn't make much sense.

One member observed that the WSC Literature Committee was WSO's dream come true. They wrote literature that sold into the millions of dollars and yet never asked for or received a dime from, WSO. So, all these years, money has flooded into world services from the sale of the Basic Text while at the same time all the people who were directly involved in the writing are alienated and derided by WSO through their systematic control right down the line to the people who answer the phone at WSO.

One member shared:

"/ was talking to Bo S. I called him to see if he could help us with an event we 're going to be having this Labor Day and during our talk, I recalled another talk I 'd had in the last couple of years, with Steve R., a WSO fellowship facilitator. I believe in his position, concerning the guide to PI and why it was no longer available to the fellowship after the release of a new version, the new PI guide. I was concerned because my group had not voted on this and I was told that my RSR had...I tried explaining to him that my RSR did not have anything to do with my group because my group is traditionalist with no ties to the NAWS, Inc. structure. Somewhere in our conversation I brought up Bo S. and the comment from Steve was, 'Bo S. has been trying to destroy NA for the last 25 years.'

“As an informed member of NA, I know that nothing could be further from the truth. If it wasn't for Bo S., and a small group of people that believed that God could direct us to write a book, we would riot have the fellowship of NA we do today. I have a very clear understanding of the fact that the people who wrote the book went on to start 10,000 meetings. It is at the very least unprofessional and at the worst it is blatant character defamation. This type of behavior should not ever be tolerated and certainly not from someone who is a paid professional of a non-profit organization. Not only is this allegation unfounded and insulting, it is directed at one whom I and thousands of other members consider to be one of the last defenders and pillars of the truth of what is in our Traditions and the ability of groups to promote recovery in complete creative freedom in accordance with our Higher Power's will. ”

This kind of consistent character assassination is inconsistent with spiritual principles. It creates a new category of "personalities before principles." And it happens all the time.

Rather than get into a he-said, she-said conundrum, there are other examples that can be found. Like a rock rolling down a hillside, it will not stop until it hits a bigger rock or rolls all the way to the bottom. Repetition creates false memories, no matter what the truth may be!

Why is the corporation flooding us with all this concern for our service structure? Could it be that they regard all attempts at group conscience as externalities that just take up funds that they would prefer to run through their accounts?

Are we that expendable? After all there is a chance the Fellowship will find out why the Concepts are so dear to their hearts. Without the Concepts, they would have to do what they were told by the groups. Some lawyer told them this single line, "The Steps were written to guide us individually, the Traditions were written to guide our groups but the Concepts were written to guide our service structure." would relieve them of the obligation to do what the groups and members of NA have to say on any given topic. Did anyone tell you about the power in the AA Concepts to order resignations and restructuring of their General Service Office? It does not say this anywhere in the NA 12 Concepts.

Corporations hire public relations firms to create buzzwords to put across ideas they wish to promote. Terms like 'service system' undermine our staunch reliance on the NA 12 Traditions by sounding like a fresh viewpoint when it is just repackaging baloney. PR firms stretch or represent information to build sales. They do not deal in truth or accuracy. It sounds to me like NAWs has noticed members don't like picking up the tab for officiousness and cost overruns. So much money goes to WSO from literature sales that there must be a leak somewhere.

Nothing new is happening. The last time we got hit with massive structural changes was in the 1990's. NAWs has commanded such great loyalty that today's Fellowship does not recall what a real group conscience process is like. It is when a large predominance of active members are aware of a problem, discuss and research it from various angles, submit ideas and proposals which are then placed before an active and informed Fellowship and voting determines the outcome - members will support the process, even it doesn't go their way because it is all open and above board. There are reasons why today's Fellowship doesn't trust the process. Documentation: when is the last time a motion originating in a region of NA has passed at the so-called World Service Conference? It was 1996. One small motion carried in 2010 to do a Traditions Workbook that was obviously supported by the corporation to make money and further the corporate spin on our Traditions.

Who owns the copyrights on our literature? Many members see a quiet attempt to copyright new literature written after the 1990's as a move to put our copyrights into the hands of the corporation. Could this be?

Like a coat of paint on an old tool, the proposed structural changes pretend to be something new. But on closer examination, it just puts NAWS in charge of everything with fewer voting members so it is easier to control and plan outcomes while maintaining the appearance of democratic processes. Many other corporations do this to create the illusion of democratic processes. It is probably financially motivated to save money also. Gone is the idea that our worldwide Fellowship can count on its primary service conference to inform, involve and take time with members who are kept up-to-date so that when we are asked for a group conscience, we don't have to go into an orgy of study and discussion.

You will notice the appearances of democratic processes are highly visible in the current move to make new radical changes in our service structure. What is not so visible is that we, as a Fellowship, did not ask for these changes. Also, it will be consistent with past behavior if we later find that NAWS has already planned the printing and implementation of their proposals because today's Fellowship is so uninformed that most folks will rubber stamp the shutting down of our Twelve Traditions like it is simply business as usual. Business as usual can encroach on matters of grave concern in a spiritual Fellowship.

New ideas come to mind when we face a tough piece of adversity. I have no doubt that unless the Fellowship wakes up to what is happening, the NAWS corporation will be broke again within ten years and probably want to change our service structure again to fix themselves. There seems to be a pattern here. I believe NA is going to survive whatever happens but just like we lost control of our "CAR" a few years back, now we are being asked to put on blindfolds and ear plugs! All before December some time. What and who does this serve?

When I served on the NA Board of Trustees (WSB), I went back to the college I attended in Atlanta. I asked the Dean of the Political Science Department a few questions. He politely directed me to the school library to a book entitled *Bureaucracy*, I found the following sentences: "In bureaus of a financial or profit-making nature, individual opinion is sacrificed in favor of efficiency. In bureaus of a spiritual or religious nature, efficiency is sacrificed in favor of individual opinion." This permanently cleared up a host of situations for me.

Group conscience was developed and refined during the writing of the Basic Text in the years between 1979 and 1982. The World Service Conference operating under *The NA Tree* and its adapted forms was called *The Temporary Guide to our Service Structure*. It was then systematically eroded out of existence over a period of years by the people on the WSO Board which later became known as NAWS, Inc. They saw their mission as running NA so they could bring order into world services which, perhaps, they did not understand because they were not that involved in the literature process and did not understand the absolute necessity of involving members at all phases of what was going on at the world level.

They began by taking over the secretary and treasurer functions of the WSC and the WSB (Board of Trustees). Everyone was very trusting in those days. They also took over the NA Way Magazine. At that point they controlled all NA publications. In the 1990's, the same people who were involved in these changes did one more thing. They took world service out from under the umbrella of protection afforded by the Twelve Traditions by pushing through the NA Twelve Concepts - no relation to the AA Twelve Concepts. Then they engineered the shut down of the WSC subcommittee system for six or seven years and pushed through the Super Board in the late 1990's. All this further centralized administration of NA resources and financial activities. The people who engineered it all were in upper level administrative positions and/or on the Super Board. Consensus Based Decision making puts pressure on the informed or questioning members to conform to a majority opinion and does away with a coherent voting system. So, with CBD, if you are aware of concerns or issues not known or visible to the majority, you are forced to go along with the group by social pressure.

It may be that Consensus Based Decision making is another way of saying 'tyranny by the majority' because it doesn't allow participants to abstain or oppose. Another interesting factor is when we decided by simple majority or two-thirds on major changes, you could tell if a motion passed unanimously or if by a close vote. Also, if there were a lot of abstentions - it gave a sure sign that discussion had not reached the point where it was clear to the participants where they stood on the matter under consideration. If a vote was too close or had too many abstentions, a wise chairperson would then call for more discussion. Also, at a later date, a close inspection of the minutes shows how things went because of the Y/N/A counts. Consensus Based Decision has no such footprint. Of course, administrators at WSO had other ways to doctor the minutes - just re-word or delete motions or amendments and leave out important elements of discussion.

We'll consider the following ways in which our members have been buffaloed into chumming along with things they knew were 'kind of funny.' Funny. Yeah, right! Look

up “Philosophical Fallacies” with Google or another search engine. Here are a few items for your consideration:

“Wait My Chance Syndrome:” Some members won't contend on issues because they are concerned that it will only make the problem worse. They are worried that the conflict will diminish those who are weak in their desire for recovery - that they will just go out and use if they are disheartened by a conflict. So they hang on and console themselves with the idea that if things get really bad, they'll be in a position to oppose or prevent more serious problems.

The “Can't Fight City Hall:” is another excuse for inaction by members close to or directly involved with, untoward orchestration of motions by NAWWS, Inc. attempting to push the Fellowship in a direction they might find objectionable or in violation of our 12 Traditions.

“Work inside the System:” is a gimmick to neutralize members concerned about improprieties who are so concerned about doing the right thing the right way, they attempt to make others aware of their concerns until they are worn out. It never seems to occur to them that those who would abuse our processes for personal preferences and regardless of our Traditions and guidelines would not conduct counter efforts to keep the objections relegated to a low priority with those objecting held in contempt or low esteem.

“Not My Job:” I might speculate that some of the personnel working at WSO are aware of improprieties and choose to remain silent - staying out of things that don't directly concern them. This too is a good way to insure that such improprieties will continue. It is not dishonorable to blow the whistle on deliberate contravention of our Twelve Traditions and proper even-handedness in matters of concern to the Fellowship. Conflicts of interest especially should not be allowed to play a role in Fellowship decision making processes.

Appeal to Authority (false authority) You appeal to authority if you back up your reasoning by saying that your position is supported by what some supposed authority says on the subject. Appealing to authority- is fallacious whenever the authority appealed to is not really an authority in this particular subject. *Example: The moon is covered with dust because the president of our neighborhood association said so.*

Appeal to the People (bandwagon) If you suggest that someone's claim or argument is correct simply because it is what most everyone believes, then you've committed the

fallacy of appeal to the people . Agreement with popular opinion is not necessarily a reliable sign of truth, and deviation from popular opinion is not necessarily a reliable sign of error: but if you assume it is then you're guilty of committing this fallacy. *Example: You should turn to channel 6 for the best most informative news because it's the most watched channel this year.*

“Poisoning the Well” - Poisoning the well is a preemptive attack on a person in an attempt to discredit their testimony or argument. A person who thereby becomes unreceptive to the testimony reasons fallaciously and has become a victim of the poisoner. This is a kind of ad hominem, circumstantial fallacy. *Example: [Prosecuting attorney in court] When is the defense attorney planning to call that twice convicted child molester, David Barnington, to the stand? OK, I'll rephrase that. When is the defense attorney planning to call David Barnington to the stand?*

Several likely occurrences included selling the Fellowship the innocuous notion that today's Fellowship is larger and worldwide and so needs to be updated. This simplistic idea will serve to shoe horn in 'certain drugs are ok' to appease the pressure groups advocating drug use as a business. This faction is ignoring a basic tenant of NA's program of recovery. A program of total abstinence is being bulldozed aside as a consequence.

We have become an externality to NAWA, Inc. which functions as a corporation - meaning it is only concerned with the bottom line: making money. The part that gets side-stepped is we the members built NA and maintain it not for our financial well-being but for our very lives and the lives of the newcomers. Exploitation of this as if it were a weakness just because members as a whole support world services is unthinkable to most.

Quoting from a recent public news article, the following seems appropriate:

"You shouldn't quit your jobs, as you have kids to raise and families to look after, you don't have to speak up and risk being fired, but, you can quietly become a rebel in sheep's clothing. Don't follow the party line. Don't fall for the trap. Don't buy the government propaganda. Be on the good side. Be on the side of truth, freedom, and justice. We will win with or without you, so join the awakening, and be part of the resistance of the mind, and soul. Humanity is calling out for you. The rest of us are waiting for you. Take that leap. Leave the land of lies. You're not safe there. None of us are. Only the war criminals and state terrorists can call that land their home. We must make a new home, built on the rule of law, and

grounded in the principles of liberty and human empowerment. "

While this article addresses wide-spread problems facing the world today, it should be obvious that we are part of that world and what happens there, happens here, to some extent. We may think of this as a wake-up call.

We have a well established custom against governance in NA's Second Tradition. This means full disclosure and explanation of changes where they occur. We don't tell people what to do, we ask what they want and try to deliver according to their wishes. The ways in which we go together and agree on certain things is miraculous and not the result of connivance or manipulation. Those who ask and gather information along the lines of group conscience are never going to be too numerous.

The idea of spiritual service is that the few do for the many. But the results have to prove their accord in the minds and hearts of people to garner support and have effect. Doing with surrender and respect breeds mutuality. Common goals become clear. Abusing trust and conflicts of interest are not service. It is not inconceivable that a group within the Corporate system would attempt a power play to capture the 'gullible vote' and change the entire nature of NA. The yardstick or template to measure this is to be found in our Twelve Traditions.

My advice? Stick with the Twelve Traditions. The 12 Concepts of NA service may have been written by the business office but the members who approved them had little idea or understanding that they directly contravened the NA 12 Traditions. The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions are spiritual principles - the Concepts are corporate principles!

NAWS, Inc. employs corporate techniques to attain their goals and we in NA need to learn a little more about this if we are to successfully deal with issues stemming from these techniques. We don't have to be hateful or vengeful, just informed and consistent. One way we can do this is to bring out into the open just what corporations do to insure compliance with their policies and the sanctions they impose to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What's at stake is our spiritual integrity. We simply cannot endure as a spiritual Fellowship without maintaining certain standards and values which have made NA great over the years.

After all, our primary service in NA is personal service, member to member. NAWS, Incorporated controls the paperwork that goes out from WSO. The power has been concentrated in a few hands on the NAWS, Inc also known as the Super Board.

Problems of money, property and prestige have resulted in the notion that we get our strength and guidance from a corporate authority. This is perfectly fine with someone who has never experienced anything else. It is not fine with those who got clean on group conscience processes.

Today, WSO and NAWS, Inc. are so walled off from the rest of us, they believe those who speak out against their policies are misinformed and not too numerous. That is because they are not accustomed to hearing from informed members and don't check source documents, even where sources are cited. Newer members who go along with what they say are regarded as more valuable over the longer term members **who** may ask embarrassing questions and challenge the authority of the corporate members who seem to think they know better. Also, in any society, those who track, discuss and study are fewer than the main body who trusts the few to look out for them.

The only legitimate role of our service structure is to serve. Our Twelve Traditions dictate that our leaders ought never govern (Tradition 2) - and while we may create service boards and committees, they remain directly responsible to the groups and members (Tradition 9), we do not lend our name to outside groups or organizations with specific warnings against problems of money, property' and prestige (Tradition 6). Many if not nearly all members think the Basic Text and 17 of the IP's came from WSO - not from NA. This erroneous idea is never dispelled by the corporation. In the business world, professionals get paid for telling us what to do. In our case, this is ridiculous. Every NA member knows we are about 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and total abstinence. All else is not NA.

WOULD THEY?

“It is the height of irresponsibility in service to allow personal interpretations to get in the way of doing our service jobs.. If discussions of policy begin to take precedent over getting the work done, something is wrong. The thing to do then is to renew our sense of primary purpose, apologize to those who have distracted us and pray to be used as instruments. There are times when almost nothing we do can avoid or even diminish the times of difficulty. Sometimes, like in other phases of our recovery, all we can do is just stand there and hurt.

One concern of members familiar with world services has been:

“I know several years ago the WSO was found to have a written black list. I am

wondering if today NAWS, Inc. has such a list.” If so, we need to re-think our position relative to the corporate entity that thinks it owns and controls all of NA. In our 12 Traditions it states clearly that our service boards and committees are ‘directly responsible’ to the members of NA who created them. It means just that. A black list is a list of members known to oppose or question corporate policies. It also violates a members anonymity by labeling them and keeps their concerns from being heard.

Making the Fellowship into a random crowd of uninformed people who haven't a clue what is going on in World Service nullifies their capacity to participate in meaningful voting at any level of service. Plus from the groups all the way down to the executive branches which are confined by our 12 Traditions to carry out the will of the Fellowship as expressed in group conscience. The executive branches are put at the bottom because they are furthest removed from NA. It is seeming more and more like the information coming out of NAWS, Inc. is excessively complicated so as to be unreadable by most NA members. This means they are more likely to vote as they are told and not question things they might disagree with or disapprove. Centralized publishing requires precautions to insure Fellowship views and concerns are not pushed aside by business interests. Principles come before profit because if we maintain our principles NA will grow. If we abandon them, the business will fail as a Fellowship entity.

One new idea being propagated by NAWS, Inc. is the notion that the inverted pyramid is poorly thought out and does not really represent reality. This is another example of corporate management. The report style is designed to be readable without giving the membership information that lends itself to coherent voting on issues that affect the growth and continuance of our Fellowship.

The service structure was designed to be reflective of the basket and literature sales from the Fellowship. The whole idea was to style WSO so that a friendly, service oriented WSO would always be well taken care of by the Fellowship it served. And likewise, a belligerent, selfish, money-hungry and governing WSO would soon have financial problems. Raising prices and haranguing the Fellowship, rigging deceptive changes in our service structure and manipulating group conscience processes to suit the NAWS Board of Directors who think they run NA. Just as I know of improprieties, I also know of Fellowship loyal Board members who may be outvoted. This opposes all concepts of NA service. Lip service, slick displays and corporate betrayal should not be allowed to fool the Fellowship into bowing and scraping before tricksters in a business suit.

The whole reason voting representatives were well treated by the general Fellowship in

the 1970's and 1980's is because they went way out of their way to discuss and define what the members wanted to happen and then worked hard to bring those very things about. They were respected because they carried group conscience. Without group conscience, the structure is just a business. Without the Twelve Traditions, the corp is free to act in any manner it chooses. It has no bounds. Let it be known that there is a large and aware body of membership tracking the events of sabotage against our group conscience system. These people are not happy. Many members participated directly or indirectly in the writing of the Basic Text and knew the Book came from the Fellowship, not a group of professionals. The membership was very aware of the principles of group conscience processing.

To see this more clearly, consider money problems. We print and publish literature within NA. The profit margin from literature sales is great so there should be plenty of money in our coffers. If there are problems of money shortages, there can be only one explanation: over-spending and poor budget controls. With no other goals than helping the addict seeking recovery, how can this occur? Saying the money goes for services beyond what money comes in is not an answer, it is an excuse.

Is there any problem of prestige? Are there any prestigious positions in our service structure? Who is the Executive Director of WSO? Who is Chairperson of the WSC? Who is Chairperson of NAWS? Is our Area and Region noted for its dedication and service to the needs of the NA services provided? Is world services noted for its humility and impressive record of following the Will of the NA Fellowship? Looking at things in this way may help us sort out where some of our problems are coming from and what we can do to help restore good order in a loving and caring manner. Anger won't do the trick. If someone left the barn open, you can't blame the animals for getting at the food. Shut the door and get someone else to watch it.

In detective work, they say follow the money trail. That might be a good idea for us to keep track of since I heard someone got another raise at WSO. It would be less insulting if they weren't broke and down to two months operating expenses. Wonder if that is before dipping into the prudent reserve or having spent the prudent reserve down to that point. Money, property and prestige has a certain allure but no one has ever called it recovery. Spiritualists throughout all time have warned against noisiness, transience and fame as substitutes for reality. It is not what you have, it is who you have to share your life with that counts. As soon as you begin compromising your values, your worth as a person begins to fall off. You simply cannot feel good about yourself if you are violating your own code of honor. This may sound simplistic but it can be the greatest joy on earth or it can be a living hell.

From New Attitudes - NA Newsletter

“We haven't always had serious service disorders. In the middle seventies in the new Fellowship of the East and South, we all used the newly written and approved *N.A. Tree* as our service structure. We didn't argue the content of the service structure because any reader could see that it was written in a clear and open style and the carry over between the feelings of love and trust from our recovery meetings into our service structure was obvious. Members of good spirit could make anything work. Then, in the early eighties, when we really started growing someone got the bright idea that our service structure had to be updated. What was meant by that was there were two or three places in the work that seemed mildly contradictory. In the rush of growth and expanding change, the notion that our structure wasn't perfect led to a succession of efforts within our service to come up with something better than the service structure described in *The N.A. Tree* which has essentially been carried forward under the title *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure* (TWGSS).

“While the effort attracted widespread support, two things seemed obvious 1) that the ‘work’ being done was really bickering over terminology as opposed to a respectable work like you would find in a library book on the subject and 2) it was really about POWER and that the people who were able to push through their version of the structure would also be the people who wound up running things.

“Well, no one came out and said it but as time went by, serious people withdrew from the effort. The pitiful versions of the structure that were advanced are only taken seriously by the inexperienced and the uninformed. The Twelve Concepts were referred to as the ‘Twelve Cons’ in the late eighties. They were approved during the time when WSO launched a lawsuit against a member who was upset about the high cost of our literature and the fact that group conscience approved versions of our Basic Text had been set aside in favor of a version merely approved by fifty or sixty people at a WSC one year. An entire generation of devoted members withdrew as a group from the structure when the Concepts were passed. Even now, years later, there is an serious polarization between people who support the Concepts and those who do not.

“Without attempting to explain the positions once more, I would just like to say that when you watch two groups contending and one is basing their position on books and study and the other on conjecture and hearsay, I will go with the ones

who have been open-minded and sincere enough to check out what is written in books on the subject. There is no parity between an informed group and an uninformed group. By definition, the uninformed group will never understand. They may even feel downtrodden and unfairly criticized for their unwillingness to read, study and become informed. If they are numerous, as they are in this case, then no one would dare speak out against them would they?

“Any reader who thinks that there is a similarity between the Concepts of NA and the Concepts of AA has never compared them. One is around a hundred pages long and well written; the other is much shorter and full of jargon and slogans. Guess which is which. One gives the Fellowship the ultimate right to order reorganization and resignations; the other gives voting representatives the right to vote the way they want to regardless of what their regions instructed them to vote on motions presented in advance and deliberated on by the Fellowship.

“This has the effect of nullifying the Fellowship's involvement in its affairs because they can study an issue, direct their representative how to vote on an issue, pay for their trip to California or wherever the WSC happens to be and then have the "representatives" vote however they want to effectively eliminating the Fellowship's voice and seriously cutting into the idea that representatives represent and leading to the idea that what we really have is a system of elected governors who do what they want and may or may not tell us what they did in our name.

“Fewer and fewer members know or care what is "happening" at the world level because they have been left out for the last four or five years and a new generation of servants are in place who are forced to go along with things without the benefit of really knowing our history or exactly why we are so unsettled on basic issues while we have a structure that has been in place for over twenty years now.

“The service structure, as written, has been abused and often is ignored unless it can be used to justify someone seeking to get their way. The theoretical, unapproved and unproven *Guide to Service* is supposed to be a real contender to the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*, yet few members have even seen it! Perhaps the time has come for us to recommend that our members read the AA Twelve Concepts not to gather an opinion on an outside issue but to become informed in the subject.

“Since there is a strong mistaken notion that our Concepts are based on the AA Concepts, at least this error would become obvious to all. Then perhaps we could

rejoin as a Fellowship to work out something that would really suit our needs. It is hard to ask those who have done their homework and studied both sides of the issue to give in to those who are too lazy or too arrogant to at least become better informed as to the facts to these basic issues before any real harm is done.

“You know, sometimes you just gotta tell people when they are out of line and don't really know it. Maybe I am out of line to say this but the Fellowship through the WSC told me to go and study the materials as a member of an Ad Hoc and I submitted a sixty page typewritten report on the A.A. Twelve Concepts to the WSC one year. I don't say theirs is a perfect system but I believe that a member reading it would feel comfort and support for the vital importance of their membership.

“Sharing from the experience of someone who was around in the "good times", we did better when it was understood that no one was above the principles of our structure. We surrendered and served side by side.

- New Attitudes Newsletter - June/July 96

Instead of building on the actuality of members experience, newcomers will vote in almost anything. Our leadership is rendered obsolete, casting aside many decades of clean time experience. Also, in my experience, powerless people are always looking for a 'power move' and so inexperienced newer members will vote for the corporation just to stick their lip out - against informed members. We have to be aware of these 'reverse reactions' if we are truly expect to help. It is best to answer questions and give members ways to check the facts for themselves. They love to see old-timer writhe! Our disease is full of tricks to evade recovery. And with our own service structure-system-corporate overlords putting a rope around their necks and telling them to jump off a chair. Fewer old timers does not mean more newcomers. It means fewer members period. Old-timer's have encouraged hundreds if not thousands of newcomers in their clean time. It may be that the bureau just resists anyone who dares question or challenge the positions of people on the board who have succumbed to the notion that they are powerful. This is dangerous for any addict and the more so for those in sensitive positions.

The Twelve Concepts

The NA 12 Concepts drive a wedge between group conscience and world services by

making the service structure a corporate management system. The Fellowship had no reason to expect such a thing could happen in their times back in the early 1990's and had no ready-made defense for it. To a great extent, the bureaucrats in world service exploited these weaknesses, converting trust and surrender into deficiencies. Where was God? Pain makes a man wise if it does not kill him but it may take a while. We are learning what it is like to have a spiritual Fellowship ruled by mercenaries who were supposed to do our bidding. The tone and import of this chapter may seem extreme but just wait until you have had a chance to review and study the subject a while. That this was done by intent rather than ineptitude is sure to impress you.

When some members in world services methodically acquired control of our information systems, it gradually moved towards "NAWS way or the causeway." Any member not according with NAWS corporate policy was treated as a heretic and excommunication was accomplished by simply ignoring the member in the paperwork. The corporate strategy was to take over, eliminate the opposition and **then** revise our writings to cover their tracks. The second task was altering the approved materials which might prove embarrassing after the membership took a longer look. Much like in the book "1984".

Most NA members are unaware of the disparity between the 12 Concepts of NA versus the AA 12 Concepts. A direct comparison is the only way to see the difference for yourself. The similarity of the Steps and Traditions of NA to those of Alcoholics Anonymous make it easy to suppose the Concepts are very similar. But consider the following comparison:

AA Concept 12

12. General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A. A. Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will

always remain democratic in thought and action.

NA Concept 12

12. In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous our structure should be one of service, never of government.

When the service structure changed removing the 'world representative' from the World Service Conference, the Super Board could be engineered. Our name was now lent to a legal corporation: Narcotics Anonymous World Service, Incorporated. When it suits them, NAWS cites the Traditions. When the will of the Fellowship goes against corporate policy, they cite the Concepts. With our Traditions compromised, the corporation can proceed to appease the big pharmaceutical interests and treatment industry by eroding our stand on total abstinence and justify it all in the name of profits. We have heard big money is a threat to spiritual Fellowships but what can that mean? Exactly how is it a threat?

One member noted:

“My friends have told me that the chaotic Twelve Concepts were a necessary step towards the radical changes in our service structure in the late 1990's. I had trouble understanding just how this is so because I must be the earliest member of NA to read, digest and study the AA 12 Concepts at the request of the NA World Service Conference. From the beginning I found the NA concepts so poorly written and spiritually distasteful it was hard for me to take them seriously. I was sort of lonely in my view point but that's the way it is when you study. I am a former member of the World Service Board of Trustees and have always believed in group conscience. I mean group conscience is an instance of divine will. Like you can't beat it, betray it or get around it because the people know, they somehow find out..

“Several times in the 1990's I built myself up to a real positive level. Then I sat down to see if maybe just changing a few words would help make the NA Twelve Concepts read better. Each time, I found the experience just horrible. Like the one about "right of redress." For one thing, who the heck do you know who uses language like that? In my experience, the same lynch mob that hanged you on Friday, will hang you again next week, if only to avoid the possibility- of admitting they made a mistake.

“Several of the Concepts contain sentences that are arbitrary misrepresentations.

The best example of this is the one with the line about the 12 Steps were meant to guide our personal recovery; the 12 Traditions to guide our groups but the 12 Concepts were meant to guide our service structure. Either it is a flagrant joke or most people don't realize the implicit attack on our 12 Traditions. It is probably the most gross and obscene attack on the 12 Traditions of NA that has ever occurred. I know this may seem kind of shocking to some readers but maybe someday you will take a look at the AA 12 Concepts and it will dawn on you just how massively we as a Fellowship have been duped.”

Abuse of surrender and trust among the members of Narcotics Anonymous carries its own penalty: loss of conscious contact and growing shame and guilt. I believe all people have an internal witness that monitors their personal behavior. When we go against our internal values too far, we begin to punish ourselves with self-destructiveness. The Fellowship has endless options to retain their recovery and find ways to go on. But those who abuse the spirit of NA will punish themselves, even if they do not wind up in court for malfeasance.

Our Spiritual Condition depends on our Mental State - for NA to reverse the dwindling meeting count we need to build up our positive energy and begin to erode the negativity. Those who perpetrate the things that result in negativity, will deny their complicity and attempt to put the blame on members who raise the questions about their policies and actions. NA must be strong against outside influences. This should go without saying, yet there is no mention of this that I know of in NAWS, Inc. publications. Despite the marketeering of big pharmaceutical companies to push drug replacement involving habit forming drugs, the whole subject is dismissed as an outside issue. If doctors decided a good stiff drink now and then would help an alcoholic, would AA members regard it as an outside issue?

Poor thinking is like using. Power is a strong drug, triggering chemical reactions in the body similar to drugs that give a person a temporary sense of power and energy. It is scientifically known that the human body has its own drugs like serotonin and endorphins which can be triggered by moods, anger, extreme selfishness, fear and other personal states. These natural drug releases that can be minimized or eliminated by spiritual principles. This is one of the factors in the 'hey, look at me' behavior. It is an easy trap for an addict struggling with recovery to fall into.

Our Twelve Traditions grant us the right to create service boards and committees and when they become too burdensome or expensive, we can un-create them as well. I'm not saying this is our only option but it is certainly an important thing to know. The AA 12

Concepts give their General Service Conference the right and ability to order resignations and restructuring of their General Service Office should that ever become necessary. Is this true of the NA 12 Concepts? No. Also, it would probably spin off into a Fellowship civil war. The answer would seem to be in education and progressive changes. Certainly there have been valiant efforts to assemble and make available factual material on our history so that members can become more informed. If you do not know where we have been and what we have tried, it is impossible to know where we are or where to go from here.

The Twelve Concepts are the greatest violation of our Twelve Traditions ever. Take a fresh look. Highlight the lines to go against, or conflict with one or more of our Twelve Traditions. When they were being composed, some grateful, loving, and caring members on an ad-hoc committee worked hard to build something good for NA. Then someone else came in and after the project was taken from the members working on it, and they put in a line or two, here and there. You can tell. Some of the sentences are forced and don't fit the flow. It would be a good project for someone to try and locate the lines that were added before the Fellowship got to see them. The line about the Concepts being written to guide our service structure is the killer. It takes the protections afforded by the Twelve Traditions and moves the structure under the Concepts. Of course, the Traditions still apply in all cases but it is a lawyer thing. The membership's voice was throttled.

The best examples of this are contained in the document *In Times of Illness*. Now, an effort is underway to deceive the Fellowship into voting away our Second and Ninth Traditions. Of course the group conscience system was dismantled long ago, leaving only the vestiges of our old service structure. For those of you new to this information and perspective, the original service structure gave every member a vote, built the World Service Conference and spread NA all over the planet earth. Being in on things was very attractive to addicts seeking recovery. It is immoral to still their voice.

IN TIMES OF ILLNESS

The original version is fairly good and useful. Somehow, the new revised forty-seven page NAWS document says,

"Some members have found that they were fully capable of fulfilling their service commitments while taking medication to treat an illness or injury, while others have made the choice to step down. This is a deeply personal decision.

"We will want to consider what is best for both the fellowship and ourselves." Pg

18 In Times of Illness Pamphlet (ITOI)

This statement completely negates our clean time requirements outlined in all our previous Service Manuals. It refers to ALL Levels of service. Quite a sweeping statement for a NA piece of approved literature. Doctors and other educated readers of ITOI (pronounced: e-toy) will conclude with a shake of their head that NA is basically a clap-trap street gang.

The bulk of the material reads like a college student learning thematic structure wrote it and got a 'C' on the test. I doubt many members of NA are aware of just how far the revised ITOI goes to undermine the principle of total abstinence and misrepresent our magnificent Fellowship. It was sent out in the WSC Conference Agenda Report! But you know, members don't read the CAR like they used to. If a mistake has been made, the Fellowship has a duty, not just a right, a duty to correct it. It is the duty of the Conference to get the word out to the regions, areas, groups and members, It takes a lot of work to do this but from my own experience, I know it can be done. We did it with volunteers and no financial support so we sure can do it now with the money we have coming in and with new technology like the Internet.

Fifty years of miracles down the tube. Sound a little dramatic? If the indications in the recent NAWS, Incorporated book "*In Times of Illness*" is any indication, some of us may have to tell our newcomers that certain books are just not accurate. Is that a pleasant way of saying it? Like, it is OK to use some drugs, just watch it. That's not like saying, "Now you have power over your addiction and can use small amounts of certain addictive drugs that have severe withdrawal side effects safely." How far down this road can you go without stumbling into the conclusion that NA just isn't NA anymore?

What Triggered NA Growth?

And why does this kind of problem exist in the first place? The writers of the Basic Text were all asked to say a prayer, "God, free me of self-will and ego and give me the strength and guidance to do your footwork." I believe this prayer changed the nature of NA. Each member experienced a degree of transformation wherein they felt appreciated, their self-worth rose to a level of effective comfort, and their personal growth and development was restored. Not only could they write, they could do other things as well.

After they wrote the Basic Text, as members steeped in the Twelve Steps of recovery as well as the spiritual Twelve Traditions, they went home and started meetings. Ohio went

from none in 1980 to four the first year, forty the next year, eighty the year after that, a hundred and twenty the next year and on and on. The program of Narcotics Anonymous was enhanced by the experience of writing its Basic Text and there were more informed addicts seeking recovery than ever before. Changes in our service structure in 1990's closed the door on group conscience as it had existed during our great expansion.

We addicts depend on learning to advance our lives by discovering and adding to the building blocks we know so far. It has been obvious for thirty years that something odd is taking place in our Fellowship. First of all, we got no fiscal support during the writing of the Basic Text. Our proudest old-timer, Jimmy K., refused to even allow the World Literature Committee writing the Basic Text to utilize the portion of the White Booklet, *Another Look*, verbatim in one of the newly written chapters. And this was in a review form, not a final: a review piece to gather input from the Fellowship. No reason to block its inclusion in the Basic Text Review form except it might not be to his personal liking. Basically, this sent a very clear message that all was not well in the NA community. To be distrusted in the very midst of writing the Fellowship's long awaited book spoke reams about why it had not yet been written. Well, that's a personal thing. But the Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*, is a Fellowship thing. So maybe God's Will was done despite the good intentions of the Literature Committee. The material in the Informational Pamphlet *Another Look* was left out of the Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*.

The reason for writing this all out is there is a peculiar species of presumption that if it isn't written, then it really didn't happen. Our membership deserves to know. So, we the Lit Committee members and significant supporters have been accused of locking Jimmy out of his World Service Office when really it was his own distrust beginning with the denial of permission to include *Another Look* that locked him out. Not coming in to work and picking up his new door key may also be a factor. Huffing off and presuming he was locked out may be yet another. We'll never really know. And that no one will speak allows the lie to tumble forward endlessly in time with no other means of resolution but to tell the truth. Only a fear-based person would be afraid to tell the truth. It doesn't hurt his reputation or diminish his magnificent contributions, but it is childish to imagine the collective "Fellowship" as uncaring and ungrateful. These people were very wide awake when all this happened and everyone I was in touch with was saddened and embarrassed.

We found out later that the whole thing happened because the guy who was supposed to tell Jimmy a new WSO manager had been chosen by the WSC just couldn't bring himself to tell him. He was close to Jimmy and very responsible and his emotional

loyalty to Jimmy prevented him from heading off the terrible misunderstanding that ensued. Also, the notion of an ungrateful Fellowship seems to be the brain child of Bill Beck, who admitted as much just prior to his death a few years ago. Mr. Beck probably meant well somehow - he did a lot of good in his life for addicts seeking recovery. So, while a few may know these things, it is not exactly common knowledge. So, when it comes time to honor the old-timer, those who know only the misleading rumor will think, "Oh, we're supposed to be ungrateful." Actually, Jimmy K is regarded with respect and affection and people don't give much credence to the rumors. This applies to other areas of our Fellowship and specifically the matter at hand. Again, shrouding these things in a veil of secrecy serves no one.

The 2007 CAR describes the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in the United States as "flattened." What an odd choice of words. It seems to mean that NA stopped growing at twenty-seven thousand meetings. This is seventeen years after WSO demanded an inventory to 'find out what the Fellowship expected of world services.' It is also about ten years after the creation of the Super Board. And this was published in the 2007 CAR report. A quick check revealed the number of US NA meetings dropped in 2008 to 25,000 meetings and stayed at 25,000 meetings in 2009.

The rapid growth of our fellowship after the release of the Basic Text from 1979 to 1989 versus the "flattening" of it now, indicates there is a problem. One strong possibility is by strangling the group conscience process, altering the service structure and writing strangely worded new 'literature' is clearly sending a message to anyone caring to listen.

One member shares:

"I have been careful to make clear when I speak to large groups that no one is complaining about the secretaries, the shipping department or any other WSO employees. Just the incredible 'agree to disagree' line from the telephone inquiries and the general management by the NAWS, Inc. corporation. If world services were still known for friendliness and transparency, this letter would be pointless. It is not our wish to defame or heap scorn or ridicule on those who are already having a rough time trying to steer the NA ship. Perhaps that is the purpose behind the Second Tradition. No small group of people can ever expect to satisfy the needs and methods of the many. But where are our WSC and RSC leaders in this storm and why aren't they asking for help?"

Asking for money is not asking for help. It is like, "We blew what you sent in last year, so we need you to buckle down and support our corporate maneuvers financially so everything can work out swell." It is starting to look like the national government and our

wonderful US financial corporations! What an unwieldy model to emulate.

As someone who got clean on the first NA service structure, *the NA Tree*, witnessed and participated in writing the next several versions, including the Green Service Manual where the sections Member, Group, Area and Region were approved, I have seen the service structure work. But the rule is simplicity and consistency, not complexity and exceptional special cases. I think the time has come for the Fellowship to take time to seriously consider stopping the encroachment of an outside issue corporation that has taken over NA. NA is a spiritual Fellowship and therefore our members go through considerable trouble to stay apprised of our growth and changes. Things go good when members pull together. An increasing number of members take issue with the way NAWS, Inc. and some staff members overrun their Second Tradition boundaries.

But the most important information will always be the how and why of spiritual living. There is a vast difference between the person who uses anger to fire their enthusiasm vs. and a person who disagrees and tries to work towards a point of remedy. There must be a hundred thousand NA members out there who have the knowledge and information awaiting an opportunity to help make it better. There are probably twice that number who know better and refuse to do anything because they are bogged down in fear and resentment. Certainly those who hide out in other fellowships do nothing to help. As others have shared, AA never had another program to run to!

While this may be taken as a negative observation, it just puts those who care in a wonderful perspective. They carry forward the first addicts who had the gumption and temerity to step out on faith and help the program take her first painful steps. We in NA have never gotten anything easy. We generally proceed by making every mistake in the book! If anything at all works, we move through that of necessity.

There is nothing new in all this. There has always been a war between the spiritual and the worldly with the same old questions being puzzled out again and again. There is a new saying - it is not what you have, it is who you have. And that includes the person in the mirror. In the past we have not been on good terms with ourselves and now we can move on. But recovery is not about making a little progress and then helplessly sliding back into the same old patterns of me and mine. The more I learn about you and yours, the less afraid I am and the more I can enjoy the peace in my life.

Outside Audience

Most, if not all, members who get tired of fighting NAWWS, Inc. find it easier to go to Alcoholics Anonymous. Rumors for over thirty years have it that AA is filling up with displeased and unhappy NA members who love the NA program but hate the politics. Many other members stay in the rooms of NA but refuse to get involved with service again. Why is this? There are NA watchers in business, medicine, law and government as well as media and other 12 Step programs. Certainly our families are another big audience.

Adjudicating the Baby Blue Federal Court case, Judge Louis Pollock stated formally that we had become divided among ourselves and lost touch with our primary purpose. Later the same day the trial began on January 1, 1990, lawyers hired by WSO arranged a meeting in their offices and had me sit next to George H. who represented the WSO in court. George sat beside me with his head in his hands for quite some time. This was underscored by the fact that there were no chairs left by the time George came and the senior attorney glanced at the tableau and got a chair from the adjacent room and placed it beside me, seating George where he thought it might do some good.

I was a witness that the writers of the Basic Text didn't want money or personal recognition. Without a named author, a vacuum was created that power hungry people were drawn into like flies. Character assassination campaigns raged for decades with baseless accusations whispered like inside trader knowledge. There is a saying from AA that mentions 'contempt prior to investigation.'

As the gulf widened between the volunteer service workers who built up NA from scratch through active involvement in the newly formed NA World Service Conference we learn the vocabulary of deceit. First comes the misinformation and disinformation. One involves omission of important facts, the other deliberate lies. Then 'inappropriate' was a way of being politely damning. After that the strange word used by court room attorneys was learned: dissembling. Dissembling involves the careful presentation of facts which only support the client's side of the questions about what really brought about the case at hand. So, very far from simple 'contempt,' you enter the land of deep and deliberate personal attack, character assassination, black listing. There are many shades of deceit. All this takes the addict seeking recovery far from the subjects of complete, creative freedom and worthy spiritual goals.

A rumor that I was paid \$25,000 apparently swept through the members active in world services for years and probably to this day. While untrue, what a juicy little lie to impress people with your knowledge of what 'really happened.' We can feel for an individual so bereft of personal accomplishment as to need such a ploy to bolster their flagging egos.

Our tolerance and compassion does not exempt them from the self-destructiveness that they bring on themselves from deliberate wrongdoing. I didn't hear the rumor until around 1995. I finally heard the rumor and said 'publicly' that the only time I recall \$25,000 coming up was one time Bob Stone asked me how much money I had spent over the years working on the Basic Text. I responded by taking into account lost time from work, travel, food, incidental expenses, the work came to about \$25,000. Neither I, nor any of the others writers wanted money. We all agreed we wanted our people to stop dying, live better lives and the proceeds to shower down on the Fellowship forever. And that is still what we want.

Where the subject of money comes up, it is a plain fact that profits derived from Basic Text sales has provided the bulk of funds for world services since 1983. By distancing the book writers, and the dominant group in world services failing to face the facts, a strange situation has slowly developed. The writers are treated as loose cannons because they have their remembrances of their actual experience as a reference point. These remembrances coincide with the written records, minutes, correspondences and other eyewitness accounts. All of us wanted our people to stop dying and have a chance at living a better life. But this does not make the corporation look good, so it is given the hush treatment.

If we ever get this mess straightened out, we need to hold workshops to make our members aware of the prices paid by their predecessors for the freedom and liberty they enjoy. We as a Fellowship have never gotten anything easily and yet, it has been our experience that once we become willing, a loving God steps in and takes care of things for us. But only after we become willing.

Along with distancing the writers, the corporation has continuously operated so as to distance themselves from the general Fellowship as well. Changing the service structure in the 1990's is the most graphic example of this. It is well known the drug replacement and court ordered attendance are the two big threats to the growth and continuance of NA today. Drug replacement was invented as a way to switch addicts over from street drugs to government and medicine approved pharmaceuticals that have the same withdrawal effects as heroin and morphine.

Many NA members today belong to the "No Matter What Club" that espouses the belief in total abstinence by declaring "I will not use no matter what happens." This is a potent counter to the idea that total abstinence is an obsolete notion in the modern world. Except in unusual medical cases, the human body is pretty well equipped to function on food, water, rest and exercise by millions of years of evolution and biology.

NA Today

It is unpleasant to bring some of these matters up. Certainly great steps were taken by the Fellowship from 1975 when the NA Tree was approved by the NA Board of Trustees to date - but I hardly credit the corporation with a positive role. I have heard from so many how they worked hard for years only to be summarily dismissed. And many told stories of being in session and uttering the words, "Oh, I don't think we have a mandate to do that. We need Fellowship direction on this." And then being dismissed even when they have been elected at the annual WSC for a one year term. To make this clear, they were told that there had been budget cuts and there just was no way the Office had funds to fly them to LA and put them up in the Airtel Plaza. Their real reason was they had broken the unspoken rules and suggested that they were acting beyond their directives from the WSC. Bringing this up would be pointless if the errors had been admitted and discontinued. Instead, they have accelerated into greater miscarriages and violations of trust. Changing our service structure to allow for a 'Super Board' was never an idea brought forth from the Fellowship. We were weakened by the change. It made NA less attractive to diminish or remove the members voice. Others WSC participants simply sided with the Fellowship often enough to be tagged as 'not a team player' and whoosh, they were gone. I was contacted by a few of these but surely there were many more. I tried to give them hope as best I could but I will never forget their feelings of violation and betrayal.

The world has seen wonders worked against unfair and impossible odds by non-violence. Every time a person changes their mind, they change their life. Every time we sit in an audience and have the feeling, "Yea, I felt that way" in response to a spiritual speaker, the world changes just a little bit. If in reflection, we find truth in the words we heard spoken, that change becomes potent, able to make things better. In today's NA, we not only have cd's and audio cassettes of inspirational speakers, we have dvd's, transcripts and free downloads.

Court ordered attendance becomes a problem when groups are overwhelmed with people who don't want to be there. We, as the informed membership of NA, have to open discussion on these topics and formulate real solutions if we are to survive.

We have a real need to address and evaluate these things if we are to go forward without

endless repetition of one power group displacing another in an endless series. Power groups are the problem, not the Fellowship or even necessarily the policies - however flawed they may be. Sweeping real problems and issues under the carpet makes it hard to walk on the carpet. Easy things become difficult or even impossible to resolve when you can't ask questions or talk openly.

Commendations are in order for WSO shipping, clerical and all the nuts and bolts of running a world office. I have nothing but praise for them. But I learned important lessons when I administrated portions of the World Service Conference as WSC Literature Chair for two years, WSC vice-chair, an ad-hoc committee for convention guidelines and an ad-hoc on service structures of other Fellowships, especially Alcoholics Anonymous. Then five years on the WS Board of Trustees. I saw how hard they worked on policy to keep things spiritual in AA. I learned if you trust people, they trust you. In a spiritual organization, praise your workers, and pass over lightly those unable to fulfill their tasks at present or ask for help. All Glory to God because belief in a loving God is what keeps us all going.

Guile, trickery, even second-level agendas undercut and undermine our spiritual Fellowship. Yeah, we have faith and we know everything is going to work out but in our case especially, the wrongdoers will 'do' themselves in before anyone else even knows. So, our service is to the wrongdoers also. They probably don't like what they are doing anyway. They have just been sold a bill of goods - that's where you pay the price but don't get anything but the bill! - and can see no alternative. Some stay in the arena of world services to keep things from getting any worse. What seems to be happening in world services is overspending and running out of money. So somebody got the bright idea that there were tons of money being spent out in our service structure on regional and zonal events and that if that could be changed, the money saved could be sent to NAWS, Inc. That is typically the way corporations think. So, they set out to change our service structure for the financial rewards. The involvement and interface with the membership was deemed unimportant.

When I and many others serviced the Fellowship in the 1980's, we were a Fellowship-wide network of honest, loyal and enthusiastic recovering addicts with no goals but to increase our common welfare. The level of commitment was total. Businesses play by different rules! If you don't understand this, take an old-timer aside and ask them to explain it to you so that you can understand. Our volunteer service workers need to be praised for their courage and dedication through some pretty rough years. I still wince at the many courageous members who spent years hoping it would get better.

But real service engages the joy of giving and that is a precious part of our NA program. It is up to the few to awaken the many. They may need a little time to absorb the information withheld by those in power over them. The strength of propaganda is so absolute that without care and concern, you can literally have brother fighting brother and sister fighting sister to the death over differences in what they have been told. If we are to be winners in the struggle, we certainly don't want to look back on wreckage and more needless suffering.

Chuck Skinner, one of the most devoted and honorable of our long time trusted servants once shared with me when talking about some of the changes in the early 1990's. I asked him if I hadn't put my concerns clearly enough or if they just couldn't hear me. He was my sponsor at the time and we were close. He said, and I will never forget, "No, Bo. We heard you and understood what you were saying. We just couldn't believe something like this could happen in NA." Honestly, I can not recall just what the item was but I guess the principle is the important thing. We have to be up-front and clear if our communications are to be effective. The important thing is that because they could not believe 'something like this could happen in NA' a serious mistake was made. I think the matter at hand was the hiring of a professional writer to work on some of our literature. Chuck is among the best and most loyal, dedicated members of NA ever and yet he was man enough to admit a mistake!

If all goes well in an organization, there are no complaints and no suspicions. Unwarranted suspicions and accusations may be written off to a lack of faith and surrender or simple projection. But after a long time, it becomes obvious that the problems may be real and the simplest explanations that fit the facts are the first to be considered. The trust of the newcomer is underscored by their belief if something were really going wrong, the old-timers would speak up. But what if the old-timers were afraid they might be subjected to a smear campaign like so many others? What if the old-timers had never been prepared to face such an internal crisis? Hey, how about, "It's not my problem." or "I'll let someone else more qualified solve this. I'm outta here! I didn't sign on for this."

We in NA are modern people faced with modern problems. There is always a chance that those entrusted with our world services will be lured into roles and decisions that once begun are hard to rescind. We have to do our own housekeeping. Conflicts of interest are nothing new. Many of those who designed our service structure did not see certain problems as inevitable or that safeguards could so easily be removed when training didn't prepare trusted servants to deal with corporate tactics. Remember, the

corp has all year to plan these things and many trusted servants at the world level have only a few years to prepare.

A Closing Note

What makes NA great is the ability to reach right into the hearts of people with terrible living problems and help them sort out their difficulties on a daily basis. Many of the problems seem large but turn out to be a fear of remembered pain or embarrassment. Others have injured their physical systems and it takes time for their bodies to repair themselves. All have reached a point of desperation and despair sufficient to qualify for NA membership. They need hope to start on the road to recovery. We need to clear up the contention within our Fellowship. The only hope I see is learning to deal with the avoidable problems that come up when a bunch like us get together and learn to communicate honestly.

Here are some questions you might want to get answers for if there is any chance your position will have an effect on NAWS, Inc.'s move to tour the country making a case for the changes they think are important.

- 1. Where did NAWS get their direction to make these changes? Who is in charge here?*
- 2. Since they authored the last changes in our service structure that didn't work out, why would they think they are knowledgeable?*
- 3. Do you think efficiency or the will of the Fellowship is most important?*
- 4. Do you think we should model NA after a church style organization or a business for profit?*
- 5. Is it more important to make money or keep NA spiritual?*
- 6. How much does it cost to operate NA WS, Inc. ?*
- 7. What do we as a Fellowship get out of it?*
- 8. Do we want a corporation writing our literature?*
- 9. As an NA trusted servant, who are you responsible to?*

There is nothing new in all this. There has always been a war between the spiritual and the worldly with the same old questions being puzzled out again and again. There is a new saying - it is not what you have, it is who you have. And that includes the person in the mirror. In the past we have not been on good terms with ourselves and now we can move on. But recovery is not about making a little progress and then helplessly sliding back into the same old patterns of me and mine. The more I learn about you and yours, the less afraid I am and the more I can enjoy the peace in my life.

Addicts in recovery are entirely capable of constructing elaborate fantasies wired together by resentments, unmade amends, plain poor thinking and hearsay all to justify their next usage. Knowing doesn't make any difference if a person doesn't make any changes. Many, many fall into the trap of trying to understand the program before they will take the corrective actions found in the Twelve Steps of NA. A moments hesitation turns into the rest of our life. This is all the result of trying to solve our addiction with our mental powers alone. Some people believe recovery is really a miracle that comes from a divine source. Recovery is where you wake up one day to discover you are becoming a different person, someone you feel good about and can accept. Pain and guilt fall away and we are guided by a gentle optimism. Making recovery hard, complicated and elusive is not our way.

Exploding the illusion that world services has got it together would be a cruel thing without giving a vision of equal or greater value to us. In our case, we have the spiritual Fellowship of NA with decades of massive clean time to evaluate our history and explore our future history in writing and dialogues. NA means "Never Alone." Let's call it *the Narcotics Anonymous Continuum*. The corporate model is so limited and controlling that the best synopsis I can think of is, "Who would want to be King of the Gypsies?" The joke here of course is that gypsies do as they please, whatever the times, and whatever the weather, and so do we. Almost anyone may be king, as long as they follow the chosen trail and they don't disturb the gypsies too much. Our services were much more effective when they were more open and friendly.

It is very much our shared responsibility to clean up our own backyard. No one else can be expected to care about, or understand, our problems. Our members need to know they are taken seriously and respected for their recovery, their help to others, and their ability to grow spiritually, despite our horrific disease. In fact, our program of recovery is centered around learning to take personal responsibility for our lives and our associations. We simply cannot leave it to someone else. Whether we listen to members who care and share their hard-won experience with us or we listen to slick politicians, is very much up to us. If we allow ourselves to be gulled into voting for propositions we don't agree with or understand, then we are letting everyone down, starting with ourselves.

Out of three hundred members at the Houston World Convention in 1978, over half were from California. They gave us their best and we from the East and Mid-West tried to improve on that in our programs back home! Trusting in the Fellowship was crucial to our evolution. Trust must first be earned, then carefully maintained. If those watching

find errors, it is important to make corrections lest the errors endure and eat away the bonds of trust that hold us together. If the watchful are dismissed as uninformed or disaffected, lasting injury occurs. Some things just have to be dealt with before we can go forward. Keeping people in the dark and not trusting the Fellowship with the truth is no solution. Our people can deal with the truth but don't leave it to the addicts imagination!

Don't you recognize your old friend Fear? Fear is used to control people. Sometimes the risks are real. Usually, they are completely impossible in the field of reality. In effect, a good actor can read their lines so effectively that you really expect Frankenstein to walk into the room! As long as the effect is there and it pushes people in the right direction, fear seems a useful tool. Now, of course, we are not talking about spiritual principles here. We are talking about raw and terrifying money, property and prestige that our Twelve Traditions try to warn us about.

A really moral person lives so that they don't make trouble for others and they help when they can. They avoid consciously participating in things that are hard on people, deliberately hurtful or unfair. When you switch tracks over to business it is all too easy to hide behind one of the saddest phrases that can be uttered in a spiritual program, "Don't give me that God stuff!" Business as usual is not spiritual. Manipulating people with fear and untruths is not NA. If you are illiterate or mentally challenged, don't worry about it. If you have a working brain and anything like some education and allow yourself to participate in things that are wrong, shame on you.

Be it known that NA was conceived of to be a program of total abstinence for addicts seeking recovery. Not a stepping stone to something else, not a informal treatment program, not a pawn in a game designed to get everyone to take at least some drugs. Addicts like this have no where else to go, so there is a measure of cruelty for those who are attempting to change NA. We don't want it changed. We have built new lives here. It is our program - outsiders have no business creeping into positions of trust and re-writing total abstinence into oblivion. Narcotics Anonymous involves drug-free recovery.

I regard myself and my friends as the correct ones because we produce much of what we call our common welfare. Not just slogans and rash ideas, I mean copyrighted material that accounts for most of the cash flow in NA and its service boards. This is group service, personal service, volunteer structural service and written materials based on group conscience processes. We are not egotistical or self-centered about this because we made prayers of selflessness and scrupulously attended to the will of the NA Fellowship in person and in writing. The strength of this statement lies in the popularity and

universal appeal of our writings.

Somehow, through interesting mental acrobatics, our opposition seems to characterize us as unbusinesslike and non-professional and therefore unrealistic. Perhaps they are jealous or fear we will take over some day. This is all pretty far-fetched and may be based on the fears of persons either dead or neutralized by health and age. You can't catch them expressing this out loud but it is obvious in the way that many of us - as a group - are left out of the goings and comings of world services at present. If a member of the corp thinks of it, it might be good. If a regular member thinks of it, well, it is probably not good. Where did this blatant disregard of any other member of NA for any reason come from?

Much time has passed since the 1990's when the radical changes in our service structure have resulted in making the regional levels of service an extension of the NAWS, Inc. management system. In other words, the small California based NAWS, Inc. controls the direction and content of all world service publications. Therefore those publications represent only the corporate point of view. The more free Fellowship writing we have, the better for us all. We are not a branch of the Federal Government or Homeland Security nor do we condone replacing some drugs with others and calling it recovery.

Fortunately for everyone, there are now many alternate sources of publication making a free Fellowship system of announcements, discussions and concerns available to anyone with a computer, a friend who has one, or access to a library. Printouts make it easy to propagate the Fellowship service system. All real Fellowship services are conducted at the regional level and above that at the area and group level. The lowest pits of service are under the illusion that they have control, so don't upset them by letting on that they have somehow missed the boat.

In light of their lack of vision, we will be kind and gracious to them, though they have been less than kind and gracious to we the members of NA to whom they are directly responsible. Instead of meanness of spirit and vindictiveness, let humor and freely available information be our weapons to diminish the moguls of NA to their proper role of carrying out the will of the Fellowship. Or they can leave, resign or keep on until the Fellowship rises up and impeaches them.

Sure all the workers at WSO could get a raise if Drug Court/Homeland Security took over administration of NA. We do not care. We don't want that. If our road is made a little bumpy by those unwilling or unable to credit our history with consistency and carefully formulated intention, we can weather that storm. But the idea that a few

bureaucrats can tamper with our proven program is not only absurd, it is illegal.

From what we are seeing right now, it is time to re-visit the entire subject. We don't need a corporation to control us or run NA like a business. It is not a top-down system. It is a democratic organization that comes together and decides its future directions and choices based firmly on the lessons learned in the past. Right now, our bureaucrats are trying their dead level best to pretend that past and those issues have not yet be debated and decided. They have no right to do that. It is conceivable that they are so uninformed that they don't even realize what they are doing. But we do and it is very proper for us to rise up as a Fellowship and determine our future go or along the pathways of what got us clean in the first place.

We need to articulate that fear is driving the problems that exist between world service and the Fellowship. It seems to me that fear that the Fellowship will do something stupid or irrational compels the corp to keep making bad moves justified by poor thinking, thinking they are protecting us from ourselves.

I mean, NAWs needs help, so they come up with some new distraction. Changing the service structure figuring the regional level of service doesn't need to exist seems to be the latest thing NAWs want to change. Understand, this may be how they see things. After all, when was the last Regional motion carried at the WSC? Ah, they plan on getting more money saved by cutting the expenses incurred by regional service. If it passes, I believe it will back fire. There will be less money for them because even in the short run the more distance there is, the less the Fellowship will feel obliged to help the NAWs, Incorporated.

The real injury in all this is that the world of recovery, of peace, of light and living close to the will of our higher power gets second billing to the 'busy-ness.' After a time, the spiritual life becomes a dream again as money, property and prestige take over our conscious mind again. Recovery is about a person finding themselves - of remembering, or discovering, why they were born in the first place. Of learning how to live beyond the reach of obsession and compulsion. It may be that our mood swings, our jumping from place to place, person to person is a reflection of knowing something better is possible if we can just find it.

It is not improper for us to take up for ourselves! Indeed, if we do not, who will? We have come a long way in a relatively short time. But we still have a long way to go if we are to endure as a spiritual Fellowship. Our society is as yet poorly formed and many do not even acknowledge our society, because they have not been taught about it. But the NA Society involves and includes all who call themselves members. All are important

and none are expendable.

You can't clear away darkness with more darkness. Hate begets only more hate. It takes light and love to dispel darkness and hate. Learning and faith are what helps us with fear. There are members working hard to bring information on our NA history to you through the internet and in written forms. There are still plenty of eyewitnesses around to speak at workshops and gatherings. The more you learn, the less power goes to fear and confusion.

Part of my problem is I know what I know but am coming to realize that not everyone reads and studies like I do. I realize I don't read everything either and that makes holes in my viewpoints and proposed solutions. This is why I believe in "open-participatory" democratic processes. If there is an important point being missed, someone will catch it and the trick is to thank that person, not punish that person!

I believe we are slowly climbing the hill towards structural competence and can hope for better to come. But I remain adamant about giving broad powers to a tiny little, non-representative board with no accountability and no elective power to constitute that board. The NA Continuum is a better model because it takes in everything, right now, as is and as it will be, whatever changes occur.

Anytime you get misquoted and tagged by adversaries - there is some value in having stated your positions in writing available where people can get it, no matter how long it takes! What we hold in common is real and it is precious but it fades when there is contention and other goals are put before it. It is not weakness, it is the same as driving a car. As long as the steering mechanism is directed by the Twelve Steps towards something special, something careful and magical: divine loving and caring. The way is easy and all things fall into place as if planned. Allow your vehicle to swerve a little off the road, too much or too little, and you can quickly lose sight of your goal, the goal that feeds you energy, hope, enthusiasm and fall back into despair. Surrender and the power of positive expectation are great to keep our spirits up!

Even after years clean, an addict can relapse and die using. You cannot buy, sell, bottle or meter out what we hold in common. That's why we cannot lend our name. If and when and where we do, our name becomes something else: a product, an item, a corporate possession. Should we pay for the rain?

We are faced with a crisis wherein our beloved WSO and its outgrowth corporation NAWS, Inc., have decided to take over NA. It is evident from their actions that they have

created a sort of virtual reality where what they know, think and feel is real and everything else is conjecture. Those of us who have been around long enough to know better are relegated to the status of trouble makers and resentful old-timers out of touch with the 'new reality' of NA today. We'll get to that. For the sake of inclusion, this document will be added to by as many members as can come up with something not yet expressed.

There are many so brain-washed they will be unable to read this material in its entirety. But to the faithful reader, I would say that the reason they are angry is because they are afraid, afraid they will have to do something - what? All it takes is a little study and good humor and we have all the people needed to change things for the better. They are right there, sitting beside you. They have been waiting for you to give them the go ahead, restore order and uphold the Twelve Traditions! We have proved we can be surrendered and faithful. Now let's show what we can do when we have had enough. If you don't agree we have had enough, just wait, more is on the way.

In recovery, faith progressively replaces fear. Fear and fear-based thinking is the basis for the disease of addiction. Not trusting the Fellowship has long been a problem for many - outsiders and members alike. Unless you have studied bureaucracy as a subject, you have no way of understanding that corporations make decisions based on insufficient information. Information costs time and money and no decision is based on much more than 51% accurate information. For example, a corp needs to know if there is enough business in an area to construct a parking deck. They only need to know how many people drive to work and how many parking spaces are available. That's it. To spend any more money to find out more than these statistics before making a decision is a waste of funds and cuts into profits from the proposed project. Project, research, decide. Repeat the process. Corporations do fail but they try to prosper. When they fail, it is generally because their information was incomplete or inaccurate. They may fear failure but they have faith in their data. Faith-based decisions function around the idea that we check all the visible data but feel assurance within ourselves that a loving ultimate authority will be taking care of everything and everyone as well.

Now, the trouble comes in where the fear-based people will usually not admit their lack of faith. Maybe they just trust the mental perceptions more than the spiritual perceptions. So they proceed to take control of things but yet have a gnawing fear that they are missing something. And that something is known somehow to the faith-based folks who won't tell them what's going on. So, the faith-based folk are deliberately withholding information to insure the failure of the fear-based. So, faith somehow gets interpolated into something akin to sabotage. And yet the fear-based cling even more tightly to their

schemes of control and their perceived sanity, while the faith-based folk look on in wonderment at the lack of surrender.

One simple truth is that when you are relaxed and clear-headed, you can see and hear better. While the fear-based folk will never admit the role played by the faith people, the faith people credit the earnestness and grinding efforts of the fearful. They have been there. And for all the wisdom and relief to be found in the 12 Steps of NA, fear will never loosen its grip in those who cannot surrender.

What is at stake here? It is the right to express and embody message or hope in written, audio and any other media so that the spirit of NA rings true. This is not a corporate possession to be used like a meat axe chopping away at those who oppose their policies. If we are to be firm and correct, we must be diligent in our studies to come at a truth we can live with, a truth that co-insides with our principles of Honesty, Open-mindedness and a Willingness to try.

The important, basic rule about policy changes is this: unless you understand and agree with every single word, do not vote in favor of a motion, however persuasive and engaging a presenter may be. You do not buy a car or even a burger this way if the information is not completely correct and understandable, the only proper thing to do is vote it down. That's what it means to have a vote. Getting a crowd of voting "delegates" whipped up, hungry, tired or confused and then calling for the vote is a dirty trick. If this is attempted, get up and leave the room to destroy quorum.

If you are unhappy with the effects to the motion later on, you may hear them say, "Well, you voted for it!" They'll say it whether you hear it or not. We are not little children and we have not come this far as a Fellowship without learning from our mistakes. Admission of error is a positive thing here in NA! We get new lives by correcting our mistakes.

Our recommendation is to pray and ask for strength and guidance. Don't stop your ears and close your eyes in hopes the car won't run off the road. Please take charge. Higher Power always has a plan that is beyond what we can see. But it is good to have the Fellowship waking up a little after all these years.

Loud voices demonstrate lack of faith and a desire to control. No one can trick God - that's why faith works. It is something inside people that comes out when they really understand what's happening. We learn to win by surrendering where we are powerless and stepping out on faith when the Spirit moves us. Everyone in the world is on a

learning curve and no one can help where on that learning curve they are. It is up to each of us to find people we can learn from and those we can help up. This is the great process that separates us from the other life on the planet. This learning is always reflected in the general welfare of both ourselves and all those around us. It is what makes the world full of hope and wonder when there is plenty of hopelessness and despair.

And what is available for us mortals on the planet? One of the upsides of being a dope addict is living outside the system and being able to see beyond what normal people see. We have incredible sensitivity to right and wrong. Betrayal of trust and dishonorable acts make us feel dirty and guilty and that may trigger our self-destructiveness. Living in the light may hurt our eyes in the beginning. After working the first Nine Steps, we learn to still the mind and relax the body to the point of being able to recall, or surface, our dreams. By spending time thinking about our dreams we realize ways for those dreams to come true. Loud voices and worldly concerns distract us but we return to dream realization and get results. Many of us suffer in recovery because we can't figure out what to do when nobody is chasing us! Peace un-prayed for can be mistaken for boredom. Most people walk through life with a tightness in their shoulders. Stress is a common denominator for many health issues. Getting past our fearful nature into the earnest consideration of a loving higher power can lead us to begin trusting on a whole new level. We lay down the weapons that may have served us in the past and seek the grace of our higher power to shake off the acts which were born of our despair and desperation. We renew our friendships and amend our broken ties to humanity to enter fully into the new life. Inventory, prayer and meditation keep us on the path and allow our deadened spirits to find some worthy task to give meaning and focus to our lives.

The more we learn through science about the power of the mind to contain thoughts, the more amazing an individual mind becomes. Get two minds working on a common cause and their minds hold much more. Take ten thousand minds and the energy becomes incredible. And we are at least a hundred thousand addicts strong: that is what yields group conscience when it is tapped. And it is just a glimmer of what a loving God holds in store for us.

Narcotics Anonymous is people, pure and simple. Forgetting this, we fall prey to various distortions. If it is a mental construct, it can be defeated. If it is a product, it can be marginalized. If it is a proposition, it can be broken. People aspiring to do better and rediscover lost dreams that can now become reality. Each person who makes a daily decision to pay attention and find something they can do to help, they act on their better nature. It builds up and those who come to tear it down are confused when the hope

springs up elsewhere and they hurry there to make safe their fragile mentality and avoid their surrender to the Ultimate Authority.

More than anything this writing is to give voice to the unheard miracle workers of NA who breathe life into the aspirations and dreams of a better life at the various important opportunities that dot our history. May the dreams and miracles keep coming along with the people who will say yes to the challenge and pick up the flame when those who carry it fall. Remember to listen to the whispers, not the loud voices.

"If you remain silent, the stones will talk."

- *Without the King*, movie on Swaziland

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TESTIMONIALS

From Nevada, USA

Read NA in Crisis and it's nice to see what we're going through put into words. Just want to know what to do about it. My recovery was formed on the group conscience process that ran through everything before these concepts came into being. I tried running a meeting using the old service structure and trying to stay disconnected from WSO. However, it became apparent that people seem to believe we have to do what WSO says and not the other way around. When I would tell people we didn't want to be a part of the service structure -which also meant not being in their meeting directories -I had "well meaning" people put our meeting in the directory anyway.

You could tell immediately when this would happen by the new influx of people coming in to tear apart the meeting. I tried this three times and finally gave up. Addicts are self centered people by nature anyway - so helping them to understand why this affects them is next to impossible because well let's face it - there's a whole generation of addicts raised under the new service structure that are every bit self will run riot and there's just so many more of them that addicts like us come off sounding like some crazy person raised by wolves.

My recovery has suffered under this new service structure. My only solution I see is to move back east where there's more groups now formed under the old service structure and well frankly where there's more like me. But finances play a part and I don't have

the money to move right now. Each time I think I can move something comes up and I can't. Being in Nevada is like being in quicksand - I keep trying to get out but I can't.

Nor am I in CA where I might have an impact on WSO either. So what does an addict like me who is between the devil and the deep blue sea do? We can distribute things like NA in Crisis -but honestly I don't think you're going to get a lot of people to read it. Out of those who do - how many are going to understand it unless they know what it was like before?

I've been around long enough to know the difference between how an addict acts while not taking any medications vs. while taking legally prescribed medications. I know that an addict may not be "acting out" or in a relapse while on prescribed medication. But I also know that the way they perceive the world and the way they interact with the world is different when on these prescribed medications.

I've been through enough surgeries to know that I myself am not "myself for about 90 days after a surgery. So I understand why an addict should not be holding certain service positions while under the influence of anything. But we have huge numbers of addicts who have been raised on shows like A&E's "Intervention" and other shows who seem to be based in the concept that our disease lies in the drugs and not in us. But that's because of all these treatment centers who put addicts on a shopping list of medications now and call that "getting them clean".

I started putting together a continuing course for drug counselors on how to treat people coming out of sex work who are also trying to get clean. I've been contacting the schools and programs that teach the drug counselors out there what they know. I was pretty shocked to see that nothing is being taught on this subject. I was even more shocked to see that nothing is being taught about the concept of "drug free" recovery. There is a huge list of classes on things like "dual diagnosis" and basically how to get someone off street drugs and onto pharmaceutical drugs though. But nothing on the concept of an addict getting through treatment without drugs of any kind.

So we have crop after crop of counselors going out there and populating the drug treatment field - who aren't being taught this either in a home group (that concept seems to have died now also), or in school.

From Kathmandu, Nepal:

There are people all over this world dying of our disease, and, believe it or not, we are truly the only people who can really help them. You and I have been given, through

illness - through suffering - and through disease, a talent for helping other human beings like ourselves. Let's never forget that.

Wilmington NC USA:.

My main interest from this whole NAWS new IP deal has been the realm of self-medication (those who still doctor shop) and drug replacement "therapy".

Personally, I am not on any meds... Back when I had six years clean and my appendix burst, I held out as long as I could and cried when they administered morphine for the pain finally. After surgery, I only used the pain prescription for two days out of the prescribed months worth. (My personal belief is that, if you enjoy the feeling pain meds bring - you haven't surrendered yet.. I hate feeling that way, and want it to end ASAP.)

My experience with psychiatrist prescribed drugs, is limited to what I have seen in some others. Right now, I am dating someone, who, without those drugs, would most likely kill herself or I'd end up killing her.(not very PC of me to say, I know.. .but honesty is sometimes harsh.)

Her drug regime is very different than someone else I know...that person self medicates, takes this or that to get up or down depending on how they feel at the moment, etc.. .her scrips do not seem like any of the type we used to "pill pop"... but his are.

What goes on is between their doctors, higher power, and conscious. Her I consider clean; she doesn't take anything past what is prescribed, she doesn't enjoy taking them, and hates the fact that she needs to.

Him: I don't consider clean. He lies to doctors, takes what he wants when he wants it, hoards pills, etc...all the old behavior.

Drug replacement therapy and clean time? Sorry... .you ain't clean until you get off the drugs you're taking to get off your drugs. Period. NAWS can say what it wants because Hazelton needs to sell more literature, and it is going to cause a shit storm in NA. It's just the excuse addicts are looking for. It will never be the message I carry.. .nor would I ever knowingly vote someone into a position of service who is on it. I will share it loudly at meetings no matter whose feelings it hurts.

To those who have found alternative methods with their psych stuff...! commend you.

To those who have fully discussed it with their doctors, attempt to take the minimal amount of psych stuff and do not enjoy having to take them -1 commend you.

To those who look for excuses to get pills, those who are still using drug replacement therapies.. .keep coming back, maybe one day you will understand what being clean is.

To those who think new NAWs literature is the greatest thing since apple pie: You're either an ostrich, a mushroom, too new to tell the difference or junking for a paid position further down/up the service chain. The former need to open your eyes and read some original literature...the latter need to go f*** yourselves.

* Suggestions "

DVD's - personal and group readings from the material with some discussion.

IP's of sections drawn from this material - some people can only read short items.

WWW - Webpage breaking all this document into individual webpages for ease of reading and comprehension.