



The International Journal of Narcotics Anonymous

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Feature

Sharing

• The spirituality of money

Clean and serene in Iraq

86.921.132.400 minutes

• Making amends

• I am responsible

My H&I

• Dear friend

• Our Freedom, Our Responsibility

Our readers write

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From the editor

"Try to make *this* funny." That was the subject line of the email I sent to our Home Group artist as we began discussing this issue's comic strip. I explained the 2008 World Service Conference theme: "Our Freedom, Our Responsibility." Is there anything funny about that? We decided there really isn't, so we agreed on a "message-based" scenario for the strip, which isn't exactly funny—but at least it's amusing.

After that, I searched our literature for "fun" and "funny." There's not much to be found, but I liked the 19 June Just for Today entry, which reminds us that sometimes there's not much funny about life on life's terms, but that humor can help us face all sorts of adversity. We know we have to take the bad with the good (as my mom always said), and that change and freedom don't just show up in our lives. Our point of freedom rises from our universal program and a base of goodwill, and from our work in the areas of self, society, service, and god. Lucky for us, there's a whole fellowship of recovering addicts working individually and together to seek this point of freedom where balance—and humor—may flourish.

De J, Editor

IN THIS ISSUE

_	Picture this	12
3	Service	
	 Public relations news 	13
5	Primary purpose	14
6	Did you know?	15
6 7	Humor	
7 8	A simple program	16
9	Word search	16
	Calendar	17
10	Product update	19
9	Home Group	20

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, Farsi, 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."



The spirituality of money

During the darkness of my using, I had nothing to give. My spirit was so far away from light, death seemed like a bright star. My thoughts were about taking—taking from others, and taking my own life. The sparkle, excitement, and dreams had long gone from my spirit. The dance of life had lost its joy. I had lost all hope, and I humiliated myself day and night. I kept promising to stop hurting myself and others, yet I was powerless to do so.

This is a road that many of us traveled, one that leads to hospitals, institutions, death—and, for a lucky few, to Narcotics Anonymous. Fortunately for me, the road led to an NA meeting. When I arrived, my thoughts were on my own pain. I didn't know the price that had been paid for that meeting to be there, but it was all there waiting for me. I came, I believed, and I was restored to some kind of sanity. It wasn't simple. I needed a lot of help, and I learned to look outside myself to find it. Once I moved away from being endlessly fascinated with my own problems, I was able to acquire one of the great skills that NA gives us: the art of listening. Meeting after meeting, day after day, my ability to step outside my own head and listen to others improved. It was a slow process. Often, I would be much more inside my head than at the meeting I was attending, but after a while I began to hear things that I had never heard before. By listening to others, I received the gift of hope, and in time I learned to share that hope with others.

It's been a while since then, and now I reflect on my first encounter with NA at a meeting of desperate people trying to get away from the pain of active addiction. Why were those people there? How did they get there? What made them take the time to help someone like me? If they were like me, self-obsessed and caught up with their own sorrow, how could they even think of helping anyone else? At times just getting to a meeting was more than I could manage. How is it that, through the efforts of a bunch of addicts, our fellowship has grown from one meeting in the whole world to over 44,000 every week? Was it magic? Did it just all come together like some cosmic mistake? I suppose there are many reasons, but this makes me think of a conversation I had while walking along a beach a few years ago.

I was at a service meeting and we were having a break, so I went for a walk along a beach with an addict friend. We were talking about things that had gone on at the meeting when, all of a sudden, he asked me a question: "What do you think about the spirituality of money?" My mind didn't quite grasp what he was saying. I was sure he had made some kind of mistake. The words *spirituality* and *money* didn't go together well in my head. This is where the art of listening was put to good use. I tried to listen without turning my mind off to something that was far outside my own way of thinking.

For a few minutes my friend talked about how money could be used spiritually. This conversation has stayed with me since then. It has made me see money in a very different way. It also gave me part of the answer to how NA has grown from one meeting to over 44,000. My head fought with the idea for some time, but today I can see that money has played an important part in the growth of NA. The people at my first meeting used love and money so that I could get the message NA has to offer. Before, I would



have felt ashamed of such thoughts. I would have said that the recovery message was all to do with my higher power, and for some reason my higher power didn't have much to do with money. I saw him in almost everything, but it seemed wrong to think that my higher power was in money, too. I thought about how I was using my own money; in most cases, it was to benefit myself. One of the few things I was doing for others was putting money in the basket at NA meetings.

After that conversation on the beach, I began to think about what happened to the money I put into the NA basket-and not just my money, but all the money that went into all the baskets at all the meetings around the world. Fortunately, through service, I have been able to follow some of that money. I have seen it used to give a newcomer a free Basic Text, a cup of coffee, and a keytag. It's used to pay rent so a meeting can stay open and carry the message. I have seen our money used to let people outside of NA know that we exist, and to hold meetings inside prisons, hospitals, and treatment centers. I've seen it used to open new meetings, create web pages,

and print meeting lists so that others can find us. Our money has helped groups join together to help each other, and to help NA grow and strengthen itself, to reach out across countries and form regions. I have seen it used to form zones and various worldwide service offices, and to print the message in many languages, to bring NA members from all over the world together to work so that no addict on the planet need die without the chance to recover. I have seen our money bring thousands of addicts together to celebrate recovery. I see it in this very magazine, which allows me to share my recovery with all of you who are reading this; in the workers at our service offices who, day in and day out, care for the needs of our worldwide fellowship. I have read of NA members who hold their coins to the sky and pray that they will be used to stop the suffering of another in pain. I have seen it enlighten those who thought that to be an addict was to be a criminal. I have seen it in workshops, in fellowship development, in new literature, and in outreach efforts. I have seen it used to carry NA members from one country to another to serve addicts there who needed help. I could go on; the list seems endless, and I am sure others have seen things I haven't.

I feel that what I put in the basket is part of all this. This doesn't mean I will sell everything I own and put it into the NA basket. It just means that what I do put in goes a long way, and that I am part of something much, much bigger than just the money I give. It is a wonder to see so many who once had nothing to give, support themselves and give light and hope to the world. I am grateful to all those who did so before me, so that I can live the life I have today; to those very first members who, despite their own hardships, gave so that we could become the worldwide fellowship we are today. I hope what I give will do the same for those who are vet to find us.

Michael C, Marbella, Spain

This article is a continuation in our series on contributions.

How to contribute to NAWS

Many members, groups, and service committees don't realize that they can contribute directly to NAWS. If you would like to make a direct contribution to NA World Services, visit the donations portal at our website at: http://www.na.org/ donation-external/index.htm



Making amends

For years while I was using, I angrily recounted the vast number of people who had done me wrong. If only my childhood, my parents, my relationships, my employers, my neighbors, my friends had treated me differently, my life would have been better. When I thought of the things I had done to them, I minimized the importance of my infractions, or I said that it was their own fault because they had harmed me first. As I began writing on the steps, I started to see that I had an active part in my life and the unpleasant things that kept happening to me. I began taking responsibility for myself. One of the greatest gifts in my recovery is that I can do something to make my life better.

My Eighth Step list was long and painful. It contained literally everyone who had appeared in the resentment, shame, and guilt sections of my inventory. I had harmed or hurt all the people about whom I had some kind of strong feelings. Seeing this list in front of me was the only time I felt really discouraged in my step work. How would I deal with this huge task? I would have liked to have it all settled and cleared in one breath.

Thank God I don't have to do it alone. Through sharing in the meetings and with my sponsor, I have learned that, "just for today," I only have to do one step after the next, dealing only with those items I feel ready to deal with. Sometimes making amends simply (simply?!) means changing my behavior today, so that I won't hurt others anymore. Sometimes there is no other kind of amends to make, because the people concerned are still using, out of reach, or dead.

MITTWOCH

IENSTAG

At age sixteen, I hitchhiked to Italy with my friend, Billy, and when she called home she heard that her father had died. I only felt annoyed because our holiday was ruined. I brushed aside her tears and let her travel home alone. Billy has since died from her addiction, and maybe she never forgave me for deserting her. Many years later, another friend from those days phoned, begging me to drive her to the hospital because her father was dying, and she wanted to reconcile with him. Her father did not accept her reconciliation—but this time, I was able to be there for my friend.

Forgiving was also a big challenge. I needed to forgive myself a lot, stop hating and beating myself up for things that I had said or done or failed to do. Toward several people, I had such great resentments that I was far from ready to reach out to them to say I was sorry. Sometimes I can even laugh about it. For example, my sponsor once said, "Well, it looks like, in this case, your amends are not to throw a bomb at his house." With a couple of individuals, this will still be the case for little while, but I know that I need to keep on working at forgiving them, because resentment poisons me and nobody else.

The most terrific gift for me is the reconciliation with my family. It took me several years clean until I was ready to write a letter to my parents, taking responsibility for everything I had done to them and asking them to forgive me without breathing out reproachfulness against them one sentence later—and

...my Higher Power would not let me off so easily this time.

really meaning it. The letter was never spoken of (like most things in my family were never spoken about), but slowly and noticeably our relationship improved. I could carefully start giving my parents a little hug at the end of a visit. Today, I call them because I like to, not because I feel obligated. I could even write them that I love them, but saying it is still very, very difficult.

Two years ago, my dad was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He was in the hospital, awaiting brain surgery on Monday. I sat with the phone in my hand and knew I had to tell him that I loved him, because it might be my last chance to do so, but I couldn't bring myself to pronounce those words. In the evening my mom called and said the operation was postponed until the next day. But, again, I couldn't get those words to cross my lips. As I called my mom that evening, she told me the operation had again been moved to the next day. I knew my Higher Power would not let me off so easily this time. I called my dad in the hospital and burst out, "Dad, I need to tell you something urgent: I love you!" And he said, "Now I know everything will be alright." Well, who knows? It might have really helped. My dad will be ninety years old this year. His health is not good, but I know that when he leaves, there is nothing left that needs to be said. That is a wonderful feeling.

Sigrid B, Karlsruhe, Germany

My H&I

Just for today, we are together for one more day, and I have the privilege of sharing my experiences in NA. My eyes fill with tears when I remember how I came to NA and how H&I service has changed my life.

In 1996, I started working for a company where I was a secretary. I had contacts with coworkers. and I observed that some of them did not drink. I got close to one of them and asked what "IP" and other abbreviations meant. I told him about my addiction to sleep medication, which ended up taking me to a hospital for crazy people. He told me about NA, and I told him that I didn't have any problems anymore. At the end of that year (31 December 1996, to be exact) I was not working there anymore. I knew I needed help, and I remembered that I had an NA directory. I called the NA helpline. and the person who answered told me he did not go to a party to celebrate the New Year with his family because he was doing service at the NA phoneline. The next day he came to my house, which was far away from his home. We talked for six hours and cried together. I told him that I would go to a meeting if he would take me to it, so on 2 January 1997, I identified myself as an addict in an NA group, not because of the type of drugs I had used, but because of the pain. That made me come back to NA.

As time passed, I began to serve in H&I. I went to a step-study retreat in another city. There, an H&I chairman shared about his experiences with Step Twelve. He said that two NA members had carried the message into the institution where he had been incarcerated. After the talk, he and another member who had also been in that institution approached me. I had been in a lot of institutions, but I didn't remember him. It is impossible to try to explain how I felt. There are no words to describe it.

Another time, I went to a prison, and I knew there was somebody there who was a member of NA. He was so young he could have been my son. I asked the psychologist if she could call him, and she brought him to the meeting. When he got there, he hugged me, and everybody cried. None of the drugs I used could have given me the buzz that the kindness and hugs of those members gave me.

I don't know if my story will be published, but I want to share my experience to show that H&I work can be meaningful and a source of gratitude. Today, I work for the government, and I have to preserve my anonymity. I also work with other NA members, and we respect each other's anonymity; however, we cannot be indifferent reading *The* NA *Way Magazine*. The stories touch our hearts, and I thought I should share my feelings with you, too.

Anonymous, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

l am responsible

As a member of NA for more than fourteen years, I have attended many meetings. From the first time I stood outside a meeting place, frightened and not knowing what to expect, I was told that no matter how I was feeling, I was at the right place.

To my surprise, I was welcomed with open arms, which was quite a change from where I had come from. There were no hugs on the lines I stood on to purchase death. I still remember, and always want to remember, the degradation I felt standing on a line with many other sick and suffering addicts, being humiliated while waiting to "fix."

Those who were here before me shared that I must surrender and become willing to be responsible for my own recovery. My question to them was, "How do I do that?" I heard many suggestions: get a sponsor, and begin to form relationships (healthy and intimate ones) where I could let someone know my secrets. I heard over and over again that secrets would keep me sick. I was also told to become involved in service-to give back what had been given so freely to me. As I began to work with my sponsor, who was my guide through the steps and traditions, I learned that one day someone might ask me to be their guide. The most important tool I could give them was the understanding that they, too, were responsible for their own personal recovery.

Responsible? Many of us thought we had mastered responsibility early on in our recovery. I had put down the drugs. hadn't I? I had a sponsor, with whom I was sharing, didn't I? Yes, we may do these things, but how responsible are we when we are doing them? Do I keep my appointments with my sponsor, or do I continually whine about how busy I am? Personal responsibility for my own recovery means setting a time and keeping that appointment. Yes, I attend meetings, but how many of them are step and tradition meetings? Am I responsible enough to know that I "bring a better me to us" when I am practicing the steps and traditions of NA? When I am at meetings, do I remember the personal responsibility I have to carry a clear and concise NA message? Do I introduce myself as an addict, or do I dilute the message by introducing myself as dually addicted, cross-addicted, or some other combination of terms? We have heard many introductions, but just one began in our program: "I'm So-and-So, and I'm an addict."

Am I involved with service—and, if I am, do I maintain the responsibility that comes with making such a commitment? Do I give my best to NA? Do I do my service with humility? Have I grown up in recovery? Have I learned that my focus must be on *my* behavior, not someone else's? After taking a personal inventory, do I recognize the part I have played in the situations in my life? Do I have empathy, compassion, and tolerance toward people with whom I may not agree completely? Do I become the new Western Union when, directly after a meeting, I am on my cell phone "sharing" about another addict and their story, instead of focusing on my own personal recovery?

Ultimately, we will always fall short in some area, but we choose to be honest, open-minded, and willing. Should we fail to be responsible for our recovery; our ends may be jails, institutions, or death. Together, we can be mindful of how quickly we might pick up our old toolkits and act out again. Together, we can help each other with gentle reminders of our own personal responsibility to continue our process of recovery.

Peggy C, Virginia, USA

Dear friend

I have multiple years of recovery, just like you. One of the hardest things I had to do in my recovery was share in a meeting that, with two years clean, I had reached a point of having absolutely no spirituality. The disease deceived me into thinking that recovery was a destination at which I had long since arrived. Recovery is a path, and we all lose our way from time to time. With that surrender, my sanity has returned, and I have faith that my serenity will return again also.

I realize that you are just another addict seeking recovery. I can see through your ego, which lies to convince you that you are somehow better than the rest. Believe me, I know that ego well. I can see, too, that it would be hard for someone like you—who has much more cleantime than I do—to honestly admit powerlessness over the disease of addiction.

False pride and cockiness, which grow at a dangerous rate with some measure of cleantime, are aspects of our addiction. It takes great courage for an addict, especially an oldtimer, to be honest about his or her fears and weaknesses, and to ask for help. We can take the first step at any time. We can surrender with multiple years of recovery—or we can surrender with twenty-four hours clean, if we are lucky enough to make it back alive. We must remind ourselves that no one here has any seniority. We are all clean just for today.

Hope S, Arizona, USA

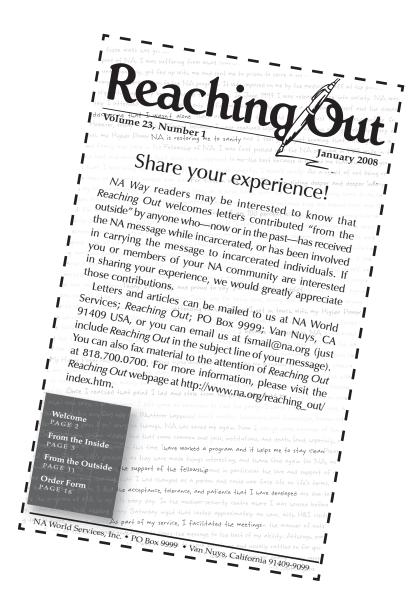


Clean and serene in Iraq

Hello, family. My name is Willie J, and I'm an addict. My cleandate is 2 March 1992. I live in St. Louis, Missouri, and my home group is "Swypes in Recovery." I'm truly grateful for my new way of life, and for my lovely wife, Shelia J, whose cleandate is July 1994. I joined the Navy Reserves in April 1997. I was deployed to Iraq in the summer of 2003, serving on convoy security as a gunner and an A-gunner. I left on my second deployment on Father's Day 2007. My job during my current deployment (my third) is convoy security. We provide security for personnel and equipment being moved from one location to another. I am scheduled to be in-country until this fall.

I have been faithful about doing NA service work from the beginning of my new way of life in recovery. I have served on committees for local and world conventions, and these were experiences I will never forget. I was serving on the area convention registration committee until I received my deployment notice. My wife and my NA family are very supportive. I try to call my home group during the meeting time so I can hear the lovely sounds of a meeting going on. AA has found its way to military bases here in Iraq, but NA hasn't yet. I pray that I can start an NA meeting here soon, with the help of sharing this message in *The* NA *Way*. I will be celebrating my cleantime in Iraq this year—sixteen years clean and serene.

Willie J, Missouri, USA





Serving in the armed forces? We know that seeking recovery while serving in the military can be a challenge for NA members. We hope those of you who are currently serving or who have served in the past will share your experience, strength, and hope with NA Way readers; especially your fellows who are also serving in the military. We would like to include your stories in upcoming issues of The NA Way Magazine. Please send your input to naway@na.org or mail it to us at The NA Way Magazine; NA World Services; PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA.

Our readers write

www - Sydney

I attended my first NAWS worldwide workshop in November 2001 in Wellington, New Zealand, the place I call home. I was nine years clean with some service experience. That workshop opened my eyes to the much larger world of NA, and I renewed my commitment to service. The vivid realization that we are greater than the sum of our parts inspires me still.

...my home group, area, region, and our fellowship as a whole are most certainly worth it.

Going to the January 2008 Sydney worldwide workshop just over six years later was a fabulous experience. I could see not only how much I had changed in my own recovery and my understanding of our fellowship and our service structure, but also how the fellowship has continued to grow all over the world.

I was right out of my comfort zone by choosing to sit with a different group of people at each workshop; but, you know, when we talked about the issues facing the fellowship and what we could do to make improvements in the atmosphere of recovery in our meetings, or how we could strengthen our service structure, many shared about the same challenges and solutions my home NA community faces. By following the brainstorming and facilitator guidelines provided, we were able to stay (more or less) focused, and come up with some collective answers to our common problems and issues.

I was inspired. Members of the Australian NA community traveled from different parts of the country to attend this workshop. Some came from Perth, Australia, from which it takes longer to fly than even from Wellington, New Zealand! I was not alone as one from "Land of the Long White Cloud" Ithe English translation of Aotearoa, the aboriginal name for New Zealand]; others, too, traveled from New Zealand. There was a good mix of women and men, old and young. Some had very little cleantime, some were very new to service, and there were the more experienced members. too. We were a truly diverse and vibrant bunch of addicts getting together to do what we could not do alone. HP was definitely present among us, and I came away from the event better informed, refreshed, and inspired because each of us has an essential role to play in carrying the message and making a difference to those who are still suffering the horrors of addiction.

When I first cleaned up, one of the things I remember most was being told that I could do this recovery thing and I was worth it. At this workshop, World Board members and NA World Services staff showed us tools we can use to share this workshop experience with other NA members. They told us we can do it, and reminded me that my home group, area, region, and our fellowship as a whole are most certainly worth it. Thank you to all those who participated, the Australian Region for making it happen, and NA World Services for providing guidance and leadership.

Ursala O, Karaƙa Bay, New Zealand

86,921,132,400 minutes

The room was rockin' and jivin' as music played and members danced with each cleantime call-out at the 24th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Convenference of NA (8-10 February 2008 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA). There were more than 1500 registered for the event, and attendees signed in with their clean time in years, months, and days. The host committee then tallied all those "just for todays" to calculate the total amount of cleantime represented at the event. That sum was reported during the countdown at the Saturday evening banquet: 5,512 years, 6 months, and 9 days, which breaks down to:

66,150 months 24,144,759 days 1,448,685,540 hours 86,921,132,400 minutes 5,215,267,944,000 seconds

Of course, the most amazing was the member there with one day clean who was mobbed with hugs to the tune "We Are Family."

Thanks to the MARLCNA Host Committee for this information

Worldwide workshops provide an opportunity for discussions on a variety of recovery and service issues. The workshops usually run from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. Sessions include the current conference cycle's issue discussion topics, NAWS update, and other issues of importance to the local or global NA community.

Turnout for the Sydney workshop was very good, with numbers approaching 280 on Friday evening, and as many as 400 for the Saturday evening recovery meeting. Sessions included "Building Strong Home Groups," "Medication and Recovery," "Leadership," "The Critical Links: GSR & RCM," "APT," and a final wrap-up session. The RSC supported ASC trusted servant travel, funding up to four people from each ASC. This made for great participation and a variety of perspectives. Additionally, a number of longtime members were present for portions of the workshop, lending their particular perspectives.

Our Freedom, Our Responsibility



n NA member from Iran writes, "We have spent very cold days in Iran, but this glacial cold cannot close the NA meetings, even **X** Some of the meetings that are held in open spaces and parks. The photos here show the location of a group that meets each weekend on Friday morning from 10 to 11:30 am in northern Tehran, near the mountains. It is a small group of twenty-five to thirty members that has a question-and-answer format. In the winter photo, the members use plastic covers to protect themselves. The temperature on the day the winter photo was taken was -8 degrees Celsius (approximately 18 degrees Fahrenheit). We published the image at the back of the winter 2008 issue of Payam Behboodi (the Iranian NA community's recovery journal) with words from the chapter on the Seventh Tradition in It Works: How and Why.

The gratitude we speak of in regard to Tradition Seven is like the collective sense of direction the Second Tradition talks about; it is the gratitude of the NA group as a group. When NA members gather to share their recovery, they generate a sense of gratitude among themselves. They are grateful the group exists and want it to continue to be there for them and for the members yet to come. The gratitude of the group speaks, in part, through the group's collective commitment to support itself. The group's decision to become fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions, reflects the group's sense of responsibility for itself. In recovery, we discard the illusion that the rest of the world is responsible to take care of us; rather, we take due pride in caring for ourselves. Individually, we demonstrate our newfound maturity

by accepting the weight of our own burdens; collectively, we demonstrate our maturity by accepting responsibility for our group, neither seeking nor accepting outside contributions.

The burden of responsibility, however, may seem unbearable without an appreciation for the simplicity of the group's needs. The commitment to become self-supporting is not a commitment to raise vast sums of money to fulfill sweeping programs. Rather, the group determines it will muster the few basic resources it needs to fulfill its simple primary purpose: to carry the message to the still-suffering addict.

> It Works: How and Why Seventh Tradition





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.).

1550 molecula FAULO X CARINA NACHO A X CISSH NUVATOR ALVARON MARIA DAM CLER LACTA NO. 13950

The photo above shows the record of the first meeting of Grupo la Magia with names of attendees and Seventh Tradition basket (canasta) collection of 39.50 Uruguayan peso (currently equal to approximately US \$2). Today, the group donates the equivalent of approximately US \$200 each month to its service system.

Grupo La Magia



"When I came down those stairs for the first time..." This sentence is heard often during our meetings, especially when a newcomer shares. "Those" stairs belong to Grupo La Magia (Magic Group), the first NA group in Uruguay, which held its first meeting on



27 November 1990. The group has met from day one, in the basement of a church. It is a very picturesque place; behind its walls, a river flows, and the ceiling is extremely high.

Over the years, we have tried to find ways to keep the room looking nice. Banners from conventions are hung on the walls, and we have a blackboard where we write members' cleantime birthdays, and the dates and the names and positions of the group's trusted servants. We have more than thirty-five home group members. The group has eight weekly meetings; one meeting is open, and another has a step-study format. Soon we will begin to sell literature. The NA community in Uruguay had its office and telephone line in the group's location for ten years, because of its location and because it has meetings every day. Our meetings are attended by many regular members and have considerable newcomer attendance. Thank you, Groupo La Magia, for being part of our lives.

Juan P and Martin G, Montevideo, Uruguay



PR News



Professional Events

Since our last NA Way article, NAWS attended three professional events, which included the Psychiatric Nurses Conference in Florida. The nurses at this event were receptive and welcoming toward our program, and inquired about including NA in their training modules in graduate school. Nurses would be able to learn about recovery from addiction and the NA program. We were equally well received at the Employee Assistance Professionals Conference in San Diego, California. Many of these attendees served in the military, and many were international members of this association.

We also presented at the International Society of Addiction Medicine Conference in Cairo, Egypt, and we were supported by members of the local fellowship in our interaction with attendees. We had a booth at this event, and we were the only exhibitors not representing a pharmaceutical company. There were hundreds of doctors from all over the world in attendance, with over 600 Egyptian doctors registered. Our booth was busy, and we distributed a large amount of Arabic and English literature, and answered hundreds of questions. We were encouraged that many doctors commented that it is obvious NA is talking about how to carry the message to members on medication, and that these discussions have made our meetings more welcoming to these members and potential members. This could not have happened without the support of the Egyptian fellowship.

Cooperative Events

NAWS worked collaboratively with the Chicagoland Region for the Illinois Alcohol and Drug Dependency Association's conference, and with the Free State Region for the Association of Programs for Female Offenders Conference. For these events, NAWS provided support and/or materials for participation, and local trusted servants attended the conferences and engaged with the professionals in attendance, providing them with information about recovery in NA and sample recovery literature.

Collaborating with regions has been a great asset in our efforts to more effectively share information about NA. We hope every addict has the opportunity to experience recovery in his or her own language and culture. Therefore, we seek to inform and provide sample recovery materials to professionals in various fields who interact with potential members about NA's program of recovery. In response to requests from many members who have participated in cooperative PR events, in the next conference cycle, we are planning to offer NA public relations tote bags and brochures as inventory items that can be purchased directly from NAWS for local communities to use in their public information and public relations efforts.

Public Relations Handbook

Many members have participated in Conference Agenda Report workshops or have encountered the discussion questions included in the CAR. One of the discussion questions concerns the Area Planning Tool, which is also an addendum to the PR Handbook. We all seem to want to be effective in our service efforts, and this planning tool is simply one avenue to help us. Whether you have just seen the APT for the first time or you have used it in your service system, we want to hear from you about your experience with the APT. What can we do to make this a more user-friendly service resource? How can it be improved? As always, your input is what makes the difference.

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

Writing steps for recovery behind the walls

"My name is C_____. I'm currently a resident of _____ Correctional Institution. I've been involved in (the institution's) drug and alcohol program for two months now. It is a six-month program. I'm looking for a sponsor. I really need one. I'm serious about my recovery. If you could help me—which I hope you could—please write back to me. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much."

And so it began. After receiving this cry for help from an addict serving time in one of our state prisons, the Connecticut Region (USA) decided to discover a way within our service structure to help incarcerated addicts find the same relief from addiction we have found. That was in June 1993.

"Sponsorship Behind the Walls" started functioning as a working group of our regional H&I subcommittee in the fall of 1994. In December 1995, the WSO Board of Trustees (the name at the time for one of the elements of our current World Board) pointed out that since we used pen names and were offering step direction through NA service, not traditional sponsorship, the name "Sponsorship Behind the Walls" was perhaps not the best name for this service. As a result of this input, the group's name was changed to "Writing Steps for Recovery," or WSR for short. At that same time, the regional conscience called for the committee to become a standing subcommittee of the Connecticut Region, rather than a workgroup of H&I, since the service is quite different from that of taking presentations into institutions.

In the beginning, we worked with the Connecticut Department of Corrections to come up with guidelines that would make it possible for us to follow the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts while adhering to the rules and regulations of DOC facilities. As of the summer of 2007, WSR had been approved to serve addicts in all eighteen Connecticut DOC institutions. This accomplishment has taken time and consistent, responsible service. Because of what we have been able to accomplish, we feel grateful to share our experience, strength, and hope with anyone interested in doing the same.

I began my involvement with WSR in early 1996. Working with this committee has been a wonderful part of how I stay clean. Over the years I've had step writers in prison who have been so eager to change their lives that they diligently worked all Twelve Steps before their release. Recently, one of the girls I guided through her steps showed up at our subcommittee meeting, was trained to become a new WSR step guide, and took on a subcommittee commitment. In January, when we held our workshop at the Connecticut Convention, another former inmate who had worked her steps through WSR qualified to become a new step guide. We've received word that there are now some addicts in Connecticut's prisons who have been working with WSR step guides and have enough cleantime and step-writing experience to offer true sponsorship to fellow inmate addicts! It's so incredibly rewarding to see this process come full circle, to see the living, breathing, recovering proof that what we are doing is working! Through this service, addicts with experience in working the steps have an anonymous avenue for sharing that experience with incarcerated addicts.

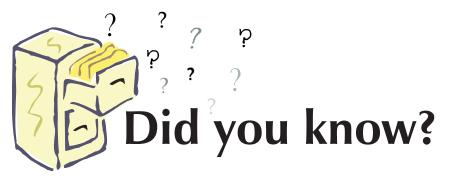
My WSR commitments have been instrumental in my own recovery. It's been incredibly rewarding knowing that my service contributed to at least one addict being released from jail with the knowledge and experience she needed in order to live differently. She carried that knowledge into her recovery on the outside, and is now giving back what she freely received. I've also benefited in much the same way as I do when I sponsor women. Working the steps with other addicts reinforces my understanding of how the steps work for me. I'm also grateful that this service is convenient and time-friendly. It's the closest thing to sponsorship that we can give these addicts—and for me, it has the extra benefit of not further complicating my sometimes chaotic daily life.

I've loved the times when I've had a commitment on the subcommittee level, too. As the corresponding secretary, I've grown more accustomed to picking up the phone and asking for help. Never before in my recovery have I ever had this much practice in that simple, life-saving skill. This commitment, more than any other I've had in the seventeen years I've been clean, assures me that I will stick with the winners. When I receive that initial letter from an inmate who pours out his or her heart about how far down into degradation and despair the disease of addiction has taken them, and then they ask for our help in learning a new way to live, I am sometimes moved to tears. I have absolutely no doubt that, for me, this is the best service commitment in NA!

Kim A, Connecticut, USA

Please visit the local resources area at www.na.org (http://www.na.org/ local_resource_area.htm) to find or to offer—inmate step writing resources.

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



The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has come a long way since our beginnings in 1953. We have grown from that first meeting in Sun Valley, California, USA, to more than 44,165 weekly meetings in over 127 countries worldwide. Our history is rich with diversity, and we want to share the facts of that history with you—the little-known facts and tidbits of information others might not otherwise know. Share your interesting NA facts with us by email at naway@na.org, by fax at 818.770.0700, or by postal mail at The NA Way Magazine; Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA.

Did you know

we have a virtual NA alphabet soup of many ingredients that are a part of our fellowship?
 Are you aware of other widely used letter combinations in our "NA alphabet soup?"

- **APT** Area Planning Tool
- **ASC** area service committee
- BT Basic Text
- **CAR** Conference Agenda Report
- **CAT** Conference Approval Track
- FIPT Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust
- **GSR** group service representative
- GTLS A Guide to Local Services in NA
- GTWS A Guide to World Services in NA
 - **H&I** hospitals and institutions
 - HRP Human Resource Panel
 - **IDT** issue discussion topics
 - **IP** informational pamphlet
 - **JFT** Just for Today
 - LTC local translations committee

MCM metropolitan committee member

MSC metropolitan service committee NAWS NA World Services public information PI PL phoneline PR public relations Public Relations Handbook **PRHB** RCM regional committee member regional delegate RD regional service committee RSC RSO regional service office SP service pamphlet WB World Board **WCNA** World Convention of NA **WSC** World Service Conference WSO World Service Office (NAWS headquarters) ZF zonal forum



A simple program

To be read with a sense of humor:

After an RSC meeting in my region, I began to think about how the twelve-step programs got started. It occurred to me that perhaps a Higher Power, a loving God, manifested himself to the people and told them: "I have created a program for people who have afflictions like yours, and the only prerequisite for membership is to have the desire to stop [fill in the blank]. The program has twelve steps that help the individual recover, and twelve traditions to help the fellowship survive. And for those who don't understand this simple program, I have created—the service structure!"

German C, Lima Sur, Peru

WÓяD SEaRCh

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Ι	W	0	R	Κ	S	Н	0	Ρ	S	С	Ν	W	В	С	AUTONOMY
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С	Ρ	Е	Κ	В	R	G	W	F	Μ	Κ	U	Ρ	Κ	I	FAITH
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NA groups and service bodies can publicize events in *The* NA *Way Magazine* and in our online calendar at www.na.org. To submit event information for the online calendar and the magazine, just click on the "na events" link at www.na.org and follow the instructions. (If you don't have Internet access, fax your event info to: 818.700.0700, attn: NA *Way*; or mail it to: *The* NA *Way Magazine*; Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA.) Only multi-day events are printed in the magazine. Events remain on the online calendar until the week after the event. Please submit information according to the magazine publication schedule below.

Issue	Submit event info by	For events taking place during
January		second week of January through first week of April
April	5 January	second week of April through first week of July
July	5 April	second week of July through first week of October
October	5 July	second week of October through first week of January

Brazil

Ceará 11-13 Apr; Convenção do CSA Do Sol 2; SESC IPARANA– Fortaleza–CE, Fortaleza; event info: 85.88668206; speaker tape info: 85.88668206; www.na.org.br/csadosol/csna

Santa Catarina 11-13 Apr; Convenção Região Brasil Sul 3; Praia dos Ingleses – Hotel Praiatur, Florianópolis; rsvns: 48.3269.1292; www. nabrasilsul.org

Canada

British Columbia 18-20 Apr; Vancouver Area Women's Retreat; Squamish Easter Seals Camp, Squamish; event info: 778.229.5383; event reg: 778.240.1958

2) 11-13 Jul; British Columbia Regional Convention 27; Powell River Town Centre Hotel, Powell River; rsvns: 866.485.3001; event info: 604.487.4205; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 May; write: BCRCNA 27; Box 405; Powell River, BC V8A 5C2

Manitoba 13-15 Jun; Manitoba Area Convention 18; RA Steen Community Centre, Winnipeg; event info: na_manitoba@hotmail. com

Ontario 16-18 May; Ontario Regional Convention 21; Hilton London Ontario, London; rsvns: 519.439.1661; event info: 519.645.0732; www. orcna.ca

Croatia

Trogir 8-11 May; Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian Convention 2; Hotel Medena, Trogir; rsvns: 385.21.555.949; event info: 386.407.95477

Denmark

Copenhagen 9-11 May; Copenhagen Area Convention 15; Frederiksskolen, Copenhagen; event info: 4570200185

Ecuador

Manabì 1-3 May; Ecuador Regional Convention; Manta; www.trufonz. webnode.com

Finland

Helsinki 25-27 Jul; European Convention and Conference 25; Paasitorni, Helsinki; www.eccna25.org/en/index.html

Germany

Bavaria 9-11 May; German Convention; Löwensaal, Nürnberg; rsvns: 0049.0.911.52.16.092; http://dcna.narcotics-anonymous.de

Indonesia

Bali 30 May-1 Jun; Bali Area Convention 7; Dhyana Pura Hotel, Seminyak; event info: narandy79@yahoo.com, universed@bigfoot. com, www.na-bali.org

Japan

Nagoya 26-28 Sep; Japan Regional Convention 5; Nagoya Congress Center; event info: jrcna5th@live.jp; http://najapan.org/

Okinawa 4-6 Jul; First Okinawa Area Convention; Sunset Mihama, Chatan-Town; event info: 080.3953.1836; write: Okinawa Area; 5-12-1-2F Oyama Ginowan; Okinawa, Japan; www.najapan.org/okinawa

Mexico

Baja California 11-13 Apr; Convención de el Área Baja Cachanilla 5; Hotel Calafia, Mexicali; rsvns US: 01152.686.568.3311; rsvns Mexico: 01.800.02.65.444; event info: 760.251.1496; write: Area Baja Cachanilla; Calle 4ta Callejón Yucatán #1210; Local Altos #14; Colonia Esperanza; Mexicali, BC, Mexico CP 21140

Peru

Huanuco 16-18 May; Convención Regional Peruana 14; event info: 51.1. 99706609; http://groups.msn.com/m7o6n2qg00p944ekai1nm08g01; write: Región Peru; Oficina de Servicio Nacional; Av. Militar 2733; Lince, Lima, Peru

United Kingdom

Birmingham 3-6 Jul; UK Convention 20; Metropol Hotel, Birmingham; rsvns: 44.0.121.780.4242; www.ukna.org/info:/events

London 11-13 Apr; London Area Convention 17; Friends Meeting House, London; event info: www.londonna.org

United States

Arizona 23-25 May; Arizona Regional Convention 22; Marriott Phoenix-Mesa, Mesa; rsvns: 888.236.2427; event info: www.Arizona-NA.org/ARCNA

Arkansas 6-8 Jun; SOS and HOW Float for Hope 5; Caddo River Campout and Canoe Rental, Glenwood; rsvns: 888.300.8452; event info: 501.655.6815

California 30 May-1 Jun; Ride 4 Recovery; Sierra Bible Camp, Canyondam; event info: www.rcaride4recovery.com

2) 6-8 Jun; California Mid-State Regional Convention 10; Holiday Inn, Visalia; rsvns: 559.651.5000; event info: 559.786.7008; www.cmsrcna.org

3) 20-22 Jun; The Door Is Open; San Diego Community Concourse, San Diego; rsvns: 800.826.0009; event info: 619.255.0776; www. sandiegona.org

Connecticut 9-11 May; Women's Sponsorship Weekend Retreat 4; Incarnation Retreat Center, Ivoryton; event info: 203.886.7336; www. ctna.org

Florida 18-20 Apr; North Dade Area Convention 3; Deauville Beach Resort, Miami Beach; rsvns: 800.327.6656; event info: 305.345.4008

2) 24-27 Apr; Fun in the Sun 30; Boardwalk Beach and Resort, Panama City; rsvns: 850.234.3484; event info: 800.224.4853

3) 25-27 Apr; Daytona Area Convention 9; Daytona Beach Resort & Conference Center, Daytona Beach; rsvns: 800.654.6216; event info: 386.672.4236; www.daytonabeachresort.com/daytonana.org

4) 2-4 May; Annual Unity Campout 2; Jay B Starkey Park, New Port Richey; rsvns: 727.834.3247; napasco.org

5) 3-6 Jul; Florida Regional Convention 27; Tampa Marriott Waterside, Tampa; rsvns: 888.268.1616; www.FRCNA.net

Georgia 18-20 Apr; Spirituality is the Key 9; Unicoi State Park, Helen; rsvns: 800.573.9659; event info: 770.639.2653; www.SpiritistheKey. com

2) 3-6 Jul; Midtown Atlanta Convention 18; Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, Atlanta; rsvns: 800.833.8624; event info: 678.927.6501; midtownatlantana.org

Iowa 4-6 Jul; Iowa Regional Convention 25; Ramada Hotel and Convention Center, Waterloo; rsvns: 319.233.7560; event info: ircnaXXV@iowa-na.org

Louisiana 25-27 Apr; Sunlight Sanity Campout; Crooked Creek Recreation Park, Ville Platte; rsvns: 337.599.2661; event info: 337.945.0953

2) 23-25 May; Louisiana Regional Convention 26; Clarion Hotel, Shreveport; rsvns: 800.321.4182; event info: 318.518.8012

Maine 11-13 Apr; Brothers in Spirit Men's Retreat; Notre Dame Spiritual Center, Alfred; event info: www.namaine.org

Maryland 11-13 Apr; Chesapeake-Potamac Regional Convention 22; Ocean City Convention Center, Ocean City; event info: 301.420.4404; www.cprcna.org/22/

Massachusetts 11-13 Jul; Serenity in the Berkshires Campout 19; Camp Stevens, Pittsfield; event info: 413.281.8145; www.berkshirena.org

Michigan 3-6 Jul; Michigan Regional Convention; Crowne Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids; rsvns: 616.957.1770;

Minnesota 23-26 May; Upper Midwest Regional Convention 25; Fair Hills Resort, Detroit Lakes; rsvns: 800.323.2849; event info: 701.388.4064; www.umrna.org

Mississippi 18-20 Jul; Mississippi Delta Area Convention; Days Inn, Grenada; rsvns: 662.226.2851

New Hampshire 18-20 Jul; Freedom under the Stars Campout 18; Goose Hollow Campground, Thornton; rsvns: 603.726.2000; event info: 603.767.2581

New Jersey 18-20 Apr; Shore to Recover Convention 4; Quality Inn, Toms River; rsvns: 732.341.2400; event info: 732.489.3523

2) 20-22 Jun; New Jersey Regional Convention 23; Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Cherry Hill; rsvns: 856.428.2300; event info: 732.673.3533; www.nanj.org

New York 23-25 May; Heart of New York Area Convention 5; Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, Liverpool; rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 315.299.8888; www.Honyana.com **2)** 30 May-1 Jun; Greater New York Regional Freedom Convention 19; Friar Tuck Resort and Convention Center, New York; rsvns: 800. 832.7600; event info: 646.573.6601

North Carolina 18-20 Apr; Bound for Freedom 22; Blake Hotel, Charlotte; rsvns: 704.372.4100; event info: 704.605.7508

2) 23-25 May; Down East, Inner Coastal, Crossroads Areas Convention; City Hotel and Bistro, Greenville; rsvns: 252.355.8300; event info: 252.560.3714

3) 6-7 Jun; North Carolina Capital Area Family Reunion; Sheraton Inn, Rocky Mount; rsvns: 888.543.2255; event info: 919.395.9810

4) 18-20 Jul; New Hope Area Convention 15; Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center, Durham; event info: 919.544.5817

Ohio 23-25 May; Ohio Convention 26; Radisson Riverfront Hotel, Cincinnati; rsvns: 859.491.1200; event info: 513.967.0860; www. naohio.org

2) 4-6 Jul; Dayton Area Convention 7; Holiday Inn Holidome, Dayton; rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 937.654.9798, info@dascna.org

Oregon 9-11 May; Pacific Cascade Regional Convention 15; Riverhouse Resort, Bend; rsvns: 541.389.3111; event info: http://pcrcna08. centraloregonna.com/

Pennsylvania 20-22 Jun; Freedom in the Forest Campout 5; Lackawanna State Park, Scranton; rsvns: 570.945.3239; event info: 570.906.4385

2) 11-13 Jul; Living Recovery Annual Campout; Francis Slocum State Park, Wyoming

South Carolina 15-17 Aug; Welcome Home 13; Marriott of Columbia, Columbia; rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 803.518.0400; http://crna. org/areaevents/

Tennessee 2-4 May; NA in May; Meeman-Shelby State Park, Memphis; rsvns: 800.471.5293; event info: 901.338.4904; www.nainmay.org

2) 2-4 May; KISS Kampout; Valley View Christian Campgrounds, Greenbrier; rsvns: 615.589.3817; na.nashville.org

Texas 16-18 May; Texas Unity Convention 99; Redwood Lodge, Whitney; rsvns: 254.694.3412; event info: 832.704.0687; www.tucna.org

2) 23-25 May; Texas State Convention; Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dallas; rsvns: 972.980.8877; event info: 214.546.8069; www.tscna.org

Utah 6-8 Jun; Southern Utah Area Convention; St. George Ramada Inn, St George; rsvns: 435.628.2828; event info: 435.313.2438; www. suana.org/Convention.htm

2) 6-8 Jun; Celebration of Recovery 22; American Legion Hall, Vernal; event info: 435.790.0982

3) 13-15 Jun; Northern Utah Area Women's Retreat; Box Elder Campground, Mantua; event info: 801.645.8780; www.nuana.org

4) 11-13 Jul; Utah Region Campvention 25; Whiting Campground, Mapleton; event info: www.utahna.info

Virginia 23-26 May; Marion Group Campout 12; Hungry Mothers Park, Marion; event info: 276.646.8462; www.mana-e-tn.org

West Virginia 9-11 May; Mountaineer Regional Convention; Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley; rsvns: 304.372.7860; event info: 304.562.5835; www.mrscna.org

Wisconsin 30 May-1 Jun; Inner City Area Convention 6; Best Western Milwaukee Hotel and Conference Center, Milwaukee; rsvns: 414.769.2100; event info: 414.241.1977

Wyoming 16-18 May; Upper Rocky Mountain Regional Convention 9; Ramkota Hotel, Casper; rsvns: 307.266.6000; event info: www.urmrna. org

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

English

Conference Approval Track material

Item No. EN-9141 Price US \$12.00 Copies can also be downloaded from http://www.na.org/CAT2008/cat08-toc.htm

NA White Booklet-ASL DVD

Item No. 1500-ASL Price US \$0.63

Estonian

Filipino

Keytags

Welcome - Multiple years

Item No. FL-4100–4108 Price US \$0.37/each

Keytags Welcome – Multiple years Item No. ET-4100–4108 Price US \$0.37/each



Lithuanian

The Group Booklet Grupės Bukletas Item No. LT-1600 Price US \$0.63



Portuguese

The NA Step Working Guides Guia para Trabalhar os Passos de Narcóticos Anónimos Item No. PO-1400 Price US \$7.30

Turkish Basic Text Adsiz Narkotik Item No. TU-1101 Price US \$5.50



French

Just for Today, Revised Item No. FR-1112 Price US \$7.70



Indonesian

IP No. 7: Am I an Addict? Item No. ID-3107 Price US \$0.21

IP No. 11: Sponsorship Item No. ID-3111 Price US \$0.21

IP No. 22: Welcome to NA Item No. ID-3122 Price US \$0.21

Keytags

Welcome – Multiple years

Item No. ID-4100–4108 Price US \$0.37/each

To be discontinued

Production of the items below will be discontinued when inventory has been depleted

Gold-plated medallions

(item #7300 through 7399)

Small and large PI posters

(item #9108 and 9109)

Individual recovery tapes

(item #8802 through 8806)











Coming soon

Arabic

An Introductory Guide to NA دليل تمهيدي لزمالة المدمنين المجهولين Item No. AR-1200 Price US \$1.70

Filipino

NA White Booklet *Narkotiks Anonimo* Item No. FL-1500 Price US \$0.63

German

Group Readings Set of seven cards Item No. GE-9130 Price US \$2.50

Lithuanian

Basic Text Narkomanai anonimai Item No. LT-1101 Price US \$5.50

Russian

Just for Today **Только сегодня** Item No. RU-1112 Price US \$7.70

Home GROUP

