

# Basic Text Project Update

## Are you participating?

This is the last *NA Way* issue before the end of the review and input period for the Sixth Edition Basic Text—so this is the last chance we have to urge you to sign up to review the draft. Input is due by 28 February 2007. To receive a paper copy of the draft or instructions on how to download an electronic copy, you can either write to

NA World Services  
19737 Nordhoff Place  
Chatsworth, CA 91311 USA

or you can sign up online to receive a copy: [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt).

Thousands of members have already signed up! By the end of October 2006, we had already mailed more than 3100 paper copies and more than 2100 electronic copies had been downloaded. The input is starting to come in, and the project workgroup is reading through your ideas and recommending changes to the draft.

Many of you have already written to tell us you appreciate the increased diversity in the collection—the international quality of the collection and the greater breadth of experience living clean, among other things. We are getting plenty of ideas on how to improve the text, but overall the input is quite positive so far.

## The project

We have also fielded some calls and emails about the project itself. Some of you have wondered about the origins of the project—how it came to be—and our process—how we made decisions about what to include in the collection. It's not possible in the space we have here to answer all of the questions you may have, but we can briefly touch on some of the background. More information about the project is available online at [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt).

The origins of the project stretch back many years. Work on the revision itself began after a motion passed at the 2004 World Service Conference. That motion was included in the *Conference Agenda Report*, published in November 2003 (December for the languages other than English), and subsequently discussed throughout the fellowship. But the passage of that motion was not just the beginning of something (this project); it was also the end of something (six years of evaluation about the issue). During that time, we formed a workgroup and devoted a project to the question of literature revision, surveyed the fellowship twice, had numerous discussions about the issue, and published reports in *NAWS News* and the conference publications. Since work on the revision began, we have also been using *The NA Way* and the World Wide Web to publish updates. And yet, there are members who are only now hearing about the Basic Text project. One of the long-standing challenges we have in NA service, at all levels, is communication. The challenge is ongoing and far larger than one particular project, but we hope the thousands of mailing requests and downloaded copies of the draft represent some progress for us.

## The process

Within the workgroup itself, one of the ways we improved communication was to develop an online database tool for workgroup members to register evaluations of the stories (both the new submissions and the existing stories). Each new submission was put through the same evaluation process, which

involved, at one stage, rating the pieces according to criteria such as recovery content, quality, style, structure, and how it fits into the work as a whole. The evaluation process was “blind,” meaning the submissions were evaluated anonymously, and if a workgroup member did know the identity of the writer, he or she could opt out of evaluating that piece. The existing stories were also ranked, by the workgroup and board members, alongside the new submissions using the same set of criteria. We knew we wanted to preserve some of the existing stories for their historical value, as well, without sacrificing quality. As you might expect, some of the decisions were awfully difficult. But we are confident we have done our best to evaluate all of the pieces fairly and objectively.

Now we are on to the next set of tough tasks. We are trying to find pieces to fill some of the obvious gaps in the collection. Ideally we would like, for instance, to be able to include something from India, Iran, or Eastern Europe, to name just a few of the places from which we see a need for more material. At the same time, we are beginning to get input on the draft from the fellowship. Reading through all of the input, compiling it, and making decisions about it is an exciting but daunting prospect. Nonetheless, we hope you’ll make it even tougher for us by sending us lots of ideas.

❖ We hope to hear from you ❖

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