

THE
NA Way
MAGAZINE®

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



APRIL 2015
VOLUME THIRTY-TWO ♦ NUMBER TWO



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- [World Unity Day](#)



THE
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

The NA Way Magazine, published in English, Farsi, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as providing current service and convention information. Foremost, the journal is dedicated to the celebration of our message of recovery—"that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."

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From the editor

When we use the tools available to us, our recovery continues to thrive no matter what we face or how long we stay clean.

Living Clean, Preface

I have a tiny desktop humidifier that's fed water through an upturned plastic water bottle. It reminds me of my dad, who obsessively monitored a hygrometer to measure and manage the humidifier in our house. My siblings and I kept it filled with water, filling a large, five-gallon jug from the deep sink in the utility room and thumping our way through the kitchen to the humidifier. Years later, in my own home, I had a whole-house humidifier installed to the furnace, providing ongoing, adjustable humidity. No hygrometer, no thumping through the house with five gallons of water.

This all makes me think of our tools and resources. Of course, we are each other's greatest resource. Plus we have books, pamphlets, bulletins, booklets, and guides all in print, and some online or as eLit (like the soon-available eStep Working Guides); the NA meeting finder app; helplines and meeting schedules; and endless information at www.na.org, and worldwide area, regional, and zonal websites.

Sometimes long-term NA members boast they didn't need anything except the White Booklet to get clean before the Basic Text was published. I appreciate their success and point of view because we had just the Basic Text when I got clean—but my recovery has been so enhanced through our newer literature that I have a real appreciation for the benefits of progress and improvement. If all I have is a spoon, I can eat all kinds of food with it; but if I have a knife, it will surely be easier to cut a piece of meat, and I'll experience something new and different, perhaps change my perspective. I could trudge my way through the house carrying five gallons of water, or simply adjust a dial—and have more time to delve into my recovery with the help of all these NA tools and resources.

De J, Editor

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in The NA Way, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First name and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.



Step Four

I have worked through the Twelve Steps several times throughout my recovery. I had five years clean when I was 30, and one of the things I didn't do in those five years was work a thorough Fourth Step. I was pretty sure I was powerless; I came to believe, and once things were going well, I didn't think I needed the rest of the steps. I thought recovery was great, and it was for a while, but I could not understand why I wasn't happy. I had a lot of things in my life, and had achieved an expected level of professional, financial, and marital success. I say expected because I never knew those things were a gift. My life was a gift, my children were a gift, and recovery is grace. I didn't know how to be successful: I knew how to fail; I had been doing it all my life. I didn't know how to change, and I really didn't know that I needed to change. I kept thinking if my circumstances would just change, I would love myself one day. After years of struggling with my demons, I relapsed and stayed out for seven years. I went to the same depths that many of us have and I didn't think my life would get better, but I was fortunate to have been given the gift of desperation.

When I came back to the program, I had an inkling of what I did wrong the first time, and for once in my life I was actually hearing the message, not the mess. I heard that the same person will use again, and if I didn't work a Fourth Step I would miss the gifts god had already given me. I had to get rid of the old so I could be open to the new. I knew I wanted a different life, and I also came to realize that I could only get that by working from the inside out. I came back with a broken spirit, and working the Fourth Step early in my recovery did not seem like a good idea; however, my sponsor had different ideas. I wanted to stay clean, so I took suggestions and did it. I can say it was the beginning of having an open mind.

I have since worked another Fourth Step, this one more revealing than the first. I have come to terms with my past and have figured out what makes me who I am and what could possibly make me feel like I had to use again. I discovered my resentments and why I couldn't form healthy relationships. In looking at my resentments, I found that I was the common denominator, but I had to look at why I had the resentments. Some of them were due to my upbringing, some were due to real wrongs done to me, and many were due to my unhealthy thinking. I took a look at all the cruddy stuff I did, but more importantly, why I did it. One of the things I discovered about myself was that every decision I've ever made in my life was made out of fear. I was afraid of life, was full of shame, and was always a victim. Through working the Fourth Step, I found I could get rid of these liabilities and that I actually have assets. I am so glad I did a thorough, searching, and fearless moral inventory because now I know where I am coming from. I am not placing my mood before my action; it is the opposite today. Mood follows action! If you are afraid to work a Fourth Step, it's okay, but our program offers us freedom from active addiction, and the steps are how we get there, just for today.

Elizabeth N, Virginia, USA

Reprinted from June 2014 [SHEVANA News](#), Shenandoah Valley Area



Basic caption contest

Here's your chance to participate in *The NA Way Magazine* in a whole new way. Write a caption for this comic, send it to us, and you'll be magically entered in our caption contest. We'll choose the best (and maybe a few other really good ones) for publication in an upcoming issue. Your prize will be the satisfaction of contributing to the humorous recovery pursuits of fellow NA members—and seeing your name in *The NA Way*!

Email your entry with "Basic Caption Contest" in the subject line, and be sure to include your name and where you're from in the body of the email: naway@na.org.



Thank you to everyone who participated in the Basic Caption Contest.
The winning submission is:
Sarah F, New York, USA



And here are some other notable entries:

Social acceptability doesn't equal recovery.

Andrea P, New Jersey, USA

• • • • •

I need to publicly post why Tradition Eleven is so important!

Brian S, Ontario, Canada

• • • • •

Just don't press enter until you pray, talk to your sponsor, and write about it.

Scott W, Idaho, USA

• • • • •

Guy #1: Upload my NA birthday pics to the group's page.

Guy #2: No, we cannot be shown in the newspaper, radio, or social networks.

Guy #3: Yes we can because the group we opened is secret, so no one else can see it except for those who are in the group.

Marco K, Baja California Sur, Mexico



Step Five: The exact nature

To put the idea of "exact nature" under a microscope, we consider that Step Five is not calling these defects the exact nature of *us*, but the exact nature of *our wrongs*. Who we are is just underneath that flawed belief system that we created and perpetuated to survive as active addicts. I was taught that this exact nature was not the behavior and not even the feeling, but the thought that came into my head just before I started to feel badly. (The defects starting to well up inside me?) It was like a deconstruction, a tracing of my mind's steps backward through events in my life. Maybe I had lashed out at someone. I said unkind things because I was upset, and under that I was feeling hurt. But even below the hurt were the thoughts "no one really cares about me" or "people cannot be trusted" or "I am not good enough for anyone to care about me."

Those thoughts that were like statements in my head began a very long time ago, and I took them for facts. Then, as my life began to play out, I gathered evidence for those statements to be true. I may have even created or participated in the events to make sure that my belief system was intact. Somehow, the need to be right about my defects was more comfortable for me as an active addict. It was permission to keep using. To admit them, to shed light on them, to see with alarm how much they dominated my life is huge! The defects do not want to be uncovered. But uncovering them, speaking them out loud, admitting them, and accepting their existence seemed to also bring a sense of relief and freedom, and even hopefulness.

In order to get to this dark, scary place of looking at the defects and their exact nature head-on, and admitting them to God, myself, and another person, I need to feel as safe as I can. I may still feel anxious, but I know my sponsor loves me and has my recovery in her heart. She related similar defective thoughts to me, so I knew I was not alone; plus she offered her experience with how going on in the Steps gave her some freedom from "having" to act on those thoughts, and even from not feeling the feelings from them as deeply or as long. That sounded so exciting.

If the Fourth Step takes us to the basement or attic, the Fifth Step is when we return to the room in our hearts. "When we take inventory and practice paying attention to our actions and our motives, we sometimes feel like we are defined by our character defects.... We learn that our spirit is not apart from us; it is a part of us. We gain awareness of the exact nature of what is right about us." (*Living Clean*, Chapter Three, A Spiritual Path)

Barb D, Virginia, USA

Reprinted from June 2014 SHEVANA News, Shenandoah Valley Area

*...the Fifth Step is
when we return
to the room
in our hearts.*



Obrigado!

Hello, I'm an addict in recovery called Flavio. I am grateful for this new life that the NA Fellowship gave me! I joined NA in 2007 in total despair, fear, loneliness, paranoia, panic, and madness. I joined a group and I was very well received. I'm from São Paulo and had already tried all ways to stop, and nothing worked. I was hospitalized and arrested, but nothing stopped this disease with no cure. In NA I found honest fellowship.

I pray every day, and I do not want to go back to the hell of using. I love this brotherhood of heart, soul, and spirit. I believe in the daily maintenance of our recovery. I believe in our sayings and certain customs, but I also believe that there is no such thing as "our drug of choice." This does not exist because the disease is not the drug. In recovery, our choice is life, freedom, love, peace, unity, and selflessness.

I believe addicts are special beings and that we have great potential. I believe any addict who wants to stop using and find a new way to live can find relief here in NA—and there is no better life than that of an addict who overcomes the prison walls of addiction.

I share my best wishes with all addicts of the world who have found the way to live without drugs and substances. Cheers! Obrigado to God, my mother in heaven, and to all NA groups in this lifetime and others! It works!

Flavio A, São Paulo, Brazil

How'd ya do it?

The night before celebrating my fifteenth NA birthday [March 2013], I thought about the question I am asked every year: "How'd ya do it?" Here are just *some* of the ways I've stayed clean.

I did it by putting pen to paper, not using no matter what, asking for help, being open-minded and willing, being irritable and discontented, taking suggestions, waiting five minutes, and by going to meetings—a LOT of meetings!

Ninety in 90 wasn't enough for me; I went to at least 150 in my first 90 days.

I stayed clean by listening to those who had what I wanted, to others I didn't want to listen to, and to those who shared the same stuff every day and who I wished would just move on or get over it! I did it by being grateful, never forgetting how glad I was to be living this life no matter what I was dealing with at that moment, and no matter how enticing using appeared.

I did it by going to NA conventions. The broader the base, the higher the point of freedom, and our base is really broad at an NA World Convention. I did it by finding meetings everywhere I went (I travel a lot for work), making

...knowing everything

phone calls after midnight, and making impromptu meetings, like on a ski-hill chairlift. (Where I used to find time to get in a quick hit, now I've learned to squeeze in a spiritual hit.) I even helped start a Spanish-speaking meeting while working in Venezuela for three months, which happened through a connection I made at a World Convention. I am far from fluent in Spanish, but we talked,

...and begging for answers

met, and decided to start a meeting two times a week. Not easy when working twelve-hour days, six and seven days per week, but I did not get here because I wanted to be clean; I got 15 years clean because I plan my recovery daily and live the plan.

I stayed clean doing it your way, my way, doing it any way; doing my best when my best didn't look very good, putting in 10 percent of the effort I put into using; doing it when it was easy; doing what didn't make sense; doing it when I thought it was a good idea, and when I thought I couldn't take another step. I stayed clean reading our literature, writing on steps, using a dictionary, and having a program. "Just for today I will have a program..."

I did it learning to surrender; practicing patience, acceptance, and tolerance; biting my tongue to avoid adding to my Ninth and Tenth Steps; and sometimes by not biting my tongue. I did it by letting go and not letting go; laughing and cry-

...sitting quietly... right here, right now

ing; facing my fears in spite of sometimes being overwhelmed by my feelings.

I did it kicking and screaming, with my ass falling off, with duct tape, using the phone, supporting H&I meetings, going to NA activities, being involved in putting on some of those activities, chairing meetings, setting up chairs, cleaning up rooms, and cleaning coffee cups. I stayed clean by helping before being asked, saying yes to almost anything I was asked to do (except going to area meetings), not leaving the house because I was afraid of what I'd do or where I'd go, and by being humble, arrogant, and self-centered.

I did it while *trying* to act out on lust. Seldom did anything happen, but I'd be a liar if I didn't admit sometimes a nice piece of anatomy or a smile made me go to meetings I otherwise might have blown off. I stayed clean knowing everything and not waiting to tell you and knowing nothing and begging for answers; doing all of it in the rooms, and living clean; not using one day at a time; and praying and meditating even before I believed in a Higher Power (God), but prayed to him/her/it anyway.

I stayed clean with dumb luck, while eating ice cream; visiting fellow members in the hospital, and taking meetings to them there; going to funeral homes, churches, and temples to bury some who didn't make it, or to support addicts whose loved ones had passed. I did it by learning to eat, sleep, and exercise properly, coming to understand that some form of regular physical activity is crucial to my mental health, which makes staying clean 100 times easier.

I stayed clean by learning from those who were here when I got here, by being vulnerable, by knowing what a miracle my life is clean and never wanting to return to my other life—ever, no matter what

I was feeling, thinking, or dealing with. I did it by working a thorough First Step and knowing what would happen if I took one of anything, whether I liked that substance or not. I did it by believing in NA, sometimes not believing a word of anyone or anything, but having nowhere else to go and no one else to talk to. I stayed clean sitting quietly because I was too uncomfortable to talk and too afraid to leave, but knew nothing bad would happen right here, right now, as long as I stayed right here.

David I, Tennessee, USA

Like every piece of NA literature,
this was written by addicts for addicts.*



Available Soon!

New Electronic Version of

The Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guides

An e-version of our NA Twelve Steps study guide will be available soon for download to your electronic devices. Visit www.na.org/subscribe to sign up for NAWS Updates emails to receive up-to-date information and news.

*These guides are meant to be used
by NA members at any stage of recovery...**

** The Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guides, Preface*

Get connected with NA eLit and Apps!

Apps

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Available Soon!
The NA Step Working Guides

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of or affiliation with these vendors.

eLit

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Narcotics Anonymous
(Basic Text, Sixth Edition)

It Works: How and Why

Sponsorship

***Living Clean:
The Journey Continues***

Amazon: <http://tinyurl.com/o4thtm9>

iTunes: <http://tinyurl.com/gcuducy>

Picture this

NA communities are invited to send photographs of their meeting places and events. Sorry, we cannot use photos that identify NA members. Please tell us the group/event name, location, how long it has been in existence, format or special traditions, and what makes it a unique part of your NA community.



NWMASC

The [Northwest Michigan Area Service Committee](#) serves meetings held in Leelanau, Benzie, Manistee, Mason, Lake, Wexford, Kalkaska, and Grand Traverse counties in Northern Lower Michigan. Our area began in the mid-1980s in Traverse City. Due to our large geographic size, we reach out to the outer counties when they fail to make ASC meetings to make sure their needs are being met. As part of our PR subcommittee we also have an outreach subcommittee that takes addicts to less-attended meetings outside of our population centers.



Our area service committee meets at 4:00 pm on the third Sunday of each month at the corner of Fifth and Oak Streets in Traverse City, Michigan. We began using consensus-based decision making in our area approximately 15 years ago. We had growing pains early in its implementation, but our service meetings are generally well run and focused on unity, rather than on personalities and conflict. On average, approximately three-fourths of our groups attend ASC meetings. The longest continuous home groups in our area are Just For Today by the Bay and Living Clean, which both began over 25 years ago.

Our greatest challenge has been to keep regular service to our local prison and jail populations. Currently we maintain weekly meetings in our largest area jail and a local minimum security prison. For most of the jails we are unable to go to, we also send literature.

The NWMASC Literature Subcommittee storage box was constructed in 2004 by our first literature chair. He constructed it in loving service in his own wood shop at his own expense. He had a passion for the disaffected and rejected in our Fellowship and in our society. In recent years, he experienced great pain in and out of recovery from an extended illness and a negative reaction to its medical treatment. He was a mischief-maker of the first order, well loved by most, and has been greatly missed since his passing in 2011.

Chad L, Michigan, USA





14 June 2015
1:00 pm Brasilia Time

Join thousands of recovering addicts for the Closing Meeting of WCNA 36! We will come together as a worldwide fellowship on a conference call at 1:00 pm Brasilia Time (BRT). Listen in as the meeting kicks off and we hear the NA message carried from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to households, meeting rooms, and activity halls around the world. (To determine your local time, visit www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html.)

Individual members, groups, areas, and regions can register for the two-hour telephone hookup. The cost is \$50.00 for calls within the United States and Canada. Complete the registration form at www.na.org/wcna and submit it along with your payment information to NAWS on or before 15 May 2015.

One free hookup will be provided for each region outside the US and Canada. Free regional links outside the US and Canada must have approval of the regional service committee, and we are only able to provide one (1) free hookup per region.

For the first time in our Unity Day history, we will provide a **free internet audio webcast of all four WCNA main meetings**. We are testing this audio webcast on an experimental basis, so we cannot guarantee accessibility, quality, and consistency of the audio broadcast signal. Visit <http://wcnavolunteer.org/wcna36/streaming.html> for meetings schedule and to access this audio webcast.

Questions? Call Johnny at 818.773.9999, extension 149 or email johnny@na.org.

Click here for
a printable version
of this flyer.

It's just around the corner ...

WCNA 36—*O Presente é a Liberdade*, The Gift Is Freedom – 11-14 June 2015

Get ready to stroll awe-inspiring coastline, explore exquisite Brazilian beauty, and celebrate NA recovery with members from around the world at our second ever bilingual World Convention.



Your Once-in-a-Lifetime Brazilian Opportunity...

in breathtaking Rio de Janeiro, one of the most beautiful cities in the world! NA members from all over Brazil are ready to welcome you with open arms and loving hospitality. Get ready to stroll awe-inspiring coastline, explore exquisite Brazilian beauty, and celebrate NA recovery with members from around the world at our second ever bilingual World Convention.

Pre-registration and Registration

If you haven't already pre-registered, there is still time because **we extended pre-registration through 15 May** (\$105 US, real amount determined by currency exchange rate). Onsite registration will also be available, and we will have limited packages available onsite for newcomers. Our World Conventions require registration, which gives you access to all convention workshops, meetings, and daily gatherings like dances and concerts.

Accommodations & Transportation

We'll be creating bus loops to several Rio Centro area hotel areas for your convenience. Because we have no hotel block to offset this cost, we'll sell bus passes onsite. We'll provide additional details soon at www.na.org/wcna and onsite. Other transportation options include shared cab rides, which are not expensive in Rio.

** We continue to caution our members that traffic conditions make it almost impossible or extremely difficult to stay outside of Barra da Tijuca for the days of the convention—minimally Thursday through Sunday.

Entertainment

Thursday night you'll have your first taste of Brazil with a "Samba teaser," just before the main meeting. After the meeting, it's a jammin' dance featuring three phenomenal DJs: two NA members—one from Rio de Janeiro and one from Japan—and Mary Olivetti, the number five female DJ according to *electro m.a.g.* Olivetti has DJ'd around the world in the hottest clubs, shows, and on television. She has a nationally-broadcasted show on Brazil's Oi FM and has energized shows like Rock in Rio and the Rio Music Conference.

Friday night's concert will have you on the dance floor with Detonautas, purveyors of alternative rock, post-punk revival, psychedelic rock, garage rock, and a string of hit singles like *Outro Lugar*, *Quando O Sol Se For*, *O Dia Que Não Terminou*, *O Amanhã*, *Tênis Roque*, and *Só Por Hoje*. Detonautas Roque Clube was created in the late 1990s through internet contacts, thus the band's name, a combination of Detonadores + Internautas. Along with many other accolades, Detonautas took the MTV Video Music Brazil (VMB) Best Band Award in 2003.

Saturday after the main meeting, experience Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art with elements of dance, acrobatics, and music. From there, launch into a marvelous show by Banda Grafite, known for the record-breaking hit, *Mama Maria*, 1980's Brazilian new wave music, and international hits. The night doesn't end there because after Grafite, you'll have a full serving of samba with Mangueira—colorful, traditional samba with modern flair from the oldest and one of the most famous of Rio's samba schools. For more than 84 years, Mangueira has won multiple awards—and the hearts of thousands of Brazilians.

Main Meetings: Live Audio Streaming

For the first time in WCNA history, we'll be providing a free internet audio webcast of all four main meetings. For meeting times and to access the audio webcast, please go to www.wcnavolunteer.org/wcna36/streaming.html. All meeting times listed are Brasilia Time (BRT). Check your local time zone at <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock>. (Please note that we are testing this audio webcast on an experimental basis, and we cannot guarantee accessibility, quality, and consistency of the audio broadcast signal.)

Being of Service: Volunteer Registration

We will be seeking volunteers to help with entertainment and events, merchandise, program, registration, and many other tasks. If you want to contribute to the success of our recovery celebration, please click on the volunteer link at www.na.org/wcna.

Excursions around Rio

We plan to offer local excursions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and part of Thursday, 9–11 June. We will provide details as they are available on the website and onsite.

Weather, the Beach, Local Sites, and Customs

Barra da Tijuca Beach is known for few tourists and as a favorite spot among locals for surfing, kite- and wind-surfing; body-boarding, fishing, and—of course—swimming and sun-bathing. There is also a beachside bicycling/foot path.

You'll enjoy temperatures ranging from about 60 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit, with tropical sea breezes from the Atlantic Ocean. Take advantage of brilliantly sunny days and clear, sparkling water along the longest, cleanest beach in Rio.

Although Barra is all about the beach, it is also the most recently developed part of Rio de Janeiro, with modern city planning features surrounded by natural beauty. When you're not at World Convention events, you'll find worldwide cuisine, and about 20 shopping malls nearby (including the largest shopping center in South America). Be sure to check into local customs and etiquette, and guidance for travelling to another country; and watch for some local FAQs at www.na.org/wcna. Of course, one of the best sources of information will be your Brazilian fellow members.

Visas

If you are from the US or Canada, you will need a visa to travel to Brazil, not just your passport. We encourage all others to verify whether or not a visa is needed. We will continue to provide updated information to assist you at www.na.org/wcna.

Stay up-to-date with our countdown to WCNA 36 in breathtaking Rio de Janeiro by checking the website regularly: www.na.org/wcna, and by signing up for WCNA updates at www.na.org/subscribe.

*We can carry the gifts of recovery
with us everywhere.*

Basic Text, "Just For Today, Living the Program"

Traditions Project Update

The Traditions Project is continuing to move forward, with the second batch of chapters for review and input (R&I) having been released 1 March 2015. Delaying the release of the second batch of chapters allowed the workgroup to thoroughly discuss the input we received on the first batch and incorporate your helpful suggestions into the way the chapters in the second batch are structured and organized.

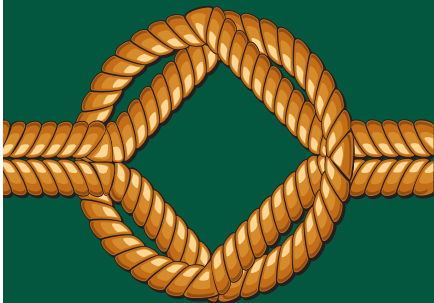
The high level of member participation combined with a devoted workgroup are helping to produce strong material. We continue to urge members to send input and ideas sooner rather than later, as your efforts can be most useful to the workgroup in drafting later chapters.

The quality and quantity of participation have been quite impressive, both for front-end input and for R&I material. For each Tradition, we received at least 100 pages of front-end input, with some Traditions gathering as many as 300 pages. Input received for the review period on the Introduction and Tradition One exceeded 300 pages. We received input from members, groups, and a variety of service workshops from before or after ASC meetings, to specially organized Traditions Project workshops in several NA communities. We received input from throughout North America, and from at least ten other countries. The broad range of input and ideas will certainly help to create the best literature possible. We are grateful for and look forward to your continued participation.

Participate on the project discussion board:
<http://disc.na.org/trads>

Find complete project details,
including materials to help you submit, at
www.na.org/traditions.

Traditions Book



Project

*It takes an
entire Fellowship
to create the best
NA literature possible!*

Review & Input Dates Announced!

Traditions Two through Six
1 March through 31 May

Traditions Seven through Twelve
1 June through 31 August

For more details, visit
na.org/traditions

Our Third Tradition

I was in a meeting the other night and heard someone state that they were “an addict with a desire to stop drinking.” How original, how unique! How deadly, though, because my terminal uniqueness is what almost killed me and took me in and out of NA for two hellish years in the beginning.

If I’m in an NA meeting, I respect the Third Tradition and identify as an addict. If I’m in a meeting of another fellowship, I respect its third tradition and identify as a member of that fellowship. If we are in another fellowship’s meeting and feel the need to “remind” ourselves that we’re also addicts, maybe we need to get to an NA meeting, where we probably belong.

My heart belongs to NA. It’s where I got clean and where I was loved unconditionally. It is where, for the first time in years, people looked me in the eye and said they

loved me. But when you have been around a while, you live in a town of 30,000, and you’re consistently among the one or two people in the meetings with more than a few years clean, there are times when attending meetings of other fellowships is an alternative. Because I learned to respect the Traditions, the message I carry is an NA message. It is where I tell my truth.

The constant anti-other-fellowship message I hear when I go to NA reminds me of why I sometimes don’t want to go to NA. If I let narrow thinking coerce me, does it mean I shouldn’t go to Gamblers Anonymous if I can’t stay out of the bingo halls? What if I’m a recovering sex worker, wounded from years of sexual abuse? Should I avoid Sex Workers Anonymous in a desire to work a “pure” NA program? What if I’m addicted to Twinkies? Do NA members really want to hear about that creamy white filling during an NA meeting when our focus should be on the desire to stop using?

I first came to NA in 1981, and our literature was limited. We got clean using the—gasp—Big Book. That is my history. Does NA want only revisionist history? I am proud of our Fellowship, and after more than 30 years of cleantime, I don’t feel the need to fly my “NA flag” to anyone. I have done my time in the trenches, and I continue to serve; however, when I had about 15 years clean and moved to a small town, I began to attend other fellowships. Today I am just as loved in them, too, and as long as I have friends there, I’ll continue to attend.

It’s time for us to simply stand quietly on our own feet

Which programs others attend is absolutely none of my business. If it works for them, I’m happy for them. When I share in an NA meeting, I speak a clear NA message. If I attend an AA meeting, I may mention I used drugs and will talk to anyone who is having a problem with drugs after the meeting, but I focus on my experience with alcohol. If I wasn’t comfortable respecting another fellowship’s third tradition, I could avoid it and only go to open meetings.

When we grow as individuals, we have to break loose from the restrictions we feel are placed on us, whether real or imaginary, from our parents, our teachers, our mentors. Only then do we find our own way. It appears to me that NA is still in its adolescence, breaking away from and “despising” the fellowship that launched us. But just as

most of us rebelled against our parents, in recovery we hear over and over of the joy of rebuilding these fractured relationships. My hope for the NA Fellowship is that it grows in maturity to the point where we don’t waste valuable energy boasting about our NA “purity.”

Like it or not, AA is the mother ship from which NA sprang. Let’s stop crapping on the deck of our mother ship with snide, nonproductive remarks like “I work a pure NA program” and “I get everything I need in this fellowship” and the one from a member with the most hubris I’ve ever heard in 30-plus years in NA: “If AA didn’t come along, I believe something [else would have], and NA would still have started.” Personally, I thank God on a daily basis that I was born long after Doctor Bob and Bill W, and a few befuddled hopeless alcoholics miraculously found each other and floundered to a start. I, and probably many of you, would have died in the gutter but for that.

It’s time for NA to go from its raging adolescence to maturity. It’s time for us to simply stand quietly on our own feet and stop bashing AA and other fellowships. I have never heard members of other fellowships bash NA or wear a T-shirt that proudly proclaims “Pure _A member.” Let’s put our energy where it really belongs—in carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

Nancy G, Arizona, USA

Editor’s Note: *Opinions expressed are those of the writer, not of NA World Services or Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.*

Why I serve

*When we work to ensure the vitality of NA,
we're not working just for ourselves but for those yet to join us.*

It Works: How and Why, Tradition One



When I showed up, I wouldn't even put the chairs away. I had an acute case of superiority because I didn't use some of the drugs other people had. "Let the crackheads put away the chairs," I thought to myself. I had a hell of a chip on my shoulder, but I was afraid to be alone, so I stayed for a business meeting with three other addicts. When the door greeter position came up, a member said, "I nominate that guy," and pointed at me. My heart sank. I hated hugs and would rather have been the toilet bowl cleaner (if there was one), but I accepted the commitment anyway. I started showing up to meetings as soon as the door opened just to be around other recovering addicts because I couldn't stand to be alone.

When I had about three weeks clean, I heard the man who was to become my sponsor speak. I got his number, called him, and he told me to meet him at his home group. When I got there he was setting up chairs. When I commented on this, he simply answered, "This is what we do." I grabbed a chair and started helping. I haven't stopped since. I used to wonder what the reward is for being of service. One day when mopping a meeting room floor for the thousandth time, I realized the reward is that I get to be of service and mop the floors.

Ivan P, Connecticut, USA

By the time I was 21 years old, I had spent my life feeling like I never belonged anywhere. I lived four years of my childhood in Honduras, where the official language is Spanish, which I didn't speak. By the time I learned Spanish, I had moved back to the United States to a small farm town where everyone knew everyone—except me. At 17 I gave my first baby up for adoption, and the emotional pain of that experience led me to search for relief, which I found when I started using. But the source of my relief was quickly destroying my life and my spirit. When I found NA at age 21, I found a group of people who spoke both English and Spanish, who had also felt different and isolated, and who had experienced emotional and spiritual pain—and they had found relief that didn't involve using drugs. They looked happy and serene. I wanted that. They welcomed me with open arms and showed me how I could serve and be a part of. I finally felt like I really belonged. I serve so that others can find the relief that I've found and so that they can find their home, too.

Heidi M, Tejas Bluebonnet Region, Texas, USA



I serve because of love, because through this tool I have found the real motivation to feel significant, and it's the only way I can disconnect from my chronic self-centeredness and find the real freedom that NA gives me. Service is God's will. In the Third Step I begin to depend on my Higher Power. In the journey from the Fourth Step to the Seventh Step, I develop a conscience about the mortal aspect of the disease of addiction through my defects. In Steps Eight through Ten, I begin to discover the responsibility of acting in a constructive manner in all areas of my life. The Eleventh and Twelfth Steps allow me to dig into what is my mission in life: "to serve in order to live." Thanks, NA, because service has allowed me to feel alive and to free myself from the grip of the disease of addiction.

Yoel P, Surco, Peru

Service Center

To increase awareness of some of NA's service resources and the ways they can help trusted servants, groups, and service bodies, we'll be highlighting some of them here in *The NA Way*, along with links to additional resources.

What are **SPs**?

Service pamphlets, or SPs, are resources developed by the World Board (as directed by the 2006 World Service Conference) for use by groups, service bodies, and trusted servants. Although SPs are not intended to be read in meetings, they can be displayed on the group's literature table for interested members.

*An addict in our group keeps interrupting the speaker or person sharing...
Our group feels like he holds the meeting hostage.*

*I sympathize with parents who need to bring their children to meetings,
but it's really disturbing the group...*

*...she has gotten more violent and has been verbally attacking several people and making
threats of physical violence...*

Disruptive and Violent Behavior NA groups occasionally experience challenges in maintaining an atmosphere in which recovery can be shared among addicts. This pamphlet addresses one of those challenges: disruptive or violent behavior in NA groups. The information is meant to help groups fulfill the responsibility of welcoming members without allowing an individual to threaten the safety of those attending a meeting. This SP offers examples and practical solutions that may help groups address these challenges.

Other group resources include *The Group Booklet* (available at www.na.org/ips), and *A Guide to Local Service in Narcotics Anonymous* at www.na.org/handbooks.

You can read, download, and print all of the SPs at www.na.org/servicemat. To purchase SPs, contact NAWs Customer Service at customer_service@na.org or visit our online store at www.na.org/?ID=OrderLiteratureOnline-content.



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Does your area or region publish a newsletter?

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CALENDAR

The online calendar at na.org and the *The NA Way Magazine* calendar page are available to NA groups and service bodies registered with NA World Services to share information about multi-day events. Usually, events occurring between NA *Way* publication dates are published according to the schedule below. To enter events or to access event details, visit www.na.org/events.

| Issue | Events Occurring | Submission Deadline |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| April | 1 May – 31 July | 15 January |
| July | 1 August – 31 October | 15 April |
| October | 1 November – 31 January | 15 July |
| January | 1 February – 30 April | 15 October |

Important Notice: In order to comply with new privacy laws, beginning 1 April 2015, we will not be able to publish personal contact information in the online and NA *Way Magazine* calendars. However, the email address and/or website of the event or an associated NA group, area, region, or zone that is registered with NAWS may be submitted. In addition, the person submitting event information will be asked to acknowledge that s/he has read and agrees to our Privacy Policy before the event can be activated on the calendar.

Canada

Nova Scotia 13-19 Jul; Annapolis Valley Area Pig Roast & Campout 26; Provincial Park, Blomidon; www.carna.ca

Ontario 8-10 May; Ontario Regional Convention 28; Delta Hotel, Ottawa; www.orcna.ca

Quebec 20 Jun-11 Jul; Centre-Mauricie Area Camping; Chemin du Lac McLaren, St-Mathieu-du-Parc; www.naquebec.org

Croatia

Trogir 12-14 Jun; Adriatic Regional Summer Convention 9; Hotel Medena, Trogir; www.na-croatia.org

Czech Republic

Vranov 5-7 Jun; Czecho-Slovak Regional Convention 4; Spiritual Centre Vranov u Brna, Vranov u Brna; www.anonymni-narkomani.webnode.cz

Denmark

Skandeborg 31 Jul-2 Aug; Area Midtjylland Convention & Campout 8; Audonicon, Skanderborg; www.nakonvent.dk

Germany

Linkenheim-Hochstetten 22-24 May; German Speaking Regional Convention; Burgerzentrum Linkenheim, Linkenheim-Hochstetten; www.narcotics-anonymous.de

Bremen 12-14 Jun; Bremen 30th Anniversary Convention; Saint Pauli Gemeinde, Bremen; www.na-nord.de

Japan

Fukuoka City 24-26 Jul; Japan Regional Convention 11; Fukuoka Convention Center, Fukuoka-City; www.najapan.org

Lithuania

Vilnius 16-17 May; Lithuanian Convention 11; www.lietuvos-na.lt

Portugal

Vila do Conde 30-31 May; Portuguese Convention 25; Teatro Municipal de Vila do Conde, Vila do Conde; www.xvcpna.org

Russia

Saint Petersburg 17-19 Jul; Russia 25th Anniversary Convention; Sibur Arena, Saint Petersburg; www.25na.ru

Switzerland

Hasliberg-Reuti 29-31 May; Swiss Convention; Chalet C'est la vie, Hasliberg-Reuti; speaker tape deadline: 31 May; www.scna.ch

Tanzania

Zanzibar 21-23 May; East Africa Convention 3; Zanzibar Grand Palace Hotel, Zanzibar; www.ea-na.com

United Kingdom

Aberdeen 23-24 May; Scotland East Coast Area Convention; Hilton DoubleTree, Aberdeen; ecscna@ukna.org; www.ukna.org

United States

Arizona 22-24 May; Arizona Regional Convention 29; Paradise Valley Scottsdale DoubleTree Resort, Scottsdale; www.arizona-na.org

2) 3-5 Jul; First Southeastern Arizona Convention; Hilton Tucson East, Tucson; www.natucson.org/convention.html

California 29-31 May; Ride 4 Recovery; Sycamore Ranch Campgrounds, Browns Valley; www.naride4recovery.com

Florida 5-7 Jun; Gold Coast Area Convention 25; Heron Bay Marriott Resort and Spa, Coral Springs; www.goldcoastna.org

2) 12-14 Jun; South Florida Regional Latin Convention 10; Embassy Suites, Deerfield Beach; www.convencionlatina.com

3) 2-5 Jul; Florida Regional Convention 34; Rosen Plaza Hotel, Orlando; www.frc-na.org

4) 24-26 Jul; Mid-Coast Area Convention; Marriott Boca Center, Boca Raton; www.mccna.com

Georgia 19-21 Jun; Central Savannah River Area Convention 26; Marriott, Augusta; www.csrna.org

2) 17-19 Jul; Piedmont Area Convention 33; Anderson Conference Center, Macon; www.sites.google.com/site/pascna

3) 30 Jul-2 Aug; Midtown Atlanta Area Convention 24; Renaissance Concourse Airport, Atlanta; speaker tape deadline: 30 Apr; www.midtownatlantana.com

Illinois 22-25 May; River Run 29; Forest Glen Preserve, Westville; www.ppana.org

Kansas 3-5 Jul; Mid-America Regional Campout; Bloomington West Campground, Lawrence; www.marscna.net

Louisiana 22-24 May; Louisiana Regional Convention 33; Best Western, Alexandria; www.larna.org

Massachusetts 17-19 Jul; Serenity in the Berkshires Campout; Chesterfield Boy Scouts Camp, Chesterfield; www.wmacna.org

Michigan 2-5 Jul; Michigan Regional Convention 31; Sheraton, Ann Arbor; www.michigan-na.org/mrcna

Minnesota 22-25 May Spiritual Refreshment; Fair Hills Resort, Detroit Lakes; www.umrna.org

Montana 19-21 Jun; Montana Gathering; Symes Hot Springs Hotel, Hot Springs; www.namontana.com

Nebraska 22-25 May; Run for Fun Campout 35; Alexandria Lakes State Recreation Area, Alexandria; www.nebraskana.org

Nevada 18-19 Jul; CAN Area Speaker Jam; Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, Laughlin; www.canana.org

New Jersey 12-14 Jun; East Coast Convention 19; Georgian Court College, Lakewood; www.eccna.org

2) 31 Jul-2 Aug; Suburban Essex Area Convention 3; Hanover Marriott Whippany, East Hanover; www.nanj.org

New Mexico 14-17 May; Rio Grande Regional Convention 26; Marriott Pyramid North, Albuquerque; www.riograndena.org

New York 5-7 Jun; Promise of Freedom Campout 7; Camp Scully, Wynantskill; www.thepromiseoffreedomcampout.com

2) 3-5 Jul; Manhattan Area Convention 2; Waldorf Astoria, New York; www.mascna-ny.org

North Carolina 29-31 May; Capital Area Convention 26; Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh; www.capitalareancna.com

2) 17-19 Jul; New Hope Area Convention 22; Durham Convention Center, Durham; www.newhopeconvention.com

Ohio 22-24 May; Ohio Convention 33; DoubleTree by Hilton, Beachwood; www.ohioconventionna.org

2) 31 Jul-2 Aug; Greater Cincinnati Area Abnormal Weenie Jam; Kincaid Lake State Park, Falmouth; www.naohio.org

Oregon 15-17 May; Pacific Cascade Regional Convention 21; Quality Inn Suites, Clackamas; www.pcrna.org

Texas 22-24 May; Texas State Convention; Omni Hotel, Corpus Christi; www.tscna.org

Utah 5-7 Jun; High Uintah Area Celebration of Recovery 29; American Legion Hall, Vernal; event info: jim_tamie@yahoo.com

2) 19-21 Jun; Southern Utah Area Convention 8; Hilton Garden Inn, Saint George; www.nasouthernutah.org

Virginia 22-25 May; Marion Survivor's Group Campout; Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center, Marion; event info: mfisher71@hotmail.com

2) 31 Jul-2 Aug; Almost Heaven Area Convention 29; 4-H Education Center, Front Royal; www.car-na.org

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Item No. CT-3119 Price US \$0.24

IP No. 22, 歡迎你來到 NA

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