

NorCal Nar-Anon Messenger

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Letter from the Editor

The central theme for this edition of the newsletter is "Returning to and Growing Our Meetings". We are sharing how our groups are navigating in-person/virtual meetings. A new term, "hybrid" has been coined which means a combination of both. A few groups have shared their successes, trials and tribulations regarding this process. Some groups report growth in membership. Feel free to submit an article telling how your group is handling "getting back to normal." We all benefit from everyone sharing what is and is not working.

Our outgoing Delegate, Paula L. has shared a summary of the process of how the 53 motions were

considered at the World Service Conference held via Zoom in Spring 2021.

Another article refers to donations to World Service Office (WSO). Each group via a group conscience can choose where to make its donations. See the article for how to report this information.

Please read the PESH article on "Service Through Sponsorship". The author describes a spiritual awakening and how the act of service increased their personal recovery. Thanks to all of you who are currently serving or have served in the past!

Finally, this is YOUR newsletter. We invite you to give us your

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suggestions of topics you would like to see and submit articles for publication in the newsletter. You can view past newsletters on the website, www.naranonnorcal.org.

Let us know how we are doing by emailing Tracy, the Literature Coordinator at the email address below.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda H.
on behalf of Tracy C.

Literature Coordinator
newslettercoord@naranonnorcal.org

Request from: Regional Service Committee (RSC)

To NorCal Groups' Treasurers or Acting Treasurers

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In June 2020, the RSC suggested in response to the pandemic's dire effect on our headquarters monetary deficit, that groups bypass their Areas and/or Region and send their donations directly to the World Service Office (WSO). Thank you for your assistance during this time.

Although all groups are autonomous, "It is suggested that all monies accumulated in excess of prudent reserve be sent to the next service levels based on group conscience." – Guide to Local Service (GLS), section 9 page 2. Please

send an accounting of your groups' donations that were sent to the WSO, 2020-2021, to your Area's Treasurer for reporting purposes. If your group is not within an area please send your groups' accounting to your *Region Treasurer so that these funds can be recorded in compliance with Concept 11.

*Region Treasurer treasurer@naranonnorcal.org

Thank you,
Michael, Chair, Region Service Committee

Returning to our Meetings

"The Logistics" - Fresno

In my Area, before COVID, we had five Nar-Anon meetings. One each day. When COVID hit, all five meetings stopped. In late April of 2020, we discovered Zoom. We created an Area Zoom account. Two of our meetings used the Zoom format. It was wonderful to see each other again! We experienced recovery, we shared, we welcomed newcomers. We gained several regulars from out of state. Once again, we were not alone. We were grateful for our virtual meetings.

When the restrictions were lifted in June 2021, we were allowed back at the church, our former meeting place. Volunteers made phone calls, sent out emails, and texted members to share the exciting good news: "We can MEET again!" We had mixed responses from members. So many questions:

- Are we going to keep Zooming?
- What about our out-of-state members?
- Is it safe for the immunocompromised?
- Do we wear masks/social distance?
- Can we give hugs/hold hands?

Some members liked virtual meetings and wanted to continue them. After taking a group conscience, two meetings decided to use a "hybrid" format, combining virtual and live

meetings. This has not been easy and created more questions:

- Should we purchase a microphone to be better heard by the virtual members?
- Do we have internet at the church and is it strong enough?
- Do we need to create a new volunteer position for this virtual connection/what would the duties include?

As of today, four out of five of our meetings are meeting in person. Hugging, holding hands, sharing, and experiencing recovery together. The two hybrid meetings that are using Zoom have raised these concerns:

- Delays in video/members can't use the computer or the Bluetooth speaker because the WiFi connection is too weak.
- Members can't always see everyone on Zoom.

We will continue to make changes and trust the process, until we create something that works for the greatest number in our groups. We will use our program to remind us that *we can only control ourselves (the rest is up to our Higher Power), surrender that outcome, and it's always progress not perfection.*

- Linda T.

“Saving Our Lives” – Martinez Returns to In-Person Meetings, June 2021

Thursday, 6:15pm, after signing off from a Zoom service-meeting, I dug out our meeting’s literature-suitcase, a portable fan, and packed the car. Oops, quickly remembered to change my pajama bottoms to jeans, and headed out to unlock the church for our first, post COVID-19 in-person meeting in 14 months!

In March 2020, our group had decided via a group conscience to keep up our monthly contribution to the church through the pandemic (Tradition Six). In June 2021, the church welcomed all outside community groups back. They only required a Nar-Anon Family Group Insurance Certificate to be emailed to them via our WSO, which happened within 48 hours of asking.

Four of us in person, hugged each other (we are all vaxxed,) and four were present on FreeConferenceCall, (FCC). Seeing these friends in-person was emotional and tearful. Although we had been saving each other’s lives during the pandemic via telephone, here we were - in our old meeting room! My saviors! Addiction never slowed, put on a mask, washed

its hands, or stayed home. The disease barreled thru COVID-19 like a hot knife through butter, destroying our addicted loved ones in record numbers. Our nephew died of a final overdose during the isolation caused by the pandemic. So many died, many close to home. I remain sane despite the insanity and grief of addiction because of these friends. My tears of deep gratitude naturally welled.

Our group decided early on to keep using the FCC when getting back to in-person meetings. Mainly because several of our members suffer from health issues and cannot physically attend. We placed a phone and a Bluetooth speaker on the table at our meeting. FCC worked out extremely well for our common welfare (Tradition One). We could hear each other clearly and everyone shared during our Sixth-Step Study. At the end of meeting we held hands while reciting our closing prayer.

- Paula L.

“A Specific Reason” – Roseville Returns to In-Person Meetings, May 2021

The Nar-Anon Family Group of Roseville has been back to in-person meetings since the beginning of May 2021. Every person who walked through that door had a mask on. Within about 30 seconds, all the masks came off. We were all hugging - some with tears of joy. We weren’t just excited to see each other, but we were also reminded that we were there for a specific reason: RECOVERY.

Once we were back in service, we were able to give back what was so freely given to us, as we have had so many newcomers! Each week we have had attendance of at least 12 and up to 23, including 2-6 newcomers. Everyone present agreed our Nar-Anon family was back together

again. We finally feel like we are helping people again, AMEN!!

The timing could not have more perfect because our meeting was drying up on Zoom. By the last Zoom meeting only myself and another person were in attendance. I think that everyone was on the same page.

We were all so exhausted by the Covid restrictions that when it finally lifted, we all showed up.

- Tracy C.

Highlights from Delegates

Our Region Service Committee (RSC) officers honored its Group Service Representatives' (GSRs) time, dedications and commitment. They carefully developed March 2021 Region's Assembly "Rules of Order," which streamlined the process of handling 53 motions by separating the voting into three categories. The assembly took 2 Saturdays, 2 hours each, to complete and process 53 motions. Bravo GSR's! This was a major accomplishment. This process was very similar to the WSC.

Round 1 – Twenty-nine (29) motions were voted on either pro/con by 75%.

Round 2 – Twenty (20) of the 53 Motions went into the second round of voting and were debated/discussed.

Round 3 – Fourteen (14) of the 53 Motions went into third round of voting because NorCal offered amendments.

We, NorCal Region, emailed 14 amendments to the WSC Committee's Thursday morning as required.

- Our first amendment on Motion #2 saved a region's motion by correcting the paragraph they had ultimately meant to remove
- Six of NorCal amendments failed at WSC
- Eight of NorCal amendments failed at WSC
- There were 58 amendments during WSC, 38 of which were sent in via email as required by WSC Committee. Twenty amendments came from the floor.

At the World Service Conference; April 29 – May 3, 2021, via Zoom, there were an average of 33 voters, delegates and Board of Trustees, all exhibiting and upholding Concept 7, "*All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.*" Therefore your delegate and alternate-delegate felt very comfortable speaking out to debate, Pro/Con, our regions decisions on motions and/or propose other motions during the conference.

A Delegate's Work – Friday Morning

On first day (Thursday) amendments were being made from the floor by raised hands before the conference facilitator introduced a regions' written amendments. This did not seem fair because the regions' delegates had been required to get all their amendments sent in (in writing) at the start of conference. Because your delegates experienced Concept 7 in action they felt comfortable participating in its decision-making process. The NorCal Region Delegate made a new motion to make written amendments, as required by the conference, handled before floor amendments.

At 7:35 a.m., Call for the question under Robert's Rules of Order means "put to the vote": 30 voted yes in favor of delegate's motion / 2 opposed / 1 abstention: Motion carried

At Conference Conclusion:

There was a spontaneous question from delegate(s) regarding how the WSC Committee could help delegates stay in touch with each other post conference; may we have the delegate email list? Spontaneous motion: All delegates agreed unanimously to have their emails shared in a drop box so they could continue to communicate.

Since conference, a WhatsApp group of delegates are connecting and preparing for next WSC. Most of these international delegates have never attended a WSC. We may expect next conference to be widely and internationally attended, we will truly be a World-Wide Fellowship!

PESH (Personal Experience, Strength, & Hope)

Service Through Sponsorship

Service comes in many forms. Sometimes, service is helping set up tables and chairs for in-person meetings, or volunteering to be the Zoom host for virtual meetings, or greeting new faces that come into the meeting. Sometimes, service is being the person willing to take a call in the middle of the night. Or sometimes, service is sharing your experience, strength, and hope with someone who wants and needs to hear it.

I was just finishing up a share on my virtual home group meeting. I'd been talking about the turning point in my personal recovery. It was during a step study group, when I voiced my opinion that addiction was a choice - and a poor choice (if I do say so myself).

A friend in the step study group asked me, "Do you honestly believe your loved one would choose this life for herself? Homelessness, prostitution, total dependency on drugs?" It was at that moment that I began to wonder, what if

addiction wasn't a choice, but a disease? Up until then, I'd been telling myself that my loved one was choosing drugs over her relationship with me. This philosophy allowed me to stay bitter and angry towards her. But I was beginning to question whether there was another possibility: just as my father suffered from the disease of cancer which took his life, my addicted loved one might be suffering from the disease of addiction which very well could kill her. This realization allowed me to have compassion for her for the first time, and also allowed me to really embrace my own healing process - painful at times - as I went further into step work.

I finished my share, and suddenly, a little chat bubble appeared on the screen from a newcomer. She asked if I could give her more information about how to find a sponsor. I explained that the best way to find a sponsor is to keep going to meetings and listening to people's shares, and wait until she

heard someone who sounded like they had some recovery experience and wisdom that she wanted for herself. She wrote back, "Well, I messaged you because I really identify with what you just shared. Are you interested in becoming my sponsor?"

She and I exchanged phone numbers via the chat box. We talked after the meeting ended and I explained that, though I hadn't sponsored anyone before, I would be honored to be her sponsor.

While I've done all types of service for my home group, area, and region - I never felt "ready" or "qualified" to provide the service of sponsorship. It feels like a huge amount of responsibility. But knowing I have the support and wisdom of my higher power, my own sponsor, and my fellowship to take on this important service work, I feel prepared to help this newcomer on her journey towards recovery.

- Becca B.

If you would like to contribute a story or inform our community of an upcoming event, please email newslettercoord@naranonnorcal.org

The Question Remains: Which is Better?

A Poll of Members Share...

In-Person/Hybrid Meetings

1. The support we share face to face with our vocal and facial expression in live meetings is essential. The opportunity to carry on conversation following the meetings is crucial. Though we didn't choose this path, we're faced to deal with our loved one's addiction in our lives. Now I can choose to attend Nar-Anon live meetings to heal and be together! So grateful that I am no longer alone!
2. I enjoy having people in the room!! It's the connection factor of live meetings. Way more personal than Zoom! Also connecting before and after the meeting is easier for me at a live meeting. Having never had a live meeting experience before... I started my Nar-Anon journey on Zoom, I had nothing to compare it to. I much prefer live meetings.
3. I miss the hugs and the opportunity to talk one on one with someone before and especially after the meeting with newcomers.
4. Although I am too ill to attend my live meetings and must use Zoom, I do not feel safe enough to share while on Zoom because my loved ones are in the house and might be listening in.

Virtual-Only Meetings

1. We can attend a Zoom meeting at almost any hour of the day, 7 days/week. From the safety of our own personal space, we can be sure to stay protected from Covid.
2. There are no more transportation barriers. No more issues of driving at night, finding a ride, taking a bus, etc. Distance is also not an issue. It doesn't matter where your home meeting is when you attend on Zoom. Even if it's 500 miles away!
3. Travel time won't stop us from attending a meeting anymore. We can still attend, even when we're under the weather. It is also convenient when we have other conflicting responsibilities, such as caretaking for others.
4. Our meetings may shrink if we move to only in-person meetings. We would lose some virtual-only/shut in members.

What do you think?

Let us know your thoughts on the benefits of meeting in-person vs. virtually by emailing us at **newslettercoord@naranoncal.org**

Meeting Spotlights

Greater Sacramento Area Update

The Downtown Sacramento meeting resumed its in-person meetings on August 3, 2021, from 6:30-7:30pm on Tuesdays. However, effective immediately, the meeting location has temporarily closed its facility to outside groups. Its members are currently considering other options. The region and other members have offered assistance.

Elk Grove began its in-person meetings on Wednesdays from 7-8:15pm in April 2021. It continues to have the normal ebbs and flows in attendance which has included several newcomers. One member has instituted a fellowship opportunity at a local restaurant prior to the

meeting that gives members the chance to connect outside the meeting.

The Wyndham/Sacramento meeting continues to meet on Zoom only on Thursdays from 7-8:15pm. Originally, this meeting was held on the first and third Thursdays of the month. It has now expanded to every Thursday to fulfill the need for those who want an online meeting.

Galt has resumed its in-person meetings only on Saturdays from 9:30-10:30am. All meetings continue to grow and fulfill the need in the Sacramento Area.

- Linda H.

A Note of Love

To Those Affected by Recent CA Fires

In the meantime,

The ongoing fires of Northern California have produced a depressing flood of continuous updates. The danger is growing without any end in sight. My sympathy lies with those families affected, the emergency workers who are risking their lives, and our fellow Nar-Anon members who must be struggling to adjust to their new reality.

These disasters remind me of how difficult and overwhelming it can be to manage stressful situations such as: being confronted with the danger of domestic violence, facing the death of family members or close friends, filing for and

getting a divorce or facing a serious illness of self or of a loved one. When combined with the daily stress of addicted loved ones the additional stress can push us into an unthinkable place leaving a feeling of desperation that it is just too much to bear. This makes me forever grateful for the lifeline of our program. All we need is to reach out and connect to regain our sanity.

For those Nar-Anon members who are able to read this note of compassion, please know that we love you and wish you God's speed.

- Jamie J.