Excerpts on the Service System Project from *NAWS News*, 2008-2013

June 2008

SERVICE SYSTEM

This project will begin with developing a vision statement for all NA services. It will create options and frame discussions about improvements to our service structure in this cycle. This is a two-conference-cycle project.

The topic "Our Freedom, Our Responsibility" follows from the IDT "Our Service System." One of the things we learned during this past cycle is that we are still struggling with the spirit of our service work—we continue to struggle with apathy and a lack of a sense of commitment and responsibility. Of course, "Our Freedom, Our Responsibility" was also the theme for the WSC and is the theme for the 2008–2010 conference cycle. We hope that this IDT will help us look more closely at our responsibilities and the freedoms we gain from them.

At the conference, the IDT session on "Our Freedom, Our Responsibility" focused on both the individual and fellowshipwide application of these principles. We began by breaking down the word "responsibility," realizing that at its base it simply means "the ability to respond." Individual members had an opportunity to share about their experiences in learning how to take personal responsibility and how that led to personal freedoms.

This became one of the most "hands-on" sessions, as some tables were asked to construct a model house, while others were given a prefabricated model. Participants were asked to consider the difference between attending (simply being present) and participating (being involved with others and co creating). Participating in our service allows us to build a better fellowship. The session's activity seemed to emphasize that we value what we are responsible for creating. When we are responsible for creating the freedoms we have, we cherish them, and in doing so we strengthen them for ourselves and for those to whom we pass them.

November 2008

SERVICE SYSTEM

The Service System Workgroup has also met twice. This project is charged with developing a vision for all NA service efforts and framing recommendations for improvements to our service delivery.
Our biggest challenge is how to engage the fellowship in a meaningful discussion that might lead to a reframing of our service efforts and, ultimately, the creation of tools that will help us deliver services more effectively—either a revision or rewriting of *A Guide to Local Services* and/or the production of other tools. Our strategic plan explains that the project will "be rooted in an analysis of the success factors that work across our service structure, as well as allow for flexibility in meeting unique local needs."

January 2009

We spent a full day in a facilitated discussion focused on our Service System project. We have heard throughout the years at workshops what is lacking: an attitude of giving back to a fellowship that saved our lives. This missing attitude manifests in disunity, lack of trusted servants, and declining financial resources and cooperation. The Service System project aims to help stem the tide of service disparities by working with our fellowship and the board.

SERVICE SYSTEM

We quickly realized this cycle that although we asked for your support in initiating this project, we had not done a very good job of communicating our expectations for both this project and the workgroup. We spent the second day of our meeting backing up a bit and trying to better define the scope of what we expected with this project. We knew we had challenges that reached past simply the service structure, which is why we called this the Service System project. We discussed the components of a system—the structure, process, people, and resources; all focused toward a common vision. We are fortunate in NA; there is a commonly held understanding of why we do what we do. Whether we call it the primary purpose as expressed in our traditions (to carry the message to the addict who still suffers) or we describe it in more detail as in the NAWS Vision Statement, we all mean the same thing. We have been hearing through workshops and fellowship discussions for the past many years about our collective difficulties in keeping that focus and being effective in our service efforts. The repercussions of that collective inability are many, but we hear the same things repeated throughout the world. We were reminded about what we said in the 2008 *Conference Agenda Report* about this discussion topic in the fellowship:

> *Repeatedly over the course of these four years, we have heard that we need better communication, less duplication of efforts, more training, and more effective delegation, among many other responses. We need to find a way to make service more attractive, more accessible, and more supportive. Interestingly enough, these are all observations that were repeatedly made about world services in the 1980s and early 1990s. Many of you will remember that we ceased all but essential services to devote our attention to an inventory, and the results of that inventory led to a restructuring of world services, including the adoption of our vision statement in 1996 and the creation of the World Board in 1998. Almost immediately, we began to see improvements, and we continued to suggest smaller improvements to the structure (e.g., reducing the size of the board). While, of course, things aren't perfect in world services today, they are greatly improved on every front.*

> *But while we made huge structural changes to world services, little has changed on the local level. We're not suggesting that local service bodies should cease all but essential services for a years-long inventory process, but we are thinking that we need to reexamine our service structure in a broad sense. Perhaps some of our chronic problems mentioned above can be alleviated through restructuring local services in some way.*

After much discussion, we defined the overarching question for this project as "How can we build a system of service within NA that is driven by unity of purpose, and that allows for flexibility in meeting the diverse service needs and goals of our NA communities?" We know this project and the issue of WSC seating definitely overlap and that we were correct in asking for two conference cycles to discuss both of these issues. We agreed that a common vision is essential to guide all our service efforts, and the workgroup will be asked to refine the NAWS Vision Statement so that it speaks to all areas of NA service. Toward the end of the day, we began the process of deciding what our next steps are and who should undertake them. We will continue shaping this project and assigning responsibilities at our next meeting. We want to work in tandem with the workgroup to ensure a continual communication flow, a shared responsibility, and clearly defined parameters for the project.

April 2009

We spent a full day in a facilitated discussion focused on our Service System project. The Service System Workgroup members and staff participated with us in this planning day which was a follow-up from our January meeting. This session was a brainstorming of ideals and ideas. Our service delivery structure has

been functioning for years in a prescribed manner that may not be the best way to meet our collective needs or carry the message. To consider what needs to be accomplished to improve the service system as a whole—who do we need to reach and what vehicles may help provide the services—is a huge undertaking. Together, we laid the directional groundwork and refined the focus for this project. We followed up with the Service System Workgroup for a half day on Saturday discussing issues related to regional seating.

SERVICE SYSTEM

One of the interesting "firsts" at our April meeting was a joint meeting with the Service System Workgroup. Most of the time, coordination between the board and workgroups of the board takes place through communication relayed by the board member(s) on the workgroup and NAWS staff. This past board meeting was the first time we ever met together with a workgroup and worked side-by-side to forge some of the foundations of a project.

The Service System Workgroup is charged with framing models for more effective service delivery, and the nature of that task is potentially so large and fundamental that we thought it best for us to meet together to discuss some of the basics. We are all in agreement that we can't afford to limit our thinking this early on in terms of what a functional and effective service system might look like. The scale of change this project may end up proposing is potentially as broad sweeping on a local level as the changes in 1998 on a world level that brought about the restructuring of world services.

On Thursday we spent the day together talking about some of the fundamental "givens" of the service system—what needs must an effective service system satisfy, for instance. Friday the workgroup, independent of the board, continued that line of thinking, developing ideas about the functions and characteristics of a healthy service system and what variables it has to consider. This kind of groundwork will help us build a template to use when creating and evaluating potential models for service delivery. Saturday afternoon, we talked about WSC seating, a separate but related issue that may be affected by the work of the Service System project. Our discussions were primarily focused on the philosophical issues and underlying principles of regional representation at the WSC. We refrained from discussing the details of a new seating process. It would seem that once we are focused on the principles of the issue, a process would be most easily developed. One thing is clear: There are many facets to the issue, with no easy answers, and resolution will take the efforts of all of us. We encourage your input as we move forward in our discussions.

July 2009

We spent time reviewing the progress and direction of the Service System project; we offered suggestions for a global vision statement—one that both encompasses our entire service system and inspires. We continued our discussions on WSC seating and on the purpose of the conference, which will help us in our consideration of seating. We recognize that seating is a small part of a larger issue, namely, the purpose of the conference and what is to be accomplished during the WSC.

SERVICE SYSTEM

Following our joint meeting with the Service System Workgroup in April, where we agreed on the fundamental needs that an effective service system must meet, the workgroup continued to put together foundational pieces for the project. They have discussed, for instance, the many variables that must be considered when framing options for service delivery and the necessary roles that would need to be filled in an effective service system. In all of our discussions we are trying to follow the maxim that "form follows function," so we are being very thorough in these first steps putting together these basic building blocks. In that spirit, one of the first tasks of the Service System Workgroup was to create a common vision for NA service efforts. After some discussion, we determined as a board that the best

approach was to simply widen the focus of the existing NAWS Vision Statement to make it a Narcotics Anonymous Service System Vision. This proposed revision will be included in the *CAR* scheduled for release in November of this year.

As of this writing, the workgroup is putting together a "template" that lists all of the elements that must be included in a model of the service system. In addition to this we are looking at the ways in which both NA service bodies and external organizations are arranged so as to gather as many ideas as possible. We are still asking NA members to send us any innovative ideas that are working in their local services, so if you are doing something new to answer an old need, please let us know about it. Your experience may be invaluable in NA communities around the world. We will use all of this information at our next meeting to begin discussing alternative models for service delivery in NA. We have determined not to limit our thinking at this point, but instead are keeping our minds open to any ideas that seem effective. We look forward to sharing our thoughts at the conference and beyond.

WSC SEATING UPDATE

Our discussions on WSC seating continued from our last meeting, where we talked about the underlying philosophy and principles of regional representation at the conference. At our June meeting we touched on some of the larger, foundational elements: the purpose of the WSC; the decision-making process; how NAWS receives direction; training, development, learning, and sharing experience; the "magic" of attending the conference; and the impact on a local fellowship of WSC representation.

In the *NAWS News* following the April board meeting we wrote, "It would seem that once we are focused on the principles of the issue, a process would be most easily developed. One thing is clear: There are many facets to the issue, with no easy answers, and resolution will take the efforts of all of us." Well, we were certainly feeling that sentiment at this meeting. The broad topics we covered in June began to outline our ideas about the "what" of the ideal WSC. Our hope is to discuss the purpose of the conference and how it satisfies the needs both of world services and of local NA communities. These discussions will in turn help us to tackle questions about the size and composition of the WSC, which may be more like the "how" of the issue. It proved to be quite a challenge to encompass an issue of this size in the short time we had available at this board meeting, however.

Seating is an issue that is closely linked to the work of the Service System project. The work of that project definitely overlaps with the issues related to seating, which in turn may be affected by the possibility of changes to our system. We will meet together with the Service System Workgroup again in January, and we hope at that time to be further along in our discussion. We are finding the question of seating to be more formidable than we had first hoped, but we remain committed to engaging delegates in structured discussions at the 2010 WSC.

November 2009

SERVICE SYSTEM

At their July meeting, the Service System Workgroup began to consider options for alternative system models, focusing first on the structural component. To guide this effort, the workgroup reviewed a list of the major challenges in our current system, identified from several years of discussion at workshops around the world, as well our own conversations as a board. Having created several possible structural ideas, the workgroup then means-tested these options to see how well they may perform to meet our service delivery needs. Means testing is a structured process of reviewing ideas and refining them; the workgroup will continue exploring possibilities and will consider options for further elements of the system in the upcoming months.

During our October board meeting, we devoted agenda time to familiarize ourselves with the workgroup's ideas by undertaking a shortened version of the means-testing process. Following this

process, we offered input to the workgroup for their upcoming meeting when the workgroup will begin to revise these structural elements.

We are planning another joint meeting with the workgroup in January to further develop the options we will be talking about with delegates at WSC 2010. We also spent some time exploring ideas for seating at the WSC, and will use our joint meeting with the workgroup to see if our ideas for the WSC and the service system work together. Ideally, the seating at the WSC and the service system ought to mesh; they are interdependent. When we were considering seating, we reviewed and explored the purpose of the World Service Conference – why we all come together biennially and what we hope to accomplish at the conference. Coupled with the purpose is a consideration of cost for this event. These costs have substantially increased since we have moved to full delegate funding, and one of the goals in considering seating is to ensure that the conference makes best use of fellowship funds. Additional information for discussion and deliberation will be forthcoming in the January *NAWS News* and the March *Conference Report*. In the meantime, we encourage you to read the essays in The *Conference Agenda Report* pertaining to the service system and NAWS resources; these will contain more information on both these topics.

At our October meeting, we also finalized the vision statement that we will be offering for approval through the *CAR* at the 2010 conference. To briefly recap, we refined the existing NAWS Vision Statement with an aim to speak to service in NA as a whole, rather than just the service efforts of NAWS. Our hope is that "A Vision for NA Service" will serve as a unifying ideal for all of us to strive toward and will guide us in all our efforts to further carry our message of recovery.

February 2010

"Our Vision, Our Future," the theme for the 2010 WSC, will be the focus of WSC sessions and the 2010–2012 conference cycle. The service system and WSC seating sessions will showcase options for a more efficient, effective service delivery system and a focused, purposeful worldwide conference. We spent a half day walking through a facilitated discussion of the work of the service system workgroup, and a full day of discourse, deliberation, and consensus-based outcomes with the service system and WSC seating options, facilitated by Jim DeLizia.

SERVICE SYSTEM

Following our input at the October board meeting, the workgroup revised their ideas for the structural component of a service system. One of the main goals of our joint meeting in January was to combine the workgroup's ideas about structure with our ideas about seating so that we could have a unified set of structural options to discuss at the conference. We reviewed the workgroup's new ideas, and their beginning thoughts on the processes we use to deliver services. We also reviewed the structural ideas for seating options at the WSC, and discussed how these interfaced with the service system models. Together with the workgroup, we talked through ideas until we constructed two basic models of the structure, each of which has a series of options to make it more flexible and adaptable. In a general sense, we feel strongly that form should follow function, and want to find a way to ensure that communities have the ability to create a structure that works best for them.

All of our ideas throughout this process have been guided by four key principles. We feel the most effective service system will be:
- Purpose-driven: Each of the proposed service system units should answer a specific need or group of needs, and the responsibilities of each unit should be clearly defined and understood.
- Group-focused: Each model offers ideas for better aiding groups in their efforts to carry our message.

- Defined by geopolitical boundaries: Following established geopolitical boundaries for at least some of our service bodies would allow us to better interface with professional and legislative bodies, making it easier for professionals and the general public to find and communicate with us.
- Flexible: Each model offers ideas for extra service bodies to answer specific needs, but does not mandate their existence if they are not needed.

We know some of these ideas are a radical departure for many regions. We will be offering more complete information for review and discussion on both WSC seating and our service system in the *Conference Report*. It is important that we be able to talk together at the conference—delegates and the board—because these are big ideas. In order to make any useful changes to our service system and conference seating practices, we'll have to have extensive conversations throughout the upcoming cycle. The conference will be the beginning of that dialogue. We are looking forward to hearing from conference participants about whether we are on the right track with our ideas and how you think they might be practically implemented.

June 2010

At the conference, we presented service system models with new structural ideas; we have been using a service model designed in the 1980s whose effectiveness and lack of flexibility may have outlived itself. We will be developing session material to discuss these service system proposals fellowshipwide.

SERVICE SYSTEM & WSC SEATING

Another topic you will hear plenty about this cycle is the service system. This conference marked the beginning of what will become a fellowshipwide discussion on alternative models for service system delivery. Several sessions of the conference were devoted to presenting and gathering input on proposals the board is offering with new structural models for service delivery. We heard a lot of things from delegates ranging from excitement about a system that focuses more clearly on the needs of the group to generalized anxiety about change.

We asked conference participants what concerns them and excites them about the proposals and we got a lot of input that the workgroup and board will review at their next meetings. Some of the input points to aspects of the models that simply need clarification—for instance, some participants were concerned that the models add layers of service. In fact, they do not, and so that seems to be an aspect that needs clarification. Other feedback indicates some areas that the board may want to reexamine and perhaps revise. For example, the name "geopolitical" concerned some members. The workgroup will discuss this sort of input and work on possible changes to present to the board. After the board meeting in July, revised materials will be available.

The conference also offered some input that will help frame the fellowshipwide discussion about these concepts and models. Participants were asked, "What challenges do you think we will face in discussing these models with the fellowship? What should we try to stress to show the benefits?" Many delegates expressed anxiety about having to explain these ideas on a local level when they were only just grasping the information themselves. We are trying a number of things to help.

First, we launched a webpage devoted to the project http://www.na.org/?ID=servsys . The first three links on that page are a good "starter kit" for anyone trying to get caught up with the project. There is a link to a two-page essay giving the background of the project and explaining why it was undertaken. There is a one-page update about current work. And there is a formatted version of A Vision for NA Service, adopted at WSC 2010. Along with those pieces, the page has links to a discussion board for the project, as well as downloadable copies of the material distributed for WSC 2010 and material on the project published in previous reports.

The other thing we are starting to plan that will help is a series of United States workshops. We are planning five workshops in the US between mid-August and mid-November at places with concentrated fellowship density. Right now we are thinking of New York, Florida, California, Texas, and a Midwest city like Chicago or Detroit. These workshops will give us a forum where we can talk with members about the ideas presented at the WSC, answer questions, and get input. We will have a revised report, session outlines, and Flash and PowerPoint presentations for delegates and others to use locally to further the discussion. We also want to devise some sort of tool or template to help you provide input more easily.

These workshops would be held in lieu of the two US worldwide workshops we'd normally have and some zonal forum attendance. Obviously we need a strategy to engender fellowshipwide discussion that extends beyond the United States, but we aren't yet sure how to have that international discussion in an economically feasible and practically effective way. We welcome your ideas, and will publish our thoughts in *NAWS News* when we make further plans.

The Service System Workgroup meets at the end of June, jointly with the Executive Committee of the board. The board meets in July and any tools or plans that are produced as a result of those meetings will be posted on the webpage for the project.

November 2010

We held our initial meeting of this conference cycle 29-31 July 2010 in Chatsworth, CA. Our agenda was ambitious, with a focus on the Service System Project. We spent half a day discussing the Service System Project, its timeline, charge, next steps, and what we desire from the workshops. In our second board meeting, 21-23 October 2010, we spent a day and a half refining the session profiles based upon input from three previous workshops. Our goal in all of the workshops we participated in was to gather input, but more importantly to create a common understanding of the proposals in their current form. We see this as the only way to proceed down this path together. More information about the Service System Project and next steps are included in this *NAWS News*.

SERVICE SYSTEM

Much has happened since we last reported in *NAWS News* about the work of the Service System Workgroup. The workgroup met three times since the conference, once with the EC and once with the board as a whole. Information has been revised from what we presented to the conference, a webpage for the project has been launched (www.na.org/servicesystem), and five US workshops and several shorter workshops in other countries were held. Now we are collecting input on the proposals in preparation for revising them again in 2011. Here are some highlights of the ground we've covered and where we expect to be by WSC 2012.

The Executive Committee spent a day with the Service System Workgroup in June to discuss revisions to the service system proposals the board presented to the conference. Many of you (we hope most of you) have seen that revised material by now. We used the input we received from WSC participants to simplify the framing of the proposals. The information is basically the same but we think the revisions make the information easier to understand and to present.

At our joint meeting with the workgroup, we also talked about the areas we felt needed further discussion or where there are questions we have not yet answered. Since that time, many of these answers have begun to come through our more recent work on the processes, people, and resources portions of the service system. We have started talking about planning processes and leadership development processes, for instance. These ideas, together with the input on the current proposal drafts, will get factored into the revisions to the proposals in 2011.

During our July board meeting, we reviewed the revised materials and achieved broad agreement on the changes in the proposals. A revised and reformatted version of the service system proposals report was

mailed to conference participants, posted on the Service System Webpage (www.na.org/servicesystem), and discussed at numerous workshops.

We held five weekend-long US NAWS workshops:

- September 17-19th in Dearborn, Michigan
- September 24-26th in Dallas (Grapevine), Texas
- October 15-17th in Oakland, California
- October 29th-31st in Baltimore, Maryland
- October 29th-31st in Orlando, Florida

We also had sessions about the service system proposals in several places internationally (and California):

- Guadalajara, Mexico: Mexico Occidente Regional Convention
- Israel: European Delegates Meeting
- Culver City, California: Hispanic Area Convention
- Honduras: Honduras Regional Convention
- Chandigarh, Punjab, India: SIRSCONA workshop
- Siliguri, West Bengal, India: NERF workshop
- Toronto (Mississauga), Ontario: Canadian Assembly & CCNA (RD-led)

During our October board meeting, we spent a day with the workgroup to discuss some of what we heard at those workshops as well as some of the workgroup's initial ideas about processes. This wasn't a decision-making meeting for us, just a chance to meet jointly and begin talking about some of the ways the proposals could be improved after the end of the year. We will meet with the Service System Workgroup again in January. At that time, we'll have received all of the input from local workshops and begin making decisions about revisions to the proposals.

We have tried to help those of you who are holding locally based workshops. We released a session outline and PowerPoint for a 90-minute to two-hour workshop. Both of these are available on the Service System Webpage: www.na.org/servicesystem. We encourage everyone to send us any input from local workshops or from interested members. We've posted an online form to make it as easy as possible to send us input, but we will take it in whatever form it arrives: online form, email, fax, or post. We are grateful for your efforts and your ideas.

Many of you have expressed anxiety about the time frame involved in communicating these ideas, getting input, and revising the proposals. We want to reassure you that 31 December does not represent the end for input on this project or even on the ideas contained in the current proposals. All of the input we've heard so far indicates that the revisions to the proposals will most likely involve refining and adding to these ideas, not rejecting them in their entirety and issuing a radically different set of proposals. The process of developing these ideas is more of an evolution than a revolution, and if you are putting on a local workshop late in the year, you need not worry that you will be talking about information that will become irrelevant in a short period of time. Further, if you are gathering local input, that input is useful even if it comes after the deadline and can't be factored into this set of revisions. Work on a local level will not be wasted even if it's at or after the end of the year.

We've talked within the board and with the workgroup about the time table for this project and what seems realistic to discuss and decide upon at the 2012 World Service Conference. Most likely, what we will be publishing in the 2012 *Conference Agenda Report,* for discussion and decision at the conference, is a set of "agreements in principle," not unlike the resolutions voted on at the 1996 conference that led to the restructuring of world services. Pending the conference's decision on those agreements, we expect to need a project for some sort of transition group to lead us into the next stage in this process of change. We are not trying to rush this process, and we continue to welcome your input.

We realize with our current direction for "agreements in principle" that may be offered at WSC 2012, the WSC seating component of the service system is involved. We have been functioning under the premise of coming to WSC 2012 with a proposal for seating. The discussions at WSC 2010 seemed pretty clear that people are not in a rush and want adequate time for discussions. To separate seating from an entire service system is not practical and will detract from our goal of developing a *system* for effective service provision. We are taking this opportunity to inform you that we will be engaging conference participants in a discussion of what should happen when the current moratorium expires at the close of WSC 2012. The current moratorium states we will only consider regions not resulting from a regional split for seating at the conference.

If you haven't yet visited the Service System Webpage, we hope you will. In addition to the proposal report, the page also contains:
- A two-page essay giving the background of the project
- A formatted version of A Vision for NA Service, adopted at WSC 2010
- The discussion board for the project
- Downloadable copies of the material distributed for WSC 2010
- Material on the project published in previous reports
- Session profiles and PowerPoints from the workshops in the US
- An abbreviated session profile and PowerPoints for shorter local workshops
- An online form to use to give input on the proposals

Most of these materials are now also posted in Spanish.

February 2011

We spent two days focused on the Service System Project; one day we reviewed and discussed fellowship input on the proposals and day two was facilitated by Jim Delizia who helped us refine the revised proposals. Our service system workgroup partners were with us for these two days. In this *NAWS News,* there is a synopsis of points and the website is a great source of current and past information about this project. We hope that you take the time to visit the service system area on the website, www.na.org/servicesystem.

SERVICE SYSTEM

As many of you (perhaps most of you) already know, we met jointly with the Service System workgroup again in January. We reviewed the input we'd received on the first draft proposals and talked about our impressions from the service system workshops and sessions we have facilitated and attended.

> **Input on the First Draft Proposals**
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> We received input from:
>
> 63 individuals, 6 groups, 14 ASCs, 27 RSCs, 18 workshops (not including the 5 NAWS US workshops)
>
> 10 countries: Canada (3 provinces), Finland, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, South Africa, Sweden, US (30 states), the UK, and Venezuela.

As we eblasted to delegates, we made some decisions about how to revise the proposals—both how to refine some of the existing ideas about structure and what to add at this stage about process. Certainly, it is clear that this continues to be a work-in-progress. We are currently working on those revisions and expect to have them out sometime in March. In the meantime, if you have not read the February 2011 update yet, we have posted it online, and it offers a brief explanation of what we expect those changes to be: www.na.org/servicesystem. These "second draft" proposals should form the basis of conversations that will help shape the material in the *Conference Agenda Report*. At this point, we

expect to include a set of "agreements in principle" for decision by the conference. We also expect to be presenting a project plan for some sort of transition workgroup (this project plan would be included in the Conference Approval Track mailing along with the other project plans).

We continue to welcome your ideas and input about the service structure-what kind of changes can we make to more effectively carry the message? One of the areas we are specifically looking for more information about is shared services. If you have had experience working with a successful shared services body of some kind, we'd like to hear from you. We are particularly interested in hearing how you dealt with the potential pitfalls or challenges related to accountability and delegation in a body formed to share services between two ASCs, for instance. Please write to us at worldboard@na.org with your best practices.

Thank you for your help so far in spreading the word about this project, putting on workshops and talking about ideas in your service bodies, sending us input and generally trying to help us move forward in this process of change. Together we can.

August 2011

We spent two days focused on the Service System Project; day one we collaborated on processes for various aspects of the proposed system and day two was facilitated by Jim Delizia, who helped us refine the proposals which we will forward in the *CAR*. Our Service System Workgroup partners were with us for these two days which was bittersweet as this was the last meeting of the workgroup. The workgroup will be communicating by email as we move the proposals forward. In this *NAWS News*, there is a synopsis of points from our meeting, and the website is a great source for current and past information about this project. We hope that you take the time to visit the Service System area on the website, www.na.org/servicesystem.

SERVICE SYSTEM

We met jointly with the Service System Workgroup over two days of our June meeting, with one of these days being facilitated by Jim Delizia. Since our January 2011 meeting, we have released a revised copy of the Service System Proposals document and added a number of resources to the project webpage, including session profiles and PowerPoints for local workshops. These can be found online here: www.na.org/servicesystem. We also put together a session profile and accompanying PowerPoint focused on A Vision for NA Service, an integral part of the earlier stages of the Service System Project. This material can be found online at: http://www.na.org/?ID=IDT-IDT.

We reviewed the fellowship input we received on the proposals since our last meeting, talked about a number of key aspects of the proposals, and began to discuss what material will be in the 2012 *Conference Agenda Report*. We've received a few questions about how long we will be taking input on the proposals, and we want to clarify: In a broad sense, we appreciate input at any point since any changes to how we deliver services need to involve collaborative efforts and the more conversation we can have together, the better. In terms of having a specific effect on the written proposal report, however, input received after the October board meeting is unlikely to effect the third draft proposals because we will need to draft the *CAR* and finalize the third draft proposals shortly after our October meeting.

As we have reported previously, the issues of how groups get their literature, how funds flow through the service system, and how shared services work in a revitalized system are among the things that need further definition in the proposals. These topics were a focus of our discussions in our two day meeting. We also spent time talking about the possible roles of zonal forums, how service body boundaries might be established, and the possible advantages of more effectively coordinating planning cycles across the

system. We expect to offer more material on all these topics in the near future as we move towards a third draft of the proposals for inclusion in the 2012 *CAR*.

We discussed seating issues beyond our January decision to propose seating state, national, or provincial bodies at the WSC, such as what further seating criteria will be needed, and ideas for how to accommodate service provision in both very large and very small states, national or provincial service bodies.

Our other major task was to begin to frame a series of "agreements in principle" which would be included in the 2012 *CAR* and voted on at the 2012 WSC. The third draft proposal report will be included in the *CAR* but provided more as background information for the thinking that led to the agreements in principle. The proposal report itself will not be voted on. The agreements are broader in nature—thus the "principle" part of "agreements in principle." Our belief is that each of these agreements will provide an essential piece of the foundation for the next phase of the project. Because we are proposing a system, really these agreements in principle all work together. In this respect it's almost artificial to separate them into distinct ideas to vote on, but we understand that is the way that these ideas will be workshopped and discussed. After a discussion, we decided that including them as distinct ideas to be voted on separately would be easier for all and would allow someone who agreed with most of the ideas but strongly disagreed with one to register that disagreement. As we reported in January's *NAWS News,* we also expect to offer a project plan to form some sort of transition workgroup as part of the Conference Approval Track material in January.

June saw the last meeting of the Service System Workgroup. We want to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the workgroup members, who have spent three years and countless hours working on this project. One unique aspect of this project is that for the first time we met jointly with a workgroup. We believe that this has been a great success, due in part to the experience and hard work of the workgroup members. Thank you all for your dedication.

We also want to thank all those members who have organized and attended service system workshops throughout our fellowship. Your ongoing participation is an invaluable part of this project.

November 2011

Service System Project: based on the work of this project, the *CAR* will contain eight resolutions for discussion and decision at WSC 2012.

January 2012

SERVICE SYSTEM

We had attended two *CAR* workshops prior to the board meeting and discussed our interactions with members in these workshops along with their issues of concern. We heard three recurring issues.

One thing people asked about was project background – where did this project come from? The Service System Project stemmed from efforts to address what seem to be perennial challenges on a local level. Over the years, we have heard the same concerns with local service delivery from various sources. Worldwide Workshops asked what were the significant issues members faced and apathy was usually the #1 challenge – members did not want to be involved. During the PR Roundtables, professionals from treatment, medical, and judicial fields stated that there were significant challenges with contacting NA in specific locales, often involving the need to contact multiple services bodies. Finally, we had several IDTs focused toward service delivery (Infrastructure, Our Service System, and Leadership, are examples) over the last ten years. Members repeatedly brought up lack of training and mentoring, a lack of trusted servants, negative atmosphere of recovery in service meetings, and ineffective services such as helplines with no one answering the calls. There have been efforts over the years to "patch" some of the "holes"

in the system, but after hearing the same challenges for so long, taking a holistic approach to examining and suggesting improvements to the service system seemed to be the wisest approach to resolving some of these issues. More information about the background of this project can be found at www.na.org/servicesystem.

A second issue which has been voiced at the *CAR* workshops is that of delegation. For one thing, there seems to be a misconception that the Service System Proposals are outlining a system in which groups would no longer be voting on matters for the WSC. There is no intention whatsoever to distance members, and certainly no suggestion to remove a member or group's voting privilege for WSC matters. The proposals are geared toward Consensus Based Decision Making, but this in no way removes the group's ability to vote on proposals/motions/items affecting the WSC. It's worth noting that not every region in NA functions the same way with *CAR* voting; some gather their conscience at workshops or assemblies, some use area voting, and some gather group tallies. *We are not proposing anything that would change those practices.*

Delegation on a local level, on the other hand, may function a bit differently for some communities if the ideas in the Service System Proposals were put into practice. The group support unit is focused toward group issues, and GSU meetings would be held separately from the LSU, which is based upon a planning cycle for local service projects and ongoing services such as H&I. The local service unit, as it's described in the proposals meets quarterly to make decisions and have discussions about planning, prioritizing, and overseeing work. Much of the administrative detail on a local level is delegated to the local service board as well as the project workgroups and committees in the hopes that the LSU meetings can be focused on broader strategic discussions, more deliberate decisions about resources, and oversight of the work being done. In other words, delegating more of the administrative detail ideally would promote groups' participation in decision making, rather than discourage it, as groups are better empowered to make decisions that affect local practices and outcomes.

Thanks to the discussions held at the two *CAR* workshops, we were able to clarify these points on the session profiles and PowerPoints for *CAR* workshops. These third draft proposals, outlines and PowerPoints for local *CAR* workshops can be found at www.na.org/servicesystem.

Finally, the third issue regarding the service system centers on a common theme of questions about the specifics of implementation (e.g., "What will happen to my ASC if…" "What if other ASCs in the region decide…?" "What if my group decides…?" In a sense, these sorts of questions put the "cart before the horse". We are offering resolutions in the *CAR* which move us in a direction that is different from what exists. Until we know whether we have agreement in principle about the broad ideas being proposed, it seems premature to work out the details of a transition to that system. Of course, any effective transition has to rely on unity. We are all in this together. We will be offering a project plan at the conference to accomplish possible next steps with the Service System Project; the concrete details of implementation will be addressed in the transition/implementation aspect of this project.

June 2012

Service System: The Service System resolutions and proposals all garnered support at the WSC. That was very exciting as we are moving to a system of service. Over the next cycle, we will be developing a transition plan and providing details to the broad brush resolutions. We will continue with a web page and we are looking forward to members' input and dialog. This is a 'together we can' project and we hope you will embrace our partnership. At the end of the day, we want A Vision for NA Service to be embraced and brought to life. Updates will be posted online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.
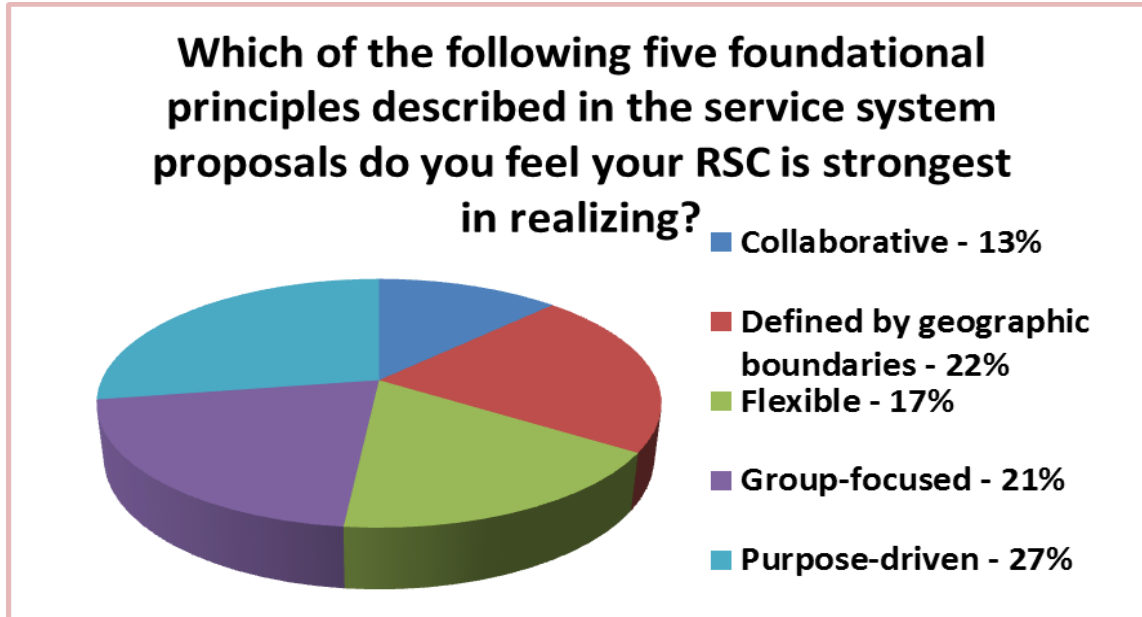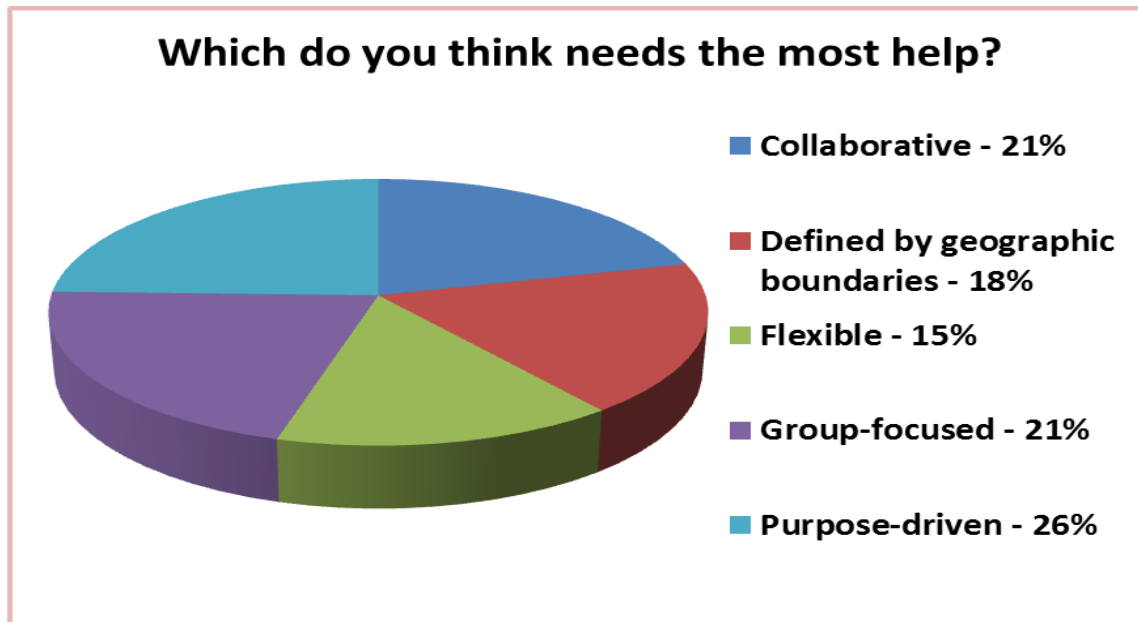
SERVICE SYSTEM

One of the major topics at this conference was the Service System Project. Leading up to the conference, the Service System Project was one of the matters we discussed the most at CAR workshops and zonal forums. We answered many questions—over the phone, via email, and face-to-face. While we have been working on this project for years and done our best to communicate the ideas as broadly as possible, it seemed clear that many members had only just found out about the project when confronted with voting on the resolutions and straw polls in the Conference Agenda Report. Some members were critical, others excited; perhaps most were confused. This project has only served to reinforce what has become almost a mantra at world services: Communication is our number one challenge.

We knew that we needed to have an opportunity at the conference to answer questions about the project and proposals outside of the business sessions—to talk about how we can improve our service delivery without having to debate specific resolutions.

In preparation for that discussion, prior to the conference, we surveyed delegates about some questions related to the service system, questions about the region and areas' effectiveness as well as which of the Service System Project's foundational principles they were strongest in and which seemed to need the most help. We also asked about RCM training and the definition of RD and AD roles. We devoted a session Monday morning, before business, to reviewing the results of this survey and answering questions from delegates and alternates about the project ideas.

The survey results didn't seem to point clearly toward one aspect of service delivery or one foundational principle that needs particular attention above the rest. For instance, purpose-driven was the principle most frequently reported as strong in regions and also the one most often reported as needing the most improvement!

Which of the following five foundational principles described in the service system proposals do you feel your RSC is strongest in realizing?

- Collaborative - 13%
- Defined by geographic boundaries - 22%
- Flexible - 17%
- Group-focused - 21%
- Purpose-driven - 27%

Which do you think needs the most help?

- Collaborative - 21%
- Defined by geographic boundaries - 18%
- Flexible - 15%
- Group-focused - 21%
- Purpose-driven - 26%

It does seem clear that we continue to struggle with some of the same challenges that you have heard us reporting on over the years—only about half of the regions responding had RCM training, and many reported on apathy, poor communication, a lack of planning or collaboration, and rural areas feeling isolated. While many regions and areas report improvements in planning or service delivery, we clearly have a ways to go.

When we opened up the session for questions, one thing that came up repeatedly is that members are struggling to understand the ideas in the proposals. The proposals are complicated and delegates were challenged to present the material to their regions in ways that people could understand. One delegate expressed her concern that the conscience she was carrying might not be truly representative of the way her region feels. Some delegates brought up the need for more training materials, better ideas about implementation, and simpler explanations of and more time to try the ideas being proposed. We will begin discussing how to help answer some of those concerns at our July board meeting.

Of course, as most of you know, this conference wasn't just a chance to discuss the ideas in the Service System proposals. At this conference, participants made some decisions in terms of the projects' future direction. The Service System resolutions and straw polls as well as the project plan for 2012-2014 were voted on at WSC 2012. All of the resolutions as well as the project plan passed, and all of the straw polls had support, but in some instances, the votes were close (see the WSC 2012 Summary of Decisions www.na.org/conference for the vote counts for each item). In particular, Resolutions 7 and 8 and most of the straw polls passed by a simple majority, rather than the two-thirds threshold which would be required to change policy. While it's true that resolutions only require a simple majority because they set a future direction for work rather than calling for specific action at this time, we are aware that at the next conference we will need to reach broader agreement since we will be voting on motions rather than resolutions.

What that means is that we will continue to move forward with the project, but we need to work together—world services, delegates, and interested members—to build consensus around the ideas related to the project.

The project plan passed at the conference explains:

Pending decisions and discussions at WSC 2012, what we hope to present to WSC 2014 is a better description and definition of components of the proposed system as well as a transition plan that describes ways to get from where we are to this new system – one that is accomplished in stages to allow for continuity of services

This project is at the point that to move forward will require partnership and dialogue between the WB and the delegates. To move these ideas forward will require all of us to be informed resources for our members, particularly those who are just beginning to realize that we are actively working to improve our service system.

Our hope is that we can continue to hold people's attention over the course of the cycle ahead because we'll be asking for your help. We speak of partnership and moving forward thus we will need to embrace 'working together'. Clarifying and improving the ideas in the proposals will be important to all. We also recognize the need for developing a clear transition plan that will serve all of us and improve the way we deliver services and our ability to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Field Testing

One of the things we've talked about as important at this stage of the project is "field testing" some of the ideas. We'd like to work closely with a few communities who are willing to put some of the Service System proposal ideas into practice to see how some of the components of the system actually might operate, not just how they look on the drawing board. We know some communities are already forming group forums of some kind, and others are shifting from their established practices as an ASC and adopting some of the aspects of a local service unit as described in the proposals. Still others are talking about what regional reunification might look like.

We would like to be in better communication with the communities who are already trying some of the ideas in the proposals so that we work together on a kind of field test. We will be talking more about this at our July meeting and discussing what tools we can develop and how else we can help some of these local experiments. If you are from a region or area that is trying out some of the ideas proposed by the Service System Project or you are discussing how it might work and you desire to try some of the ideas, we encourage you to contact world services if you haven't already done so and let us know what you are trying and how it is going. We look forward to hearing from you.

WSC SEATING

One aspect of being "in-progress" in terms of the Service System Project is that we continue to be in transition in terms of developing an approach to WSC seating. WSC 2008 adopted a motion that created a moratorium on the consideration of regions resulting from a regional split. Participants at WSC 2012 decided, through straw poll, to continue the spirit of that moratorium for one more cycle. When the body was straw polled about whether they support the board's recommendation to not consider any region for seating at WSC 2014 (not just those regions that didn't result from a split), the body was divided.

In terms of specific seating requests, only one region not resulting from a split applied for seating prior to the 1 April 2011 deadline, the Siberia/Far East Region. As we explained in the seating memo included in the Conference Approval Track material, we were challenged in responding to the request. On the one hand, the experience and circumstances of the region are somewhat extraordinary and having them attend the conference may benefit both the WSC and the region. On the other hand, we are in a transition period in terms of seating and it seems ill-advised to seat any new regions until we gain more clarity on what direction the conference wants to take related to seating. For those reasons, we did not

recommend seating the Siberia/Far East Region. A motion was nonetheless made at the conference to seat the region and it did not pass.

The conference did approve Resolution 8, "To approve in principle: State/national/province boundaries are the primary criterion for seating consideration at the World Service Conference," and the board will work on seating criteria during the cycle ahead. We will report on our discussions in NAWS News and we look forward to hearing your ideas.

PROJECTS FOR 2012-2014

Service System

To move forward with this work will require partnership and dialogue between the World Board and delegates. Being well-informed will help to inform and involve all NA members, especially those who have only recently learned about the project. This cycle will not require a workgroup, but we may utilize focus groups as needed. At WSC 2014, we hope to present a better description and definition of components of the proposed system, as well as a transition plan that describes ways to get from where we are to this new system—one that is accomplished in stages to allow for continuity of services.

THE ROLE OF ZONES

This session was created as a way to encourage discussion about the role of zones and the possibility of collaborating with zones to hold workshops. One aspect of zones that remains fairly consistent for us at NAWS, even as we have found it necessary to greatly reduce our travel budget, is that we continue to make good use of the zonal meetings as an opportunity to interact and communicate with RD teams from many regions in a single setting.

We hope to build on that success in the cycle ahead. With our diminished capacity for holding larger workshops to reach broader portions of the fellowship, we want to explore greater partnerships with zones as a way to reach more local members. During this session at the conference, we asked RD teams to sit with others from their zones and talk about some of these possibilities. Participants were asked to discuss several questions, including "What needs and objectives could NAWS workshops in your zone help to fill?" and "What would your zone be willing to do to help this happen?"

We did our best to give participants from each zone an opportunity to respond, and we collected their worksheets for reference. Ten of the zones who reported back said they wanted more information about the future of our service system, including planning, public relations, fellowship development, and social media/IT. Three shared that they needed translations workshops and/or assistance from NAWS. A couple of the participants stated that multi-zonal workshops may be beneficial and others offered the possibility of helping NAWS to defray costs, looking at alternate venues such as a movie theatre, and communicating with local members about attendance.

While the session generated a lot of positive energy and useful ideas—having larger fellowship-oriented workshops on Friday evening and all day Saturday, for example, and using Sunday for a more formal meeting of the zone—this was really just the beginning of the discussion. At this point, we do not have a concrete suggestion to offer to zones about how we can move forward; we need to continue in the discussion with you about our participation at your zonal meetings. At the time of this writing, we've received an unusually low number of requests for us to travel to zonal meetings. Perhaps, regions are still disseminating conference information and zones will be meeting to discuss how to plan for NAWS participation. The lack of participation requests is of some concern as we are looking forward to working together this cycle. Please send us your thoughts and ideas about workshops, and send us your participation requests.

August 2012

Service System: We are actively soliciting communities who want to test any components of the proposed system – GSUs, LSUs, etc. The more help we can have translating the ideas in the proposals to actual practice on a local level, the easier it will be for us to frame a transition plan to present at WSC 2014. If you are interested in working with us to "field test" the thoughts and ideas please contact worldboard@na.org. This is a "together we can" project and we hope you will help us take these ideas off the drawing board and into real life. Updates will be posted online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.

SERVICE SYSTEM

As most of you (perhaps all of you) already know, all of the resolutions related to the Service System Project passed at WSC 2012 and all of the straw polls were supported, though some by a narrower margin than the 2/3 that a policy motion would require. The conference also approved the plan to continue work on the project for the cycle ahead. At this board meeting, we focused on what that means for us specifically over the course of the next two years. What service system tasks do we need to accomplish before the next conference?

First we talked about the reality that for us, a "two-year" cycle really amounts to a 15-month window to do most of the work from conference to conference. This July was the first meeting of the new board, and we will be approving material for the 2014 *Conference Agenda Report* during the 2013 October meeting. In essence, we have less than a year and a half to get most of the work done to be prepared for the decisions and discussions at the next conference.

With the recognition of time constraints, we earnestly began to map out the road ahead of us. The project plan passed at WSC 2012 explains:

> …what we hope to present to WSC 2014 is a better description and definition of components of the proposed system as well as a transition plan that describes ways to get from where we are to this new system – one that is accomplished in stages to allow for continuity of services.

At this meeting we discussed the need to translate the "theory" of some of the ideas in the proposals to actual "practice" in order to accomplish those goals. We think one of the best ways to do that is to actually field test the ideas described in the service system proposals. We know some communities are already experimenting with implementing parts of the service system proposals, and we are putting out a call for any other communities that may be interested. If you think your community might like to form Group Support Units or implement a Local Service Unit-style planning assembly or try out any of the other ideas in the service system proposals let us know. We'd like to be able to test all of the components of the proposals to whatever degree possible. Of course, forming a group forum for all of the meetings in a neighborhood is a different undertaking than, say, reuniting regions so that they can cover the geographic area of a state. We recognize that, given our short time span and the fact that we are not in the implementation stage of the project, what we are calling "field testing" will vary from place to place and depend on the component we are testing. For instance, we hope to discuss what unifying on a state level might look like with some regions and to gather information from other regions that already span a state and are testing some of the processes like CBDM or planning. It may not be possible, however, to actually field test a regional reunification. We won't know for sure what we can include in a field test until we talk further with the communities involved. Look for more information in *NAWS News* to come.

In the meantime, we will be having further discussions on aspects of the service system proposals that need to be fleshed out or developed in further detail. Our list of topics includes:

- How to meet the needs of border communities as well as communities with particular ethnic language, or cultural considerations
- Literature distribution, fund flow, and costs
- RSOs, other service offices, incorporated bodies, and conventions
- Options for very large or very small state/nation/provinces
- The role of zones in a new system
- WSC seating criteria

Let us know if there's something not on this list that you feel needs further explanation in the service system proposals. We will be devoting part of each board meeting to these discussions. In addition, we know that, in general, we need to explain ideas in simpler language so that the proposals are easier to understand. We've heard you asking for that and we are working on it. Please continue to write or call with any questions or concerns. It feels like it has taken years for us to get a better-than-usual start at informing the fellowship about this project and we'd like to maintain the momentum this cycle.

November 2012

Service System: We have initiated field testing for GSUs and LSUs. If you are trying any aspect of the proposals such as GSU, CDBM, etc. please share your experience with us at worldboard@na.org. The more help we can have translating the ideas in the proposals to actual practice on a local level, the easier it will be for us to frame a transition plan to present at WSC 2014. Updates about the project will be posted online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.

SERVICE SYSTEM

We've covered a lot of ground in the Service System Project since our last *NAWS News*. We have two main focuses for this cycle, to further flesh out the parts of the Service System Proposals that are vague or need definition, and to field test the ideas in the proposals. We've begun work on both of those fronts since our last board meeting. We'll cover some of the highlights briefly here. As always, let us know if you have questions or concerns. We've created an email address dedicated to the project: servicesystem@na.org.

Field Testing

As we mentioned in our recent eblast, we have begun field testing the ideas in the Service System Proposals. The field testing frame posted on the Service System Webpage www.na.org/servicesystem explains the field test in detail. There are a number of communities around the world who are already implementing parts of the Service System Proposals or who are talking about the possibility of doing so soon. Within that broad group, we've selected a number of ASCs to be "core community" field testers. Those communities have agreed to form LSUs and/or GSUs exactly as those bodies are described in the Service System Proposals. They are sending us all of their materials—agendas, guidelines, minutes, tools—and we have agreed to talk with them regularly—at least monthly—and support them however we can. Because of our resource limitations, these core communities are all located in North America. That will make it easier for us to travel, if needed or to bring some members of those communities together for a debriefing session at the close of the field test, if we decide to hold such a meeting.

The number of core communities is relatively small, but we are interested in **any** communities that are field testing or want to field test the ideas in the proposals. Let us know what's happening in your community and how we can help. If you've adapted the ideas in the proposals in some way to make them "fit" better with your local community, let us know. We can learn as much from struggles as we can from easy transitions. All of it can be helpful information when we are drafting a transition plan.

Tools

We are working on developing tools for the field testing. We have posted quite a few tools for the GSUs on the Service System Webpage, and we are working on tools for the LSU as well as a brief CBDM Basics document. Please send us any input you have on those documents or any experience working with them, if you try them out on a local level. We had a great discussion about CBDM at our board meeting and you'll see the results in the CBDM Basics draft. If you're practicing CBDM on a local level, we hope you'll send us your tools or ideas if you haven't already. All of these tools that we are developing for the field test are works in progress, and we expect them to change as we learn more. We welcome your insight and ideas.

Webpage Update

There was a long period leading up to the conference and afterward that the Service System Webpage still had exclusively pre-WSC 2012 information. We've finally updated the page and we are regularly posting new material. In addition to the tools we are drafting for the field test, we have posted a couple of new PowerPoints for local workshops—a "101" session that gives a very brief overview of the Service System Proposals and an update session that explains the project focus for this cycle. We've also posted a document titled "Ongoing Discussions Related to the Service System Proposals" that highlights some of the areas in the proposals we know we need to talk about this cycle. We have posted this document so you know what we plan to discuss in our upcoming board meetings and so that you can give input on any of the topics if you wish. We particularly encourage those involved at the zonal level to send ideas about the role of zones in a revitalized service system.

Seating and Large and Small State, Nation, and Provinces

Among those "ongoing discussions" are the need to develop seating criteria and the related topic of what to suggest for service delivery in particularly large or small states, nations, or provinces where a single service body may not make sense. We began those discussions at this past board meeting, and while we had a very good discussion, we aren't significantly closer to drafting proposed seating criteria or a set of recommendations for large or small SNPs than we were before the meeting. In the end, we determined that these may be discussions we can have more productively if we "uncouple" them from each other. What makes the most sense in terms of a structure that ensures effective service delivery in a very large or small state, nation, or province may not be what makes the most sense in terms of a conference seating policy. We are putting aside the question of conference seating for now and will resume the discussion about state-, nation-, and province-wide service delivery at our next board meeting.

January 2013

Service System: We are continuing to field test GSUs and LSUs. If you are trying any aspect of the proposals such as GSU, CBDM, etc. please share your experience with us at servicesystem@na.org. The more help we can have translating the ideas in the proposals to actual practice on a local level, the easier it will be for us to frame a transition plan to present at WSC 2014. Updates about the project will be posted online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.

Thursday was one of the board meeting days facilitated by Jim DeLizia with a focus toward the Service System Project, specifically the state/nation/province component of the system. We considered local service coordination with its inherent challenges and began to brainstorm about possible approaches for them. We also discussed delegate funding to the World Service Conference and the role of the Alternate Delegate. At our April board meeting, we anticipate reviewing the role of zones in a system of service delivery.

SERVICE SYSTEM

A Look Back …

Sometimes in a three cycle project, we need to look back and see where the project started. Long before a project plan was presented to the World Service Conference, we had service discussion topics each cycle, beginning in 2000 and ranging from Service at the Group Level through Infrastructure. These Issue Discussion Topics echoed the same struggles on a local level: apathy, poor communication, no training for trusted servants, mismanagement of funds, poor atmosphere of recovery in service meetings, and lack of trusted servants to fulfill service delivery. The Service System Project grew out of a need to find new solutions for these recurring problems.

At one time, NA World Services was plagued by systemic issues such as duplication of services, poor communication, and competition for resources. By the early 1990s, service efforts were threatened and overwhelmed which led to the World Services inventory process. From 1993 to 1998 various committees examined what we had and proposed ideas for change. This led to the reformation of the Board of Trustees, the WSO Board of Directors, and the WSC committees into a single World Board; the creation of the World Pool and the Human Resource Panel; a unified budget for all of world services; and the writing of the NAWS Vision Statement (which later formed the basis for A Vision for NA Service*).* Structural changes were coupled with process changes including strategic planning, a project-based work cycle, and the use of consensus based decision making to name a familiar few.

However, the rest of the service structure has never undergone such an in-depth examination of service provision and overhaul. Service delivery on the local level (areas and regions) mirrors ideas presented in *The NA Tree* in 1976. Thirty seven years later, our service delivery at the local level remains the same. We continue to apply the same structural "die model" to a growing diverse global fellowship because it seems to be the only option we have.

The WSC 2008 approved formation of the Service System Project, and the first step was to create A Vision for NA Service which was unanimously approved at WSC 2010. Additionally in the 2008-2010 cycle we looked at our current service delivery and realized we needed to think systemically, not just in terms of structure. Structure is one component piece in a system that also includes members, processes, and resources all working toward our common vision.

At WSC 2010, the Service System Project was reaffirmed for a second cycle by unanimous consent. The 2010-12 Strategic Plan phrased it this way:

"Issue: Service System Revitalization, Objective 4: Transition from a service structure to a service system that is driven by unity in fulfilling our primary purpose and that is flexible in meeting the diverse service needs and goals of NA communities."

Today with the 3rd cycle of this project approved at WSC 2012, we are beginning to consider development of our transition plan. WSC 2012 passed a series of resolutions, and we are testing the "theories" of the proposals by field testing GSUs (Group Service Units) and LSUs (Local Service Units). Sometimes, with a project that spans several conferences which recognizes communication breakdown and change with trusted servants, it is wise to look back before moving forward again.

Now, if you have any questions about how we got here or concerns with how we are moving forward, let us know. We've created an email address dedicated to the project: servicesystem@na.org.

Local Service Units

We continue field testing the ideas in the Service System Proposals. The field testing frame posted on the Service System Webpage www.na.org/servicesystem explains the field test in detail. There are a number of communities around the world who are already implementing parts of the Service System Proposals, often modified in some way, and they are reporting their successes as well as their stumbling

blocks. The "core community" field testers have agreed to form LSUs and/or GSUs exactly as those bodies are described in the Service System Proposals. They are sending us all of their materials—agendas, guidelines, minutes, tools—and we have agreed to talk with them regularly—at least monthly—and support them however we can. Because of our resource limitations, these core communities are all located in North America. Many of the core communities' initial LSU meetings took place following our board meeting yet we did hear from a few on their progress.

The number of core communities is relatively small because that is all we can sustain at this level of support, but we are interested in any communities that are field testing or want to field test the ideas in the proposals. Let us know what's happening in your community and how we can help. If you've adapted the ideas in the proposals in some way to make them "fit" better with your local community, let us know. And keep in mind, we can learn as much from struggles as we can from easy transitions. All of it can be helpful information when we are drafting a transition plan.

In our meeting, we discussed exciting aspects of LSUs and elements that may be confusing and pose challenges. Most of the stumbling blocks seem to be places in the proposals that need better definition or more elaboration. Literature distribution is a good example of one of those aspects that might be confusing; it's something we believed needed better definition in the proposals. Field testing is helping us gather some practical examples of how local communities are dealing with collecting contributions and distributing literature. Some other concerns we identified in our meeting were simplification of tools, collaboration with neighboring areas, syncing planning cycles, and transition training. Equally important was identifying what is exciting in the process. Some of our exciting points were goals produce results, planning for services, empowering all members, attracting members to service through defined projects and tasks, and a more inviting service atmosphere.

www.na.org/servicesystem

We have updated the service system webpage and we regularly post new material. In addition to the tools we are drafting for the field test, we have posted a couple of new PowerPoints for local workshops—a "101" session that gives a very brief overview of the Service System Proposals and an update session that explains the project focus for this cycle. We've also posted a document titled "Ongoing Discussions Related to the Service System Proposals" that highlights some of the areas in the proposals we know we need to talk about this cycle. We have posted this document so you know what we plan to discuss in our upcoming board meetings and so that you can give input on any of the topics if you wish. We particularly encourage those involved at the zonal level to send ideas about the role of zones in a revitalized service system.

State, Nation, and Provinces

We mentioned in the November 2012 *NAWS News* that we were going to separate our discussions about seating criteria from those about service delivery within small and large SNPs where a single service body may not make the best sense. We started our facilitated session with a general question about state/nation/provinces: "How can a SNP effectively perform one of its primary functions—to coordinate local service bodies as needed into an efficient system of service?" We talked in small groups about the challenges SNPs face in filling their roles and identified four general challenge areas:

- communication (internal, external, and ability to link communities together),
- logistics (planning, coordination, scheduling),
- mindset/attitude (willingness to collaborate, reallocate tasks, trust in value of SNP to help mend regional splits), and
- resources (human and financial).

Once we completed the identification of challenges, we began to brainstorm some solutions for each of the four challenge areas. Some of the ideas we had include:

- communication
  - a statewide 800 number
  - effective use of technology
  - workshops/IDTs rather than providing reports,
- logistics including planning and scheduling
  - a revised Planning Basics for SNPs
  - coordination of scanning and plan process (calendars) with LSUs
  - a resource development focus,
- mindset/attitude
  - building from our strengths
  - partnering with zones for workshops
  - community building workshops at SNP that demonstrate value in the process, and
- resources
  - propose a new funding approach
  - communicate the tangible results of giving time and money
  - clear budget for plan goals with consideration for a budget template.

Of course, these solutions are not exhaustive yet they will begin to move us forward in mapping out an effective and efficient coordination of local service, and provide the basis for facilitated discussions with regions.

In closing out this session, we looked at the practicality of small and large SNPs. We decided that we would contact some of the regions in large states that have several regions within the state, including some we know that have discussed the possibility of reunifying after a regional split to hear their thoughts about how to best provide services on a statewide level. We know the ideas in the Service System Proposals may not work the same in all places. We need to talk with those involved in service in large states with multiple regions, or small states that comprise only part of a region, or states that are split between an urban region and a region for the rest of the state so we can get their ideas about what would work best where they live. Following our fact-finding telephone calls, we may find that we need a face to face meeting. We are trying to determine what makes the most sense for unified and efficient service delivery within geographic boundaries.

THE WSC

One of our focuses this cycle has been the issue of WSC Seating and the WSC component of the service system. We have certainly struggled with some aspects of creating standardized seating criteria, and two related but separate issues have come out of our discussions. Those two issues are delegate funding and alternates at the WSC. We have seen some discussion of delegate funding on the conference participant discussion board so we are obviously not the only ones who are thinking about these topics.

We are all influenced by our own personal experience and that certainly pertains to how we look at the WSC. What we have known is comfortable, and it's easy to view the unknown with resistance or suspicion. To help us get away from this reaction, we asked ourselves what we think is possible and what will serve NA for the future.

Since all of these issues seem to elicit a personal reaction, we tried to look at all of the data we have available. Prior to the world services unification in 1998, the WSC and its expenses (H&I literature, the annual meeting, boards and committees, the Development Forum, travel, publications, etc.) were all paid through contributions and were accounted for in the WSC Budget. That income and expense averaged at roughly $500,000 per year with fewer than 100 seated regions.

In 1998, all income and expense for any world service activity was consolidated into one budget. At the same time, seating at the WSC began to increase and perhaps more importantly, the costs of projects began to rise primarily because NAWS funds workgroup participation whose membership had begun to be much more global. In 2000, we moved from an annual conference with some funded delegates to a two year conference cycle and complete delegate funding. In the 2000 CAR, we stated that this seemed the most logical way for us to collectively take responsibility for attendance at the conference. The intent was to equalize access to and participation at the conference by a worldwide fellowship. Prior to 2000, the WSC functioned with a Developmental Forum that ensured funding for those who were not financially able to attend a conference held in the US. There was, however, some perceived inequality with regions that could send their delegate versus those who needed assistance. The belief behind the move to complete delegate funding was that if we all continued to contribute what we could, this would be a form of equalizing the cost.

The primary objection to the 2000 motion was fear of funds being withheld or spent in other ways. However, we didn't believe fear of what 'might happen' ought to keep us from moving forward with what was believed to be best for the conference. Our collective thinking was that, ideally, if participation at the WSC is a top priority, then the fellowship will respond and take responsibility for this decision. That ideal has not really been what has occurred throughout the fellowship, however. Many regions have stopped considering conference funding a regional responsibility, and this doesn't seem to be a sustainable direction for the future. Since 2001, what was once under the WSC budget and considered WSC expenses, have exceeded contributions by over $1,800,000. That trend is something we can no longer sustain with declining literature sales.

The conference now costs approximately $500,000 for the biennial meeting whereas the 2000 WSC cost was approximately $121,000. The expense increase is partly due to delegate funding but also due to the increase in the size of the WSC. The audio-visual needs, set up of the room, and other hotel charges are all more expensive as the conference grows. We expect this trend to continue once the seating moratorium is lifted and more delegates are seated. We have seated 20 regions since 1998 – 15 of those since 2000. We do not see how we can continue delegate funding with spiraling WSC costs.

We seem to be at a crossroads. The issues that we looked at in the 2000 CAR included delegate funding, alternates, zonal forums, and decision making at the WSC. Some thirteen years later we seem to need to evaluate most of this yet again. We need to be able to look past our own personal experience and opinions, and consider what the best course of action for the future of the fellowship is. In other words, we can do that by visualizing how we want to see the WSC meeting 5 years from today. That is only a few conferences away. Having discussed delegate funding thoroughly, we believe that the most responsible action is to recommend that delegates not be automatically funded by the WSC to attend the WSC. Those regions unable to fund their delegates attendance would go through an application process as was done in the past with the Development Forum. The Development Forum, which were those delegates needing funding before 2000, seemed to be something we could pay for.

We are hopeful that delegates and others will want to discuss this with us. We need to be able to make a collective decision as a conference to find a more sustainable approach to funding for the future. Please share your thoughts and ideas on the conference participant discussion board or write to us at worldboard@na.org . We welcome your thoughts and ideas about this and other ideas to lead us forward.

Alternate Delegates and WSC Attendance

As already stated, we are concerned about the cost and size of the WSC. And that all of this time and energy we have put into looking at our service system, actually serves our future needs. The role and perceived value of alternate delegates at the conference was also a part of our discussion, without the

same clear conclusion we came to as a board with delegate funding. Several issues about alternate delegates seemed to warrant evaluation. One is the overall size of the WSC, the second is the seeming inequality of more US alternates, and third the overall cost to the fellowship of the WSC. For the past five WSC's, the average of US alternates attending the WSC is over 90%, while non US alternates are less than 50%. In a discussion based conference with many small group discussions, this "inequality" seems to skew the discussions to be even more US centric. If the size of the WSC was almost ninety people fewer, the physical needs, as well as cost, of the WSC would diminish, and the ability to adapt to future growth would increase. We estimate that the attendance of alternate delegates costs the fellowship about $200,000 per conference.

This is by no means a discussion of whether or not the alternate delegate has value. Absolutely they do. Our question is whether or not they have to attend the WSC and if this human and financial resource would be best served by using it at home. It is not a matter of what we might like but what do we believe is needed to capture the voice of the global fellowship and what can we sustain?

We talked at our meeting about the value of alternate delegate attendance; we recognize they are an extra set of ears and eyes – a resource for the delegate. Additionally, their attendance may offer a training opportunity and a benefit to the home region. And, when continuity is able to be maintained from alternate to delegate that appears to be added worth, yet often "life shows up," and continuity is not possible. Communication can be increased back to the home region by having an alternate in attendance; yet, we also wondered whether the communication to all members actually is increased or is there a possible duplication of efforts.

Now, as we considered possible downsides to alternate delegate attendance at the conference, we immediately identified that not every delegate has an alternate present. Other thoughts that came up during discussion included the fact that alternates are not active participants in formal sessions, and that additional regional funds are being used to send the alternate delegate and this money may be better used in their home region on service delivery.

This discussion inspired us to begin envisioning a possible new role for the alternate delegates in the new system. If an alternate's function and responsibilities were solely focused to support their home region with service delivery, how might service improve? The alternate could reach out to areas and assist their service delivery efforts. Alternates would be an additional conduit of information and offer workshops to members. Alternate delegates may assist in the training and mentoring of members. We realized also that in large states/nations/provinces, there could be a team of alternate delegates performing services throughout a large geographic area.

This was our first discussion of the role of alternate delegate in our new service system; hence we have no recommendation at this time. We hope that you will discuss usefulness of alternate delegate presence at WSC and start to think about how value may be increased in service delivery without attending the conference.

We look forward to hearing your discussions; you may identify benefits with attendance that we missed and you may envision creative advantages to having an alternate delegate remain focused toward service delivery in their home NA community. We are in the process of envisioning a different model that has advantages and adds value to the conference and to the regions. Please share your thoughts with us at worldboard@na.org.

We will continue to have the discussions outlined above regarding delegate funding and role of alternate delegate in our service system. We will also be adding the discussion of the role of zones at our April meeting.

June 2013

Service System: We are continuing to field test GSUs and LSUs. If you are trying any aspect of the proposals such as GSU, CBDM, etc. please share your experience with us at servicesystem@na.org. The more help we can have translating the ideas in the proposals to actual practice on a local level, the easier it will be for us to frame a transition plan to present at WSC 2014.   Updates about the project will be posted online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.

Thursday was spent in a facilitated discussion focused on the state/nation/province component of the Service System Project. We considered local service coordination and how it may look operationally. We looked at approaches under the categories of communications, human resources, structure, and finances. We also continued to explore the role of the Alternate Delegate at the WSC and the roles of zones as part of the Service System.

Friday was spent discussing the status of the current field testing of GSUs and LSUs and our perspective of where this project is currently and what we see as possibilities for the immediate future. Our experience shows that although what we have been most focused on and debated is structure. And, what is bringing about the most benefit is new processes and ways to approach our service efforts. We do much of what we do in NA because that is how it has been done before rather than anything that is written in our service material.

In order to keep us focused on process and improvements, we are recommending that we provide questions or motions for decisions about GSUs and LSUs in the 2014 Conference Agenda Report. More than that seems like it cannot be rationally processed at one time. We, as well as the majority of WSC 2012, remain committed to new visions for State-Nation-Provinces (SNPs) and the role of zones, but we also believe more discussions on these are needed. Since these are potential system-wide changes, we believe moving forward in stages is more practical and realistic.

SERVICE SYSTEM

Field Testing Update

We have been conducting field testing of the ideas in the Service System Proposals since November 2012. We have had communications with more than 70 communities worldwide about some form of field testing. Some have contacted us merely to get more information while others have shared with us their experiences trying some of the project's ideas such as establishing GSUs, implementing a planning cycle, utilizing consensus based decision making, or talking about regional reunification to form statewide bodies or sharing services among regions within a state. Some of the communities have let us know about how they've adapted the ideas in the proposals for local use. For instance, some communities are devoting every other area service meeting exclusively to a discussion of group needs or have set aside time before each ASC for that discussion. Others have dissolved their standing subcommittees or some of their subcommittees in favor of workgroups.

Along with the communities informally testing the ideas, or some variation of them, we are working closely with nine "core communities" in the US and Canada that have agreed to test what we have been calling GSUs, or GSUs and LSUs exactly as described in the proposals. One-third of those communities are testing GSUs and two-thirds are testing GSUs and LSUs. Some of these communities had already begun holding GSU or LSU meetings of some kind and others had not begun implementation of any kind. We have traveled to most of the communities to help them launch their field tests, and we have made a commitment to keep in contact with each community at least monthly.

Tools

As we've been working with the field testers, we've been working to move the ideas in the proposals off the drawing board and into practice. Part of how we've been helping to do that is by developing service tools to support the GSUs and LSUs. Among the tools we've drafted are:

- GSU and LSU agendas,
- reporting templates,
- a facilitation guide,
- a survey form to help gather community input before a planning assembly,
- a tool to help develop project plans,
- documents that briefly explain the "basics" of the GSU and LSU, and
- CBDM basics.

We know there are many more tools that would help field testers such as budgeting tools, more tools to support the LSB, and additional reporting templates, to name just a few. We also already have ideas about how to revise and improve the tools we have. All of the tools are posted to www.na.org/servicesystem, and we will continue to post new tools and revisions as we are able.

Most of the field testing communities held their first LSU or GSU meetings in January. In order to have results of the field test in time to consider them when drafting the *Conference Approval Report* and Conference Approval Track *material* and preparing for the conference, the formal field test is scheduled to end in July. We are, therefore, more than half way through the formal field test. Most communities testing LSUs have had two LSU meetings and are beginning to implement projects.

The test is already helping us refine the ideas in the proposals in countless ways. For instance, we drafted an agenda and tools to help communities prepare for and conduct a planning assembly. Then after assisting with several assemblies, we came to realize a few things. For instance, in gathering information for the scanning part of the planning process, communities were having a hard time considering external trends or issues in addition to the trends or issues within NA in their communities. One of the ways we may be able to help with that is by suggesting that those involved with PR and H&I within the service body be given a special role in gathering that information prior to the planning assembly.

Another discovery we had is that LSBs have had a hard time converting the prioritized goals into project plans. We realized that we could build in more time at the end of the planning assemblies for LSUs to collectively develop some approaches to the goals they've prioritized. They may also want to assign particular people to draft project plans to bring to the next LSB meeting. If, say, the project was about training and mentoring of GSRs, the LSU might assign a couple of the most experienced GSRs to draft a project plan for the LSB to review and refine at their next meeting.

On the GSU level we are discovering quite a lot as well. The proposals suggest that one way that GSUs could meet is to be hosted by a different group within the GSU each month. What we've found, however, is that rotating GSUs don't seem to work as well as GSUs that meet at a consistent time and place each month. In most cases it seems too difficult for members to keep track of a changing location and meeting time. Another discovery is that rural GSUs need extra attention. There are usually fewer groups and those groups have farther to travel so extra efforts have to be taken to make rural GSUs successful in some communities.

These are the sorts of things we are learning from the field test. There are too many to list here but this report should give you examples of the kinds of insight we're gaining from field testing. It's one thing to read about driving a car; it's another thing to actually do it. The testing communities really are teaching us how to practically implement and operate LSUs, LSBs, and GSUs. The field test is helping us go from blueprint to frame to home.

Perhaps the most significant thing we are seeing is that transforming an ASC to an LSU/LSB and GSUs is a lot of change for one community to undertake all at once. In addition, in most of the field testing

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No more "units"

Many of you have let us know you're not fond of the "unit" part of the GSU and LSU name. We are talking about changing the names to something like "Group Forum" or "Group Support Forum" and "Local Service Conference."

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communities the majority of the burden is being shouldered by a very small number of people and many of those people are feeling pressure or burn out. Testing in many communities seems to be winning over some of the skeptics; that is, some folks who were suspicious of the proposals now see the benefits and potential benefits and have become supporters. But the communities that are feeling the least amount of stress or overwhelm seem to be those that started a gradual process of change prior to formally becoming a core community in the field test.

Two things seem key to a successful transition on a local level: the community must make efforts to develop a broad base of support and change must be gradual and in stages—an evolution not a revolution. This latter consideration has been critical in guiding our thinking about a transition plan.

Transition Planning/Where we are Now

At this board meeting we began talking about what we could expect to put in the *Conference Agenda Report* and Conference Approval Track material. Given the results of the field test to date, it should come as little surprise that we are again talking about more of an evolution of the material and ideas, than a revolution or abrupt upheaval.

What field testing is teaching us is that communities need time to phase in the elements of local service delivery rather than trying to implement everything all at once. And before that process even begins they need time to educate and inform the community and build support for the transition. Given that, rather than trying to implement the entire system following the next conference, we are beginning to think that it may make sense to focus on taking at least a cycle or two to implement local services first—what we have been calling GSUs and LSUs—in stages. Then we would focus on field testing SNPs and then we could offer an implementation plan that covered the SNP part of the system at a later conference.

Of course, the Service System Proposals do describe a system and so none of the parts make complete sense if they are operating outside of that system. But the reality is that the transition ahead of us will have to be taken in stages to be successful. This more gradual, staged approach would allow communities to take a reasonable more gradual approach to transitioning from ASCs to LSUs and GSUs (see the text box for our thoughts on new language for these service bodies). At the same time, regions that are part of multi-region states can continue talking about (and performing) shared services. In some cases, we know regions have begun talking about consolidating, as well. These sorts of joint efforts and conversations can help lay the groundwork for SNP field testing in the future and implementation efforts that follow.

As we said, these are just our preliminary thoughts about what might be included in the *CAR* and discussed at the conference.

We will, of course, report more as our ideas develop.

Role of Zones

Before we started our board discussion about the role of zones we identified possible barriers which include resistance as some zones like how they function and may not be open to change. We also

recognized that some members do not think zones should become a new level of service or part of the delegation stream while others zones may want to continue without a defined purpose.

Following the identification of possible barriers, we began our discussion with the premise that zones need to add value in the revitalized service system and incorporate the principles of the service system. We then took a look at probable needs that a zone can fill. In this discussion, we identified basic core functions for all zones. Leadership Development is a key area as a zone could share responsibility for workshops with regions, assist with training and mentoring by utilizing experienced trusted servants such as former RDs, and be a communication link with world services. We looked at Planning as a key function primarily in the role of teaching those in the zone how to plan and scan. With planning as a function, we recognized that a skilled facilitator is necessary to the success of planning. Another key function we identified was community development which is analogous to Fellowship Development which may encompass a resource/training pool, a source for best practices exchange, trusted servant recruitment for services like H&I, PI and may host planning assemblies.

We recognized that zones serve as a communication/unity link and a point of connection amongst trusted servants in a geographic area. This may lend itself to increasing communication and sharing of best practices amongst the SNPs in attendance.

The one area that was difficult to assess was zones being a part of the fund flow system. On one hand, zones with an activity associated with a zonal meeting such as the Canadian Assembly of NA may be part of the fund flow system while other zones may not be a part of the fund flow system. Additionally we will be looking at cost factors for zones in light of travel and lodging costs and costs associated with service provision by a zone.

We wanted to share with you our beginning discussion yet we have not reached any recommendations. We will be continuing our discussion at future board meetings and most likely at the conference.

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Consensus Based Decision Making (CDBM) and WSC Rules of Order

We had our initial discussion in an effort to establish a direction for inclusion in the *Conference Approval Track material.* As we stated at WSC 2012, we would come back with ideas for change because we recognize that we are straddling two worlds which tend to collide in the business sessions. This seemed to happen in old business at the last conference and new business at the WSC 2010 conference. Hence, we need a holistic approach for both business sessions.

Our overarching question is how do we hear from a range of voices and hear all perspectives when a few tend to dominate the conference? We looked at the concept of limits on a number of times a RD could speak yet realized that may not be practical. We considered inviting the quiet RDs into the discussion and considered a rotation whereby a delegate who speaks to a motion and/or amendment before the line is closed would automatically be moved to the back of the line with the next motion or amendment. Implementation for the latter two ideas still needs to be considered. Basically, we want to hear from several voices without getting bogged down with repetitive points.

Additionally, we are considering a large digital clock with red numbers and a second hand that counts down with a time limit for each motion/amendment. We are looking at 20 to 30 minutes per motion. The conference may become more aware of where they are and would be informed of length of time to complete discussion on a motion/amendment. This may help us all become more responsible with time management.

Currently, we have a dilemma and are leaning toward rotation and a large digital clock to help us. Yet, we are very much open to your suggestions. We believe we want the same outcome – an international discussion with many voices and perspectives and a decrease in the domination of the body by a few.

Please forward your ideas to us at worldboard@na.org. We are a 'we' fellowship and would like all conference participants to share a productive and exhilarating conference experience.

Alternate Delegates and WSC Attendance

We continued to explore and refine ideas on eliminating alternate delegate attendance at the conference and ensure value to both the conference and the region. Initially, we looked at how an alternate may receive training in lieu of conference attendance. We considered regions utilizing their alternates in an active role in the SNP planning cycle, expanding their regional role to include attendance and participation at zonal forums, and asking a team of former RDs within the region to offer mentoring. Additionally, we thought the alternate may facilitate *CAR* workshops to gain an understanding of the motions and be informed about strategic planning as outlined in the CAT.

If alternates did not attend the conference, what may help with those who are attending a conference for a first time? We considered a broader, more in-depth orientation at the WSC which seems more possible with 125 people. We also discussed creating videos of the WSC to use in AD training in the region and a video of RDs who share their experiences and skills that are needed at the conference.

In our discussion, we came to realize that the alternate delegate attending a conference is an institutionalized aspect of our functioning. In other words, this is the way we have always done things. We researched the last four conferences to ascertain how many ADs actually transitioned to the RD trusted servant role. The data illustrated an average of 41% were elected to the RD position and returned to the WSC in that capacity. WSC 2012 even showed a lower percentage of 37% yet that was one of the conferences averaged into the four year history.

We believe that the fact that almost twice as many US regions are able to send alternates as those from other countries leads to the sense of US dominance at the WSC. It certainly skews all discussions where everyone participates to being US centric.

We are not making a firm recommendation at this time; we will continue our discussion. Again, we would like to hear your thoughts and ideas. We have read a few comments on the Conference Participant Bulletin Board and we would like to hear more. If you choose not to share your thoughts on the board, please feel free to write us at worldboard@na.org.

August 2013

Service System: We are closing out our field test of what we are now calling GSFs and LSCs. Partially as a result of these field tests, we have decided to offer decisions about local services for this conference and to continue gathering information about services at the state/nation/province level. Decisions about local services will be in the 2014 *CAR* and if the conference passes them, the transition plan, which will be in the CAT, will be offered. We continue to post tools and updates about the project online as they are available: www.na.org/servicesystem.

How Can We Help??

More than two decades ago, World Services began a process focused on how to improve NA services. Starting with World Services' inventory in 1992 and continuing into this decade, we have been looking at service issues relating to groups, members, areas, and regions. We have gathered and reported on information from Issue Discussion Topics such as Infrastructure; Atmosphere of Recovery; Leadership; Our Freedom, Our Responsibility; etc. We reviewed all the data, and everyone involved seemed to agree that apathy, lack of trusted servants for carrying the message of recovery, low GSR attendance, poor fund flow, and inadequate service delivery (for instance, phone lines that don't get answered) were some of our issues. No one seemed to argue with these facts. Our most requested workshops have been helping members get involved in service and Building Strong Home groups.

We have been discussing the topics of Infrastructure and Our Service System for the last four years. We believe it is now time to take the results of those discussions, including the information gathered from the 2008 Conference Agenda Report, and move into framing recommendations for the fellowship to consider. Our existing service structure was developed for a fellowship with much different needs than we now have globally. Because of this, it is no surprise that we have volumes of information about ineffective services. However, we also have heard new and creative ideas that local NA communities have adopted, and we hope to build on these.
From the 2008 Service System project plan

More than five years ago World Services proposed initiating a comprehensive change from a Service Structure to System which we hoped would help resolve some of our ongoing struggles. The World Service Conference agreed, and together we decided to move forward. This proposal was not a magic bullet; none of us anticipated that overnight we would have all the money to do service, all GSRs participating at area service, and an abundance of trusted servants. Rather, we began building on our foundation, our primary purpose. With that in mind, our first job was to revise A Vision for NA Service.

Now, years down the road of proposed change into a service system, some members appear to be blaming world services for forcing a change upon us, when in fact we have done our level best to partner with the Fellowship every step of the way to bring the Service System Project closer to a common vision. We seem to agree on where we fall short in our service efforts and even have common concurrence of identified problems, and a shared vision for NA service—so how can we move forward together?

We know from our personal experience that change is messy; many of us, most likely, recall our lives being in flux as we worked Steps Six and Seven, yet we also know how our lives improved as did our relationships with others once we were on the other side of change. This analogy is true with the service system proposals. We believe that change is necessary for the future stability and flourishing of NA. It is our responsibility as trusted servants to inventory, analyze, and suggest ways to improve. As a fellowship, we have inventoried our service efforts repeatedly through the years and have shared those "assets" and "defects" openly with each other.

As *It Works How and Why* tells us, "When the pain of remaining the same becomes greater than our fear of change, we will surely let go." (*IWHW*, Step Six) Did any one of us know how we would be on the other side of Steps Six and Seven? No. The proposed service system changes ask us to let go of the old and risk moving to something new.

Now that we are presented with the opportunity to change, our road has gotten narrower. Many are excited at the opportunity to improve our services and to grow. However, there are those who are standing their ground, defending NA's right to continue in the same way we have always done things. As responsible leaders, the board has found ourselves obligated to make suggestions that some find off-putting or objectionable. Some may see the exercise of this responsibility as overbearing, and some may disagree with our suggestions, but doing less than our best to serve the future of NA was never an option for us.

In a paragraph just as true today as when it was written decades ago, the Basic Text cautions us that "Everything that occurs in the course of NA service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It was for this reason that we began this work. We must always remember that as individual members, groups and service committees, we are not and should never be in competition with each other. We work separately and together to help the newcomer and for our common good. We have learned, painfully, that internal strife cripples our Fellowship; it prevents us from providing the services necessary for growth."

We have, as a Fellowship, adopted A Vision for NA Service and now we must figure out how to move forward to realize this vision. At the 2014 World Service Conference the Fellowship, through the *CAR*, will have the opportunity to choose the direction for our shared future. Our option is a leap of faith. Each and every one of us, everyone on the World Board and everyone reading this issue of *NAWS News*, are motivated by our desire to carry the message of recovery to addicts. In a sense, we are planting trees that someone else will be sitting under. What is the legacy we want to give to members who are not here yet? How can we move forward together and how can World Services help?

Thursday was spent in a facilitated discussion focused on the service system. We started our day focused on the future of the WSC—how can the WSC evolve as an effective, efficient body that demands fewer of NAWS' resources. We also considered delegate funding that is not automatic and a new/revised role for the alternate delegate in line with the board's recommendation that the AD would not attend the WSC. Prior to reaching our recommendation, we considered a number of factors: the size of the conference and the ability to engage in CBDM, capacity and sustainability of our current configuration; our wants versus our needs; the fact that we are out of balance with many more US participants and fewer international members; and the improbability of moving to another venue due to cost. We even discussed removing the rounds, yet that is the setting where discussion, ideas for the future, and more interpersonal exchange happens. We closed out Thursday with next steps in the discussion on the role of zones.

Friday was opened with an update on the service system field testing, concurrence on closing the formal field testing phase, and a discussion offering those who participated in field testing an opportunity to assess how it went. We made a decision on terminology that we explain further in the "terminology" section below. What had been referred to as LSU (Local Service Unit) will now be termed Local Service Conference (LSC); the GSU (Group Support Unit) will be called the Group Support Forum (GSF); and the Local Service Board (LSB) remains unchanged.

SERVICE SYSTEM

> *Sometimes it's hard to know what affects NA as a whole. The Fourth Tradition offers a way to balance the freedom of autonomy with our responsibility to preserve NA unity. We are challenged in Tradition Four to apply autonomy in ways that will enhance the growth and vitality of NA. Autonomy encourages groups to become strong and lively but also reminds them that they are a vital part of a greater whole: the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We consider our common welfare when we make decisions in our groups.* Tradition Four *IWHW*

Members who regularly read *NAWS News*, participate on the WSC Participant Discussion Board, or serve Narcotics Anonymous may have heard some of the spirited opposition to the Service System Project. Differences of opinion can be healthy and ultimately lead to better decisions, but it takes open minded dialog to get there. We embrace the discussion and we ask that we all remain open-minded.

We all want the same thing for NA: We want to be as effective as possible in achieving our primary purpose of carrying the message to addicts who still suffer. Yet we seem to differ in ideas about how to do that. In fact, some of our differences may actually be misunderstandings.

Perhaps the most common misunderstanding we hear is that World Services intends to *force* change, including restructuring, on groups, areas, and regions. We want to be clear: NAWS is not planning to impose structural or procedural changes to local service bodies. The idea that NAWS could or would somehow force a group to affiliate with a certain body, or an area to reunify with another area, or a region to reunify with another region is simply not true.

However, the service system proposals do recommend structural change—local service bodies that are formed along county, town, or city lines; group forums consisting of recovery groups in the same

neighborhood; service bodies that are formed along state, country or province lines. They also suggest service bodies adopt certain processes: planning and consensus-based decision making, for instance.

But it is crucial to keep in mind that any decisions—how to structure oneself, how to make decisions, how to plan services—will be made collaboratively. If the fellowship decides to move forward adopting the ideas in the Service System Proposals, groups, areas, and regions will talk together about what changes they want to make. A transition into a new service system wouldn't be about World Services telling any local service body what to do. It would be about World Services providing the tools and blue prints for local service bodies to talk together about what they want a transition to look like.

We hope to get a fellowship conscience at WSC 2014 on whether members want to move forward in the first stage of a process of change to a new system. We have invested a great deal of time, energy, and money into this project and we still believe in dedicated support of groups, planning and budgeting for local services, service body boundaries that make it easy for potential members and professionals who refer addicts to find us, and collaborative decision making.

More than anything, in this *NAWS News*, we are asking how we all can move forward in a spirit of loving service and unity toward our future.

Terminology

We reported in the last *NAWS News* that we had heard from many of you that the word "unit" didn't really sound like an NA service body. We continued our discussion about terminology at this meeting and came to consensus on the term "group support forum" rather than "group support unit" as it's been called up to now. We also agreed that "local service conference" was a better description than "local service unit." We will start to use this new terminology and as we update the documents on our website we will make the changes to them over time.

Field Testing Update

We are wrapping up the formal part of our field testing though we know several of the nine core communities as well as many of the non-core community field testers plan to continue holding group support forum meetings and planning conferences. We will be working between now and the conference to collect thoughts from the field testing communities and we will continue to report on what we find in *NAWS News* and the conference reports.

Perhaps the most important thing we've found is that communities need to take the time to develop awareness and community support, and changes need to be planned so that they can be adopted in stages.

Some ideas we have collected that may help that evolution include:

- Service bodies transitioning from monthly ASCs to quarterly LSCs might start by changing from a monthly service meeting to one that's held every other month, before moving to a quarterly meeting to create a more gradual, less drastic shift.
- Some of the projects that come out of the initial planning assembly could be specifically focused on the transition itself, so workgroups are tasked with figuring out difficult pieces of the transition.
- One idea for transitioning to group support forums is to begin with one GSF for the whole community that gradually morphs into a number of them. A single GSF can model best practices and help people see value in them.
- It may help to have CBDM be among the first things to be implemented. Given the potential strain on a service body from so much change, learning to build consensus may be a helpful first step to put in place to ensure a more effective change.

Other things that have worked well in some of the testing communities include:

- Group support forums seem to thrive best when they are given some structure. There has been success in making someone in the local service board initially responsible for administering and facilitating the GSF and then gradually training someone from within the GSF to take the helm.
- There has also been some success in setting up topics for group support forums for the year. These topics could be related to or coordinated alongside the planning cycle for the local service conference.
- If GSFs are seen as more of a community resource, they seem to be more successful. Most of the field testing communities have been challenged to get the word out to the community at large that the group support forums exist, where and when they are, and what they do.

Tools

We continue to develop tools to help with the field test and to give a more concrete idea of what the ideas in the proposals might look like when put into practice. The most recent tools we've developed are a sample agenda for the third local service conference and an "LSB Basics" document. We are also currently working on several calendar-type tools.

Among the other tools we know we would like to develop at some point are:

- Reporting template from local service board to the groups—like a monthly LSB equivalent of the front page of *NAWS News*.
- Reporting template for ongoing services/ subcommittees to the local service conference (or local service board)
- Post-planning assembly local service board agenda or task list or perhaps LSB task lists for LSB meetings between each local service conference
- Tools to process survey results
- Budget tools

We've already learned quite a lot about how to improve the tools we've drafted, and we will probably get more ideas as we talk further with the communities that have field tested them. To date, we've been fully occupied supporting the field test and developing new tools. Nonetheless, we hope to find the time to revise at least some of the tools we've developed for the test so that they can be more useful in the cycle ahead should the conference determine to proceed with a transition.

Role of Zones

We continue to talk about the role of zones in a new service system. What seems essential to all zones is their role as a hub for fellowship development. Zones are a forum where regions can gather to feel connected, share resources and experiences, and foster unity. They function well as training forums and help regions with planning and leadership development.

Of course, that's not all that zones do. Some have a public relations or translations role. Others work on events and hospitals and institutions work. They can also help border communities to communicate within their own state when they belong to a neighboring region.

Were the conference to adopt the recommendation (described below) about eliminating alternate attendance at the conference, zones would be an even more crucial training ground for alternate delegates. A zone can be a sort of microcosm of the WSC, a place to engage with others who serve beyond the local fellowship. Yet at the same time zones are intimate enough settings to allow substantive, in-depth discussion.

Given this role or potential role as a microcosm of the conference, we also discussed US zones and whether it makes sense to have fewer, larger US zones. This would increase the diversity within the zone and for some would make their zone feel more valuable as a result. If the primary focus of zones is fellowship development, that purpose might be better realized in a zone that could share a broader range of experience. This is a discussion we want to have with delegates. It makes sense to us to have

between three and six zones in the US rather than eight. What do you all think? We look forward to continuing this discussion with you. As always, we can be reached at wb@na.org.

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Consensus Based Decision Making (CDBM) and WSC Rules of Order

We continued our discussion about conference processes and how to move further toward consensus based decision making. At WSC 2012, we said we would come back with ideas for change because we recognize that we are in a transition right now—we are utilizing both parliamentary procedure and consensus based decision making at the conference and we are trying to improve our ability to develop consensus at the conference without prolonging the business sessions into the wee hours of the morning.

We still have not resolved our question of how to hear from a range of voices and how to hear all perspectives when a few tend to dominate. You have read our brainstorming ideas including utilizing something like a digital clock with red numbers and a second hand, inviting quieter delegates into the discussion, and placing those who have already spoken to a proposal or amendment at the end of the queue. However, we need to hear your suggestions. We seem to want the same outcome – an international discussion with many voices and perspectives. Please forward your ideas to us at worldboard@na.org

Delegate Funding and Alternate Delegates WSC Attendance

We continued our discussions about the future of the World Service Conference and how to make the conference more sustainable for the future. By sustainable, we mean a focus and expense that we can afford and that is appropriate to the efforts. All funds, whether spent by World Services, a zone, or a region, are "our" funds. We have tried to consider these issues with that perspective in mind and not just considering direct expenses to World Services.

As we reported during the Conference Participant Webinar, we've decided to recommend no automatic delegate funding. Need-based funding would be available to delegates who apply, but the expectation would be that regions that can afford to fund their delegate would be responsible for doing so.

The original thinking behind funding all delegates was that it would make the conference equally accessible to all, and that regions would contribute the funds they would have used to send their delegates so there would be no or minimal financial loss. That, however, hasn't happened, and the cost of funding all delegates to the conference is not sustainable in the long term.

We also are recommending no alternate attendance at the conference. This was a difficult discussion for us and a hard conclusion to come to as a board. This is an issue many of us feel passionately about. Those of us who have had good experiences as alternates are challenged to imagine denying other regions and alternates that experience. We see the value in having an alternate to share experience and sometimes language with a delegate as well as a training position. Nonetheless, after much discussion, we determined that the best option we have when facing the future is to recommend no alternate attendance. For one thing, having fewer people on the floor of the conference would allow us room for growth in our present space. Moving locations would involve an outlay of human and financial resources that we hope to avoid and may well not have available.

We also believe that fewer people will make small group discussions more productive and more diverse. Right now, with more than 200 people in the room, it's almost impossible to productively use small group discussions to build consensus. Having fewer people will allow more in-depth discussions. And participants will be more internationally diverse since a disproportionate number of US regions are presently able to fund their alternates. Of course, eliminating alternate attendance at the conference

would also reduce the cost of the conference to regions and World Services, with more resources freed up for fellowship development and local services.

At the same time, we imagine that the role of the alternate can be refocused on communication throughout the region and support locally. We even talked about the possibility of a team of alternates locally that could work in concert supporting and helping to communicate throughout the region. In short, we're trying to think creatively. None of us like being in a position where we have to make recommendations about giving something up, but our present reality is that we are stretched past physical and financial capacity and it's our responsibility to the Fellowship to figure out how to make some changes in the conference. This seems like the best set of recommendations to us at this time.

We've gotten a number of questions about whether these recommendations would affect the upcoming conference, and the answer is that they will not. These recommendations will come in the form of motions in the 2014 *Conference Agenda Report*. If the conference passes the motions, they will take effect at the close of the conference so the changes would take effect at the 2016 conference.

WSC Seating

We reported in the last *NAWS News* that we want to hold off making any recommendations about a possible transition from regions to state/nation/province service bodies as well as recommendations about a seating policy for the conference. Nonetheless, we need to offer something as an "in the meantime" recommendation, what we might call a band-aid while we talk further together as a conference about what we want a seating policy to look like.

This was another challenging discussion for us. Some of us can see the wisdom in a zonal seating approach for the future, while others of us are not as enthusiastic about that idea. Regardless of where we stand about our ideas for a future conference, without further development of the state/nation/province parts of the service system as well as shared agreement about the role of zones, we have to come up with a stop-gap recommendation while we consider how to move to a bigger vision.

What seems to make the most sense to us for now is to consider no new seating requests. As some of our sponsors say, "When you don't know what to do, just wait." Planning for the growth of NA over the years and the impact on the conference is no easy feat. We need to work together to drive toward a vision for the conference. When we can come to that shared vision of the future WSC, it will give us a foundation upon which to begin to build seating criteria.