



NSAC News

National Spiritualist Association of Churches, Lily Dale, New York

www.nsac.org

February 2017

Letter from The President

February 1, 2017

During the course of my tenure as your President, and in an effort to reduce the excessive expenditures of NSAC, I have been shocked in the past five months to discover irregularities. As distasteful as it is, I find myself in a position of having to address occurrences that are certainly unethical and in my opinion, most probably unlawful.

I am publicly asking at this time for those involved to come forward as I offer to address with you, one-on-one in private and in confidence, to resolve these issues and to avoid public embarrassment. This is a one-time offer. If you have any concern, please contact me immediately.

This is being brought before members of NSAC as a public announcement—to avert the shock that I have suffered, and in the event that the individuals involved do not voluntarily step forward and I am forced to initiate disciplinary action under NSAC Bylaws. I am obligated ethically and morally, under my fiduciary responsibility to you as your President, to act.

—Rev. Christine Krithades
President

Spiritualist Healing Update

In a letter dated February 2 to all NSAC pastors, credentialed workers, and students, Christine Krithades notifies each about the Spiritualist healing resolution passed by delegates at last year's convention. Delegates voted to "require healers of the NSAC to conduct healing by touching only from the shoulders and above and asking the sitter before the touching [healing] begins."

Spiritualist Healing policy documents are being consolidated and revised to include this change and to be a comprehensive statement of NSAC's healing policy.

Bobbie Caswell Joins Headquarters Staff

Bobbie Caswell joined the NSAC staff early in January. Bobbie is a native of Western New York and a graduate of Fredonia State University. She earned her Masters degree in Library Science at Buffalo State University. She recently retired as Assistant Director after 16 years with the James Prendergast Library in Jamestown, New York. She has worked with community organizations, and was a member of the Jamestown Strategic Planning and Partnership Commission when she retired.

Caswell has been an active volunteer, working with Literacy Volunteers of America. She is a board member of that association in Chautauqua County and serves on the board of the Lily Dale Assembly as secretary. As a member of the Lily Dale Spiritualist Church, she serves as a healer, medium, and lecturer.

"... It is so peaceful here,
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office."

In 2015, Bobbie moved to Lily Dale. She says, "I am still surprised at how much I love living here. Even my animals enjoy it; one of my cats is the official greeter on our street! It is so peaceful here, and that atmosphere continues into the NSAC office."

Saving Our Spiritualist Churches, Report 4

Saving Our Spiritualist Churches: NSAC Delegates to the Rescue Report 4 is the final segment of responses to the workshop questionnaire completed during NSAC Convention 2016. The workshop presenters, Christine Krithades and James Ehrhart extend our thanks to the 102 delegates who interactively completed the 29 ques-

tions as the workshop proceeded. Each delegate, responding to the questions, provides a great advisory service to NSAC.

For this February issue of *NSAC News*, questions 23 through 29 are reported. A few comments follow question statistics. See additional two-page EXTRA-EXTRA for Report 4.

The complete results, with all comments, verbatim, will be reported to NSAC Trustees and available as a PDF file to any member who wants a copy. (Request copy by email to nsacinfo@nsac.org showing subject as *SOSC Report*.)

Nomination for NSAC Awards Closes March 31

March 31 is the deadline for nominations for an NSAC Award. Awards are presented at the Annual Convention in October, in four categories: Teacher Award, Literary Award, Outstanding Achievement Award, and Lifetime Service Award. Nominations must be on NSAC Form 14, Nomination for Award, available on the NSAC website forms page, www.nsac.org/member-pages/forms. Guidelines for submission are on the back of the form.

Healing Center Director Named

Laura Hansen, CH, last month was named director of the NSAC Healing Center. Laura is a member of Spiritual Science of Life Church in San José, California

The Healing Center receives requests for Absent Spiritual Healing and publishes the names of those requesting healing on a list updated monthly. Names are listed for two months unless removal sooner is requested. Names may be resubmitted if need continues.

In order to respect personal privacy, names to be placed on this national healing list must be with permission either from the person wanting the

healing or their caretaker. Names should include first and last name (*or initial*), in order for healing to better target the intended recipient. Each person in a family or group should be listed individually.

Names for healing can be emailed to the NSAC Healing Center at nsachealing@nsac.org or sent through the NSAC website Contact page at nsac.org/contact. Laura will be glad to hear from you.

Nominating Committee Appointed

NSAC's Nominating Committee for 2017 has been appointed. They include Chair Tracy Bolton, Summerland Spiritualist Church of the Comforter, Santa Barbara, California; Lelia Cutler, The Memorial Spiritualist Church, NSAC, Norfolk, Virginia; and Lorraine Radice, Church of Spiritual Growth, NSAC, Burlington, Massachusetts. Information on NSAC Trustee positions expiring at this year's convention and how to contact the Committee will be announced soon.

NSAC Certification

This column continues the series which began in August, and appeared in August, September, October, and January editions. Selected questions are from *Questions and Answers about NSAC Certification*. Further information about certification should be directed to June Killmer, Director, NSAC Department of Education at junekillmer@surewest.net.

Q What is the responsibility of the examination committee?

A The Examination Committee proctors the examination by seeing that no notes or other resource material are used in completing the examination.

Q Who appoints the examination committee chair?

A The church board appoints the examination committee chair unless the church is affiliated with a state association, in which case the state

association board appoints the chair. In cases where there is no one nearby, who is eligible to chair, assistance will be provided by the Director of the NSAC Department of Education.

Q Who grades the essays?

A The essays are graded by NSAC trustees holding equal credential to that being tested, or higher.

Q Who grades the written exams?

A The written exam is graded by the NSAC Examination Committee, composed of three trustees with the appropriate credential.

Q If the applicant is applying for Ordination or NST, what other considerations are there?

A The General Information and Essay sections of an examination must be completed and received by the NSAC Department of Education 30 days prior to the Pre-Annual Convention Trustee Meeting or the Trustee Spring Meeting. This requirement is necessary so that travel plans can be made by the applicant, and that the NSAC Trustees will have sufficient time to complete the process, and notify the applicant of the time and place of their examination.

Q Should an applicant take more than one exam at a time?

A It is recommended that applicants complete one examination at a time. Sometimes applicants for Ordination and NST want to take the examinations at the same time. This should be discussed with the Director of the NSAC Department of Education.

Reminders

March 26: Gratitude Day (See NSAC Bylaws Article XVI, Section 4 for details)

March 31: Observance of the Advent of Modern Spiritualism

March 31: NSAC Awards Nominations due

October 22-27: NSAC Convention 2017, Milwaukee

Bookstore News

Featured this month . . .

Essays on Progression, Herbert Schneider. A true Spiritualist classic offering over 70 essays on Spiritualism, Healing, Prayer, Contemplation, Psychic Phenomena, Vibratory Values of Color, Ecological Progression, and so much more. As Schneider states, "Nature compels us to evolve, Spirit compels us to progress." Available now at a value price of \$10. BKS 356, \$10.00

Order from NSAC Bookstore, PO Box 217, Lily Dale, NY 14752, nsacbookstore@nsac.org, 716-595-2000. Checks and credit cards accepted. If order total is \$100 or more, prepayment of 50% is required.

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To subscribe, make a request by email (Subject: NSAC News Request) from the address to which you want *NSAC News* sent. Your request must include: your name; and your church or camp name. A monthly email notice will contain a link to the NSAC website page from which a PDF copy can be viewed and downloaded.



EXTRA-EXTRA

Saving Our Spiritualist Churches, Report 4

Following is Report 4, the final segment of *Saving Our Spiritualist Churches: NSAC Delegates to the Rescue*, responses to workshop questionnaire during NSAC Convention 2016 held in October, in St. Louis. The workshop presenters, Christine Krihades and James Ehrhart extend our thanks to the 102 delegates who interactively completed the 29 questions as the workshop proceeded. Each delegate, responding to the questions, provides a great advisory service to NSAC.

The complete results, with all comments, verbatim, will be reported to NSAC Trustees and available as a PDF file to any member who wants a copy. (Request copy by email to nsacinfo@nsac.org showing subject as *SOSC Report*.)

For this February issue of *NSAC News*, questions 23 through 29 are reported. A few comments follow question statistics. Note that a triangle ► signifies a different delegate comment.

23. Many of our church buildings are in physical decline; rented meeting space is becoming more expensive. Any suggestions that have been successful at your church or any general advice?

33 out of 102 delegates (about 33%) responded to this question. A few of the comments follows:

► Plan ahead. Minimize expenses. Treat it as you would a business. ► Hang on—it gets worse. ► We increased number of fairs; applied for grants from historical society, and had soup-a-thons. ► We work hard, and our past members worked harder to get our building. We are blessed. ► Our church owns our building. We strongly resist those who advocate selling and then renting.

24. If you own your church building, do you have displayed symbols of other religions, such as a cross, depictions of Buddha, Jesus, Mary, etc.?

Out of 102 delegates, 13 responded yes to this question; and 72 responded *no*. Among the 12 comments:

► Yes, Jesus; but we are very clear (*to advise*) that he is an example of a healer and messenger, not *god*. ► Yes, trying to get it removed. ► We have pictures of Jesus in addition to Native American and sunflower pictures. ► We have a dove that represents spirit. ► Yes, cross which has been there for years.

25. What do you recommend our churches do when either there are few or no qualified platform workers; or too many? If this situation is in your church, how are you coping? Advise on one or both questions.

74 out of 102 delegates responded to this question; sampling of comments follow:

► Too few, institute educational program and training. Invite guest (*NSAC*) speakers. Have a pool of traveling workers (*NSAC*) to call upon. ► 6-15 people attend. Recommend a home circle. ► Better encourage members to become credentialed and give credentialed workers preference. ► We have no credentialed workers who come to church. There is a negative response if you try to make sure people are in compliance with NSAC Bylaws. (*There is*) bullying, peer pressure. Please, NSAC Board must support and defend the NSAC Bylaws and MPI teachings, and individuals who are trying to comply with NSAC standards. MPI students are ghosts in the church. The strongest personality is winning. ► Encourage MPI. ► Teach classes to educate our members. Not enough: perhaps services

every other week; or ask guests to serve. Too many: add a mid-week service and have a rotating schedule to keep everyone involved. ► Start more churches. ► Not enough: Encouragement incentives to work on Morris Pratt. There's currently not much emphasis on it. ► Subjective, depends on ego of spiritual decision maker. ► On survival mode. ► Not qualified: train them. ► Too many: make a schedule. Too few: invite from other churches, encourage a member to apply for MPI using the DeMarco scholarship and letting that person begin chairing or speaking. ► Share the load. Continue development classes to gain new student workers. ► Hold classes in (*platform*) decorum and development. ► Just make decisions as needed.

26. Do you, as a church member, have a copy of your church bylaws? If, yes, is there anything that you don't understand? Explain and advise.

74 out of 102 delegates responded *yes*, that they do have a copy of their church bylaws. 27 delegates stated *no*. Following are a few of the 24 comments:

► All members are given a copy during Right Hand of Fellowship. ► Not in the past. We are doing that now. ► Some receive them; but haven't been updated in years. ► Not in the past; but we are putting together new member packet with a copy of bylaws. ► Don't like our current bylaws. ► Usually read or show sections to member to clarify things that come up. ► No, members do not.

27. When you first joined your church did you take a membership class; or were you advised what your church membership entails? Can you suggest anything to help others who are thinking about becoming a member of a church? Advise.

40 out of 102 delegates responded *yes*; 33 delegates stated *no*. Following are some of the 72 comments:

► Yes, membership class before board approves. ► Membership class and suggest an informal social time to meet with church members and discuss ways to become involved. ► Had to spend one year in basic classes prior to joining. Now we hold a 5-week class, Spiritualism 101 based on Sharon Snowman's membership book. ► This church does not have membership meetings and no instruction for years. ► Yes, we have a membership FAQ that details the membership process and requirements. Spiritualism 101 class costs to attend and there is a waiting period. ► No, I explain things to new members. ► No. At present we have a board that has caused new members to leave, whether through thoughtless words or actions. ► Class, yes; but not in advance of being admitted as a member; also ethics needs to be mentioned. ► Agree that membership class should be offered to members on their first or second visit. Was not offered when I joined. ► Yes, all members take a class before joining. ► No, I was not educated. A class would be nice. ► Yes, took an expensive membership class. Now our membership class is free. Much, much better. ► No, an introductory class would be very handy. ► Yes, I took a class. We have a talk or class every three months.

28. How is your church community letting others know about your religious services, classes, social events? All suggestions and advice welcomed.

There were 86 comments, many responded with similar media suggestions. Listed below are media suggestions and number of delegates who mentioned that suggestion. There are 43 individual comments that were not redundant.

Media Suggestions—Email: 9; Facebook: 39; Meetup: 20; Website: 39; Event fliers or announcements: 16; Newspapers and magazines: 26; Church newsletter: 10.

Following are some of the 43 individual comments:

► Many present members who are attending pass the word. We invite people through media. (*see above*). ► This is sorely lacking in churches across the country. Give free lectures in public libraries. ► Always has been word of mouth for 118 years. ► Sharing about Spiritualism in church and life. Even on planes, hotels, wherever I go. ► Advertising in local newspaper is expensive; but getting results with up to 45 people every week. ► Website kept up to date is important. ► Discussing this handout (*NSAC Workshop Saving Our Spiritualist Churches questionnaire*) with all of our church members. ► Need to work on this. We advertise in *Creations* magazine and have three Meetup groups. Email blast to members and non-members. ► Local PBS, radio, newspaper. ► Recommend that we put a copy of the TNS in local library. ► Advertise in new age magazines. Have Wednesday evening mediumship night and medium fairs.

29. Is there any one thing that would help your church or any Spiritualist church become better—What is it? Multiple answers encouraged.

There are 76 delegate comments out of 102. Following are a few delegate comments:

► Quality mediumship, quality healing, quality meditation. ► More open classes. ► Stick to bylaws; have a decent dress code. If members show respect others will too. ► We need to get more people in, and we need them to stay. Not “the people come, the people go” philosophy. ► More members; get Spiritualism out there in the mainstream; mediumship to prove the continuity of life. ► Music, upbeat sermons; well-prepared sermons given with energy. ► Hold fast to MPI and not let those who oppose and want to be on the platform get the upper hand. The problem with our church is that a few members who have psychic or some medium abilities want to be on the platform without proper religious training through MPI; and if not will group together and make complaints about the pastor in order to oust them out and take over the church as an independent one to do as they please. NSAC must

support their pastors who are diligent about teaching MPI and assist them while supporting NSAC teachings. Those inciting other members to do otherwise must be looked at closely in their motives for complaining. Therein lies the demise of Spiritualist churches in general. It is not unusual for a small group of dissatisfied members to move from one church to another in order to change NSAC membership to an independent church. In my 30-plus years as a Spiritualist, I have witnessed too many churches suffer internally with this problem. If we don't start supporting our precious teachings and working pastors, slowly or perhaps, I should say, quickly, our NSAC churches will decline. What kept me going to Spiritualist churches through the years were the teachings and messages of the continuity of life. ► Encourage education; be active on committees, workshops, special events, to being a part of the church family. ► Powerful, evidential messages. ► The Principles. ► Provide education; encourage MPI. ► Members who are welcoming of visitors and greet and speak with them. ► Education! Education! Education! Spiritualism is my “home” right place for me. I cannot imagine life not being a Spiritualist. ► Adhering to high standards for speakers and mediumship, as that draws in new people and higher numbers and more who stay. Not being afraid to hold the line—that our churches are Spiritualist. ► Keep with NSAC Spiritualism. Positive, uplifting services (*eliminate negativism*), strong speakers; support pastor. ► Protect your credentialed workers instead of those independent-thinking members who do not want training, MPI education (*they want what they want because they want it*). I believe in self-responsibility, continuity of life, and Natural Law. To say anybody can be a pastor without a credential is opening the door to less and less credentialing—weakening the Religion of Spiritualism—and eventually the church will become independent. ► The “knowing” that love and life are eternal. ► Teamwork and respect for others! And unity.