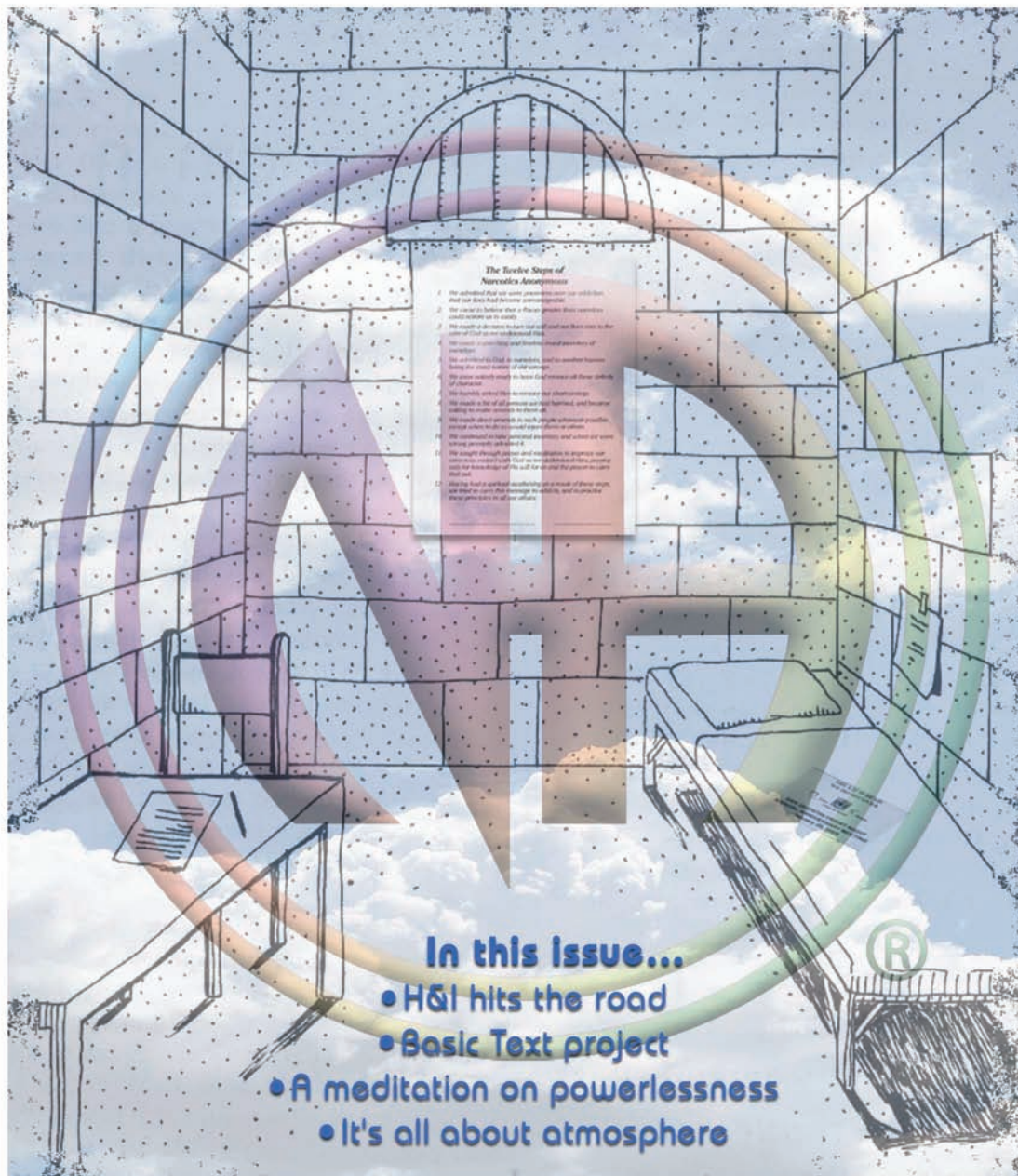


THE
NAWay 
 THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
 MAGAZINE

JULY 2005
 VOLUME TWENTY-TWO
 NUMBER THREE



The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
5. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except where to do so would injure others or cause serious self-harm.
6. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
7. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our inner and outer lives, to learn the will of God, and to overcome our old addictive urges.
8. We have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, and thus we can now live a sober and productive life that will give us the best chance of staying well.

In this Issue...

- H&I hits the road
- Basic Text project
- A meditation on powerlessness
- It's all about atmosphere



THE
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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Cover art adapted from the October 1988 issue of *The NA Way Magazine*.

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.

The *NA Way Magazine*, published in English, French, German, Portuguese, 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."



Going on a mission

The first thing I heard was the sound of Gregorian chants coming from my alarm at precisely 4:30 am. I hopped out of bed and started getting ready, knowing this was going to be a super-long day. I did not mind the prospect of a twenty-hour day, knowing that this day would be a tribute to NA and recovery, not to fear and cynicism. Freddie and I would do our part, and the rest was going to be left to HP.

I did my morning routine of stretching and meditation, went for a two-mile run, and then took a much-needed shower. By the time I got to Freddie's place, he was all ready to go. Grabbing a bottle of water, a CD case loaded up with music, and a warm jacket, we piled into my car and hit the road. Although rain had been falling steadily, the traffic moved smoothly as we headed up through the Grapevine and down into the San Joaquin Valley.

Our conversation drifted to familiar things that NA members tend to talk about on a road trip. We talked about the car and how grateful we were to have cars that were well serviced, had good tires, and were not about to fall apart at any moment. We shared about funny car experiences we had during our using days, and some that were not so funny. We each recalled a bad auto accident caused by our driving loaded, and how lucky we were that nobody had been killed in those addict-caused mishaps.

Denial is a funny thing. Reflecting on those days so long ago, we saw how each one of us had blamed everyone else in the world for being the cause of those accidents without ever attributing the responsibility right where it belonged—on our own shoulders. Even back then I knew I was an addict. I just never dreamed I would have to be responsible for what I did. I assumed unmanageability was a way of life that everyone experienced, and that no one was responsible.

We drove past Castaic, where a county correctional facility operates, and we talked about the first times we were locked up. For me, it was back in the early 1960s. I was sixteen years old and already getting loaded. In fact, I was already an addict, but I did not know it yet. My friend and I decided to run away from home in New York and head to California. We wanted "the beach life," as we envisioned it: pretty girls, plenty of pot to smoke, sunny skies, and easy living!

We ended up in jail near Lake Charles, Louisiana, charged with vagrancy and being runaways. My dad was informed that I was in a "parish" in Louisiana and assumed that meant a church of some type. (A parish is the term used for county in the state of Louisiana.) He thought he would teach me a lesson—or let the priests teach me a lesson—and so he left me in there for a month.

Well, my dad was right; it taught me a lesson of how to survive in a tough jailhouse environment where no one cared that I was sixteen years old and did not know which end was up.

Freddie was also sixteen the first time he got in trouble with the law. A brawl in a local store in San Pedro, California, landed him in the city holding jail with an assault and battery charge. Of course, he, too, was loaded.

By the time we finished reminiscing about the start of our active using, the Aretha Franklin CD had finished playing, and we followed it with a Charlie Parker CD of some very cool 1950s bebop jazz. (By the way, that's bebop, not hip-hop!) Looking outside the window, we noticed that we were passing Taft, home of a California Community Correctional Facility.

I asked Freddie, "When was the first time you were sent to the penitentiary?"

"1963, but I can't remember which month," he answered.

"What was the charge?" I asked, as if I could not figure that out by myself.

"Forgery," Freddie replied, mildly surprising me, as I would have guessed possession or sale of drugs.

"Checks or prescriptions?" I asked.

"Checks," said Freddie. "I started out in the California Youth Authority, but then I got transferred to the pen where I got an AY number. I was released in 1965, but went back in 1968 when I got my B number. Sometimes I can't remember my own name, but I can recite my YA, AY, and B numbers without missing a beat."

I stared out the window into the foggy, cool January morning. For me, the first real arrest (overlooking the Lake Charles episode—there goes that denial again) was early 1967. Some friends and I got arrested for smuggling a small amount of heroin from Tijuana across the border. I was offered prison or Synanon. Synanon was one of the first self-help fellowships, where many addicts stayed clean for long periods and lived in communal facilities. Many Synanon alumni finally found their way to NA some years later.

Anyway, I went to Synanon in San Diego, California, but did not last too long. I had not surrendered, and the program was brutal. When they wanted to shave my head for an indiscretion, I opted

"surrender to win" has always been one of my favorite slogans.

On and on we drove, talking, laughing, and enjoying the day and the chance to spend some time together. Towns, farms, cattle yards, and truck stops flew past the window. The cruise control was set at seventy-five miles per hour, and the little car was purring along like a contented cat.

We came to Shafter. "Another California Community Correctional Facility there," Freddie offered.

"God, there sure are enough CDC facilities in this valley, huh?" I quipped.

"This is just the start of them," Freddie added, with a sly grin.

I already knew Freddie had been up and down this stretch many times over the past years doing H&I, going to CDC twelve-step advisory meetings, and otherwise spreading the word of NA recovery with his tireless H&I work.

We gassed up and grabbed some lunch at a roadside diner. I think we were both anticipating where we were going and what we were doing, so we did not want to stop too long for fear of missing our appointment.

When we passed Wasco, I knew what the call was going to be. "State prison," Freddie piped in, right on cue.

"You got that right," I added. After Wasco we passed Avenal. "Another state prison," Freddie announced.

"I'm right there with you," I echoed. As we got close to Coalinga, we both chimed

setting as we turned west. We went over a long bridge, took the Main Street exit, parked next to the post office, looked up, and saw the sign:



We had arrived.

There we were, standing in front of the oldest and probably best-known correctional facility in California, ready to attend the San Quentin Friday Night Annual Anniversary Meeting of Narcotics Anonymous.

We climbed out of the car and were looking up at the gate when Freddie turned to me with the strangest expression on his face.

"What's up, man?" I said. "You look a little gray around the gills."

"I've got a lot of butterflies in my stomach," was his reply. "I don't know if I can go in there."

"What do you mean, you don't know if you can go in there? Why couldn't you go in there?"

"I was transferred out of there in 1972," said Freddie. "I haven't been back since."

"Oh, man, I understand." The gravity of Freddie's comments sank in as I tried to envision the incredible tangle of feelings and emotions he has been experiencing—right here, right now—some thirty years later. "And you mean to tell me that you got clearance to go in tonight?"

"I passed the security check. My twenty years of recovery and NA's clout here at the facility must add up to something."

Then Freddie said, with a smile, "You know, back in my early recovery, my sponsor used to always tell me, whenever we'd go to a facility, 'Let's hit 'em quick, hit 'em hard, and leave literature.'" We both broke out laughing as we thought about the man who had sponsored Freddie for over twenty years, and the passion with which he carried that message to members in institutions. Sadly, he died just a few months ago.

"On and on we drove, talking, laughing, and enjoying the day and the chance to spend some time together. Towns, farms, cattle yards, and truck stops flew past the window."

for prison. I was sent to a federal prison camp in a mountainous part of Arizona. Not that I knew it at the time, but I would have to suffer twenty more years of addiction before I finally understood that I was powerless over my addiction and that my life had become unmanageable. Ironically, it was to be approximately twenty more years for Freddie, too, after that first one, until he was able to surrender once and for all. The beautiful paradox of

in almost simultaneously, "Pleasant Valley State Prison. Yes sir!" Without realizing it, we were taking a rolling tour of the CDC facilities in the San Joaquin Valley, California.

The afternoon wore on, and the miles passed under our wheels. We drove, and we drove, and then we drove some more. Another tank of gas, and we were starting to get close to our destination. I think we were both ready. The sun was finally

The first thing that struck us, from that point on, was how well we were cared for, and how well the event was organized. The friend from Marin H&I who had invited us, and the entire Marin County H&I Subcommittee, are an awesome group of recovering addicts (more on them in a minute).

The second thing that struck us was the respect and courtesy with which we were treated by all of the corrections staff we met. We waited outside the main gate with a group of NA members who had also been invited by Marin County H&I to participate in this powerful recovery event.

The H&I San Quentin volunteer coordinator said hello to all of us and made us feel welcome. We were told that we would be processed into the prison ten people at a time. Approximately forty to fifty members from various NA communities and thirty to forty inmates were to attend the meeting.

One of the first things to impress me was the trust and acceptance that NA seemed to enjoy in this very famous—or rather, infamous—institution. Our IDs were collected and held to ensure that he who went in was he who came out. We signed in, but beyond that, it was virtually painless.

There were no searches conducted, no X-rays done. We were not questioned, except for our name, and we were treated like ladies and gentlemen. Our wrists were stamped with that purple Day-Glo ink for security, as if we were going to a club or rock concert.

It was nice to see every one of us from NA treat the staff in the same way, with respect and courtesy. All of the old malice, fear, suspicion, and aggression were gone. Freddie and I were very impressed, but all of this was only the prelude to the real gift—the socializing and the meeting.

As we awaited the start of the meeting, chatting and joking with inmates and guests alike, the overriding thought was so crystal clear: It is so true that in NA we do not care what or how much you used, who your connections were, the color of your skin, how much or how little you have, your age, or your gender, but only what you want to do about your problem

and how we can help.

There were no “convicts and non-convicts.” For the next couple of hours we were all, plainly and simply, recovering addicts meeting together to help each other stay clean! A tear came to my eye as I realized that I felt as comfortable and welcomed there as I do at my own home group.

This was the San Quentin Friday Night Annual Anniversary Meeting of Narcotics Anonymous, and we had reached our journey’s end. There were two wonderful NA speakers at the meeting who shared their experience, strength, and hope. Their message was strong, and their recovery rang true. The clean-time countdown ensued. A new twist on the countdown was made, and newer members came up first, building to members with more clean time. The reason it was done this way was because there were gifts for the two inmates with the most clean time (both over twenty years). Each man received a copy of our newest book, *Sponsorship*. Everyone there received a specially produced paper “chip,” which marked this very special meeting with the date—28 January 2005—and the amount of clean time—in years and months—of the individual.

One of the gifts I will carry with me always from that night is the memory of men with over twenty years clean in Narcotics Anonymous who are serving life sentences in prison. To hear and see such profound recovery, spiritual presence, and simple affection coming from men carrying this type of burden on their shoulders is something I have never experienced before and will carry with me for the rest of my life.

I introduced myself to one oldtimer who had long, snow-white hair and appeared ancient. With a warm grin he informed me that he was the “oldest lifer in San Quentin.” I asked him his age. “Seventy-six” was his reply. I thought, “Seventy-six years old, clean, and enjoying recovery in a most unlikely scenario.”

I told him I was fifty-eight and how much younger than me he looked. The

broad smile on his face told me he enjoyed hearing that comment.

After the meeting, we savored an amazing variety of cakes, pies, and super-premium ice cream (allowed in, again without intervention) and celebrated the joys of recovery and the thrill of an anniversary celebration together—white, black, brown, yellow, red, whatever. No pushing, no jockeying for position, no bullying or tough-guy shenanigans!

Those of you who have been locked up in the penal system at some time in your life know how unlikely it is that a story such as this could be true. And those of you who can envision doing a life sentence in San Quentin probably think it unbelievable.

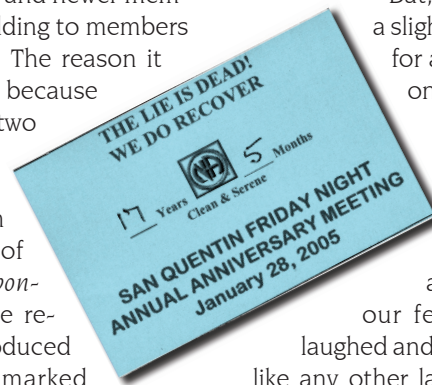
But, believe me, except for a slight embellishment or two for artistic flair, there is not one lie told in this story.

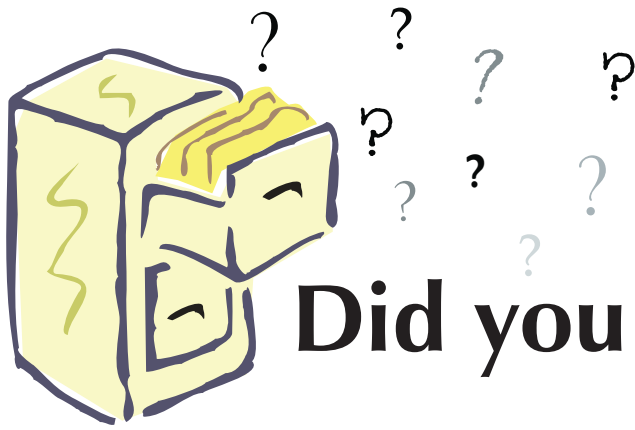
After the celebration, Freddie and I went with some of our new friends and had dinner while we all processed some of our feelings. We joked and laughed and ate some more—much like any other late-night, post-meeting NA feeding. It was great. By now it was approaching midnight of a day that had started at 4:30 am with Gregorian chants coming from my CD alarm.

One of the (many) touching moments of this evening was seeing a plaque presented to Mitchell R, one of the very first pioneers of NA recovery meetings in San Quentin. Mitchell did this for fifteen years and had recently moved away. As a token of appreciation, a commemorative plaque was given to him as a surprise during the countdown celebration. Hearing him share his gratitude was very moving to us all.

In closing, we would just like to give a final thank you to the Marin H&I folks, present and past. Your groundbreaking accomplishments, your energy, your lasting commitment, and your drive for excellence in carrying the message to the addict who still suffers are a model to us all. What an event. What a life. Thanks, NA.

Jeff G and Freddie A, California, USA

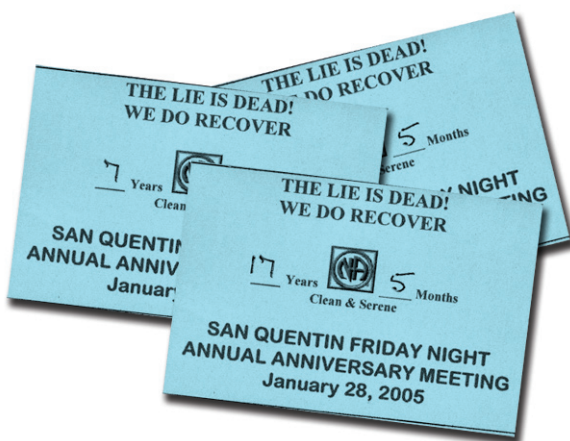




Did you know?

The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has come a long way since our early beginnings in 1953. We have grown from that first meeting held in Sun Valley, California, USA, to over 33,500 weekly meetings held in approximately 116 countries worldwide. Our history is rich with diversity, and we want to share the facts of that history with you, the little known as well as the well known. If you have an interesting and historic fact, send it to us at naway@na.org or NAWS, Attn: *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

- Did you know...** The first NA H&I meeting in San Quentin started in late 1982, and a meeting has been brought to the prison continuously ever since?
- Did you know...** The Friday night NA meeting was started by the Marin County H&I Subcommittee in January 1997?
- Did you know...** There are five meetings per week in three units at the prison? Two of the meetings are held in a higher-security part of the institution, where most of the inmates are serving life sentences without the possibility of parole.
- Did you know...** The first known twelve-step H&I meeting was started by AA in San Quentin in 1946?
- Did you know...** San Quentin is California's oldest and best-known correctional institution? It was opened in 1852 and covers 432 acres.
- Did you know...** The director of the California Department of Corrections was a former warden of San Quentin and is an ardent supporter of twelve-step programs? She has stated that "Narcotics Anonymous is essential to fulfilling our mission."



Our readers write

Dear *NA Way Magazine*,

My name is Michael T. I am finishing the last year of my incarceration for drug distribution. It is only because of the generosity of the H&I Subcommittee from the New Dominion Area Service Committee and all the members from these groups that I have experienced the most profound and rewarding change in my life. This change is a direct result of the NA program.

If it were not for these strangers who were "hell-bent" on carrying the message of recovery, I might not be leaving prison with an enlightened point of view. As a result of working and living this program, I have had a spiritual awakening.

I find that I am not as self-centered as I used to be—which, in itself, is a miracle. I have a zest for life that I never knew existed. I am able to look at myself in the mirror and be proud of the person staring back. I actually can carry on a conversation with someone and not be motivated by anything negative. I now wake up in the morning with more gratitude. And I have a newfound eagerness to begin my day, instead of the dread that haunted me for years.

Mere words seem inadequate to express my heartfelt gratitude for the way of life and program of Narcotics Anonymous. I cannot thank all those caring, recovering addicts enough for giving so freely of themselves in order to teach me about recovery.

The purpose of this letter is to thank all those addicts for having the strength and courage to be in recovery and carrying the message that I do not have to be imprisoned by my disease of addiction any longer.

Humbly yours,

Michael T, Virginia, USA

Riding on recovery road

Everything started with this idea: to travel around the United States to meet other addicts like myself and learn about their experiences. It was the most enriching trip of my life in recovery.

This trip began with the fellowship in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, where I had the opportunity to share and meet people with a lot of recovery. Following this area, I steered myself toward Boston, where I helped to run a meeting called South End Miracles Group. The next day I went to New York City to help with a step meeting at 7:30 pm, and then right after that I went to yet another meeting called No More Excuses, where I met more members who welcomed me.

I then went to Daytona Beach, Florida, for a meeting that unfortunately was no longer there. I had not noticed that the meeting was listed as cancelled on the NA website. So I stayed in Daytona Beach for ten hours and went to other meetings, one of which was called Street Survivors. There I was welcomed by the GSR, who directed me to more meetings.

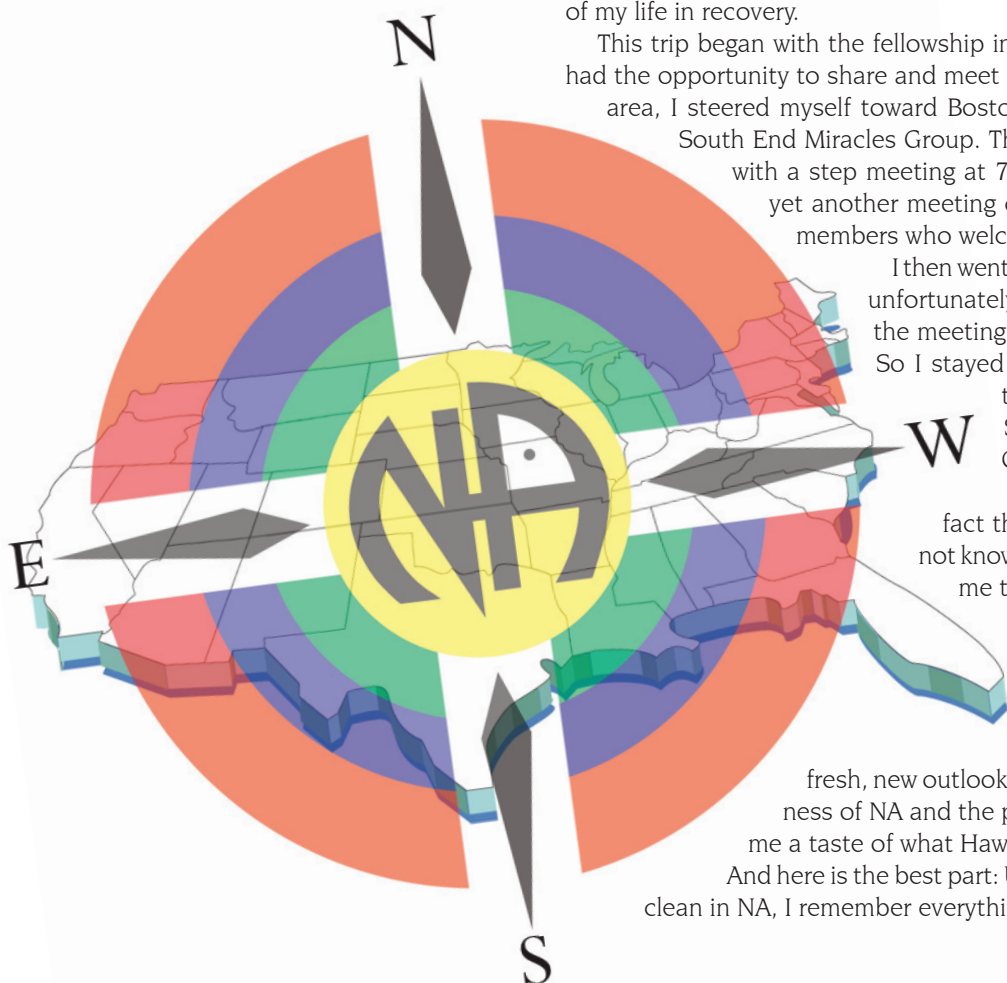
My biggest revelation of this trip was the fact that I could not judge anyone, because I did not know anyone. The importance of the steps moved me toward members with a lot of recovery.

I proceeded to do more fellowshipping in Decatur, Illinois, and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where I went to an event called the Serenity Festival.

My meeting journey has given me a fresh, new outlook and has helped me to understand the greatness of NA and the power of its message. My trip has also given me a taste of what Hawaii will be like with all of you!

And here is the best part: Unlike all the other trips I took before getting clean in NA, I remember everything!

Robert R, Quebec, Canada



The choice is yours

I got clean in August 1987 and was pretty cocky during my first year. I believed that if I ever was going to use again, it would have to be because of something very traumatic. Unfortunately, I got my first experience with that trauma in my second year.

I found my son in the garage locked in my car while it was still running. I had to first break into the garage and then into the car just to get him out.

I was so upset that I did not even know what to do. I picked up the phone and called an addict to find out what was the next thing to do for my kid. He told me to call an ambulance and get my son to the hospital.

This addict said that he would meet me there. He stayed with me the entire day while the doctors and nurses took care of my son. Sadly, my son attempted this again within the next six months, and then twice more in the next couple of years.

In my seventh year of recovery, my wife came home from the doctor and informed me that a large mass had been found in her right lung. A biopsy was performed. It was cancer.

She went through some radical surgery on her right lung and suffered for the next six years, going through multiple radiation and chemotherapy treatments.

During that time, my mother was also diagnosed with cancer. My wife passed away in March 2001, and my mother passed in August 2002. I lost my job for the first time in my life the following November.

I went into the deepest depression and was unable to do anything for weeks. During this time, people in the program just about lived at my house, making sure I ate and showered. They took me to meetings, especially when I did not want to go, but that would not stop them. They would show up at my door and say, "Get dressed; you're going to a meeting."

I honestly do not know what I would have done without these friends or this

program. I felt that God had blessed me since I was able to stay clean through it all.

I got a new job in February 2003, and I loved it. The people were great, and I had the best boss I probably will ever know. I loved it.

In November 2004, my dad passed away, and in December I lost the job I enjoyed so much. I am sharing all of this with you because, through each of those life experiences, I utilized the principles of this program.

I went to meetings and cried my eyes out, asked for help, prayed to my Higher Power, and, most importantly, I did not pick up. It was not easy; my disease talked to me, and sometimes screamed at me, to use: "Just one hit, just one joint, come on, you deserve it—look what you have been through." Each time I heard this, I dug deeper inside and told my disease to get lost.

Folks, it has been a long road these last four years, but I have found that when I first got clean and was asked if I was willing to go to any length to stay clean, never did I expect to have to really go through what I did to realize that I meant it when I answered, "Yes."

I have learned that life happens, and I thank my Higher Power for helping me to build a strong foundation during my first year, because I did not have a clue how much I was going to need it later in my recovery.

Whether you are a newcomer or an oldtimer, believe with all your heart that, no matter what life places in front of you, you never have to use again!

William K, Florida, USA

How I learned to lighten up

The treatment center where I got clean was in a different area than my home area, which is in the Southern California Region of NA. I thought all NA meetings should be like they were in the area where I got clean: punctual and orderly. When my sponsor directed me to attend a majority of my NA meetings in my home area, I was appalled at the apparently nonchalant way in which many of the meetings were run. "Horried" might actually be a more accurate word. "How in the world do people ever get clean in these meetings?" I would ask.

I continued to attend meetings in my home area, and I listened to the suggestions my sponsor made regarding how to act at NA meetings. First and foremost, I was not to criticize these meetings. If I did not like the way something was done, there was a proper way to address the situation at the monthly business meeting.

Eventually, I had a "eureka" moment when I realized people in my home area did not get clean *despite* the seemingly loosely run meetings—they got clean *because* of the way the meetings are run. In the area where I first got clean, many, maybe even most of the NA members had somewhat stable lives. Many owned homes, had long-term jobs and relationships, owned a car, and probably never even had been to jail.

In my home area, however, the opposite is true. It is a transient area with many young addicts coming off the streets, out of jails or prisons, living alternative (to put it mildly) lifestyles. That is a big reason why our meetings are the way they are. They are that way because they *work* that way. The formality found in other areas' meetings would probably scare a lot of our home addicts away before they could hear—much less get—the message that NA works.

I was able to stay clean for five years after my first day of treatment. Then I relocated to a place that had no NA meetings in English. Eventually I started a meeting. Since there were so few of us, I tried to lighten up about use of the

"S" word and other references to the various twelve-step fellowships. I held my ground, however, with our readings. Where it says NA, it *means* NA, period—not any other fellowship.

A young woman determined to get clean began attending our meetings. One day, she diligently took notes on all of the sharing from members and, as a grand finale to the meeting, she shared last, giving each of us tips on what we had shared.

When I found out she was on methadone, I thought it would be appropriate to take a group conscience about whether or not to allow people who are detoxing on methadone to share at our meeting.

Imagine my shock when it was suggested that we allow anyone to share at the meeting. Even more shocking to me was that everyone else agreed. Personally, I had never heard of addicts who are not clean being allowed to share at an NA meeting.

I wrote down my thoughts on this issue and handed the papers out before the next meeting where we were to take the vote—but the most important thing I did before the meeting was to pray. I prayed that I would be able to accept, with dignity and grace, whatever was the outcome of the vote.

We now have two English-speaking NA meetings here. At either meeting, anyone can share or check in during the last five minutes. Amazing how well that actually works. If someone who obviously is not clean begins to share, we gently suggest they wait until their turn at the end of the meeting. In my experience, addicts who are not clean love the sound of their own voice, so it is great to have that five-minute window within which to limit their share.

For me, both of these circumstances show the beauty of surrender. My sponsor taught me to "be smart about it, Cathy"—that is, to voice my opinion clearly, respect the opinions of others, remember that NA is a God-given, God-directed program, and then, finally, accept whatever the group conscience turns out to be.

When I am able to act in this way, I retain my dignity and grace. It is important to remember that the things that appear to be such a big deal when they are hap-

pening usually seem quite insignificant in retrospect. What stays with us, however, is our character.

At first, I would have to bite my tongue until it almost bled, and silently say the Serenity Prayer over and over, in order to control my facial expressions and body language. Now it is easier to surrender because I have a broader perspective and know that my way—no matter how right I believe my way to be—is not the *only* way. Sometimes I even learn the most by doing things according to another person's way.

I now have over ten years clean. The first five years were spent where English-speaking NA meetings were held day and night, many within walking distance of my home. Over the last five years, I know of only two English-speaking meetings, and they are hundreds of miles apart.

I have learned many lessons during these ten years. One of the biggest is that I have never regretted choosing to act on a spiritual principle rather than a character defect.

I have learned to "lighten up" in recovery by acknowledging that we all have different realities and that I need to respect the rights of others. I have a friend who says, "Remember, whenever you win, somebody else loses." I believe that NA is a win/win fellowship.

So, my advice to all you perfectionist control freaks out there is to lighten up, let go, and let God!

Why not give it a try and see what happens?

Cathy Y, Barcelona, Spain

More on leadership

In our fellowship, we are all miracles in action. Many of our members have found lasting recovery from addiction and have gone on to accomplish much in their personal and professional lives.

Along the way, some of us are drawn to give of ourselves, both inside and outside of NA. Perhaps one out of every five members is involved in service work and experiences the positive results of selfless giving.

Through that service work, we learn qualities that we can use while working with others in our groups, areas, and regions as well as in our families, workplace, and other organizations outside of NA. These leadership qualities are easy to spot: commitment, compassion, equanimity, practicality, wisdom, persistence, and organization, to name but a few.

I learned these qualities through service in NA, through watching those I chose to emulate as well as those I did not want to emulate.

I have been a leader in NA in several areas: by being an experienced NA member, by being a sponsor, by chairing meetings at my home group, by chairing our H&I subcommittee, by chairing our area service committee, and eventually by being a founding member of our region. I then served as regional delegate.

I also have reached out beyond NA to lead in organizations that help other parts of society. Through all these efforts, my foundation in Narcotics Anonymous keeps me grounded and focused. I have taken what I learned and shared it with others. To me, that is the heart of leadership: sharing, rather than preaching or judging or directing.

Bruce B, North Carolina, USA

My sponsor

Someone told me a long time ago that, when picking a sponsor, we should find one who is not just "talking the talk," but also "walking the walk."

My sponsor is not only a guide through the steps, but a guide through life. I can relate to my sponsor because she relates to me on so many aspects of my life.

I do my best to follow her suggestions. Even when she does not have all the answers, she can direct me to someone who does. I love my sponsor because she loves me even when I am hurting and acting out. She does not give me any advice that I cannot handle, and she is not afraid to tell me exactly what she thinks.

I have the best sponsor in the world. She can be my friend, my confidante, my shoulder to cry on when I am in pain,

and she can guide me with the tools of recovery.

I think if your sponsor is not sharing his or her experience, strength, and hope with you, or is not being tough on you when you need it—or offering love and concern when you need that, too—then maybe you might need to look elsewhere for that someone who *can* give you these things.

I am grateful to my sponsor, the NA program, all the other members who have helped me along the way, and especially to my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God.

Cyndi P, Indiana, USA

Recovery does exist

My name is Giancarlo, and I am an addict. I am twenty-nine years old, and I live in Lima, Peru.

I never thought I would be able to stop using drugs, since I used compulsively and obsessively every day. I had to have drugs in order to live—just like our literature states, I “lived to use and used to live.”

I was bankrupt physically, mentally, and spiritually until, one day, I went through the door of an NA group, and my life changed completely.

NA followed through with the promise it made to me: that I could stop using, lose the desire to use—and, if I was willing, I could achieve a better quality of life.

I am very clear about the fact that my disease of addiction is incurable, progressive, and deadly. I know that today’s recovery does not assure me of tomorrow’s recovery. That is why I cannot leave the door open for my disease. I have to attend meetings every day, because I never know when my recovery might be challenged.

Today, I do not use drugs; I am a better person, and I am proud to be able to carry the message of recovery.

Giancarlo D, Lima, Peru

I sit here at my computer crying, trying to deal with the pain of losing my seven-year-old daughter, Elizabeth. I am staying clean and getting through it. I thank God every day that I do not use, for...

The miracle is happening

How can I see love when I suffer from addiction? Will I always be so far removed from the real thing? I know I loved Elizabeth, as I do all my children, but it seems like such a foggy place where I live.

I believe that love must run much deeper than addiction. It has to! Addiction covers my soul like a fog on the lake in the morning. I pray the sun will rise soon and that I can love and be loved before my time is up.

What happens when time is over? Is it ever over, or does it somehow just change?

I realize that I have felt like the little girl I loved and raised from birth, but who is no longer here. We are inextricably intertwined. She is not lost to me; she is home. I am not lost to me; I am home. Home is right here and right now—not someplace outside of me. Home is all I want.

Addiction has robbed me of love. Addiction has robbed me of me. Addiction has robbed me of real memories that I find too hard to remember. If I remembered, then I would also have to feel the pain of loss.

Once through the pain, I believe I will enter a place where I will remember the great love I have experienced and the real people I have known and loved with all my heart.

I can let go of the pain and remember the love. I can remember the moments shared—the laughter, the music, the prayers, the tears, and the dancing and whirling that are filled with beauty, filled with something much deeper than I can express.

I believe that God has created me for a purpose. I will grow. I will breathe deeply. I will live a life worth living.

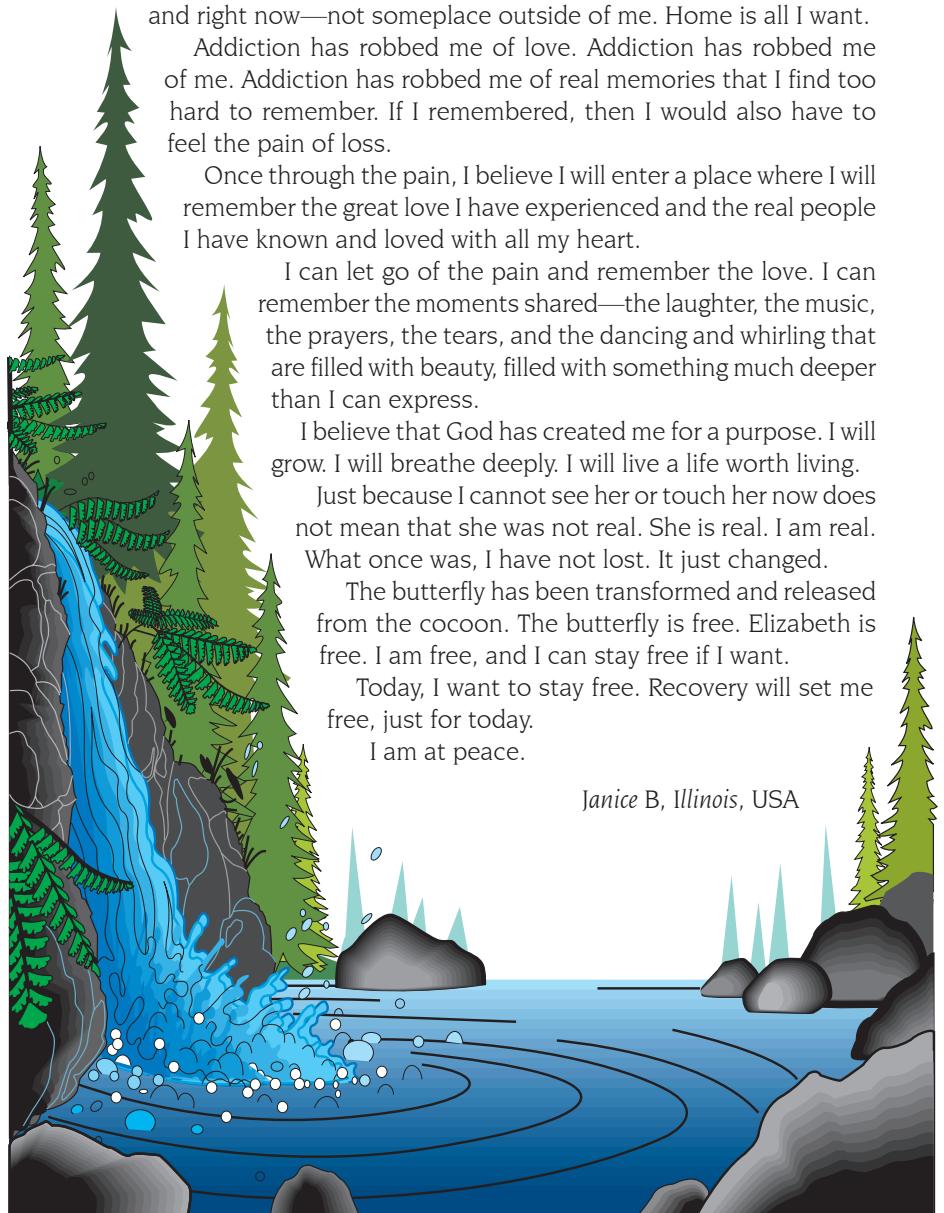
Just because I cannot see her or touch her now does not mean that she was not real. She is real. I am real. What once was, I have not lost. It just changed.

The butterfly has been transformed and released from the cocoon. The butterfly is free. Elizabeth is free. I am free, and I can stay free if I want.

Today, I want to stay free. Recovery will set me free, just for today.

I am at peace.

Janice B, Illinois, USA



Atmosphere of recovery

Many of us may have heard the phrase, "Atmosphere of Recovery," over the last several months and some of us have wondered exactly what it means. "What does atmosphere have to do with recovery?!" we pondered. If we consider atmosphere as the "air we breathe in our groups" we can look around and see if our groups have a loving, welcoming recovery atmosphere. We then may ask ourselves, "How do we create and maintain an atmosphere of recovery? What actions do members need to take to provide the love, warmth and safety so essential to a recovery environment in our groups?" As we may expect, it takes more than "desire." If each of us is willing to take a step back and look at our group environment like someone who is attending a meeting for the first time, perhaps we will understand what creates an atmosphere of recovery. So, in the position of observer, what will we see?

As we approach the meeting entrance, will we see addicts standing outside the group who appear welcoming? Is there a member or two at the front door to welcome everyone to the meeting – whether they are addicts or visitors? Will we see those new to the group introduced to members and offered informational pamphlets and a meeting schedule?

Often, we see groups of addicts talking outside, laughing and having fun, enjoying their recovery and friendships. This is one of the benefits of recovery and something that may be attractive to the newcomer, but sometimes we can get carried away with this activity and not even notice who is walking toward the group. At times, do addicts seem more consumed with their socializing than with actively carrying the message of

recovery? At the entrance to the meeting facility, we may see an addict give a hug, say "Welcome," and return immediately to their conversation with a friend. Do we think the addict who was hugged honestly felt welcomed and will have a desire to come back? Once inside the meeting room, do we see another kind of camaraderie—addicts working together to set up the meeting, laughing together, and also welcoming those sitting alone? As we extend this welcoming hand, are we mindful and respectful of the new members' personal space?

Then again, we might see members who have chosen to remain outside the meeting room until the group readings have been read. These members then shuffle into the meeting, still murmuring to each other, bumping into chairs and creating a distraction. These addicts appear to be totally oblivious to the disruptive wave they send through the meeting. Does this sound familiar? Has any group experienced the "loud late comers" or the "constant chatterers" during group readings or sharing? Is this behavior addressed by group members or does the



Illustration adapted from the Home Group, April 2002.

group simply ignore such behavior, hoping it will just go away? How many of us have stopped going to certain meetings because the atmosphere was disruptive, the meeting started late, and the group's members appeared to "clique up"?

The sentiments expressed above were passed along to the World Board from members throughout the fellowship.

There are many ways to start building a recovery atmosphere. We simply need to be willing to start.

If groups take time to answer some of these questions during their group business meetings, they probably will see whether their group atmosphere fosters recovery or drives people away. Taking corrective actions to create a loving, accepting atmosphere for recovery is relatively simple. Maintaining the atmosphere seems to be the challenge and opportunity for many groups.

To maintain a recovery atmosphere, group members need to accept the responsibility that comes with group membership. Even though we are members of NA when we say we are, belonging to a group is like making an investment in recovery. How often have we heard members refer to meetings and NA as "coming home"? Most homes need ongoing maintenance and a loving atmosphere. Chaos, clutter, and a leaky roof do not provide for an inviting and welcoming home.

Group members may want to take time during their business meeting to discuss all aspects of their meeting atmosphere. Does the meeting have qualities of a "home" atmosphere? How do we welcome newcomers and help them feel comfortable? What do we do to welcome visitors? How about the addict who is not a newcomer to NA but is

new to our meeting? Has the meeting's attendance grown or shrunk? Do our members display respectful attitudes toward everyone at the meeting? And, what are group members willing to do if addicts become disruptive and rude? We need to remember that "recovery" is an action word and that we can keep what we have only with vigilance.

The recovery atmosphere can often be enhanced with a well-structured meeting format and a meeting that starts and ends on time. Groups that thoughtfully and carefully choose trusted servants and help newer trusted servants learn how to serve, say, as a leader or chairperson, tend to maintain their atmosphere of recovery. These groups have members who lead by example who "walk what they talk." Their ac-

tions demonstrate that they value their recovery and desire to keep their group thriving. These may be the members who offer that welcoming smile and knowing nod as newcomers share. Or they may be the ones who stay after the meeting and invite new attendees out for coffee. There are many ways to start building a recovery atmosphere. We simply need to be willing to start.

It is members who create and maintain the atmosphere of recovery within our groups. Each of us has been given the gift of recovery and we can demonstrate our gratitude by reaching out to every person who walks into an NA meeting. As one newcomer said to a member who gave him a smile and hug, "It's been a long time since anyone offered me a hug."

We need your help!

The last World Service Conference passed a motion to replace "some or all" of the personal stories in the Basic Text and we need your help to gather recovery experience that paints a picture of our fellowship today. Besides writing and submitting your own recovery experience, you can help by spreading the word. **Encourage fellow members to participate—tell them NA needs them.** Distributing copies of the solicitation is an easy way to spread the word. It's online at <http://www.na.org/conference/bt> in English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish, and soon in Russian. You can also help members polish their writing, offer to type a member's experience, interview members and write their story for them or help a member translate their experience. Some NA communities are organizing a group writing workshop to gather experience together.

Many more ideas and complete information on the project are available at www.na.org/conference/bt

You can contact us by email at worldboard@na.org

or by mail at

NA World Services

19737 Nordhoff Place; Chatsworth, CA 91311 USA

You could help gather a submission that may save someone's life.

You can help make history.





WORLD UNITY DAY

Sunday, 4 September 2005

LIVE FROM HONOLULU, HAWAII

As “one fellowship” we will join together with “many friends” from diverse cultures and distant communities with a common message that “an addict can stop using and find a better way to live.” We will exemplify our vision that “NA communities worldwide and NA World Services work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery.”

This year’s Unity Day will take place on Sunday 4 September 2005 between the hours of 11:00AM and 1:00PM Pacific Daylight Time, during the 31st World Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Check our website at www.na.org for more information as it becomes available.

Individual members, NA groups, area/regional functions, and institutions can join in the celebration of World Unity Day on a two-hour, “listen only” telephone hookup to hear the Unity Day main speaker. Simply complete the telephone link registration form below and fax or mail it to the World Service Office with your payment. The cost is \$50.00 for calls within the United States/Canada. For calls outside the US/Canada, there will be an additional charge depending upon the telephone rate of the country.

Contact Name _____ Group (Region/Area/Institution) _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Street Address _____

City/State _____ Country _____ Postal Code _____

Outside US/Canada? Phone number where we can reach you on day of call: _____

Form of Payment (Check One): AMEX VISA M/C Discover Diners Club

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Print Name _____

Check/Money Order OR **Free Regional Link** NA World Services is offering one free regional hookup to each region located outside the US and Canada. To use the free regional hookup, you must have the approval of your region. Please include the name and phone number of your regional chairperson below. We will contact the chairperson of your region upon receipt of your registration for verification.

Regional Contact _____ Phone Number _____

Upon completing this application, please mail the application with your check or money order to NAWWS, c/o Unity Day, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409 or fax it to 818.700.0700 with your credit card information. Registrations will not be processed without payment or regional approval for the free link. After 1 August 2005, you will receive a confirmation via email or mail, which will include the call-in number and password you need on the day of the call. The confirmation will outline the exact time and agenda for the call, explain how to phone in on the day of the call, and inform you about what to do if you experience problems during the call.

Questions? Call the World Service Office at 818.773.9999 extension 114.

All registrations MUST BE RECEIVED no later than 1 August 2005.

WCNA-31 alternative merchandise store

Important WB update

NA World Services provides an alternative merchandise store at many world service events for regions and areas to sell merchandise. Originally, the store was intended for the sole purpose of giving areas and regions an opportunity to sell excess merchandise they had previously produced for an event, but were not able to sell. As our members' desire for merchandise from around the world has grown, the store's purpose has evolved as well. Today the store is still a way for some NA communities to sell leftover merchandise, while other NA communities specifically develop and sell new merchandise to help fund their local services.

We, the World Board, recently discussed NA World Services' policy about this issue and we determined that the responsibility for this type of decision lies with the area or region involved. We recognize different communities have different needs and circumstances and that these are best discussed in the local service community. The original policy was created because of problems and abuse by the very few. It seems more responsible for us to let you know some of the potential pitfalls rather than try to enforce the old policy or dictate your decisions.

If you are using this opportunity to help fund local services, please consider that there is always risk in depending on this kind of effort. Sometimes your community can become reliant on this income in order for your services to function, and this income is not necessarily dependable or guaranteed. In addition to the cost of your merchandise, you will also have expenses for facility and shipping costs and local sales tax. Sales at the store are competitive because our members are selective, and typically

there are NA goods from all over the world available. Also, because the store only lasts a short time, you will want to be careful not to over-project how much you will sell. All of these extra costs should be given careful consideration so that you can make clear financial decisions regarding the viability of this opportunity for your community.

The other issue to be aware of is that licensed vendors seeking access to the alternative store may offer a small percentage of their profit to sell their goods under your NA community or committee's name. Or vendors might offer to freely supply you with the goods for your committee members to sell in the store in exchange for a percentage of sales and return of any leftover merchandise. While this may seem appealing on the surface, it creates problems at every convention as we only allow area and regional committees—not licensed vendors—to sell in the alternative merchandise store.

We trust that providing you with a clear explanation about the store and how it works will assist you in making your decisions. This can only work if you help us make it work.



WCNA-31
1-4 SEPTEMBER 2005
HONOLULU, HAWAII

E launa pu, me na pilialoha



Have you registered for the convention?

After 29 July 2005 you must register onsite!

Want to find out what acts have been booked for entertainment and which of these events are still available?

Need the latest convention news?

For more information about WCNA-31
and the Alternative Merchandise Store,
please go to

www.na.org/nawsevents/event-reg.htm

or call

For WCNA-31 information **818.773.9999** ext. 771

For alternative merchandise **818.773.9999** ext. 114

Primary purpose

"There are many ways of doing things in Narcotics Anonymous. And just as all of us have our own individual personalities, so will your group develop its own identity, its own way of doing things, and its own special knack for carrying the NA message. That's the way it should be. In NA we encourage unity, not uniformity."

The Group Booklet, p. 1

This is a column for you, about you, and by you. We invite you to share any challenges your group may have faced, how your group reached a solution, or its "special knack" that keeps you coming back!

So, what's in it for me?

I have heard this question more than a few times, and I would like to share my thoughts about it: *Given the problems seen and heard about in NA service, especially at the world level, what exactly does NA World Services do for members and members' home groups?*

For service work in general, it is true that structure, personalities, and outdated policies can seem like obstacles to our recovery at times. And, to be sure, everyone is human, and we all have our own ups and downs. What I find so interesting is that some people's perception of the problems in world services often fits a generalized, predetermined bias against world services. It is also interesting that the entire service history at the world level has often been lost or obscured for many of our members, and thus many issues can easily be perceived to fit neatly into an anti-world-services position.

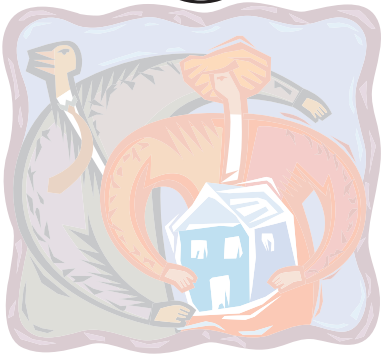
I believe this is true of many issues where members do not have the information to form a balanced opinion about NAWS. I do not fault them; I am only saying that the details, inner workings, and history of many aspects of NA World Services are neither known nor available to most of our membership. Therefore, it is easy for an NA member to form opinions about NAWS based on localized perceptions and the views of some of the more vocal naysayers.

It is not practical for average members to go investigate rumors about world services or to participate in world service events and activities so they can get an "inside" perspective, and that truly saddens me. It is one of the reasons for establishing the worldwide workshops, which have achieved some success, but the functioning of the workshops is severely limited by available funds and personnel.

I am most touched by comments about NAWS and the World Service Conference not doing anything that affects the home groups or members. I have heard this for years from many, many members, and so have all the trusted servants and special workers.

My own observation is that trusted servants and special workers are almost always dedicated to service and to helping NA groups and committees carry the message of recovery to addicts. These trusted servants and special workers believe the work they do contributes to this goal in a very meaningful way. Their work could, indeed, affect your own home group, and I would like to pause and reflect on how this work affects the groups.

The great majority of time and financial resources in world services are spent on the fellowship's primary service center (WSO) and the WSC in one way or another. As a result, the fellowship's literature is produced, legally protected, and distributed; NA's worldwide public information efforts are monitored and improved; addicts in institutions receive free literature on request; more than \$200,000 of free literature is given away each year; new NA groups and service committees are served every single day; information about NA is provided to professionals and the general public; and, last but not least, the ever-growing need for translated recovery literature is met better than ever before.



You see, I hold this work dear to my heart, because it helps individual addicts find NA recovery in more and more countries around the world every year. And when addicts find recovery, they must and do help other addicts find it through their own NA group and its meeting(s).

I believe it is critically important for all of us to recognize the fact that the group I am speaking of here could be yours or mine on any given day! When an addict in Denver or Vancouver or Germany or Ecuador or Italy or Chile or Sweden or wherever needs help, and he or she finds an NA group, it is safe to say that, more often than not, NA World Services had a part in helping that NA group provide the NA literature that could help the addict who needs it.

My sincere hope is that you, too, can look beyond the perception of world services in your NA community and find some optimism about NA World Services.

Steve S, Colorado, USA

NA Way E-subscriptions are here!

Now you can have *The NA Way Magazine* delivered directly to your email in-box—in full color! Follow the simple steps at

<http://PortalTools.na.org/PortalTools/subscriptions/Login.cfm>

You will receive an email highlighting each issue's stories, with direct links to your favorite features and the rest of the magazine.

Hasta siempre
Adeus Macht's gut
Salut Adios
Auf Wiedersehen Adieu

From the editor

When I wrote about change in my "Letter from the Editor" in the January 2005 issue, little did I know how much my life would change in a matter of weeks. Then again, that is what I have learned by staying clean in Narcotics Anonymous. Well, actually, I learned to keep myself *open* for change. And, lo and behold, that is exactly what happened.

An opportunity to move on to another exciting job in another city has entered my life. I gave this opportunity a lot of thought, talked it over with my sponsor, hammered out details of the move with my partner—since his life would be affected, too—and decided to go for it. Composing this issue of the magazine is especially bittersweet for me, as it will be my last. Because it will be the last one I work on, I want to share freely with you some of the lessons I have learned during my tenure as editor of our fellowship's magazine.

I have learned about the tenacity of the human spirit. Many of the experiences I read from you broke my heart, and yet, by the end of your sharing, I felt such hope as I marveled at your courage. Reading about how you stayed clean through some of life's most awful whims strengthened my resolve to stay clean one more day. I came face-to-face with the fragility of life and the determination of the human soul. These experiences gave me something to hold onto as I, too, went through my own grief and loss. At the risk of sounding cliché, it was humbling.

But there was also much joy shared, and in that joy I learned about the celebration of life. We are here on earth for but the blink of an eye, and as recovering addicts we have been given another chance to enjoy that life. So many of you shared the joys of life reborn, mended families, and fulfilled dreams. You fearlessly exposed your weaknesses and the acceptance you learned from our beautiful program. You continued to put one foot in front of the other, staying clean no matter what, making me even more proud to be a member of NA.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as editor of our magazine. It has been one of the most fulfilling jobs I have ever had—and believe me, I have had quite a few over the years! I will miss reading all of your thoughts, but I have so many precious memories to hold near to my heart. Thank you for giving so much of yourselves. I feel it has made me a better person who can be more tolerant, more forgiving, and less judgmental. Thank you for taking the time to put something down on paper and sending it in. *The NA Way Magazine* is a team effort, and we could not do it without you.

I hope you continue to send in your letters and articles. I hope you will welcome and support the incoming editor, De J. I am sure she will be as excited as I was to have this opportunity to serve you. I hope you all continue to find whatever it is you need to stay clean and follow your dreams.

I know we say this all the time at meetings, but you have no idea how real it is to me and the special meaning it holds, especially now, so with all my heart I say, "Thank you for sharing."

Nancy S, Editor

On being clean in prison

I wish to address the issue of recovery in prison and the availability of sponsors for prisoners. Is being clean in prison also recovery? What about sponsorship?

During previous attempts at recovery, and even now, I often have heard people say, "Clean time while institutionalized does not count as recovery." In my humble opinion, whether or not this is so depends upon the circumstances.

First of all, anyone who has worked or lived in a jail or prison knows that drugs—and plenty of them—are available and easy to procure. In addition, there are a number of other ways to act out on our addiction by using sex, gambling, food, etc. Of course, as drug abuse is only a symptom of our underlying problems, so is abstinence only the first step in recovery.

Where does this place the legitimacy of clean time and recovery in prison?

Our Basic Text states, "If you are in an institution of any kind and have stopped using for the present, you can with a clear mind try this way of life." (p. 52) It continues with, "Recovery is an active change in our ideas and attitudes." (p. 53)

Accordingly, if the addict in question is learning and practicing the various principles of the NA program, attending or starting NA meetings, sharing, and working the steps, then his or her recovery is just as valid as it is for those who are recovering outside in society. I think those members who do not recognize and accept this are doing a great disservice to their fellow members as well as to themselves.

Based on my own experience and what I know of the experience of others, I believe that more attention should be paid to the need for sponsors for prisoners. None of the NA members in this prison have sponsors. This could become a serious problem, since sponsorship is such a key aspect of recovery the NA way.

Although I have heard some regional committees do have prison sponsor programs, it seems to be a "hit or miss" situation. My personal pleas to my region have been met with this statement: "Although your clean time in prison can count for you, you cannot work your recovery until you are released, attend meetings, and get a sponsor." This statement comes from an outreach committee whose business cards read, "Recovery by Mail."

Did I miss something? I did get this person to back down a bit on whether or not I am in recovery; however, my repeated requests for a sponsor have been neither denied nor granted. Fortunately, I only have ten months left to serve, but what of those who still have several years, or those who are serving life sentences? Do we continue to leave them in the lurch? I say no.

Anonymity need not be a concern if a fellowshipwide system is coordinated through the World Service Office and the various regional service offices. In this way, all that is needed is the postal service and commitments from appropriate members. It would not require disclosure of personal addresses or telephone numbers. For the sponsor, this would be a relatively easy, yet very significant, form of service. In whatever way it is carried out, until the issue is dealt with in a focused manner, many suffering addicts may never get to revel in recovery the NA way.

I believe that of these two issues, prison sponsorship is probably the most urgent. In fact, the myth that "clean time in prison is not recovery" would be largely dispelled through prison sponsorship. I hope that my fellow members will step up to the plate—I certainly intend to when I am able.

Thank you for letting me share.

Kenny N, New York, USA

A meditation on powerlessness

My disease is based on a lack of power, and an admission of powerlessness is at the heart of our First Step. But what does that mean to someone who has been participating in this process of recovery for a number of years? I have been thinking about that question for a while now.

I am really clear about what it is that I address in NA. I am here to deal with my powerlessness over drugs (including, of course, alcohol). Once I use drugs, I lose all ability to exercise any control or judgment or common sense. Thus, my life becomes immediately unmanageable.

There may be other manifestations of my disease over which I am powerless, but those are the purview of other fellowships. Once I clean up, my need to address these other addictions may become clear—but NA is not where I do that. If I am to remain in recovery, I must be single-pointed in my efforts.

While I find that I continue to be powerless over other people, places, and things in my environment, there seems to be a considerable amount of power in my relationship to those things. The gift of recovery has been the restoration of my power to choose how I respond to those things over which I am powerless.

In NA, we talk about power—Higher Power. All that I do in the work of recovery is done to develop access to that power. If recovery works—and my experience tells me that it does—then,

at some point, a lack of power in my life is no longer the source of the problem.

I get tired of hearing people in meetings who are suffering from their powerlessness at five, ten, and fifteen years clean. One of the things that has been important for me to learn is regaining a sense of personal responsibility.

I excused my behavior all my life. It was always someone else's fault or fate's fault or bad luck or bad karma. I could always find a reason to place the blame elsewhere. NA has taught me that, to live in recovery, I had to own my life. If that lesson is true, then I no longer have the luxury of "copping the plea" that I suffer from powerlessness, and that powerlessness is the cause of my current problems.

My problems today come from my unwillingness. It is my experience that when I try to align my life with what I believe is the will of God, lack of power is not the issue. Recovery is self-correcting, as long as I am willing to pay attention. If I stray off the path, life gives me corrections very quickly. Then it becomes a question of willingness to heed the messages I get. My problem is that, too frequently, I choose not to pay attention and heed the warnings. My willingness all too often fails me. That is when I suffer, and when I am tempted to blame my discomfort on powerlessness.

I believe that God is the power running the universe. If I am aligned with that limitless power, dead dreams awaken, my conscience shows up, and things that I have been unable to do for myself become possible.

This is not to say that I do not have trouble living life on its own terms. I struggle with depression. What I know about this struggle is that, for me, it is the most self-obsessive of mental problems. While under its sway, everything I see or think is filtered through how badly I feel, how hopeless I feel, or how dark I think it is.

Depression is me being completely lost in me. Is the trouble that I am powerless over my mind and thinking? It seems to me that, much like my addiction, there is some part of depression that is outside of my control. Nonetheless, I am responsible for my recovery. I have learned in recovery how to deal with uncomfortable

feelings. When I reach out to the addict who is suffering, or when I keep a service commitment, or when I involve myself in the process of recovery, then I am able to function through those feelings. It has been said by someone wiser than me, "The only way out is through." I have yet to find an exception to that.

So, in the end, is powerlessness my problem today? When I do not pick up, when I live in the solution, when I seek the will of God in my life and I am willing, then there appears to be plenty of power available.

It comes back to the things I learned in early recovery. When my ass is falling off, I pick it up and take it to a meeting. When I get there, I tell the truth about what is going on with me, to the best of my ability. I show up at my home group faithfully and let my fellow addicts know who I am over the long haul. I have a sponsor, and I work the steps. I have a service commitment, and I am responsible for keeping it. When the opportunity presents itself, I work with others and share what I have learned about working the steps.

God has the power and is merciful and gracious enough to share it with me. It is unfaithful of me to blame powerlessness for my troubles today. Lack of willingness and self-obsession seem to be the trouble.

Hal C, Colorado, USA

Picture this



NA communities are invited to send photographs of their meeting places. We especially welcome photos that include meeting formats, recovery literature, posters, dirty coffee cups, and anything else that makes the meeting place look "lived in." Sorry, we cannot use photos that identify NA members. Please tell us about your meeting, its name, the location and city, how long it has been in existence, and what your format consists of (speaker, participation, etc.).

NA in Hungary

We are very pleased to share with *The NA Way Magazine* some photos of our meetings and our recent convention in March.

NA in Hungary has existed for about eight years. We have meetings in Pécs, Budapest, Szeged, and Veszprém. In our local community, members have from four years to the youngest ones with about one or two months. The average clean time here is two years.

There are approximately thirty members in our little fellowship. Some meetings have eight participants, and some have twenty-five to thirty. In our city, we have five meetings a week, and every two weeks there is one extra meeting for women.

At our convention to celebrate the five-year anniversary of NA in Pécs, we had two main meetings, a clean-time countdown, and a concert. We had the largest number of attendees in Hungarian NA history!



Ági B and Feri F, Komló, Hungary



CALENDAR

We encourage you to publicize your event by having it published on our website and in *The NA Way Magazine*. You can inform the WSO about your event by fax, phone, or regular post, or through our website. We encourage using the website because you can check to see if we already have a listing on your convention, and, if not, you can enter your own convention information. It is then reviewed, formatted, and added to the online convention calendar on our website in approximately four days. Just go to www.na.org, click on "NA Events," and follow the instructions.

Convention announcements entered through the website and those received by other means are also given to *The NA Way*. *The NA Way* is published four times a year in January, April, July, and October. Each issue goes into production long before its distribution date, so we need a minimum of three months' notice to ensure your event will be published in the magazine—that's three months before our publication date. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

Australia

Western Australia: 21-23 Oct; Western Australian Area Convention; Returned Services League Hall, Perth; hotel rsvns: +9227.8361; event registration: +0410324268; event info: +0410324268

Brazil

Ceara: 7-9 Oct; Convenção do CSA do Sol; Fortaleza; event info: +85.88272403; www.na.org.br/csadosol

2) 13-16 Oct; II Convenção do Núcleo; Av Vereador Edmundo Cardillo, Poços de Caldas; event info: +55.21.99533471; www.convencao.cjb.net

Sao Paulo: 17-20 Nov; II Convenção do Núcleo Grande; Uma Esperança de Vida; Caraguatatuba; hotel rsvns: +55.11.9751.8656; event info: +55.11.9751.8656, +55.11.5535.7837; event registration: +55.11.9994.4240; www.napraia2005.com

Canada

Alberta: 7-9 Oct; Canadian Convention XIII; Holiday Inn Convention Centre, Edmonton; hotel rsvns: 800.661.5193; event info: 780.450.0071; speaker tape info: 780.905.3694; www.canaacna.org

British Columbia: 28 Jul-1 Aug; Oh Ya Man Convention XIV; Komasket Park, Vernon; hotel rsvns: 250.308.7855; event info: 250.542.5704; event registration: 250.308.7855; event info: 250.308.7855; write: Vernon BC, 2800 33rd St, Vernon, BC, V1T 5S5

Nova Scotia: 11-17 Jul; 16th Annual Pig Roast & Campout; Blomidon Provincial Park, Blomidon Provincial Park; event info: 902.765.3555, 902.678.0651; write: Annapolis Valley Area, Box 522, Kentville, NS B4N 3X3

France

Ile de France: 7-9 Oct; Une Autre Chance/Another Chance; Espace Agora, Alfortville; hotel rsvns: +0609544705

Hungary

Váralja: 26-28 Aug; Hungarian Convention IV; Váralja; +36705365227

Ireland

Dublin: 20-24 Jul; European Convention Conference XXII; City West Hotel, Dublin; hotel rsvns: +003531.401.0500; event registration: +0035387.945.7832; event info: +0035386.368.3013; write: Irish Region, 4/5 Eustace St, Dublin 2, Ireland; www.eccna.org

Mexico

Baja, California: 28-30 Oct; Convención Baja California XIII; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; hotel rsvns: México: +01.800.026607, USA: 866.472.6385; speaker tape info: 858.277.6438; event info: 818.765.5593, 925.753.5074; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Oct; write: CBCNA, PMB 80, Box 439056, San Diego, CA 92143-9056

Norway

Oslo: 30 Sep-2 Oct; It's All about Living; Oslo; event info: +4748078673; write: Area East Service Committee, Box 85, Lamberseter, Oslo, SLO N-1101

Puerto Rico

San Juan: 22-24 Jul; Unidos Podemos XVI; La Gracitud Cambia la Actitud; Hotel Caribe Hilton, San Juan; hotel rsvns: 787.721.0303; speaker tape info: 787.612.5147; event info: 787.365.5296; event registration: 787.593.6928; write: Region del Coquí, Comité de Convenciones, Box 361305, San Juan, PR 00936-1305

South Africa

Western Cape: 2 Jul; Western Cape Mini Convention; Observatory Community Hall, Cape Town; hotel rsvns: +27.08.252.4442; event registration: +27.83.269.7273, +27.82.975.7184; www.na.org.za

Cape Town: 18-20 Nov; Annual National Convention; Okkie Jooste Camp, Cape Town; hotel rsvns: +27.83.252.442; event info: +27.83.269.7273, +27.82.959.2536, +27.83.252.4442; speaker tape submission deadline: 10 Oct; www.na.org.za

Switzerland

Bern: 30 Sep-2 Oct; SCNA; Together; Gwatt-Zentrum am Thunersee, Gwatt; event info: +0041.78.723.21.09; www.narcotics-anonymous.ch

Turkey

Istanbul: 30 Sep-Oct 2; Third Turkish Area Convention; Together We Can; Hotel Villa Blanche, Istanbul; hotel rsvns: +90.212.2163719; event info: +90.216.3624261, +90.240.7935215; write: Turkish Area, MBE 123, Mecidiyekoy 34394, Istanbul; <http://nalinks.org/turkiyena>

United Kingdom

Birmingham: 7-10 Jul; UKCNAXVIII; Celebrating Twenty-Five Years in the UK; The Hilton Metropole Hotel, Birmingham; hotel rsvns: +0121.7804242; event info: +020.7730.0009; www.ukna.org

Oxfordshire: 5-7 Aug; 14th Annual Campout; Oxfordshire; event info: +07932383804, +07800636759

Venezuela

Caracas: 4-6 Nov; CRENA Venezuela III; As Long as I Follow This Path, I Have Nothing to Fear; Circulo Militar, Caracas; event info: +58416800040, +584167194425; www.na-venezuela.org

United States

Arkansas: 12-14 Aug; Central Arkansas Area Convention; Holiday Inn Select, Little Rock; hotel rsvns: 866.276.6648; event info: 501.373.8683; write: Central Arkansas Area, Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72225-0516; www.caasc.org

2) 7-9 Oct; Cove Lake Campout; Mt. Magazine/Cove Lake, Paris; event info: 918.647.2724; write: ARVANA, Box 5631, Ft. Smith, AR 72913

3) 14-16 Oct; Arkansas Regional Unity Campout XIV; Shiloh Recreation Area, Higden; event info: 501.541.4728; write: Arkansas Region, PMB 216, 860 Highway 62 East, Mountain Home, AR 72653; http://arscna.org/act/act_htm#ARUC

California: 26-28 Aug; 19th Annual Mountain High Campout; Meeks Bay, South Lake Tahoe; hotel rsvns: 877.326.3357; event info: 530.541.2245; write: South Shore NA, Box 6706, Stateline, NV 89449-6709; <http://members.tripod.com/laketahoen>

Connecticut: 12-14 Aug; NA Women's Sponsorship Weekend Retreat; Immaculata Retreat Center, Willimantic; event info: 860.738.0272; event registration: 203.630.2858; write: Straight from the Hip, Box 3095, Meriden, CT 06450; www.ctna.org

2) 7-9 Oct; Prayer and Meditation Retreat; Camp Wightman, Stonington; event info: 203.630.2505; write: Free to Be Me, 252 Reservoir Ave, Meriden, CT 06451; www.ctna.com/ctnaactv.htm

Florida: 7-9 Oct; MidCoast Convention; Healing the Spirit; Ocean Breeze Golf & Country Club, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 561.994.0400; event info: 561.313.6760; event registration: 561.859.6264; speaker tape info: 561.542.4433; write: MidCoast Area, South Florida, Box 8374, Delray Beach, FL 33483

2) 14-16 Oct; HACNA III; River Ranch; hotel rsvns: 888.808.7410; event info: 863.401.9283, 863.646.6373, 863.967.2099; write: Heartland Area Service Committee, Box 1848, Eaton Park, FL 33840-1848

Georgia: 15-17 Jul; PASCNA XXIII Anniversary; Holiday Inn, Forsyth; hotel rsvns: 478.994.5691; event registration: 478.827.1419; event registration: 478.787.4205, 478.743.9456; write: PASCNA, Box 4362, Macon, GA 31021

2) 28-31 Jul; MACNA XV; Sheraton Buckhead, Atlanta; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 404.294.1817, 404.343.0067, 770.478.3251; www.midtownatlantana.com

3) 14-16 Oct; WEANA XIX; Holiday Inn Select Conference Center, Atlanta; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event registration: 678.508.9704; speaker tape info: 404.221.9832; write: West End Area of Atlanta, Box 11046, Atlanta, GA 30310

Hawaii: 1-4 Sep; WCNA-31; 31st World Convention of NA; Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu; event info: 818.773.9999; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311; www.na.org/nawsevents/event-reg.htm

Indiana: 26-28 Aug; 10th Annual End of Summer Celebration; Prairie Creek Reservoir, Muncie; hotel rsvns: 765.287.0339; event info: 765.284.1136, 765.287.0339, 765.287.8176

2) 23-25 Sep; Central Indiana Area Convention II; Unity Is a Must, Courage Is a Plus; Adams Mark Hotel Airport, Indianapolis; hotel rsvns: 317.248.2481; event info: 317.787.5414, 317.450.2461; speaker tape info: 317.209.0687; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 Jul; write: Central Indiana Area, Box 441716, Indianapolis, IN 46244; www.naindiana.org/home.php

Kansas: 28-30 Oct; Unconventional Convention; Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds, Lawrence; hotel rsvns: 785.766.7850; write: Miracle Area, Box 991, Lawrence, KS 66044

Maryland: 30 Sep-2 Oct; OGANA VIII; Clarion Resort Fountainbleau Hotel, Ocean City; hotel rsvns: 877.270.9494; speaker tape info: 443.614.0225, 443.366.3857, 410.251.8644; www.ogana.com

Massachusetts: 8-10 Jul; Serenity in the Berkshires XVI Campout; Camp Steven Witawentin, Pittsfield; event info: 413.499.5021, 413.499.8899

Michigan: 26-28 Aug; R & R at the Fort; Camp Fort Hill, Sturgis; event info: 269.273.1131

Mississippi: 21-23 Oct; 23rd Annual Mississippi Regional Convention; Ramada Inn Hilltop, Natchez; hotel rsvns: 601.446.6311; event registration: 601.317.4440; event info: 601.212.9063, 601.954.9645; write: Mid-Mississippi Area, Box 1556, Ridgeland, MS 39158-1556

Missouri: 29-31 Jul; High on Life Picnic; Bucksaw Point Resort, Truman Lake; hotel rsvns: 660.477.3900; alternate lodging: 800.222.5251; event info: 877.444.6667; www.ozarkasc.com

Nevada: 15-17 Jul; CANAC XIV; Riverside Casino, Laughlin; hotel rsvns: 800.227.3849; event info: 310.487.2177; speaker tape info: 928.234.0365, 702.208.3868; write: CANAC, Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439-1975

2) 30 Sep-2 Oct; Never Alone Never Again; Peppermill Hotel Casino, Reno; hotel rsvns: 866.821.9996; event info: 775.329.9568, 775.884.4829, 775.972.6997; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Jul; write: Sierra Sage Region, Box 7324, Reno, NV 89510; www.sierrasagena.org

3) 28-30 Oct; Western Service Learning Days IX; Palace Station Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas; event info: 702.638.0971, 702.647.6632, 702.528.8787

New Jersey: 12-14 Aug; GPACNA III; Spiritually Refreshed, Glad to Be Alive; The Glenpointe Marriott, Teaneck; hotel rsvns: 800.992.7752; event info: 973.615.6536; event registration: 973.925.9576

2) 7-9 Oct; In the Spirit of Unity XI; DoubleTree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center, Roselle; hotel rsvns: 732.469.2600; event info: 908.241.1257, 908.468.6258; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Jul; write: Northeast NJ Area, Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

New York: 15-17 Jul; Mohawk River Area 2005 Campout; Moreau Lake State Park, Moreau; hotel rsvns: 518.382.9360; event registration: 518.393.5148, 518.221.9149, 518.243.9520

2) 2-5 Sep; Recovery in the Woods XIX; Camp Pioneer & Retreat Center, Buffalo; event registration: 716.874.4944; speaker tape info: 716.578.2374; event info: 716.853.4514; write: Buffalo ASC, Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207; www.nawny.org

3) 9-11 Sep; The True Nature II; Delta Lake Conference Center, Rome; hotel rsvns: 315.336.7210; event info: 315.457.1614; write: HONYANA Fall Retreat, Box 772, Syracuse, NY 13201

4) 14-16 Oct; Fall into Open Arms; First Convention; Fallsview Nevele Grande, Ellenville; hotel rsvns: 800.647.6000; event info: 646.772.1727, 845.494.1403, 845.831.5640; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Sep; write: Open Arms Area, PMB283, 56 N Plank Rd Ste 1, Newburgh, NY 12550-2116

5) 21-23 Oct; Western New York Regional Convention X; Holiday Inn Select, Niagara Falls; hotel rsvns: 716.285.3361; event registration: 716.602.6815; speaker tape info: 716.831.6815; event info: 716.308.0153; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Jul; write: Western New York Region, Box 218, Buffalo, NY 14220; www.nawny.org

North Carolina: 15-17 Jul; New Hope Area Convention XII; When at the End of the Road...; Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center, Durham; hotel rsvns: 919.941.5050; event info: 919.815.0604, 919.599.0045; event registration: 919.452.5876; write: New Hope Area, Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

2) 26-28 Aug; Unite for Life; Ramada, Greensboro; event registration: 336.420.2273; speaker tape info: 336.442.5458; event info: 336.442.8197

3) 23-25 Sep; More Powerful than Words; Holiday Inn Express, Salisbury; hotel rsvns: 704.637.3100; event info: 704.857.1078, 704.224.1057

Ohio: 10-11 Sep; Shattering the Illusion with a New Vision II; Travelodge Hotel, Cincinnati; hotel rsvns: 513.771.5252; event registration: 513.403.0207; speaker tape info: 513.546.1029; event info: 513.295.3130; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Aug; write: New Vision Group, Box 6743, Cincinnati, OH 45206

2) 7-9 Oct; Ohio Regional Twelve Step Spiritual Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Chillicothe; hotel rsvns: www.naohio.org; event info: 419.420.1981, 740.452.8273; write: Ohio Region, 139 1/2 N Sixth St, Zanesville, OH 43701; www.naohio.org/orscna_events.htm

Oregon: 26-28 Aug; Triangle Lake Campout; Triangle Lake Park, Eugene; event registration: 541.757.8013; event info: 541.760.9510, 541.758.7051

Pennsylvania: 15-17 Jul; Freedom in the Forest II; Lackawanna State Park (group sites 2&3), Dalton; event registration: 570.586.9095; event info: 570.341.6808; write: Greater Scranton Steamtown Area, Box 20168, Scranton, PA 18502-0168

2) 26-28 Aug; Serenity in the Mountains Annual Campout; Mauch Chunk Lake State Park, Jim Thorpe; event info: 570.454.2601, 570.854.4909

3) 16-18 Sep; Little Apple Area Birthday Convention XXIV; Days Inn Conference Center, Allentown; hotel rsvns: 888.395.5200; event info: 610.434.5189; write: Little Apple Area, Box 90273, Allentown, PA 18109

South Carolina: 19-21 Aug; Welcome Home X; Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Columbia; event registration: 803.787.3809; event info: 803.463.1824; write: Central Carolina Area, 709 Woodrow St, Box 418, Columbia, SC 29205

2) 30 Sep-2 Oct; Unity Festival; Radisson Inn and Suites, Spartanburg; hotel rsvns: 864.574.2111; event info: 864.205.4012

South Dakota: 7-14 Aug; SDRNA; 11th Annual Sheridan Lake Campout; Ranger Rick Group Campsite, Hill City; event info: 605.339.2133, 605.335.9847; www.southdakotana.org

2) 16-18 Sep; SDRNA VIII; Oaks Motel, Sioux Falls; hotel rsvns: 800.326.4656; event info: 605.925.4873, 605.339.2133; write: SDRNA, Box 788, Sioux Falls, SD 57101; www.southdakotana.org

Tennessee: 19-21 Aug; Unity VII; Surrender to Win; The War Is Over; Hotel Preston, Nashville; hotel rsvns: 877.361.5900; event registration: 615.354.1534; event info: 615.482.2119, 615.485.6663; write: Middle Tennessee Convention, Box 282232, Nashville, TN 37228-2232

Texas: 15-17 Jul; Fort Worth Area Convention V; La Quinta Inn Arlington Conference Center, Arlington; hotel rsvns: 800.531.5900; event info: 817.279.9108, 817.465.1862; write: Fort Worth ASO, 316 Bailey, Ste 107, Box 470033, Fort Worth, TX 76147-0033; www.fortworth-areana.org

2) 26-28 Aug; CTCANA III; Our Message Is Hope; The Promise of Freedom; Holiday Inn Market Square, San Antonio; hotel rsvns: 210.225.3211; event info: 210.662.4834, 210.260.7182, 210.645.1763; write: Courage to Change Area, Box 830363, San Antonio, TX 78283-0363

3) 30 Sep-2 Oct; For the Newcomer; Park Plaza Austin, Austin; hotel rsvns: 888.201.1803; event info: 512.775.1338, 512.322.9234, 512.587.9686; write: Miracles & Solutions, Box 141805, Austin, TX 78714

4) 14-16 Oct; Alive and Kicking Group Anniversary XXXII; Sheraton Brookhollow, Houston; hotel rsvns: 713.688.0100; event info: 281.748.4860; event registration: 832.794.7637; speaker tape info: 713.562.3138; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Aug

Utah: 15-17 Jul; URCNA XXII Campvention; Lodgepole Campground Uinta, Heber City; event info: 801.830.4524; event registration: 801.787.0683; speaker tape info: 801.465.1455; write: Utah Region, Box 994, Springville, UT 84663; www.utahna.info

Vermont: 19-21 Aug; Back to Basics XXI Campout; Wallingford Boys Camp, Wallingford; event info: 802.579.4842, 603.355.1347, 603.588.3132; write: Green Mountain Area, Box 6414, Brattleboro, VT 05302; www.GMANA.org

Virginia: 15-17 Jul; BRANA Campout XXIV; Natural Chimneys Regional Park, Mount Solon; event info: 540.820.0861; write: Blue Ridge Area, Box 623, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; www.brana.org

2) 5-7 Aug; Almost Heaven Area Convention XIX; 4-H Center, Front Royal; event registration: 304.728.2274; event info: 304.264.1450; speaker tape info: 304.262.2098; write: Almost Heaven Area, Box 1761, Martinsburg, WV 25402; www22.brinkster.com/js42dae/events.htm

3) 14-16 Oct; OLANA Unityfest XII; Holiday Inn, Chesapeake; hotel rsvns: 757.523.1500; event info: 757.328.4752, 252.245.0969; write: Outer Limits Area, Box 1063, Franklin, VA 23851

Washington: 19-21 Aug; Summer Sizzlers XVII; Red Lion Inn, Richland; hotel rsvns: 509.946.7611; write: Tri-Cities Area, Washington State; 2527 W Kennewick Ave #230, Kennewick, WA 99336

2) 14-16 Oct; Pacific North West Convention XXVIII; Sheraton Tacoma Hotel, Tacoma; hotel rsvns: 800.845.9466; event info: 253.208.7798; event registration: 253.473.6035; speaker tape info: 253.230.2648; write: Washington Northern Idaho Region, Box 700, Tacoma, WA 98401

Wisconsin: 28-30 Oct; WSNAC XXII; Beyond Our Wildest Dreams; The Abbey Resort, Fontana; event info: 262.245.0404, 608.356.1702; event registration: 608.257.1990; write: WSNAC XXII, Box 149, Baraboo, WI 53913

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New medallion design will be available 1 September 2005

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18 months and 1–50 years

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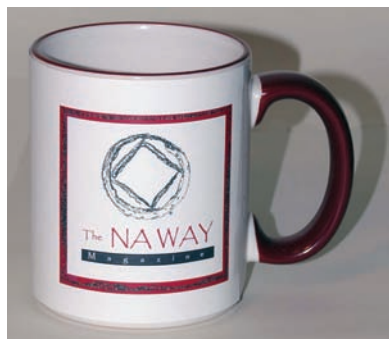
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Зависим/а ли съм?

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Les douze principes de service de NA

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Sponsorship

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Home GROUP

