

THE
NAWay
MAGAZINE[®]

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



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VOLUME THIRTY-FOUR ♦ NUMBER THREE



• West Africa Fellowship Development

• WCNA 37!



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

In the years when we hold the World Convention of NA, World Unity Day is an event that takes place at the convention, in NA communities around the world, and on telephone lines and internet streams. But in non-WCNA years, Unity Day can be a totally different experience. Some groups and service bodies will host Unity Day events, at some meetings unity will be the topic, and some NA members will just take a quiet moment with their higher power—and a connection with our worldwide Fellowship. However you celebrate Unity Day, we hope to "feel" your presence on 2 September as we all come together at once to share the Serenity Prayer and a lot of love and positive NA energy. (Please share the Unity Day flyer included in this issue with others in your NA community.)

And speaking of sharing . . . remember that this is *your* recovery journal. You can help other recovering addicts by sharing your experience, strength, and hope through writing or other artistic media. It's just like sharing in a meeting, sponsoring, or being of service. Email electronic documents (doc/docx, rtf, jpg, pdf, etc.) to naway@na.org. Fax to 818.700.0700, attn: NA Way Magazine, or mail to NA Way Magazine; PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409. Share with others what's been given to you!

[De J. Editor](#)

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Electronic subscribers can click here for additional content.

Cover photo: Artwork from Mid-Summer Campout 2016, Ireland Region

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.

Strong foundation

With more than ten years in Narcotics Anonymous, my world was rocked in a small moment. I was hit by a car on my motorcycle. I was cruising along one moment, a very active recovering addict living and enjoying life to the best of my ability, and then, BAM!! After 16 hours in the trauma unit, I was sent home with a fractured pelvis—a non-weight-bearing injury. That meant cruising around on a motorcycle became cruising in a chair with wheels on it. Life was completely turned around in the blink of an eye. We hear about this stuff all the time. I know addicts in recovery, friends who have experienced this. What happens when it happens to us? Thank God for Narcotics Anonymous.

When I first got here, I was desperate with a capital D. I was pretty much willing to do anything. I know I had been willing to do anything for dope. Changing that gift of desperation into willingness, open-mindedness, and honesty was big for me in early recovery. With some surrender and willingness, I was on my new spiritual journey. As the story goes for many of us, I found a home group and I got into service. I got a sponsor and started working the Steps, and I learned about spiritual principles and tried to practice them to the best of my ability on a day-to-day basis.

I didn't understand at that time in my recovery what was transpiring—not like I do today. I was building a solid foundation to deal with life. The rigors, the tragedies, the ups and downs still happen to us daily whether we are clean or not. On occasion in the past I have gone through times when meeting after meeting just got a little repetitive, mundane, and even boring. What I have learned about perseverance is that I just show up anyway. I have the disease of addiction and I must participate in my recovery. I learned that no one will do it for me.

After the smoke clears, I'm still left with me and how to process life's tragedies. I have to get honest about the situation and I have to accept and surrender as necessary. I have to trust and have faith in the God I understand and the program so that, no matter what, I can get through anything with these principles. Sometimes I can simply overlook the strength that I get and draw upon from God and you guys, all of you. I love Narcotics Anonymous and all of you guys. I know I'll get through this with dignity. And when that happens, I promise not to take credit for it (well, maybe not all the credit).

Jay W, California, USA



Basic caption contest

Here's your chance to participate in *The NA Way Magazine* in a whole new way. Write a caption for this image, send it to us, and you'll be magically entered in our caption contest. We'll choose the best (and maybe a few others) for publication in an upcoming issue. Your prize will be the satisfaction of 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.



First Esperanza Convention; San Antonio, Texas
Photo: Gilbert L, Texas, USA

WCNA 37

Save the Date

30 August–2 September 2018

Orlando, Florida

[more info on page 18](#)

Coming Soon!

NA Way Newsletter Edition

Our thanks to NA newsletter subcommittees that added *The NA Way* to their mailing lists or sent us copies of recent issues. **There's still time to submit your material** (articles, artwork, etc.) to be included in the newsletter issue. If your article is published, we'll cite your newsletter as the original source, and we'll link to your service body or newsletter webpage in the electronic version of the magazine (if we have a URL).

We also received some of your newsletter guidelines, which have been uploaded to the Local Service Resources* page at www.na.org/localresources, and **there's still time to share your guidelines** for others to use and adapt in their newsletter service efforts. Email yours to naway@na.org.

Thank you!

*The resources on this webpage are developed by local service bodies and aren't approved or endorsed by NA World Services or the World Service Conference (unless clearly designated otherwise). If you have other service resources to share, please email them to fsmail@na.org.



The problem with Step Three



A few years ago I started written [Step work](#) again. I was struggling with powerlessness and unmanageability in a certain area of my life and I had been brought to my knees again. I am grateful that I know where the solution can be found. Step Three is one of my favorite Steps. I find that writing and practicing Step Three fills me with hope, which I so desperately need. So it was with much eagerness that, after writing Steps One and Two, I commenced with the Third Step.

Several weeks later I was stuck on my Step Three. I couldn't understand why. Often conversations with my sponsor would run along the lines of "I'm just not connecting with this Step." I couldn't answer the questions as fully as I knew I ought to. I was frustrated because I *know* the goodness that comes with Step Three and turning my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power, but this time the good feelings eluded me. I couldn't wrap my head around *how* God was going to care for my will and my life. My sponsor's suggestion was to continue writing and to start praying for connection, to ask God to move whatever needed to be moved inside me so I could connect with the Step and surrender so I could find hope again. I did these things. By then I was writing begrudgingly. I was going through the motions, hoping a miracle would happen during the process. After some half-hearted writing and a lot of prayer, I finally figured out what was wrong. My problem with Step Three was actually Step Two!

Step Two, I feel, is an often-overlooked Step. After ten-plus years in recovery, I looked at the words *came to believe*, and I automatically jumped past them. In my arrogance, I thought that because I had already come to believe in a Higher Power, I had Step Two in the bag with no further work required.

However, this was not the case. I need to work each and every Step. I can't skip over the Steps I find too difficult or challenging—or even too easy. Step Two doesn't just state that we came to believe. It states that we came to believe a power greater than ourselves *could restore us to sanity*. I know that my Higher Power can restore me to sanity. I have found sanity and freedom from drug use, excessive spending, my sexual behavior, and my need for attention and affirmation, but I had never found sanity and freedom in the way I behave around food. I had approached the Steps this time with an understanding of my powerlessness and unmanageability. I was completely willing to hand my will and my life over the care of God. I knew that I couldn't change on my own. I was so eager to move forward that I didn't pay enough attention to whether or not I believed my Higher Power could or would restore me to sanity in this area.

The truth of the matter is that while I believed God had the power to restore me to sanity, I didn't believe that I was worthy of that sanity. I still don't feel fully worthy of complete sanity. Part of me is not even sure if that's what I want. It's a reservation similar to the one many of us have in early recovery—that I'll be boring without my chaos, issues, and madness. There is also a reservation that I may become so "healed and recovered" that nobody in the rooms will be able to relate to me.



What I do know is that my God wants me to experience sanity and freedom—and it is me who gets in the way of making that happen. Once I realized that it was my perception of myself that was hindering my progress, I could take some action. I have spent many years of my recovery reminding myself that I am worthy of this life. Self-pity and self-judgment are two of my biggest defects of character. I have to work on them constantly by telling myself the truth about me: I am neither a failure nor a superstar. I have learned some tricks over the years to counteract low self-esteem, and I practiced those earnestly while I rewrote Steps Two and Three. The difference was amazing. I connected with the belief that I am worthy of sanity, and I ultimately found the freedom I was looking for.

Step Two is not the easy Step that I can leap over to reach Step Three. In doing so, I abdicate my responsibility for my recovery. By effectively skipping over Step Two, I'm saying, "I'm powerless" and "God, fix me." I'm not coming from a place of humility; I'm coming from a place of arrogant assumption. I've learned a new respect for Step Two. It's the Step of possibility where hope is born.

Leanne B, Durban, South Africa

My deal with god

I was in a recovery house and decided I was going to leave, even though I knew I would face seventeen years without parole if I left. I made a deal with god (whom I wasn't real sure about, but was coming to believe in). My deal was to go to the office and see if a van was available to take me to an NA meeting, knowing the chances of that were slim. If there was a van available, I would stay; if not, I was packing my stuff and leaving.

I got to the office and the guy behind the desk was on the phone. He paused and asked what I needed, and I told him I needed to get to an NA meeting and asked if a van was available. He said no, so my first thought was, "Aha! I'm

packing!" Then he told me to hold on a minute. He said, "I'm on the phone with someone who's going to the meeting, and he says he will come by and pick you up." I said, "No, no; that's okay." But he insisted. "You just said you needed a meeting, and he's on his way."

I stood outside, pissed off and not sure what to do. My deal was a van. No van, I'm leaving. I decided to be polite and go to the meeting with this guy, and then after the meeting I would leave. I got an uneasy feeling when the guy pulled up in his car, but I was astonished when he introduced himself. He said, "Hi, I'm Van." I laughed all the way to the meeting.

Jim B, Texas, USA

Reprinted from [The NA Way Magazine](#), April 2009

The pages in my book

I remember my mom telling me a story about when I was a child. She tried to discipline me by taking away my crayons. When she came to wake me the next morning, I refused to get up. I told her that without my crayons there was no point in even getting out of bed. Even as a young child, I felt the need to have something to get through the day. Fifteen years later, drugs became my crayons. My name is Christine and I am an addict.

Why did I "need" these crayons? What did they do for me that I didn't want to live through the day without them? Well, when I colored a picture, it made me feel good. What was even better was when others

looked at that picture: I got praise. I got what I craved, to be told I was good, talented, special; I felt loved and accepted. I felt worthy. Without my crayons I felt less than, I felt hollow, I felt worthless. So I took my crayons and I colored; I colored the pages in my book of life.

I continued to use anything I could to give myself that outside approval I craved so desperately—until the day when something changed. I became a teenager and I made some mistakes. Suddenly my parents didn't approve of me anymore, and even the best work of art couldn't make things go back to the way they were. People had new, higher expectations of me, some impossible expectations of perfection. I had stopped getting approval from the places I once had, and I needed to feed my addiction. So I switched up my crayons for drugs, and I switched up getting approval from my parents for getting it from my friends.

I quickly discovered that getting high was a lot easier than creating big, beautiful works of art, so I began to fill my pages with drugs, parties, sex, and money . . . chaos. The works of art on my pages now were just random chaotic lines and colors scattered all about, no shape, no form. Sometimes the marks flew completely off the pages. Things started getting messy, but I didn't care. My pages were being filled, and that was all that mattered.

Coloring my pages with drugs as my crayons was a different experience. There was an affordable, unlimited, and varied



supply of crayons, but drugs ran out quickly, and one type was never enough for long. All of my crayons had become nothing but little nubs of colors, so small I couldn't hold on to them. I frantically tried to coax color from the tiny pieces, but they fell to the floor, useless for filling my pages. The bright, beautiful colors faded and disappeared. The only color left was black. All I could find was black, and all my pages were just black. Drugs had stopped working, and I could no longer use them to fill the pages of my life.

When I tried to stop, I realized I couldn't; I was addicted, I was powerless. Drugs controlled my life, and I couldn't save myself by coloring with crayons. I needed something else, something powerful to help me, something that could color my pages for me, something that would never run out. That something was the God of my own personal understanding, a loving and caring power greater than myself. I found God by coming to Narcotics Anonymous and working the Twelve Steps. It was only with God's help, the Twelve Steps, and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous that I am here today, again coloring the pages of my book.

I no longer need to use drugs as my crayons because God has a set picked out just for me, and they are everlasting. They never fail, and there are more colors than I ever knew existed. Together we are able to color exquisite pieces of art, and my God always approves. I no longer need approval from my parents, my friends, or others; I'm not saying I still don't want it, but today I don't need it to live through the day.

I now follow God's direction in my life, and NA is a huge part of it. Narcotics Anonymous makes only one promise: "that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live." I truly believe this with all of my heart because it happened to me! There are so many people out there suffering as I did, and I know what they could have instead, but it is only possible if they hear the message of Narcotics Anonymous—and are ready to consider a new way to fill their own books.

I still have all those black pages in my book, and sometimes I create a page that doesn't quite satisfy me, but that does not make my book any less beautiful.

Thumbing through the pages reminds me how strong I am. Comparing what I have now with those black pages helps me realize how beautiful my book can really be when I use the right set of crayons.

Christine L, Alberta, Canada

Peeking through the windows

I tried to get clean for 13 years. Well, let me rephrase that: I tried to "stay stopped" for 13 years. I went to meetings, but I wasn't present for them. I got sponsors, but I didn't take their suggestions. I answered questions for every Step, but never with the intention of being thoroughly honest. I got into relationships with those I thought were "recovered" so that I might "get recovered," too. When each relationship grew stale (usually within a month), I searched the rooms for the next big love of my life who would keep me clean. I prayed, but never listened for the voice of my Higher Power. I moved from place to place, always with the hope that geography would calm the storm that lived within me. I sat in the rooms counting down minutes until the meeting would end. I needed to be seen. I needed to be heard. I needed you to know that I was clean and living a spiritual life, even though I was not.

Through the 13 years, I had periods of abstinence. Sometimes I would use here and there, and then stop on my own, never telling a soul. Sometimes I would relapse and tell immediately. Other times, I picked up white keytags; I picked up one-year tags that I didn't actually earn. I never made it past ten months without using at least once. Many times, I picked up tags while high. Always, I had a heaviness attached to my spirit and walls surrounding my heart.

I had no support group, not because the hand of NA hadn't been extended, but because I refused to grab it. I had a few running buddies, but they were nothing more than vessels used to sign off on my disastrous defects. When I did find common ground with those

I thought were healthier than me, my disease always took over control, and I sabotaged the ties that had once bound us together. It was a never-ending loop of self-deception, self-centeredness, and drugs. I could not be faithful to anyone, whether friend, sponsor, or lover.

When I came back into the rooms this last time, I did not have any idea what I would do differently. I was not excited about my return. I was not hopeful. I had no clear idea of what recovery looked like, and I certainly didn't want to reach out for help. I did not make a decision that I would never use again. My spirit, on the other hand, made the decision for me. I began doing things against my will, just as I had so many times before. This time, though, there were marked differences. Where I had lied, I began to be honest. Where I had cheated, I began to practice faithfulness. Where I had been hidden, I stepped into the light. Where I had pretended, I became true to myself and others. Where once I would have shied away from the loving arms of Narcotics Anonymous, I allowed each hand to catch me when I began to fall.

I went to meetings when I did not want to. I began counting minutes for the meeting to start, rather than for it to end. I stayed in my seat, no matter what. I worked the Steps with a new sponsor, one who possessed what I wanted spiritually and mentally. I worked the Steps thoroughly and with my whole heart. I listened for the voice of my Higher Power and began to see things differently. Where there had been differences, there were now nothing but similarities. Where I had been afraid, I began to have calmness.

I celebrated my first true year clean with a [glow-in-the-dark keytag](#) that really meant something to me. By continuing to do service commitments and Step work, by reaching out, listening, praying, and surrendering, today (June 2016) I have three years and seven months clean. I have friends today, and I am a good friend. I am loved, and I am a productive member of society. No longer do I have to peek through the windows of Narcotics Anonymous to watch other people recover. Today I know that we do recover—and that "we" includes me.

Amy M, Texas, USA



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. Please send submissions to naway@na.org.

Meeting in the mountains

The Ajuda Group (which means "help" in Portuguese) meets daily: Sunday morning, Monday through Friday evenings, and an open meeting at 5:00 pm on Saturday. We meet in downtown Nova Friburgo, a city in a forested region with a cool climate in the state of Rio de Janeiro at an altitude of 840 meters (2800 feet). The group met for many years at a church, but a serious disaster flooded the city with mud a few years ago and destroyed that church. Since then the group has rented an 80-square-meter (about 850 square feet) commercial room. The group was started 9 April 1987, using NA literature and carrying the NA message from the beginning.

In our early years, there was only one weekly meeting, and only a few members. The meeting moved from one room to another, until the group managed to stay at the same room for over 20 years. Through service work and commitment, from the 1990s on, the group grew in number of members and the number of weekly meetings. Our monthly service meeting helps us deal with any issues that come up, and is a way of ensuring that the group keeps the Twelve Traditions with the guidance of a Higher Power through group conscience. We welcome patients of local clinics and persons who arrive with court-order cards.

The average meeting attendance is 20, with many newcomers but also members with multiple years in recovery. The average cleantime is eight years, and we have members with up to 29 years clean. We celebrate cleantime with the sponsor first sharing about that person; then the sponsor calls on the member to receive a keytag or medallion and to share. Usually, members prefer to celebrate their cleantime at the open meeting, inviting their families and having a big cake for everybody, with cool drinks and little snacks passed around.

Carlos P, Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil





FELLOWSHIP DEVELOPMENT

West Africa

As NA grows, we continually move toward our vision that one day every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message and find a new way to live. NA is often introduced in new places by NA members traveling or temporarily living away from their home countries or by friends of NA. These folks play an important role, but NA communities are truly sustained when the program takes root with the local, native population. It's common for meetings to start and stop as NA is beginning in a new place. There are also usually few members and a slowly developing understanding of NA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, so connection with experienced NA members and a sense of the broader NA Fellowship is important. [NA World Services](#) supports and collaborates with new NA communities to help make these connections and by providing educational events and service materials, free or subsidized literature, financial support, and ongoing communication with local members. As the community is strengthened, World Services continues to offer support as needed, but steps back so that the community develops at its own pace.



And so it has been in some of the countries of Western Africa. We know of attempts to get meetings started in Senegal and Cameroon. And through a chance email connection, we became aware that NA has been consistently present in Liberia for some ten years. In this issue, we share accounts from two members who have played a part in helping to establish and develop NA in Ghana and Nigeria.

NA Ghana: Collective experience

Helping to get things started has always been a passion of mine. As with the disease of addiction, so it is with all of life's issues for me: "Living well" no matter what cards are dealt to me is my personal goal. Sharing what I have learned through my own challenges has prepared me to help others overcome issues that used to get me loaded. Service through the principles of recovery is transforming my life, and I continue to learn along the way.

In my line of work, I have had the opportunity to support people struggling with illness and lack of access to proper care. I have traveled to Ghana more than 15 times and other African nations more than 20 times. In the process, I have also been able to connect with addicts seeking recovery and to participate in the development of NA in Ghana. I am happy to be able to share some of what I have observed and experienced there in these 20 years.

As of October 2016, there are [eight NA meetings in Ghana](#), a country of more than 26 million people. In 2004, the first known NA meeting was established by members of AA and NA. AA is reported to have been present prior to 2004, but died out and was reintroduced after NA was established in 2004. They held that first NA meeting in the alcohol detox unit of a teaching hospital in the city of Accra along Ghana's Atlantic coast. The meeting continues today at the local psychiatric hospital, where treatment is now offered. There are also meetings at rehabilitation facilities and schools of higher

Afri-can Zonal Forum:

Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe.

learning, including one on the main campus of Ghana's oldest and largest university.

In Ghana's second-largest city, Kumasi (in the inland Ashanti region), there are two NA meetings supported by enthusiastic Ghana NA members. While I was there recently, I joined one of these members to do some public relations work on local television. There are two additional meetings at a psychiatric hospital and a church-run halfway house in the coastal city of Cape Coast that are well attended but, like any developing NA meeting, are in need of the support of experienced NA members.

Addiction is stigmatized here, so fear and shame feed the denial that can destroy the addicts' families. Those who use drugs are often hidden or abandoned by their families, who fear that the addict will ruin the reputation of the family. Many view addiction as a curse and believe drug use is brought on as the consequence of moral failings. Women are even more likely to be forced into isolation by both their drug use and their families' guilt and shame. Many female addicts die alone and in secret; they simply never make it to NA meetings.

There is a lot of confusion in Ghana (as, of course, there is in many other places) regarding the purpose and intention of twelve-step programs in general, including what many perceive

The government is beginning to understand the twelve-step concept . . .

as religious tenets in programs that don't endorse any religion and that welcome people from any religion or lack of religious background. The government is beginning to understand the twelve-step concept, but there is definitely a need to share information about NA with government agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, judicial and corrections systems, and the general business community—all of whom may help still-suffering addicts find NA. There are members on the front line in Ghana who are committed to carrying NA's simple message. They are keeping the flame of hope alive.

On 24 September 2016, Ghana held its second "recovery walk" to raise awareness of the extent of substance use, and to illuminate the fact that recovery from addiction is possible. Approximately 150 to 200 people participated, which ended with radio and television interviews and recovery-related skits. Many community-based organizations participated. There were supportive nonaddict community members, but the majority of participants were in recovery. This was a demonstration of the growing numbers seeking recovery and the hope developing in Ghana.

One of the sources of support for Ghana's efforts is NA's Afri-can Zonal Forum. Ghana is a member of the AZF and is benefiting from the relationships the zone fosters with other African nations. The AZF was established in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in May 2013, when NA World Services helped bring together NA members from eleven African countries in response to members in Africa seeking assistance from NAWS to make connections among the various countries. World Services has supported the AZF and development of NA on the continent by organizing and funding the annual AZF meeting and providing resources for the regions to collaboratively nurture and sustain the growth of NA in Africa.

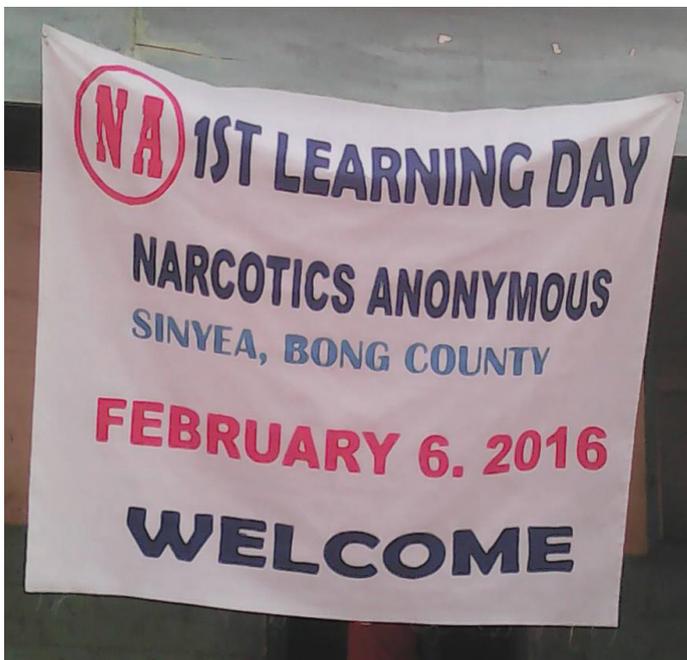
In Fellowship development efforts like this, NAWS offers support and resources including NA literature, educational materials for learning days and service events, financial support, and ongoing one-on-one communication. As the communities build upon those preliminary efforts, NAWS provides ongoing support as needed. Ongoing service conferences and learning days provide continued training of local members on NA's

Steps, Traditions, and Concepts,

We came to NA powerless . . . only to find the collective power of the program.

they can then share with others in their respective communities.

Today I know I play a part in the larger principle I choose to call life, but I do not recover alone. I know that NA recovery is possible and practical. We came to NA powerless over the disease of addiction as individuals, only to find the collective power of the program. If you are fortunate enough to have many



First NA Learning Day; Bong County, Nigeria

meetings in your area and access to sponsorship, be grateful! This is not the case in many parts of the world. I challenge all to work the Steps and then teach someone else by example how to find peace, purpose, and fulfillment. I thank the power that brought me to recovery and gave me the opportunity to find a new way to live.

I hope those who read this article will realize that we have become a worldwide Fellowship of recovering addicts through this collective experience of our members and through the spiritual principles of our program. I plan to return to Ghana in September 2017, and I hope all who are reading this will continue to pray for and support the members of the "no matter what club" in Ghana.

Maurice G, California, USA

... and commitment in Nigeria

My sponsor once shared with me how vital the principle of commitment is in his recovery, particularly in strengthening the significant relationships in his life. I believe we're learning as a region how this principle is vital to the development of the NA community here in Nigeria. I wrote excitedly last year about the growth we were beginning to experience here in Nigeria: Meetings had sprung up in Zaria and in Abuja, and the Lagos group was coming back to life. We'd received several cartons of literature from World Services, and we were filled with hope.

As time went on, the challenges came. We had hoped the Zaria group would grow rapidly and in no time several other groups would spring up in the area, but the opposite was the case. We had seen some growth in Abuja, with two groups meeting regularly at different locations in the town, but as time went on members slowly fused both groups into one. In Kaduna we also had challenges. The DATER Group, which is an H&I group, was affected negatively by new institutional policies.

In sharing about commitment, I remember how my sponsor stressed, "Not when all goes well, but when things aren't exactly going as they should, do you need to practice this principle." And we learned this through practice. During this time, several social media app chat groups (which function as closed group

meeting spaces) have become extensively more active. And so, while there may have been a decline in the number of physical group meetings, members were still sure to share their experience, strength, and hope and to celebrate their cleantime. I've become accustomed to waking up to shares on the [Just for Today](#) daily meditation. The Lagos group has been able to set up and hold impromptu meetings as soon as they have enough members who are interested in having one, but the members there would tell you it couldn't have been better even if it were planned years in advance.

We've come up with clever ways to ensure that members have access to the literature we have, and at the same time these serve the purpose of Fellowship development. Groups in Abuja and Kaduna now have group libraries where copies of our NA literature are kept, and each group has a librarian who is responsible for these books. Their service is to ensure an orderly, timely lending and returning of literature by members. Members who have recently moved to places like Kano and Benin City and are actively working on setting up groups there are given a set of literature and a group starter pack of sorts to get

... clever ways to ensure that members have access to the literature ...

the groups started. For an individual member who wants their own copy of the personal starter pack (Basic Text, *It Works: How and Why*, and *The NA Step Working Guides*), all they have to

do is complete writing of Step One with their sponsor and be willing to sponsor someone else in their recovery.

Our experience has also shown us the critical need to reach out to the newcomers outside the rooms, to do more than just share a moment of silence for them, so we have set up our very first outreach committee. We purchased a mobile telephone information line (meant principally to provide information on how to access the closest meeting to the caller) and printed flyers with our contact information for distribution all over the metropolis.

We are learning that in addition to our hope of NA growing and thriving in Nigeria, we must add our commitment to carrying the message of recovery.

Joseph I, Nigeria

For more information on how to support Fellowship development in Ghana, Nigeria, and around the world, contact NA World Services at worldboard@na.org.





Virtual rooms, real recovery

I arrived in a small town for a work trip. It was late, but I knew that I needed a meeting. I wasn't having a burning desire, but I knew that if I wasn't working on my recovery, I was working on my relapse. I went online to find a [list of meetings](#), but there was nothing nearby. Not having rented a car, I had no way of getting to a neighboring town. So instead, I fired up my webcam and joined an online video chat NA meeting. I felt the sense of peace and safety settle over me as we all said the Serenity Prayer, as the familiar readings were read, and as we ended with the gratitude statement. Though it was midnight for me, there were dozens of people attending and sharing from around the world in a variety of time zones. I truly felt that recovery was there for all those who sought it.

I'm not the only addict to benefit from technology. For the past three years I have been speaking to people in recovery about their use of the internet, mobile phones, and other forms of technology. I've asked them about what they do, about their concerns and worries, and about where they see technology going in the future. There is a lot of worry about technology violating principles of anonymity, about requiring the use of technology to get access to life-saving resources (we all know the only requirement for membership, and it's not being tech-savvy), and, most importantly, about technology messing with that ineffable human connection that has saved each of our lives. It is indeed terrifying to think about the loving group hug at the end of a meeting being replaced with blinking text on an uncaring screen or about inviting the turmoil and trolling seemingly inherent in online spaces into our most precious place of safety and acceptance. Despite several of the stories in our Basic Text referring to online recovery (e.g., "Just Say Yes"), many addicts are wary of a network connection replacing the human connection.

I also hear many assumptions: Online meetings are for young people, real recovery doesn't happen online, and more. I wanted to know what role online meetings play in the lives of our members—so I asked. I worked with a small team of volunteers to distribute my own questionnaire on a popular online recovery website (name omitted to avoid the appearance of endorsement). A total of 285 people of all genders and ages and representing 16 countries responded to share their experience, strength, and hope. Of these people, 64 went only to face-to-face meetings, 43 only attended meetings online, and 148 people attended both types of meetings. On average, the respondents had 8.5 years clean, with people who were newer to recovery using more online meetings. Surprisingly, people who attended online meetings were on average older (56 years old) than those who attended only face-to-face meetings (49

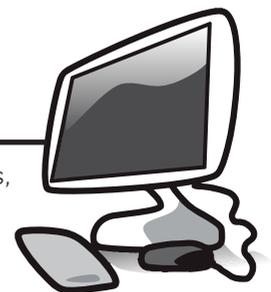
years old). People who attended online meetings spent more time in meetings overall: Face-to-face-only attendees went to an average of 15 meetings each month, those who attended only online attended 19 meetings each month, and those who attended both types of meetings attended an average of 27 meetings every month (roughly evenly split between online and offline). The majority of respondents who have attended both types of meetings found online meetings to be equally as helpful as face-to-face ones. The questionnaire also asked people who attend online meetings to describe their reasons for doing so. The reasons were diverse, with the most common ones being lack of transportation, health problems or disability, and work scheduled during typical face-to-face meeting times.

I think that it is important to debunk unilateral claims that recovery can only happen in clubhouses, coffee shops, and church basements. It is happening online every day for many addicts. Online meetings may be a way to reach people who are new to recovery, people who can't get to physical meetings for various reasons, and those who may need more meetings than their area has available in order to stay clean. In other words, online meetings are reaching people who are suffering and want more help! They are a great opportunity to carry the message so that "no addict seeking recovery need ever die from the horrors of addiction."

Despite this potential, it is frequently difficult to talk about online meetings without the implicit appearance of endorsement—the most common ones are hosted by for-profit, non-NA websites. We don't list these online meetings on our meeting pamphlets, guides, or websites. When is the right time for us as a Fellowship to seize this opportunity to carry the message and do it within the structures and protections of our principles and Traditions? I say the time is now.

Lana Y, Minnesota, USA

Editor's Note: Opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not reflect policies or opinions of NA World Services or the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship.



To find online and telephone meetings, choose "web" or "phone" as the country of your search at www.na.org/meetingsearch

or via the
NA Meeting Search App and
NA Recovery Companion App at
Amazon – www.tinyurl.com/j3r9nd7
App Store – www.tinyurl.com/o74swbr
Google Play – www.tinyurl.com/p94vkby

Our most important literature

Several years ago, I was waiting in an office for yet another counseling session. I glanced at the rack on the wall of brochures and pamphlets, and a stack of NA meeting lists caught my eye. I grabbed one and looked at it. It was about seven years old; some of the meetings were gone, and the helpline number was no longer correct. I wondered how many other facilities had meeting lists with information that was now incorrect, and how many addicts were affected by this. I believe our most important piece of literature is the meeting list, which must be accurate, available, and well distributed.

My experience in that waiting room is an example of the importance of accuracy. Besides meeting lists being current, the information we provide should also be complete, providing all the necessary information a person seeking a meeting might need. To help accomplish this, we can identify single points of accountability to provide meeting information. Local groups might assign one person from their group (maybe the group service representative) to ensure that their area service committee has the right information. In turn, an area or regional service committee member can regularly confirm the information they have on file, and they can log in to the meeting finder page at na.org (or call World Services) to confirm that the meetings are still accurately listed. NAWS can also provide local service bodies with information on ways to simplify their meeting updating and publishing process.

Meeting list distribution is important to our success, too. A system that allows trusted servants to identify and track where meeting lists have been placed, and when the supply needs to be refreshed, is helpful. It might be possible in some cases to systematize the delivery of meeting lists. For example, an ASC could negotiate with a local hospital to place 100 meeting lists in the emergency room and replenish the supply each month. We also want to be sure that we assign someone as a point of accountability to verify on a regular basis that we have valid locations for distribution.

Tradition Nine says we ought not be organized, but that is specifically related to our groups and their functioning. We have every right as members to expect our service boards and committees to be organized and structured in order to serve the Fellowship. They serve on behalf of, and are accountable to, the groups. I've always believed that one of the best measures of a healthy Fellowship is the number of newcomers coming to meetings and the number of phone calls received by the local helpline, and many of those newcomers find us through the meeting list. Whether printed, listed on a website, or included in a meeting finder app, our meeting lists are only as good and as helpful as the information we gather and provide.

Mark S, British Columbia, Canada



For more information about listing or updating your meeting data, contact NA World Services at fsteam@na.org. ASCs and RSCs can request a spreadsheet listing everything shown for the area or region, along with instructions for updating the data and getting it back to World Services. If it's updated at regular intervals (like monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly), together we can ensure better meeting data accuracy!

For more information about meeting directories, please see the [Public Relations Handbook](#) and [A Guide to Local Services in NA](#).



Did you know?

Contributing to NA through planned giving

Through self-support, we demonstrate our commitment to each other. The work that we are able to accomplish through our voluntary contributions is remarkable. We have grown from a few groups to a worldwide Fellowship . . .

Many of us are aware of the ways in which our time and energy make it possible to carry NA's message to others. And the money we contribute is just as valuable to making NA's message of hope and recovery available to more and more addicts. Our Twelfth Step teaches us that the more we help others, the more we help ourselves—and the generous act of contributing money to ensure our success to help other addicts is no different. We're all familiar with what we do when the basket is passed at a meeting, but there are other ways to contribute financially, too. NA members and their loved ones often ask about contributing to NA World Services through planned giving. The following information is offered to attempt to answer some of those questions.

The first and most common question is: "Is it appropriate to leave money (or other personal assets) to NA?" Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that NA is funded by our members' contributions. Our intention to donate after our death isn't confined or prevented by our Traditions. So in the spirit of our guiding principles, yes, we *can* choose to bequeath assets to NA after we die.

If a member is interested in contributing to NA in this way, arrangements must be made while he or she is alive to ensure harmony with our Traditions and our ability to accept the contribution. Often, family members or friends want to donate to NA World Services in memory of a member who has passed. Unfortunately, accepting such a donation would be in conflict with our Traditions because it wasn't clearly initiated or made by the NA member, and World Services declines several offers like this each year.

How much? Our Seventh Tradition tells us that each NA member should not "contribute more than their fair share" (*It Works: How and Why*, Tradition Seven). Beyond that, our literature doesn't specify restrictions on members' contributions. Just as when a basket is passed at a meeting, your fair share is completely your own determination based on your individual circumstances. Currently, there is no minimum or maximum limit on what an NA member can contribute, either while they are alive or after they die.

Narcotics Anonymous thrives in countries all around the world, and our literature is available in many languages, because addicts have been willing to give freely and serve selflessly . . .

Here are some general guidelines for those interested in planned giving:

- Intentions to leave something to the NA Fellowship need to be in writing, and that usually takes the form of your last will and testament. The best resource to prepare for planned giving is a licensed probate or estate planner.
- To better ensure that the contribution is received, the written instruction should direct that it be made to "NA World Services, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3), bearing tax identification number 95-3090596; 19737 Nordhoff Place; Chatsworth, California, USA 91311."
- Gifts of money or other liquid assets are always the most flexible, so are generally the most useful gifts. If you wish to leave items other than liquid assets, we'll do our very best to deal with those in the way that will best benefit the Fellowship. In the case where noncash assets are bequeathed, NA World Services may liquidate those assets for cash, through proper means, and put the resulting funds into the general fund.

NA World Services will always devote your gift where the need is the greatest. We never know exactly what that will be, as our worldwide Fellowship's needs are constantly changing. We will attempt to honor any preference or dedication of your gift, but must ask that you allow us the flexibility to make the final determination ourselves.

In harmony with our [Eleventh Concept](#), we have no processes to accept restricted funds or funds for stipulated purposes. If we receive earmarked or targeted donations, we must return them. To avoid this, it is important that

your written intentions state your understanding and agreement with this flexibility so that we can accept the donation. A sample of such a statement is: "Although I understand that no assurances can be given, it is my preference that this gift be used for _____, if possible."

As mentioned, engaging a licensed probate or estate planner as a part of your efforts will ensure that the planned giving process is completed accurately.

As members, we all invest our time and energy in service to our Fellowship, and we contribute what we are able to give financially. We give freely, knowing that our efforts help our Fellowship grow. Whether we're giving to our area or regional service committees or to NA World Services, the "return on our investment" in NA is priceless. Because of our collective efforts, we have a thriving and vibrant NA Fellowship that supports our personal recovery and, "when we step back and look at Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, the view is breathtaking."

You may also want to check out IP #24, [Money Matters: Self-support in NA](#), and IP #28, [Funding NA Services](#), for more on our Seventh Tradition at work in NA.

All literature quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions*, Tradition Seven

For additional information, or if you have comments or questions on planned giving, please email World Services at PlannedGiving@na.org.



When we come together in unity, we shine.

Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions, Tradition Two

World Unity Day

2 September 2017 – 10 am PDT*



In the same moment, NA members around the world will pause together to reflect on our **worldwide Fellowship** and our primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Whether you have a Unity Day event, **share a prayer** during a meeting or with friends, or just take time on your own, in this moment, **we all join together** in unity to share the Serenity Prayer.

A sampling of worldwide times for Unity Day

* If the time isn't practical for you, just pause at some point on Saturday, 2 September to feel the love of NA unity with a moment of silence, a prayer, and a sharing of NA energy.

NA unity is our bond with fellow addicts: those who came before us, those who are here today, and those who have yet to find us.

Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions, Tradition One



CALENDAR

Multiday events and those occurring between publication dates are printed according to the schedule posted online. To enter events or to access event details, visit the online calendar at www.na.org/events. (If you don't have internet access, fax or mail your event info to 818.700.0700, attn: NA Way; or *The NA Way*; Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA.)

Canada

Alberta 29 Sep-1 Oct; Canadian Convention 25; Carriage House Inn, Calgary; canadianconvention.com

British Columbia 6-8 Oct; Pacific Northwest Convention 40; Hyatt Regency, Vancouver; pnwcn40.com

Nova Scotia 25-27 Aug; Serenity by the Sea Cape Breton Campout; Cape Breton Bible Camp; www.centralnovaarea.ca/events.html

Colombia

Bucaramanga 5-7 Aug; Colombia Regional Convention 26; Hotel Dann Carlton, Bucaramanga; nacolombia.org

Costa Rica

Heredia 6-8 Oct; Costa Rica Regional Convention 22; Alajuela, Ciudad Cariari; <http://costaricana.org>

Denmark

Skanderborg 4-6 Aug; Convention & Camp 10; Audonicon, Skanderborg; namidtyjlland.dk/konvent/index.htm

France

Paris 15-17 Sep; France Regional Convention 20; Couvent des Cordeliers, Paris; narcotiquesanonymes.org

Greece

Corinth 3-5 Nov; The Ties That Bind Us: 30 Years NA Greece; King Saron Hotel, Corinth; nagreece.gr

Hungary

Velence 11-13 Aug; Hungarian Convention 16; Green School, Velence; <http://velence-201779.webnode.hu/>

Mexico

Baja California 20-22 Oct; Baja Costa Area Convention 25; Hotel GAMMA, Tijuana; <https://m.facebook.com/convbajacosta/>

Portugal

Portimao 22-24 Sep; European Conference & Convention 33; Portimao Arena, Portimao; eccna.eu

Puerto Rico

San Juan 11-13 Aug; Convención Unidos Podemos 28; Hotel Condado Plaza, San Juan; prna.org

Russia

Moscow 4-6 Aug; Russian Zonal Convention 2; Concert Hall Rossiya, Moscow; na-russia.org

Sweden

Stockholm 25-27 Aug; Sweden Regional Convention 30; Fryshuset, Stockholm; nasverige.org

Turkey

Mugla 20-22 Oct; Turkey Regional Convention 15; Jiva Beach Resort, Mugla; na-turkiye.org

United Kingdom

Glasgow 4-6 Aug; Glasgow & West Coast Area Convention 18; GoGlasgow Urban Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland; ukna.org/events

United States

Alabama 3-5 Nov; Greater Birmingham Area Convention 22; Holiday Inn Airport, Birmingham; event info: 205.902.4987

California 11-13 Aug; Mountain High Campout; Camp Richardson, South Lake Tahoe; sierrasadena.org

2) 25-27 Aug; Eleventh Step Retreat 5; Belden Town Lodge and Campground, Belden Town; facebook.com/11thstepretreat

3) 29 Sep-1 Oct; Area Habla Hispana del Sur de California Convention 12; DoubleTree Anaheim, Orange; ahhsdna.com/ahhsdnawp

Colorado 3-5 Nov; Colorado Regional Convention 31; Crown Plaza Hotel & Convention Center DIA, Denver; nacolorado.org/crcna

Connecticut 25-27 Aug; Spiritual Weekend 29; Enders Island, Mystic; ctna.org

Florida 1-4 Sep; South Florida Regional Convention 23; Charlotte County Event & Conference Center, Punta Gorda; sfrca.com

2) 27-29 Oct; Treasure Coast Area Convention 9; Marriott Resort Hutchinson Island, Stuart; treasurecoastareana.com

Georgia 3-6 Aug; Midtown Atlanta Area Convention 26; Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport, Atlanta; midtownatlantana.com

2) 27-29 Oct; Serenity in the South 2; Hotel Tybee, Tybee Island; grscna.com

Hawaii 26-29 Oct; Hawaii Regional Convention 25; Aqua Kauai Beach Resort, Lihue; na-hawaii.org

Illinois 10-12 Nov; Greater Illinois Regional Convention 21; Pere Marquette, Peoria; centralillinoisna.org

Indiana 25-27 Aug; End of Summer Celebration 22; Camp Redwing, Muncie; naindiana.org

2) 15-17 Sep; Central Indiana Area Convention 14; Rodeway Inn North Conference Center, Indianapolis; naindiana.org

Maryland 15-17 Sep; River of Hope Unity Retreat 11; Lions Camp Merrick, Nanjemoy; cprna.org/event

Massachusetts 20-22 Oct; Berkshire County Area Convention 8; Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort, Hancock; www.berkshirena.org

Michigan 11-13 Aug; R&R at the Fort; Camp Fort Hill, Sturgis; michigan-na.org/southwest-michigan-area

Mississippi 4-6 Aug; We Do Recover Group (Delta Area, MS Region) NA1997 Platinum Celebration; Holiday Inn Memphis-Downtown, Memphis; nagroupna@yahoo.com

2) 6-8 Oct; Mississippi Regional Convention 34; Holiday Inn Express, Vicksburg; mrsdna.net

Missouri 4-6 Aug; InTents Campout 2; Indian Creek Group Campground, Monroe City; stlna.org

2) 27-29 Oct; Saint Louis Area Convention 9; Sheraton Westport Chalet, Saint Louis; stlna.org

Montana 29 Sep-1 Oct; Montana Regional Convention 7; Big Horn Resort, Billings; namontana.com

Nebraska 27-29 Oct; Nebraska Regional Convention 34; Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker, Lincoln; nebraskana.org

Nevada 13-15 Oct; Region 51 Convention-The Spirit of Love 7; Orleans Hotel Casino, Las Vegas; region51na.org

New Jersey 4-7 Aug; New Jersey Regional Convention 32; Westin Princeton Forrestal Village, Princeton; www.njrcna.com

New York 18-20 Aug; Suffolk Area Convention 14; Melville Marriott, Melville; sasnaconvention.org

North Carolina 25-27 Aug; Bound for Freedom 28; Sheraton Charlotte, Charlotte; charlotte-na.org

2) 1-3 Sep; Spectrum of Hope Convention 3; Sheraton Greensboro Four Seasons, Greensboro; event info: 336.327.2356

Pennsylvania 4-6 Aug; Kittanning Free Campout; Crooked Creek Lake, Ford City; event info: 724.954.6277

South Carolina 25-27 Aug; Welcome Home 22; Holiday Inn Airport, West Columbia; midcarolinana.org

South Dakota 5-13 Aug; Sheridan Lake Campout; Squirrel Group Campsite, near Hill City; sdrna.com

2) 15-17 Sep; South Dakota Region of NA; Super 8, Sturgis; sdrna.com

Tennessee 4-6 Aug; NA1997 Platinum Celebration; Holiday Inn Memphis-Downtown, Memphis; event info: nagroupna@yahoo.com

2) 18-20 Aug; Middle Tennessee Area Unity Convention 14; Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, Nashville; nanashville.org

Texas 1-3 Sep; Sponsorship Is the Heartbeat of NA Group Anniversary 24; Holiday Inn, Austin; event info: 512.784.5551

2) 3-5 Nov; Best Little Regional Convention 29; Pearl on the Concho, San Angelo; blrna.org

Vermont 17-20 Aug; Back to Basics 33; Wallingford Boys Camp, Wallingford; gmana.org

Virginia 4-6 Aug; Almost Heaven Area Convention 31; 4-H Center, Front Royal; na2day.tripod.com

2) 8-9 Sep; First Rappahannock Area Convention; Hospitality House Hotel, Fredericksburg; rappahannockareaofna.com

3) 14-17 Sep; Marion Survivor's Group September Campout; Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center, Marion; mfisher71@hotmail.com

Washington 18-20 Aug; Summer Sizzlers; Red Lion Hotel-Richland Hanford House, Richland; 3citiesna.org

2) 15-17 Sep; Power Women's Retreat; Camp Lutherwood, Bellingham; nwwana.org

3) 3-4 Nov; Washington/N Idaho Regional Service Learning Days; Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Walla Walla; wnirna.org

Wisconsin 20-22 Oct; Wisconsin State Convention 34; Best Western Premier Hotel & Convention Center, Oshkosh; wsnac.info

Wyoming 18-20 Aug; Campout under the Stars 28; Stillwater Campground, Evanston; livingproofgroupofna.org

WCNA 37: THE MAGIC IS ^{Still} REAL

The theme of WCNA 19 in 1989 was "The Magic Is Real." As we return to Orlando in 2018, we believe that sentiment still rings true, so the theme "The Magic Is *Still* Real" was chosen for WCNA 37.

We are aiming for registration to be available by or before September 2017—and early registration certainly helps us with the planning process. Florida seems to be an ideal location for pre- and post-convention cruises, so we're looking into those options. There are many hotels at various prices surrounding the Orlando Convention Center, making for an easy walk. Busing will not be provided and is truly not needed from our current hotels, except for those with additional needs.

Our recent experience at the Florida Symposium made it clear that NA members in Florida are ready and excited to welcome our worldwide membership. WCNA 37 will be a great convention—stay tuned for more information coming soon!

Save the Date: 30 August–2 September 2018 — Orlando, Florida

To receive regular WCNA updates, please visit www.na.org/subscribe.

NAWS Product Update

Group Starter Kit (GSK)

Now includes the Seventh Tradition Box
at NO additional cost

to make the GSK more complete for new groups/meetings. GSK contains one of each *Group Treasurer's Workbook*, *The Group Booklet*, *7th Tradition Box*; two White Booklets, 18 informational pamphlets (IPs), 5 service pamphlets (SPs).

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Attractively packaged set of 12 bookmarks with each Tradition debossed on one side and striking artwork inspired by *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions* on the other side. Bookmarks are individually shrink-wrapped for easy giving to your sponsor/sponsees and other recovering friends.

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Narcotics Anonymous

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IP #6: धार र पुनःसेवनुस

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IP #1:

কে, কী, কীভাবে এবং কেন ?

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Item No. GA4100 – 4108 Price US \$8.50/7.50 €



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Just for Today

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Basic Text

Bare for I dag

Item No. DK1112 Price US \$9.00/7.90 €





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IP #16: ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಬಂದವರಿಗೆ

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для зависимых ...**

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iTunes: <http://tinyurl.com/nzax9d8>

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