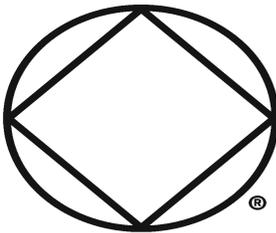


# ***Narcotics Anonymous***



## ***Convention Guidelines***



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# **GENERAL PLANNING**

## **PURPOSE**

Conventions are held by members of Narcotics Anonymous to bring our membership together in the celebration of recovery. Meetings, workshops and other actives are scheduled to encourage unity and fellowship among our members.

Because conventions are sponsored by service committees of Narcotics Anonymous, they should always conform to the N.A. principles and reflect our primary purpose.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Hosting a convention is a tremendous responsibility which requires significant planning, dedication and effort. Conventions can be complex and over overpowering endeavors; therefore, effort should be made to select key people who have had prior convention experience. The planning of a convention requires the combined efforts of many people. These people groups sponsoring the convention. Although some members change from year to year, enough experienced convention planners usually remain to ensure an effective planning process.

## **BID COMMITTEE**

At least thirty (30) days prior to closing of the convention the Bid Committee makes a presentation. Once the convention has been awarded or authorized, the next step is organizing a full Convention Committee. The Convention Committee is charged with the responsibility of organizing and carrying out the convention in its entirety and being responsible to those they serve.

## **CONVENTION COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

All Convention Committee meetings should takes place at a regularly scheduled time and place, using the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, while keeping our tradition and concepts first and foremost. The purpose of these meetings is to gather and share information regarding the planning and carrying out of the convention. Effort should be made to encourage support and participation from all members. Care should also be exercised during the planning process to involve as many groups and individuals as possible. A description of Executive Committee members and duties is presented in these guidelines.

Voting privileges are extended to each member of the Convention Committee. Any member who holds an office or participates on a regular basis at the

Convention Committee meetings is considered a member. Subcommittee voting privileges are the same as the convention committee. All subcommittees hold separate meetings prior to Convention Committee meetings. The subcommittee chairpersons' submit reports, recommendations and other details about their areas of responsibility.

Convention Committee meetings are scheduled monthly until four months prior to the convention, at which time they take place every two weeks. It is advisable to schedule two or three hours to conduct Convention Committee meeting business. An agenda of format should be prepared prior to meetings.

## **CONVENTION COMMITTEE**

The Convention Committee is generally made up of members who were involved in the preliminary planning and bidding process. However, membership in the Convention Committee should be open to all members of the Fellowship. The Convention Committee consists of an Executive Committee and Subcommittee Chairpersons.

The Executive Committee and subcommittee chair positions are identified as follows:

1. Executive Committee

- A. Chairperson
- B. Vice-Chairperson
- C. Secretary
- D. Alternate Secretary
- E. Co. Treasurer
- F. Co. Treasurer
- G. Area Liaisons'

2. Subcommittee Chairpersons

- A. Hospitality..... 3 years clean time
- B. Security ..... 3 years clean time
- C. Fund-Raising ..... 5 years clean time
- D. Convention & Information..... 3 years clean time
- E. Registrations..... 5 years clean time
- F. Arts and Graphics ..... 3 years clean time
- G. Program ..... 5 years clean time
- H. Merchandising ..... 5 years clean time
- I. Entertainment ..... 5 years clean time

Requirements and qualifications suggested for the Executive Committee and subcommittee chairpersons of the convention are as follows:

1. Chairperson..... 5 years clean time
- Vice-Chairperson..... 4 years clean time
- Secretary..... 2 years clean time
- Treasurer..... 5 years clean time
2. Working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of N.A.
3. Willingness to give the time and resources necessary
4. Ability to exercise patience and tolerance
5. Active participation in Narcotics Anonymous
6. Any requirements and qualifications listed for the respective position

### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee carries out (executes) the conscience of the overall committee. It functions as the administrative committee of the convention. Its function is to ensure that the various subcommittees work together and to assist subcommittees which may need extra help.

However, it is not necessary for the Executive Committee to involve itself directly in the specific workings of each subcommittee. The members of the Executive Committee discuss the performance of subcommittees as well at the convention budget and other, matter which affect the convention. The results of these discussions are included in reports at Convention Committee meetings.

As soon as possible, the Executive Committee drafts a schedule of meeting dates for the Convention Committee. This schedule is then approved by the Convention Committee and distributed to all members. It is advisable to choose a particular days on which meetings will be held and schedule all meetings on that days throughout the duration of the planning period.

The Executive Committee also makes regular reports to the respective Area via Liaisons sponsoring the convention. Comments and suggestions from the sponsoring service committee are included in the Liaisons report at of each committee meeting.

### **CHAIRPERSON**

Five years clean time, demonstrated stability in local community, and administrative abilities. The responsibilities and qualifications of the Executive Committee are as follows:

1. The Chairperson is charged with assigning hotel liaisons to negotiate the contract with hosting facility and/or other entities (Local convention bureau, municipality, etc.)
2. Delegates Convention Committee procedural tasks as needed to ensure efficiency.
3. Organizes subcommittees and delegates major tasks to specific subcommittees. Stays informed of the activities of each subcommittee, and provides help when needed.
4. Helps resolve personality conflicts.
5. Keeps activities with the principle of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and of the convention.
6. Prevents important questions from being decided prematurely, in order to foster understanding by the entire committee prior to action.
7. Allows the subcommittees to do their jobs while providing guidance and support. Only major issues need be brought to the Convention Committee meeting. Subcommittees should be given trust and encouragement to use their own judgment.
8. Prepares, along with the secretary the agenda for Convention Committee meetings and Executive Committee meetings.
9. Chair the Convention Committee meeting as well as the convention.

### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

The Vice Chairperson should be personable and familiar with all committee members, in order to serve as a liaison between the subcommittee and the hosting community. If something should happen to the Chair the vice chair will resume the position of the Chair. If the Vice Chair has to resume another position on the Executive Committee/Subcommittee then the Secretary will resume the vice chair's responsibilities until the position has been filled

1. Acts as chairperson is the chairperson is unbillable

2. Coordinate subcommittees and attends subcommittee meetings, when necessary in order to ensure that they get the necessary support to do a good job
3. Works closely with the chairperson to help delegate responsibilities to subcommittee chairperson; keeps activities with the principle of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and of the convention.
4. Performs any other duties as needed to support the executive committee.

### **SECRETARY**

Service experience, good typing skills and general office skills to ensure those accurate minutes are distributed to the committee members. If something should happen to the vice chair or the vice chair has to resume another position on the Executive Committee/Subcommittee then the Secretary will resume the vice chair's responsibilities until the position has been filled

1. Keep minutes of all convention committee meetings including subcommittee written reports.
2. Distributes minutes to committee members after approval by the Executive Committee Chairperson. Minutes are distributed at least three (3) days prior to the next Convention Committee meeting via emails.
3. Maintains a list of names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers of committee members for committee use.
4. Keeps extra sets of minutes, updated after each committee meeting, for members who request a complete set.
5. Assists subcommittees in mailing and correspondence.
6. Keep a record of attendance for convention committee members.
7. Keeps activities with the principle of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and of the convention.

### **ALT. SECRETARY**

Assist secretary with their duties and responsibilities. Also needs to assume the duties of the secretary in the event of his/her absence.

### **CO. TREASURERS**

Five years clean time, demonstrated stability in the local committee, accounting skills, service experience with conventions or other large scale Fellowship activities and accessibility to other committee members, especially the Registration, Fund-Raising and Merchandising Subcommittees.

1. Opens a bank account for the Convention Committee. Usually the signatures required for the account are any two of four signatures which are the Convention Committee Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Co. Treasurers.
2. Works with the Executive Committee budget for the convention which is used for planning activities. The Executive Committee budget is based on the subcommittees' recommendations as to the monies; they will need to carry out their tasks. The budget can be a rough estimate at the beginning of the planning, and revised as the convention draws near. When all of the financial needs of the subcommittees are listed and totaled, the income should be outlined: one source of income comes from fund-raisers, second and third from registration and merchandise.
3. Write all checks and is responsible for collecting receipts from subcommittees for money paid out.
4. Responsible for all monies, including revenues from convention activities, pays all bills; and advises the chairperson on cash supply, income flow and rate of expenditures.
5. Reviews subcommittee reports for departures from the financial plan not mentioned in the original budget so that an accurate budget can be maintained. This information is included in the Treasurer's report, have a budget and stick to it.
6. Each check should require two signatures. Additionally, complete treasurer's report within thirty (30) days of the convention's closing it should be submitted to the sponsoring service committee along with fund distribution.

## **AREA LIAISONS'**

The Area Liaison is the go between the Convention Committee and the Areas. If there are any questions or concerns it will be the liaison responsibilities to present that information to the committee. Keeps activities with the principle of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and of the convention

## **BUDGETING NOTES**

The Hotels and Hospitality Committee, projects attendance figures before setting a budget. This is the most difficult area to budget because we can never really be sure of attendance until a few weeks prior to the convention. A reasonable projection of participation is a figure between 40 percent and 60 percent above the pre-registrations, depending on the efficiency of Fellowship communications. With regards to banquet tickets, prudence and caution should be used when estimating the number of tickets because this is one important area where a committee can fall into the red.

## **HOTEL LAISION**

The liaison is charged with negotiating the hotels. Working closely with programming, merchandising, registration, and entertainment will give the liaison an idea of how much meeting space, ballroom space, rooms, etc. will be needed for the convention to function properly.

The Hotel Liaison will submit, for approval, all hotel contracts and any catering proposals such as coffee, banquets, and brunches. Special attention should be given to the wording of any proposal. Beware of open end contracts or additional charges. Inform the hotel, as well as any other contractors who might be involved, that the Convention Committee is unable to pay for unexpected costs. Make them explain their bargain in detail, exerting yourself to be sure that there won't be any unexpected costs. Also make sure that they don't extend services which might be left unpaid.

Establish an arrangement so that a minimal number of individuals will have the authority to sign for services. Make it clear that the committee will only honor bills with specific signatures. Final approval of any contracts will be the responsibility of the Executive Convention Committee.

Information regarding transportation to the host site should be included on the convention flyer. Information regarding the location of airport, bus and train stations in relationship to the convention site is necessary for members to know. It helps them to make appropriate arrangements for their arrival.

Keep in mind that the majority of problems arise from poor communication. Good communication between the Hotel Liaison and all other subcommittee is extremely important. Almost everything that will be done by other committees will hinge on how well the Liaison performs and communicates.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Subcommittee membership is open to all members of N.A. in those Areas. Subcommittee chair should be mindful that the diversity of their respective committees will be monitored by the Executive Board to ensure that the Committee strives to adhere to this convention's theme, which is diversity, in its membership and the execution of its duties.

## **SELECTING A CHAIRPERSON**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

When selection a Sub-Committee Chair the duties and responsibilities associated with the task should be seriously considered. Experience has shown that a successful chairperson will have:

1. A good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts;
2. The willingness to serve, work hard, and the ability to motivate others;
3. The ability to deal effectively with people inside/outside the Fellowship;
4. Demonstrated trustworthiness, especially where funds are concerned.

Elected by Executive Committee members, the subcommittee chairperson should have general qualifications as outlined in the qualification section listed above. Specific service or vocational experience should be considered prior to election or appointment. It should be clearly understood that the subcommittees' have specific service responsibilities to perform.

Subcommittees are vital to the convention, and individuals should expect to be replaced if they are unable to serve for any reason. Naturally, relapse necessitates replacement; this is because we are as concerned for the member as we are for the service responsibility. Each subcommittee has only one chairperson who then recruits committee members. A list of committees is provided throughout the Area the convention serves in this manual. Other committees may be established if

needed. Experience has shown, however, that most other responsibilities can be incorporated within this framework.

All subcommittee should consist of a chairperson to conduct business meetings, make sure the duties of the committee are carried out and make progress reports to the Convention Committee; an alternate to act as chairperson if necessary; and a secretary to record the minutes of the subcommittee. Additional responsibilities may be added.

The work load of any one committee member will probably be determined by the size of the committee itself. There is probably no set formula for determining the size of this subcommittee. What worked for convention may not work for the next. However, there is a set of objectives that need to be accomplished. Perhaps it will be best to weigh these objectives out and then determine who, on this committee, will be able to perform what tasks.

Subcommittees meetings operate according to Robert's Rule of Order keeping our traditions and concepts first and foremost. This ensures that meetings run smoothly and that business is conducted in an orderly fashion. Each subcommittee chairperson should be aware of what responsibility each member has assumed, and make sure that every task assigned is carried out.

Subcommittees maintain accurate records of the activities of the committee as well as all correspondences. Financial reports, including needs, expenditures, and receipts are included with subcommittee report. The subcommittees of the Convention Committee work together. Remember cooperation and considerations are the keys that will make it work. Subcommittee meeting should be held prior to each Convention Committee Meeting.

## **MERCHANDISING**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Trustworthiness
5. Ability to manage deadlines
6. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our fellowship

Too often the merchandising efforts of the Convention Committee detract from the primary focus. The focus of any convention is the celebration of recovery. Our efforts to generate funds from our members should be based solely on what is necessary to ensure that the convention is successful. Every Convention

committee wants to be able to provide commemorative items for the convention attendees, however, the efforts do this should be done in such that a department store atmosphere is not created.

The Merchandising Subcommittee should be fairly business minded and have an understanding of the Twelve Traditions, especially regarding the sale of N.A. related items. The practice of allowing commercial vendors to sell their products at an N.A. convention violates our Sixth Tradition and should be strongly discouraged. Any funds Generated from an N.A. convention should be used to further enhance our Fellowship either locally or worldwide. Careful consideration should be made in negotiating the purchase price of items selected for sale. Usually different bids are submitted for consideration. A minimum of three bids are required for any and all purchases.

The Merchandising Subcommittee Chairperson prepares a budget consisting of the items to be sold and expenses incurred. This budget is then submitted to the Convention committee for approval. Attached to the budget should be complete summary of information regarding the ordering, marketing, and shipping of the items selected for sale at the convention (i.e. individual items prices, service charges, consignment agreement terms it applicable, and the time frames for obtaining the items). The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the sale of all merchandise.

The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for communicating the Hotel Liaison for provision of space of a store at the convention site. Store hours should be coordinated with the Hotel Liaison, Program and Entertainment Subcommittees to assure proper scheduling with the facility management. The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the storage of all items, in a secure place, and the delivery of all receipts promptly to the Convention Committee Treasurer along with an accurate list of remaining inventory. Following the convention a final statement of remaining inventory is given to the Treasurer. This should be provided no more than one (1) week from the closing date of the convention. This information should be included in the Treasurer's final convention report. In addition to the statement of remaining inventory the Treasurer should accompany merchandising committee members to ensure accountability.

One occasion there will be committee representatives from other N.A. conventions or similar activities (i.e. state, regional, world convention committee's) at a convention. Many times these committees would like to sell items from a previous or upcoming N.A. event. This should be allowed as long as it does not conflict with the merchandising effort or the sponsoring convention committee. One very practical approach is to establish a specific situation for the sponsoring committee, but also allows conventioners the opportunity to purchase items from these committees at one time and in one place. The Merchandising

Subcommittee coordinates arrangements to provide space with the Hotel Liaison and the Program Subcommittees. It is customary for the sponsoring committee to receive some type of advance notification of a committee's intention to be present to sell. This allows the host committee ample time to plan for the provision of space and the scheduling of the sale so as not to interfere with the convention program. It is important that the host committee be reasonable sure that such sale will benefit the Fellowship.

The merchandising subcommittee will solicit bids from vendors for the printing of the convention logo on T-shirts, suvs, etc. When all the bids are received, the sub-committee will screen the vendors and make suggestions to the convention committee regarding which vendors to use. Since this subcommittee has committed the time and effort to making these suggestions, heavy weight should be placed upon their suggestions by the convention committee. The subcommittee will also staff the merchandising space during the convention. It is suggested that a schedule be made and that all involved have a clear understanding of the schedule. Care should be taken when ordering merchandise. By working with registration and garnering the feedback from experienced committee members and other conventions, the committee should have a good idea as to how much merchandise to order. The convention does not want to be left with too much merchandise after the convention.

The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the acquisition and sale of N.A. Conference-approved literature and other items selected for sale at the convention.

Although these steps may seem a bit excessive they are necessary to ensure that proper accountability is always maintained. Additionally, using a set of established guidelines make merchandising much easier to handle. Finally, we have a responsibility to ensure that our Fellowship is the beneficiary of funds generated at N.A. conventions.

## **ARTS AND GRAPHICS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Trustworthiness
5. Ability to manage deadlines
6. Artistic Aptitude
7. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our fellowship

The Arts and Graphics Subcommittee is composed of members who are artistic and energetic. Prior to the convention, this committee is responsible for designing and/or printing a banner, program, tickets, flyers, convention posters, logos and directional posters.

The Chairperson of the Arts and Graphics Subcommittee develops a budget which includes all printing and other expenses. Once the budget is developed, it should be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. The Arts and Graphics Subcommittee should present a variety of designs for each item to the full Convention Committee in order to provide a choice of selections. The duties of the subcommittee include:

1. Develop a set of priorities and keep first thing first.
2. Encourage members with artistic talents to get involved.
3. Solicit the help of as many members as possible.
4. Find a large room in which to work; banner and poster makers need a lot of space.
5. Always present ideas and suggestions to the entire Convention Committee for feedback.
6. Always adhere to the group conscience of the Convention Committee, remembering that our Ultimate Authority is a loving God expressed through the group conscience.

The arts and graphics sub-committee is responsible for the convention logo. This sub-committee is responsible for the convention. The way that is typically done is by having a logo contest with some type of prize for the winner. (Free T-shirt, convention registration, etc.) Arts and graphic will receive the contest submissions, and after careful consideration, give the convention committee two or three to choose from. Arts and graphics also is responsible for any flyers that any sub-committee wants to distribute regarding convention business. This committee is responsible for the design of merchandise, banner(s), etc.

The N.A. logo, which will be in use on flyers, T-shirts, mugs, etc., is the property of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Our World Service Office holds the trademark on our logo and symbol. Special and serious are needs to be maintained in order to assure that the use of the N.A. logo is always in good taste and in keeping with our Twelve Traditions. Any N.A. service board or committee created through our Ninth Tradition may use the N.A. logo, as well as any Narcotics Anonymous group.

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Ability to manage deadlines
5. An aptitude for scheduling
6. Good organizational skills
7. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our Fellowship
8. Creativity and imagination

The entertainment sub-committee is responsible for entertainment during the convention. This includes but is not limited to dances, comedy, live music, etc. It is important that this committee understand that diversity is most important when finding entertainment for the convention. Within the constraints of our traditions, the theme of the convention, good taste, and the budget; there is no limitation on this committee's imagination and ideas. It is important that the committee schedule around programming. If there is to be entertainment at the banquet, this committee is responsible for that also.

### **PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Ability to manage deadlines
5. An aptitude for scheduling
6. Good organizational skills
7. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our fellowship
8. Willingness to travel to listen to speakers
9. Time available to listen to speaker tapes
10. A clear understanding of the N.A. message

Without a good program, the trouble and expense of putting on a convention isn't justified. The reports of the Program subcommittee should therefore be given appropriate attention.

The Program Subcommittee plans all the workshops and meetings at the Convention. The members of the Program Subcommittee select speakers, meeting chairs and others to help with the program. They schedule all program events to take place during the convention. They attempt to have a balance of workshops for newcomers, service-minded persons and spiritual discussions. One of the main problems in scheduling is the event of no-shows (people who don't call when they are unable to attend). The recommended procedure for speakers, chairpersons, readers or anyone else involved in the program is to note somewhere on the program or the registration package that a check-in table will be set up. Include the specific location and times. This way, all program participants can sign in, thus assuring the Program Subcommittee that they are willing and able to fulfill their responsibilities. In the event of a no-show, the Program Subcommittee should have a pool of members available from which to select replacements.

The basic qualification for participation on the program of an N.A. convention is membership in N.A. A speaker or workshop chair at a convention shares his/her personal experience of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Potential speakers and program participants are people who base their recovery on powerlessness over addiction, identify themselves as addicts and attend N.A. meetings at a N.A. convention. The best speakers for conventions are those who address recovery as if their lives, as well as the lives of the listeners, depend on it. It is important to keep in touch with speakers as the convention draws near and assist in any way possible to ensure their attendance.

Workshops are held to satisfy the needs of our membership of information or discussion on specific topics and services related to N.A. These workshops allow various aspects of the program and recovery. It is important to schedule similar workshops consecutively rather than at the same time. This allows interested members to attend an entire series of related workshops rather than having to choose between two or more workshops they would like to attend.

Taping the speakers and workshops allows members who are unable to attend all functions the opportunity of hearing them at home, or sharing them with others. Care should be taken to inform the speakers and/or workshop participants that they are being taped. When contracting with someone to record meetings, it should be clearly understood that the copyrights to the tapes are held by the Convention Committee.

Whenever funds are available, a speaker's travel expenses are paid, thereby assuring attendance and participation. Sometimes a complimentary room is provided to the participant as a way of deferring travel expenses. These financial considerations should be taken into account when the budget is being drawn up in order to provide the Program Subcommittee with an idea of available funds for securing speakers.

## **FUND-RAISING**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the Fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Ability to manage deadlines
5. An aptitude for scheduling
6. Good organizational skills
7. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our Fellowship
8. Creativity and imagination

New members not familiar with the Twelve Traditions may be confused by the concept of “fund-raising” in Narcotics Anonymous because it is not unlike the kind of fund-raising done in other organizations—even nonprofit organizations. We never, under any circumstances, accept any monetary contribution from any outside source. We affiliate ourselves with no one, choosing to be entirely self-supporting through our own contributions. In Narcotics Anonymous, whenever we do need to “raise funds,” we fund-raise from our own membership.

With the adoption of these guidelines, surplus convention funds are divided by the group conscience of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, as expressed.

The experiences of many regions are areas in that fund-raising for conventions is extremely important as it generates interest and support from the local N.A. community, in addition to raising money. Our guidelines do not prohibit groups, areas or regions from hosting fund-raisers on behalf of conventions. We would, however, caution against placing an unreasonable financial drain on local resources for funds in support of the conventions, while at the same time welcoming activities which motivate attendance by increasing awareness of how conventions—like meetings—help us as members in our personal recovery. Any fund-raising should be well planned, discuss with the convention committee.

Conventions will probably continue to have a need for a fund-raising committee. This subcommittee would plan and carry out activities such as dances and picnics and will need to interface with other subcommittees such as C&I, Arts & Graphics, and the Convention Committee in order to successfully complete its projects.

This subcommittee also has responsibility for entertainment activities, selecting the bands or disc jockeys to be used at all fund-raising. They also arrange for all other forms of entertainment which are provided fund raisers for the convention.

Activities can be held throughout the year. Communication about your events is extremely important. A list of planned functions should be prepared and distributed through the area and regional service structure to the groups you serve to spark interest, encourage participation and support. Functions which are successful are well planned and publicized. Poor turn out and unsuccessful fund-raisers can generally be traced back to a lack of planning and/or exposure within the local N.A. community.

Care should be exercised concerning the concept and design of flyers. This is especially critical because many of these flyers find their way into hospitals, institutions and other facilities which relate to N.A. Appropriate use of language and graphics is crucial; these flyers may represent N.A. to the public. Utilize the expertise of the Arts and Graphics Subcommittee.

Use of the convention “theme” for fund-raising events is more likely to excite and increase the local members’ involvement in the upcoming convention. Refer to the Twelve Traditions for guidance in deciding appropriate fund raising activities.

In conclusion, fund-raising events for conventions should be held first to generate interest and support for the convention, and second to raise money. All fund-raising events held in support of the conventions should include an explanation as to why money is needed. Finally, all of our events, be they raise money or simply to provide entertainment for our Fellowship, should always be in good taste, consistent with our spiritual principals, and set a tone which emphasizes caring and sharing the N.A. way.

## **HOSPITALITY**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the Fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Ability to manage deadlines
5. An aptitude for scheduling
6. Good organizational skills

Once the task of selecting a convention site is complete, the Hospitality Subcommittee can begin planning to host the Fellowship. To assist in this planning, it will be necessary to adopt and implement the procedures, or a reasonable facsimile, as they are outlined in this section. Care should be exercised in the development of this committee to insure that the tasks assigned to it are properly accomplished.

The first objective is to project an attendance figure to help determine the amount of meeting space which will be needed. The projected figure need not be accurate, although using criteria from previous conventions should help the committee to project a reasonable figure from which to work.

Once the committee has become comfortable with the projected attendance figure, they can plan how much meeting space will be needed, how the space can be utilized most effectively, and what would be the lowest possible expense. It would be wise to have alternate plans of action if the actual attendance should be higher or lower than the projected figure of attendance. Keep in mind the need for unscheduled meeting rooms. They will also set, stock, and monitor the hospitality suites.

## **SECURITY**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Twelve Concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the Fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Ability to manage deadlines
5. An aptitude for scheduling
6. Good organizational skills

This subcommittee does security for the convention. It is important that they understand the fact that they are not police officers. If there is a situation where someone is being unruly and needs to be removed; call the police. No one is authorized to use force. This subcommittee provides escorts for the treasurer when the rounds are made to collect money. There is also a security person stationed at all points where money is exchanged. Security should be as tolerant of people as possible during the convention. We do not want to mar anyone's experience due to an overzealous security person. At the same time, we don't want one person or group to ruin the experience for other addicts. Most importantly, we want Narcotics Anonymous to be able to return to the facility if we choose. This idea is for everyone to enjoy the convention.

Security is necessary whenever large functions take place in order to maintain harmony between the hotel and the convention. Most hotels have rules and by signing the contract the committee indicates agreement with those rules. Every attempt should be made to maintain harmony and reduce the negative reflection on N.A. or future conventions. However, security decisions should remain with the Executive Committee and the hotel staff.

## CONVENTION INFORMATION

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts;
2. The willingness to serve, work hard, and ability to motivate other;
3. The ability to deal effectively with people inside/outside the Fellowship;
4. Demonstrated trustworthiness, especially where funds are concerned.

The Convention & Information Subcommittee may actually be considered a two-part committee. This committee, as the name indicates, serves the purpose of providing information about the convention both to N.A. members and certain nonmembers. These two jobs are handled very differently and, because of the resulting contacts with non-N.A., those members chosen to serve on C&I must have a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions, especially as they apply to Convention & Information and personal anonymity.

Convention & Information provided by C&I may include a description of the planned event, dates, locations and other pertinent information. It is always important that convention subcommittees work closely together and because of the work which C&I is responsible for, it is especially important for them to maintain close contact. All information must be up-to-date and accurate.

There should be no reason to promote the convention. It is an event of sharing and fellowship, and needs no "advertisement." It is, however, the duty of C&I subcommittee to communicate to all concerned persons and agencies about the coming events and encourage their participation. This is done in a spirit of providing information rather than of promoting N.A. or its activities.

The C&I Subcommittee chairperson has the sensitive task of encouraging a large attendance without abandoning the principle of "attraction rather than promotion." Some of the following experience and suggestions are helpful in keeping all C&I efforts within the dignity and spirit of N.A.:

1. Under C&I: Preparation; prints and distribution all flyers, programs and a map of the area, if necessary. Distribution is usually accomplished by handing out or mailing the information to the GSR'S and RCM's in the hosting region with additional mailings to other RSC's and WSO for inclusion in the N.A. Way. Flyers and personal phone contact numbers can be distributed freely within N.A. groups at regular meetings places, but even here, attraction is our aim and discretion and good taste should prevail.
2. Outside The Fellowship: Pre-convention informational activities of the C&I Subcommittee's activities outside the Fellowship should be extended only to

those hospitals, treatment centers and similar agencies which provide direct service to addicts. The purpose of this is to attempt to bring addicts in the hospital, treatment centers and similar agencies which provide direct service to addicts. The purpose of this is to attempt to bring addicts in the hospitals, treatment center, or facility to the convention. This is in keeping with our primary purpose. The H&I subcommittee in the respective areas should be asked to help by providing names and addresses of those agencies and institutions which are already aware of the Fellowship and have H&I panels currently operating. Addresses of other agencies which have direct contact with addicts may be available from the area or regional P&I subcommittee. A short cover letter to agencies should be included with the convention flyers or other information being mailed. The letter might be a simple statement acknowledging their ongoing support of recovery from addiction and a request that their clients be informed of the upcoming convention.

If the treatment centers are residential, a request might be made that the Convention Committee be advised about the number of residents they expect to attend. This information would then be turned over to the Registration Committee. A member of the C&I Subcommittee may be assigned to the registration desk to greet and assist members and staff from treatment centers. Assuring that institutionalized addicts have the chance to attend a convention serves our primary purpose by showing them and the staff that there are indeed clean, recovering addicts in the outside world.

The C&I Subcommittee do not do the type of work that is commonly associated with public information. C&I committees inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous, and the majority of that information is share with non-addicts, often in the form of community presentations. The community at large is not included in the C&I Subcommittee's efforts of distributing information about the convention. Letters or general announcements to professionals, other than those mentioned above, would not benefit the celebration of recovery which a convention represents. A convention is not an appropriate setting for a community presentation. Neither is it a beneficial time or place to encourage media participation.

It is recommended that pre-convention press releases to print and/or visual media sources be avoided. Anonymity, non-affiliation and "attraction rather than promotion" are just some of our principles which can be easily, although unintentionally, violated if the press is encouraged to attend a convention.

It is, however, a good idea for the C&I Subcommittee to prepare a press packet to have available at the registration desk in case a reporter does show up. All members staffing the registration desk should be informed that if a reporter

inquires they should give him/her a packet and immediately direct the reporter to a member of C&I Subcommittee. A well informed, knowledgeable C&I Subcommittee member should be readily available to accommodate the report's needs or questions. If pre-arranged, and whenever necessary or possible, a special room (press room may be made available for just those occasions. That room would need to be staffed during designated hours by members of the C&I Subcommittee, Security Committee. C&I Subcommittee works closely with the World in all matters relating to public information and convention information at these conventions. The experience of C&I subcommittees should also be sought and utilized by convention subcommittees. The C&I committee can help put together a press packet and may also be helpful as volunteers in the press room or at registration.

A serious danger exists with respect to conventions and inappropriate activity in the area of Convention & Information. In the non-N.A. sphere of activities, conventions are most frequently used as media events. In this way, social service, business and religious organizations encourage public attention to their activities, members, goals and objectives. N.A. on the other hand, if we are to live within our Traditions, should avoid this form of public information or promotional activity.

Convention & Information should be available at all conventions as a precaution, should any media discover the convention and desire to report about it. The Public Relation Subcommittee should be prepared to convey to interested media members the appropriate ways in which they can correctly report activities of the convention and at the same time not endanger the anonymity of members or allow the media to convey promotion rather than attraction.

Convention & Information endeavors should be encouraged with respect to increased participation from hospital treatment programs and institutions, so that their staff, patients and residents might be encouraged to attend and benefit from the convention experience.

Conventions are transitory activities and should not have an impact on the public relation plans and programs of the local N.A. membership in whose community the convention is being held. The tendency to capitalize on the "event" of a convention to promote N.A. through the local media is inappropriate and violation of our Traditions.

## **REGISTRATION**

Subcommittee Chair should possess:

1. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve concepts
2. Ability to deal with people inside and outside the Fellowship
3. Ability to work well with others
4. Trustworthiness
5. Ability to manage deadlines
6. Willingness to embrace the diversity of our Fellowship

Usually the first people conventions attendees meet are those members manning the registration tables. How well they are greeted in many ways sets the tone for how well the convention comes off. Smooth, prompt, orderly, and hospitable services are key ingredients to successful registrations. Therefore, organization and planning by this committee is very important.

The Registration Subcommittee is one of the busiest committees of every convention. Although it's most intensive work is completed in the weeks just prior to and during the convention, its responsibilities begin with the advance planning. This advance planning by the committee includes drafting the flyers and forms, which must be done well in advance (at least five or six months prior to the convention date) in order to allow sufficient time for review by the full committee. The mailing schedule for flyers and pre-registration forms should also be established at this time.

The development of the convention flyer should be a cooperative effort between the Registration and the Arts and Graphics Subcommittees.

The Registration Subcommittee should develop the convention registration form. This form is customarily placed at the bottom of the Convention Flyer. After the convention flyer is completed, it is given to the Convention & Information Subcommittee for distribution.

The number of members needed for this committee will depend on the anticipated attendance and length of registration hours. It is not advisable to have the same members working five to eight hours without a break or a few members handling registration for a large rush of people. Therefore, the creation of shifts and work teams is important. The first flyer announcing the convention should be made as soon as the dates are established and a contract or agreement is reached with the hotel. In this manner, participants will have an opportunity to schedule vacations or make other arrangements to attend the convention. This advance flyer can be distributed even if complete registration forms or convention fees have not been set. The flyer can be sent to the World Service Office so the convention can be mentioned in the N.A. Way. The committee should also do a direct mailing to N.A. members listed on attendance rosters of previous conventions.

When pre-registration and arrival registration information is available, the Registration Subcommittee may prepare a finalized flyer. Copies of convention flyer, and registration forms, should also be sent to the WSO for N.A. Way inclusion and sent to all members on the mailing list. The WSO N.A. Way includes announcements of conventions, and reaches thousands N.A. members around the world, at no cost to the Convention Committee. It is an excellent way of circulating information about the convention.

Care should be exercised in the production of flyers and registration forms. They should be clear and informative, not confusing. Flyers should be attractive but need not be ornate or expensive.

The finalized flyer, with registration forms, should be sent at least four months prior to the convention date and again about forty-five days prior to the convention. In this way, members can make plans to attend and those who have forgotten or delayed in registering are reminded. Sometimes convention planning committee generates additional activities which are not scheduled when the original convention schedule was announced. The final mailing, at forty-five days prior to the convention, can be used to provide announcements of those changes or new activities.

A clear understanding should be reached between the Registration Subcommittee Chairperson, the full committee, and the Convention Committee Treasurer on the procedures for handling registrations and money. One person should be assigned of picking up registrations from the committee's post office box or business address at least two or three times a week. Registration form records should be maintained on a weekly basis and all money received transferred to the Convention Committee Treasurer prior to full Convention Committee meetings.

## **REASONS FOR DISMISSAL**

1. Poor attendance
2. Misappropriation of funds
3. Relapse while holding a position
4. In the event that an Executive Committee or Subcommittee Chair falls under one of the aforementioned reasons for dismissal, the Chair will converse with the Executive Committee. If the chair is the person in question, the Vice Chair will converse the Executive Committee. The committee will give the person in questions a minimum of 10 (ten) days' notice that the Executive Committee will

be meeting to determine whether or not said person should be dismissed. Said person will be allowed to hear any accusations of evidence. That person will then be allowed to present any reason or evidence on their behalf. The committee will then have a closed meeting to discuss the facts. At that point a vote will be taken and a simple majority vote will decide if the person should or should not be dismissed. In the event the vote is even split, the committee will ask for the vote of the Program Chair. If the Program Chair is the unavailable or the person in question, the fundraising Chair will be deciding vote.

### **MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The purpose of this section is to focus on the most significant questions asked by Convention Committee. Presented are responses developed from the best experience available.

1. What about N.A. members who are unable to pay registration and/or banquet fees. Should they be allowed to attend for free?

First, the purpose of registration must be addressed. The registration fee is designed to defer the costs incurred for the facilities and functions of the convention. As outlined in the body of the handbook, these costs will vary and at times be unpredictable. Registration fees are not intended as a charge for meetings. Keep in mind that no convention has indicated they have turned away an addict who was unable to pay. However, there are methods in which this can be handled.

The most popular method is to provide a place at the registration desk where an individual with no money can go and a committee representative, responsible for making this type of determination, can be found. Members of the committee should be instructed to send people to this area to solve these problems when they occur.

However, specific reference to this is not announced or written. Policy on this matter should be developed by the committee as a whole, long before the convention is held. Prior notification from an institution or hospital of the number of residents planning to attend who may have an inability to pay would be helpful and should be encouraged by the committee in advance of the convention. In this way the full committee can participate in developing a policy to handle these situations. Due to the sensitive nature of the problem it is essential that all members of the committee working in the registration area be informed of the procedures involved and who the Convention Committee members are who are authorized to discuss and act on these requests.

## 2. How do we set registration and banquet prices in relationship to the costs?

The section on the Registration Committee, as discussed in this handbook, is intended to explain the major, if not all, factors related to costs incurred for convention facilities, functions and activities. The registration price should only be set after a careful examination of budgets and estimated attendance. Once this has established, committees should consider the possibility of under budgeting and an incorrect estimation of attendance. If this should occur and the registration price was set low, the ramifications could be devastating to the committee and the Fellowship.

Careful consideration should be taken to allow for this possibility in establishing the registration price. Keep in mind that extra revenue will go to furthering our primary purpose.

Banquet prices are usually formulated from a fixed amount negotiated with the hotel. The common problem which occurs is that hotels only negotiate on the price for the meals and not the tax and gratuity which accompany all prices. So careful focus on this is essential in determining the price of the banquet ticket.

Once the price for the meals, tax and gratuity are established, attention should be placed on the possibility of not making the estimated banquet count. Hotels require prior notification of the number of persons attending the banquet. They must prepare the right number of meals and therefore if you are way under the agreed number, the committee must still pay for unused meals. If the committee is fortunate and has a number in excess of the agreed number of meals, the restaurant may be able to accommodate the situation if given enough time. If not, the committee must be careful not to oversell the number of banquet tickets. The situation is made more complex when special diets may be requested or required, as these usually have different prices from the regular meals.

All of these factors should be taken into consideration when establishing the banquet price. Most conventions have found it practical to charge a standard price even if some of the dinners will cost less. In this manner the committee can balance low attendance, unexpected additional meals costs and meet other expenses related to the banquet.

## 3. Who provides for the basic tasks of convention set up and break down? How does security fit into the Convention Committee scheme of things? This function is sometimes referred to in some conventions as the Bulldog Committee, Blood Sweat and Tears Committee and the Operations Committee.

4. What about special interests? To what extent should special meetings or activities be provided at the convention?

N.A. conventions are many things to many people, but most N.A. members would agree that the convention is primarily a celebration of our shared recovery, a living testimony to our worldwide unity, and a public statement of our common purpose—to help the addict who still suffers.

We believe that N.A. conventions are not an appropriate place for special interest meetings of Narcotics Anonymous. Conventions offer an opportunity for recovering addicts from different back-grounds and lifestyles to learn about each other and, by doing so, break down any remaining barriers between us. The more we know about each other the more we can help each other.

It is recommended, therefore, that convention committees be particularly sensitive to the differences in backgrounds of N.A. members and be careful to select N.A. speakers who represent a variety of experiences and lifestyles and who carry a message of commonality and unity in recovery.

### **COMBINED AREA CONVENTIONS**

A Convention Committee should be a subcommittee of the hosting or sponsoring areas. This places the convention within the N.A. service structure via the Ninth Tradition by making it a committee directly responsible to those it serves. This point needs special emphasis. The Convention Committee is totally responsible to the hosting service committees and exists only because those service committees formed it. Any convention reporting to a branch of the N.A. service structure is not responsible to the Fellowship and hence is not an N.A. convention.

The Convention Committee should be allowed sufficient leeway to perform its responsibilities and should not bog down the host service committee with routine business matters that can be handled within the Convention Committee. Also, the Convention Committee area liaisons should give a report of the committee's activities at each of the hosting service committee meetings. This keeps the areas in touch with how things are going and enables them to provide support and guidance when needed. As with any subcommittee of area services, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the hosting areas should also keep in close contact with the Convention Committee and its officers.

Conventions, as in any service sponsored by N.A. service boards or committees, should conform to N.A. principles and focus on our primary purpose of carrying the message. If problems occur, they are the responsibility of the host service committee.

We should be prepared to closely evaluate all legal and financial commitments before entering into them. When these problems occur they substantially impair the ability of the local membership to provide N.A. service.

Financial benefit may be gained from holding a convention but should not be the major purpose. This tends to divert us from our primary purpose and a large amount of funds can disrupt a service structure as much as a total lack of funds.

## **LEGAL AND CORPORATE MATTERS**

The guidelines governing this type of convention and its activities should be “combined” effort of a convention committee/corporation. The corporation should be made up of members from all the regions within the boundaries where the convention will be held. This corporation is responsible for the convention and its activities just like an ASC. In order to accommodate a “service board” of this type, it must still be responsible to an element of the service structure.

Conventions of Narcotics Anonymous as defined by the Fellowship are celebrations of recovery. Although the intent is only to celebrate recovery, as the convention interacts with outside individuals and corporations, it forces us to act like a business enterprise also. It is this business-like behavior that forces the convention into the public arena where it is subject to other outside enterprise and possibly public attention. Due to this, it is essential that all conventions conduct their work within the framework of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. It is imperative that, as a convention grows, the reality of these business-like needs be addressed for the protection of each member as well as Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

Among the important aspects of this business-like activity is the financial liability that such events entail. The committee responsible for the convention is financially liable for injuries, damages and financial loss resulting from the convention. If the committee is properly organized and protected, the individual members of the convention Committee would not normally be liable for damages or suit.

However, if the convention is not properly organized or protected, then the member who signs the contract and others on the committee are liable. If the convention is organized on behalf of Narcotics Anonymous (which they all are) then all those assets connected to Narcotics Anonymous may become liable if injury or loss results. So, the reality of liability both from a contractual and public injury standpoint is fearfully present. Our duty is to be responsible and to ensure that Narcotics Anonymous is not brought into public controversy. This will protect N.A. assets from being exposed as a result of litigation. As a member of Narcotics Anonymous and the Convention Committee, you have the direct responsibility for the integrity of convention affairs handled on behalf of Narcotics Anonymous.

The most logical methods of protection are forming a nonprofit corporation and/or obtaining the necessary liability insurance. These lend protection to the members involved in the N.A. service committee and allow for a more formal approach to dealing with the public. When planning a regional or area convention, if there is a regional service office that has been incorporated, it is possible to utilize this existing corporation rather than create another. If a regional office does not exist, then a temporary convention corporation may be formed pending the establishment of a regional office.

Once a regional office corporation has been established, consideration should be given to having the office take over legal responsibility for the convention and having the convention corporation dissolved. This will allow consistency, continuity and unity within the Fellowship. In any case, all corporations must be guided by the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous and be directly accountable to the N.A. community that create them.

There are some misconceptions about conventions and corporations that create conflict. Hopefully, the following statements will provide clarification on some of those misconceptions.

1. A convention should incorporate to allow for its bills to be paid and avoid liability if the committee has overestimated its income or funds have been embezzled.

If the corporation was willing to go bankrupt and not pay its bills this would be true. However, the principles of our program require us to be responsible for our actions. This then requires our members (whether a corporation exists or not) to assume responsibility for their actions. This makes it essential that caution be taken when estimating registration, banquet counts, T-shirts sale, etc., and that good personal conduct of our members is exercised at the convention. It is also important to obtain liability insurance to protect against unexpected events.

2. A corporation will automatically be allowed tax exemption. This is not true. However, an application can be made by the corporation or the committee to the Internal Revenue Service and the state tax agency for tax exemption. Approval can take up to two years before exempt status is officially granted. During this period the corporation may not be allowed to take advantage of the tax exempt status.

3. A Convention Committee or corporation is autonomous and not part of Narcotics Anonymous, thus the committee or corporation can function as an independent entity answering only to itself.

This is a grave misconception and may be devastating to the members of that committee or corporation. Based on the principles of our program, N.A. conventions are part of N.A. and, as a celebration of recovery, are a service of N.A. Therefore, regardless of legal title, a gathering of addicts for the purpose of recovery is Narcotics Anonymous, and an organization created by these members to facilitate its function must then be governed by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. This makes their actions a direct reflection of Narcotics Anonymous. So, no N.A. service committee or corporation is autonomous from the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The corporation and Convention Committee must be responsible to a service branch of N.A. for it to qualify as an N.A. convention.

4. It is mandatory to form a corporation when having a convention.

This is not true. There are other avenues available. Extreme care should be taken when evaluating whether or not a convention needs the protection of a corporate structure. It is important to contact the WSO and/or an attorney in determining whether to incorporate or not.

If your region or area is planning to form a corporation, the following process should be followed:

- 1) Contact the WSO for assistance and information.
- 2) Contact an attorney in the region/area where the corporation is to be formed.
- 3) Develop by-laws to be approved by the region/area and submit the required applications to the state in which the corporation is to be formed.
- 4) There are certain forms that need to be filed whether incorporated or not: one is the Application for Federal Tax Identification Number. This simple form is used to get the I.D. number necessary to open bank accounts and transact other types of business. This number does not entitle its holders to tax exempt status.

It is not possible within these guidelines to provide a uniform set of by-laws, and other paper work necessary to form a corporation, due to the varying corporate legalities that exist in different states. The WSO can provide you with guidance and language that relates to the Fellowship and aid in your aims of becoming responsible to the Fellowship.

## **FUND DISTRIBUTION**

An important consideration for a Convention Committee is the start up funds to be set aside for the following year's convention. In regional or combined states conventions, a prudent reserve should be retained for this purpose. The amount of the prudent reserve to be set aside should be determined by the Convention Committee and approved by the regional service committee. The amount should be entered into the convention's operational by-laws (a reasonable prudent reserve is \$4,000.00). Increasing the prudent reserve should require, (1) a vote by the hosting area service committees. It is extremely important that all convention matters concerning prudent reserve be voted on by both the Convention Committee and the area service committee member in order to allow objective input from the area service committees whose concerns are separate from the functional aspects of the convention.

The area votes are brought through the liaisons after their respective areas have given them their decisions. The liaisons vote their areas' conscience. The other vote is the convention's chair. This way the convention committee and the areas are equally represented.

Once a prudent reserve has been established, the next consideration will be the surplus funds over and about the prudent reserve. A Convention Committee's main task is to facilitate a convention for the purpose of celebrating recovery. Excess funds as a result of the convention will be equally disbursed to the participating areas.

When turning over excess funds to the area service committees, the Convention Committee Treasurer should provide a financial statement for the area service committees' review. This will allow the convention committee to terminate its existence and allow the new host committee to begin the next convention.

If all conventions follow these practices, whether the convention is part of one area or services several areas, the development of a prudent reserve and distribution of surplus funds as indicated will further maintain unity within our Fellowship. There will also be a significant reduction in the personality conflicts within the committee and the casting of unwarranted suspicion on the members of the Convention Committee. Therefore, as the convention attains its prudent reserve, the need for fund-raising to produce the convention will be greatly reduced and eventually eliminated. In addition, the regional service committee will be unaffected, financially, as a result of hosting a convention to celebrate recovery.

We must remember that we have only one need for money in N.A. and that is to further our primary purpose which is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.