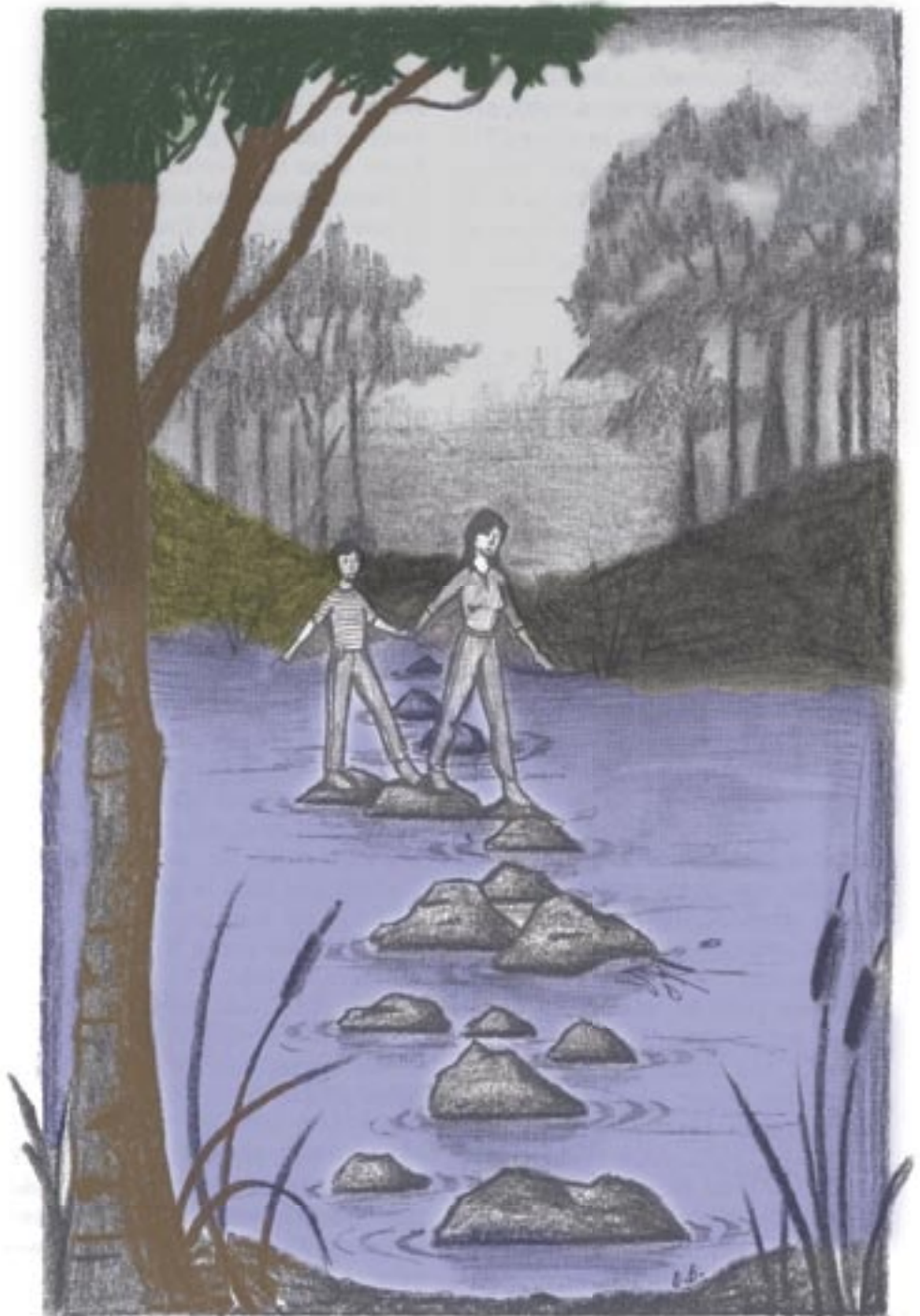


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THE
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From the editor

October marks the four-year anniversary of my tenure as editor of your magazine. It has been a tremendous learning experience and a humbling privilege. When I came on board, getting members to send in articles was not unlike the saga usually revolving around writing a Fourth Step inventory. You know, promising your sponsor you will start tomorrow, sharing about writing it in meeting after meeting, but somehow never really *getting* that heavy, unwieldy pen onto that piece of paper! Those first few issues were challenging as we sought to find enough articles to fill the pages.

Today, however, I am happy to report that we have been receiving some wonderful and thoughtful reflections from our members. I wanted to extend a big thank you for your efforts and encourage you to keep on sending in those articles. *The NA Way Magazine* is a team effort. It is our fellowship's international journal, which means we continue to need articles and essays from around the world.

You do not have to speak or write English. And if you do speak English, but feel your grammar skills are not up to par, there is no need to worry—just send us your article. Our editorial staff will make sure all the punctuation is right where it is supposed to be! If you do not speak English, send your article in your own language; we will have it translated. Remember, *The NA Way* is published in five languages—English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

We cannot do our recovery alone, and we cannot do this magazine alone. We will continue to need your interest and support—so keep it coming! Visit the NAWS website at www.na.org, go to *The NA Way Magazine* link at the top of the page, then click on "Questions and Topics" for ideas to help get your creative juices swirling.

Thank you again for helping us reach out to addicts worldwide as we strive to provide a tangible way of carrying the NA message of recovery and hope.

Nancy S, Editor

Cover art featured in the February 1992 issue of *The NA Way Magazine*.

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

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



The miracle of freedom

Thank God I am here—clean, alive, and with you.

When I review my childhood, the first thing I remember is fear. I used to live in constant anxiety and stress all the time.

At six, I knew completely the meanings of three words: divorce, isolation, and suicide. I was nine when I started to read serious psychological books, searching for studies on children who suffered as I did. I wanted to know how to heal the pain I felt. At that time, I did not know why I was the way I was. I would think it was because of my parents' constant fighting. I blamed my parents for whatever unhappiness came to me. Later on, I would even accuse them of being the cause of my addiction.

I felt an emptiness and insecurity deep inside. Like every other child, I had nightmares sometimes, but mine would affect me in a really bad way. I used to analyze them and then go into a long-term depression.

When I entered into my teenage years, I filled the emptiness I felt inside with whatever I found at hand. One day, I would grasp onto religion, which I understood at that time; the next day, it would be politics. Sometimes it was sports, and sometimes arts. One day, I thought that I would feel differently about myself if I became famous, so I started writing short stories just to become a famous writer. I was talented in many fields, but as soon as I started making any progress I would become fearful, shut down, and step backward.

I had an idea of being like a hippie and reaching peace; however, the only thing that was hippie-like about me was my appearance! I learned different methods of meditation and grasped onto eastern philosophies. Finally I came to the conclusion that only love could help me find peace.

So, I fell in love. Actually, I fell in love with love. The love I knew at that time was different from what I know today, but at that time it was a real love to me. I got married to an intellectual addict with whom I was in love. He meant everything to me. I did not know that I was a sick person with all the signs of addiction: dependency on something outside me, lack of self-confidence, selfish and self-centered, too sensitive, easily annoyed, deciding quickly without thinking, denying and dreaming instead of coping with reality.

Anyway, I started using heroin with my husband. The first time I used it, I thought I had finally found God. The feeling was great, a sort of peace and indifference mixed with loving everything and everyone. Actually, I had already started using alcohol and tranquilizers a few months earlier to kill the pain I felt from watching my husband drown in his own addiction.

I started to think that I could relieve all the pains of life by using drugs. For one year it worked for me. After that, the "dark age" of my addiction began and pushed me into a nonstop nightmare that lasted for five years.

I started telling lies to avoid my responsibilities. I had a job, and three days a week I would tell them a lie so as not to go to the office. I started to sell my things, even my clothes. Naturally, that did not get me the money I needed, since my heroin use was increasing, so I lied to everyone to get cash from them.

During the weekends I would go to sleep at midnight—well, honestly, it was not really sleeping, it was a coma—and wake up eighteen or nineteen hours later when it was dark again. At these times, I would be scared to death. I would lose any sense of

time, and sometimes I could not recognize where I was, so I would start crying uncontrollably.

Every night I had terrible nightmares about Satan. I would wake up terrified, shouting and crying. I was scared of dying, and I believed that God had especially hard punishment waiting for me when I did.

Sometimes I felt like my heart would skip a beat, and my stomach was on fire. I had a bad overdose experience once and lost four days.

There were times when my mother would come to visit me, but even though I loved her, I could not wait for her to leave so that I could use again. She was not aware of my heroin addiction.

I lost her one year later. She had a heart attack, and I was sure it was because of the big pressure of my life on her shoulders, since she had supported me financially and emotionally.

After her death I became totally miserable. I could not see the sky or tell you what the weather was like. My window curtains were always closed. It did not matter if it was cold or warm, snowy or rainy, or even if there was an earthquake or a war happening. I had become a numb, selfish person. I lost my job. I did not have any money.

Day after day I woke up thinking how I could get my drugs for that day. I begged people for money. I could see people watching me in a strange way. I knew I had a problem, but I did not accept or admit to myself that I was an addict. Funny thing was that I used to "sniff," and I thought that only those who fixed heroin were the *real* addicts.

My family pushed me to get divorced, and so I did. I do not even remember the day my husband and I got divorced. After that, I was totally alone, and I felt so lonely. I cried a lot, whether I used drugs or not. Each night I asked God to let me die; when I woke up the next day I would curse Him for opening my eyes.

I tried a number of ways to quit using or substitute other drugs for heroin. For example, I went on a trip abroad so that I could be far away from heroin, but from the first day on the road I started drinking a lot, and as soon as I got back home I rushed to my heroin again.

I substituted with many other drugs, but always came back to my favorite one. I did not know of another way, and I grew so weary of asking God to save me. I started, instead, asking Him to let me just die.

During the worst days of my loneliness, I could not even eat or bathe. I was unconscious most of the time, and I could not look in the mirror without seeing the beast named Atussa. Then, all of a sudden, my neighbor called me to see someone.

The "someone" was an NA member, and he gave me the recovery message. I was high when he was talking to me, and I remember thinking that he was not an addict like me because I could not believe an addict could be so happy and energetic!

The next day I went to buy enough drugs to kill myself. As soon as I put the lines down to sniff, the doorbell rang. I was selling the rest of my stuff, and one of my neighbors was interested in buying something. I had to put down everything so that I could deal with my neighbor. When I got back, I noticed that another neighbor had removed all my drugs after the NA member had called and asked her to do so.

Well, I realized that this may be the time to give up, so I gave up. That NA friend became my sponsor, and I came to the program and into recovery.

I started to work my First Step. It was long, and I thought the more I wrote, the more I would understand the program. I was about two months clean when I started to see my ex-husband. I stopped going to the meetings, saying that I had trouble hearing the people sharing, the meetings were boring, and I knew basically everything there was to know about NA.

Needless to say, at two months clean, I relapsed. That relapse opened my eyes, and I came to understand that our program is not a joke. I admitted that I was powerless over my addiction. I started taking small steps forward by working the steps, going to meetings, sharing in the meetings, contacting my sponsor and other NA friends, and not using for the first time, just for today.

I was again two months clean when I found a good job in a good atmosphere;

I still work there. I rented a flat for myself in which I now feel great peace. I made many friends inside and outside NA who really trust me.

The word *trust* had become alien to me. No one trusted me, and I did not trust anyone either. But after a while in recovery, people started to trust me again. My family—my only brother and his family—welcomed me back to their home.

I came to understand my God and love in a new way. As my relationship with God grew stronger, I saw many miracles happening in my life. I could see the signs. After I got clean, it seemed like every single person was put in my life by God, and they were like angels for me.

My second sponsor, from the farthest part of the world, appeared in my life through a miracle. I learned that I should share all my experiences with NA and non-NA friends to guarantee my recovery. I became aware of, for the first time, those spiritual principles I had been searching for my whole life—honesty, acceptance, surrender, willingness, hope, patience, open-mindedness, love and, finally, freedom.

Today I am free. I am not doomed to do things that are not good for me. Today I am not compelled to tell lies, and I am not afraid of who I am. I have come to know myself better through the steps.

Today my surrender is not only to my powerlessness over my addiction; I am surrendering my defects of character. Many defects that would have bothered me for a lifetime are fading as my willingness to surrender them increases.

I believe the most valuable gift NA has given me is the ability to focus my awareness on the moment I am living now. I am no longer nostalgic, rewinding and replaying my past, feeling guilt or self-pity, nor am I looking at my future with stress and anxiety.

I have learned to live in the present and do my best, just for today. Now I can experience the peace I had been chasing my whole life. Today I can look in the mirror and smile, thanks to God and the NA program.

Atussa G, Tehran, Iran



Remember the day before you got clean?

How sad it would be to forget that day. I just celebrated twenty years clean, and over the years I have seen many people forget. Friends, sponsees, and sponsors all have forgotten what that last day of using was like. But every time I hear a newcomer, every time I hear someone share that day, I remember.

It was an awful mix of hopelessness, despair, pain, and disease called active addiction. No future there, just going around in ever-decreasing circles with bigger bangs depending on the drug. I was standing at a crossroad. I wanted bigger, more powerful drugs to take away the pain, because the ones I was using had stopped working for me.

I was standing at a crossroad, but I did not know this at the time. I prayed for help to a God I did not understand. God brought me to NA before I even knew I was an addict. I was twenty-three and spiritually and emotionally bankrupt. I knew that what awaited me on the road of active addiction were insanity and a horrible, grey, hopeless life. I was too much of a coward to live a wild life. I lived in the shadows, in fear, in denial, in the dark. I ran away—I did not do, I did not have, and I did not talk. I sat in a room by myself, living in psychedelic fantasies. I had no life; my addiction had brought me to a standstill.

And God brought me to NA—a God of hope and love, a loving, caring God that I did not understand. This was not the judgmental, intolerant, cruel, woman-hating God I had grown up with. I left that one at the door of my first meeting. He did not belong in NA.

The God I do not understand does not mind if I say God and #&*% in the same sentence. The God I do not understand has never denied me hope, has never shamed me, has never told me to leave until I can behave better. This God is unbelievably patient and tolerant, and loves all my darkness as well as my light. I know this because NA has taught me this. For me, as much as God is love, NA is hope.

I remember my first day clean. I was given an incredible gift—a profound moment of clarity in which I knew that, just for today, this was the only way for me. I do not believe I have another recovery in me. I do not believe I could find that courage again. But I also have no doubt that I could use again.

So, I have no choice: Whatever it takes to not pick up is the only option open to me.

I continue to go to meetings to hear that newcomer who has just crawled across the threshold. It has not changed out there. The stories change, the drugs change, and the fine details change, but as soon as they tell me how they feel, I remember that despair, that loneliness, and that hopelessness that so characterized the life of active addiction.

I was sitting in a meeting the other day next to a twenty-one-year-old who was eight days clean. She was so grateful to NA for being there. I was so grateful to God for helping her there. Without her, I would forget. What a sad day it would be to forget my last day of using...

Lucinda C, New South Wales, Australia

One on one

I first met Bill S at the Colorado Regional Convention XI in Breckenridge, Colorado, USA, in October 1997. I was the convention treasurer and Bill was a friend of my sponsor. After receiving the October 2003 issue of *The NA Way Magazine*, I became intrigued by the whole interview concept, and asked Bill if I could interview him. He agreed. The following is the transcript of our conversation.

Tommy: What is your favorite recovery quote and why?

(Silence)

T: Now it's your turn to start talking.

Bill: My favorite recovery quote?

T: And why?

B: Well, I kind of like the quote "just for today."

T: Okay, why?

B: Because it keeps me in the here and now. That all I have to do is this thing, just today.

T: Okay.

B: Just for today, I have a job.

T: Right.

B: Just for today, I have a wife. Just for today, I have my life.

T: Okay. Job. Wife. Life. Now, what is your favorite spiritual principle and why?

B: Probably hope and faith. I have hope and faith today.

T: Okay, why?

B: Because I feel that they keep me more spiritually grounded. I have faith that everything is going to be okay, no matter what happens—in spite of me.

T: Good. Okay, question number three: What does working the steps mean to you?

B: Well, working the steps for me is a way for me to figure out who I am. It's a way for me to be honest with me.

T: Online meetings: Any thoughts on that?

B: Don't do them. To be honest with you, I don't believe in NA in the computer. That ain't how it was started. For me, it's a group, face-to-face. I'm one of the old dinosaurs. (Laughs) No,

no, don't write that down. Well, go ahead.

T: Let me ask you this: Do you see any benefit to online meetings at all?

B: Not for me. I don't know about anyone else. I guess they might have some benefit for some people, you know, but not for me.

T: Not for you, huh?

B: No. I mean, you know, I go to meetings. It's just that I like sharing one-on-one in a group. I like seeing who I'm sharing with, you know.

T: How do you handle disruptions at your home group?

B: Well, I guess it depends on how disruptive it is. There have been cases where we've just asked people to leave. There have been other times when we've talked, you know, had a group discussion with the person you know, and tried to ask them in a loving and caring manner to calm down. One guy we just flat out told that if he can't control himself in the meeting, then maybe he should find another place to go.

T: So I guess for you it depends on the situation and the extremity of the disruption.

B: Yeah, sure.

T: What is your experience with children attending meetings?

B: Good and bad. (Laughs) We had a meeting place where we had a playroom. They literally let us use their children's room. That is, until the kids threw pencils up through the suspended ceiling, which cost the group 150 dollars to replace. We paid for it. Then we had times when we had kids who were just great. We used to donate toys to their day care facility. The people in the group would bring toys, and we'd put them in the room.

T: And leave them there?

B: Oh, yeah. We donated the toys to the church. So, I've seen both sides of it, where we had good things happen, and where we had bad things happen. Sometimes we had kids who disrupted the meeting. Our Monday night meeting, an open newcomers' meeting, we realized some parents,

some women, well, we've got a guy who has to bring his grandkids since his own kids are pretty messed up. He's been clean for a while, and he has to bring his grandkids, who are a couple of hellions, but we put up with it.

T: How do you know it's God's will?

B: What's God's will? How do I know *what's* God's will? What I know about God's will ... God's will is freedom. It gives me the ability to do what I need to do as long as I'm not hurting other people. I have free will today; I have God's will, that's free will.

T: Okay. Does being productive and responsible mean being boring?

B: No. For me, some of the things that I've done in recovery—being productive and responsible has brought some of the greatest joys in my life. I never had that kind of freedom to live in my life before. If that makes any sense to you.

T: It makes sense to me. Actually, it makes perfect sense to me. Now, how do you develop healthy intimate relationships?

B: How? With honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. With love and tolerance. Using spiritual principles. Basically, living by spiritual principles.

T: What does it mean to be responsible and productive in NA and in society?

B: Well, for me it means to be able to take on commitments. Commit to something, and to the best of my ability, see it through. And if I can't be honest enough to tell whoever it is that I just can't do this right now, for whatever reason. In my situation, I'm generally able to carry through with something and see it to its end. To be of service—maximum service to my brothers and sisters, in or out of NA.

T: How does your gratitude speak?

B: By giving back what's been given to me.

T: How do you continue to make amends? Are you ever finished making amends?

B: I was told that my amends will probably be lifelong.

- T:** Is that how you feel?
- B:** Some of my amends get made and then they just kind of go away, and some of them are things that I just have to continue to do throughout my life—to right the wrong I’ve done. Some of them, I don’t know that there’ll ever be an end, because when I start thinking like that, then I’ll start making those mistakes again. I’ll start dragging people through the #S%* with me again, and that’s not even with me using.
- T:** Are there any other requirements for membership?
- B:** Not that I know of. The requirement I know is the desire to stop using. Sometimes I’m not even sure...
- T:** If there are any other requirements for membership?
- B:** Well, I believe people need to go to meetings and need to get involved in their recovery. To me, that’s a requirement. I don’t think that just walking in and saying, “Gee, I’d like to quit,” and then they don’t keep coming back to the meetings. See, I don’t know if I believe that concept, “You’re a member when you say you are.”
- T:** Yeah, I don’t either.
- B:** I don’t know.
- T:** See, when I read that question, what I thought to myself was what my sponsor said to me: “With membership comes responsibility.”
- B:** Yeah, you have to put out something, you know. And if not, if you’re not willing to do that, then I don’t believe you’re a member.
- T:** All right, last question, and this is a good one for you: rigidity. How do you learn to lighten up?
- B:** (*Laughs*) I guess when I’m able to laugh at myself. When I’m able to laugh at some of the things I’m so rigid about. When I can go, “Jesus, how could I have said that?” You know, and laugh about it. Like I said in the meeting the other night, sometimes I say some pretty hard-core stuff to people. It used to be that I’d stick right to my guns, and today I’m more to the side where I can say to someone, “You know, that really wasn’t the right thing to say.” It’s not what I said so much as how I said it.

That’s my problem. I had someone tell me the other night, “Gee, Bill, you are real direct and blunt, but most of the time what I get is that you say it with love and compassion.” And it is. It’s out of love for the fellowship; it’s out of compassion for the people who are there. A lot of times I have to write some of that stuff down on paper. That, or I just stay away from those particular meetings so that I won’t say anything.

- T:** It sounds like, at least to me, that comes with the Tenth Step, continuing to look at yourself and admitting when you’re wrong.

(*Bill’s phone rings.*)

- T:** Well, I guess that’s it. Thanks for taking the time, Bill.

Tommy O, Wyoming, USA

That moment of clarity

Hello, everyone. My name is DeAnna, and I am an addict.

I am currently in prison. This is where I have seen my first copy of *The NA Way Magazine*. I really connected with the stories and articles.

I, like many others, committed my crimes while in active addiction. I had gone through four prior treatment programs ranging from twenty-eight days to a one-and-a-half-year inpatient program.

During these times, I went to a lot of NA meetings, disliking some and at others feeling like I fit right in. But, unfortunately, I just did not want a better life.

I knew people who got clean, and I always wondered how they stayed clean and lived such happy lives. To me, being drug-free seemed boring, and I was not ready to change my playmates or playgrounds.

I truly believe that during each attempt at treatment I was planning my relapse. So it was no surprise to anyone when I returned to the same old lifestyle.

I did finally find recovery after fifteen years of active addiction and loss. They say there is a thing called a moment of clarity. For me, it was being inside a

house that blew up from the drugs being cooked in the homemade laboratory.

Rock bottom—oh, yes, that was it!

I often wonder how I made it out alive, and why. Now I know it is so I could get clean and share myself with other addicts just like me.

I have a new sense of freedom, even though I am in prison. I am clean—and even better, I am alive and healthy and more than willing to share my experience, strength, and hope with anyone who needs it.

I read the Basic Text regularly. My favorite chapter is “We Do Recover.”

I fought for so long in my active addiction, and now I do not have to use drugs ever again. Sometimes I find it boring. I look for things to keep me busy. Today my life is no longer chaotic and destructive. Today my life is laid-back and productive.

I feel so blessed to still have NA meetings and friendly, nonjudgmental people with whom I can talk. I have found true friends who care about me and my recovery. I am finally able to plan for the future, but live in today.

I am a smart, independent, hopeful woman who has many dreams, goals, and aspirations. NA has opened my eyes and made me realize I am not alone. We share a common goal. We help each other out, and the most important thing is that we do not have to use drugs.

Today I am proud to say that I am clean, and that is my personal miracle.

DeAnna C, Iowa, USA

I worked the steps in thirty days

Work the steps as soon as you can the first time around. You have the rest of your life to work and further comprehend the steps on a daily basis.

The disease of addiction uses patience—and the lack thereof—like a double-edged sword. For me, not working the steps quickly would have been like going whitewater canoeing without a paddle!

NA in the Pacific Rim

Upon first glance, the steps appear self-explanatory. I got the step workbook (*The NA Step Working Guides*) and worked up to Step Five, then grabbed an experienced twelve-stepper I could trust and had her listen while I read out loud my Fourth Step to her and my Higher Power. My Fifth Step took the longest because I had to run back and grab this person and share more dark secrets that kept coming out as I went on with Steps Six and Seven.

Yes, I saw my glaring defects and was entirely ready to have them removed as I made a list of my immediate family and made amends to them with my heart (Steps Eight and Nine). My list of all the people I have harmed is enormous and will take a lifetime of amends, but that is okay.

Step Ten became my daily safeguard for checking and correcting and making amends on a daily basis.

I am now a new person, and I am beginning to be guided through prayer and meditation to my life's work and purpose (Step Eleven).

My new life and energy found their outlet through Step Twelve, and I got out there and started doing service work.

Today the Twelve Steps and Traditions are at the heart of my program, and I am protected from falling on the submerged rocks as I canoe down the river of life with a strong and flexible paddle!

Today, my life is good. In the last seven years my relationship with my family and my son and daughter has seen much healing. I have lost the desire to use drugs and, just for today, I am living my dreams.

I have seen many fellow addicts capsize because they left out a step or tradition from their gear. I do not want to ever let that happen to me because I know the waters of addiction are deadly. That is why I double-check my gear by going to meetings, reading my daily meditations, and taking the program seriously—and without delay!

Barry B, Georgia, USA

This February I had the honor and privilege of traveling to Bali, Indonesia, and attending some sessions of the Asia Pacific Forum. The APF is made up of delegates of nations in the Pacific Rim area. It meets once a year for three or four days, usually in a small country in need of a jolt of recovery.

The addicts who attend this function are awesome with their love, their curiosity, their open-mindedness about NA, their knowledge of their countries and their needs, and their total gratitude for recovery. I get goose bumps writing about this a few months later.

Some of the countries or regions represented at the APF include: Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Kuwait, Philippines, and Singapore. Some others were unable to attend, Nepal being one.

At the forum, members give reports on NA meetings in their regions—how many they have, where they are held, concerns about literature, small problems that affect most meetings or big problems central to their culture, cultural differences, problems getting into institutions where in some countries it is still dangerous to be an addict, and translations, to name just a few. Here were myriad concerns all centered on the primary purpose of carrying the message. As I sat in that room, you cannot imagine how grateful I felt to be part of this worldwide fellowship.

There are serious problems facing our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. There are still countries where women cannot/will not/are not allowed to walk into meetings. Culturally, parts of the Pacific Rim are very male-dominated, but that is changing, albeit slowly. When we hear of a woman addict coming to the meetings, as I heard from a friend in Nepal a few months ago, we all want to jump for joy.

Some of the regions—such as Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii—have much recovery and many meetings and have been service-oriented for many

years. They help the smaller nations that are just starting their service structures and communications with their governments, etc. There was also a World Board member and a member of NAWS Translations in attendance. They gave presentations and information and offered help to anyone who needed it. I was so proud to be a part of this.

After the APF, Bali had its Fourth Annual Convention. The theme this year was *Selamat Datang*, which translates as "freedom" or "welcome to freedom." Many of the NA members in Bali are expatriates from all over the world, so going to a local meeting had an international flavor. They were all happy we came to their convention, and an attitude of gratitude prevailed all over!

There were many speakers in each convention meeting, so one could get a taste of NA from different countries. There was a member translating for the Indonesians and for us English-speakers.

After the meetings I went for a swim in the Indian Ocean. I had so much fun. I actually took my mother with me on this trip. Now that is recovery in action.

Another event that was a gift from the spirit was being able to go into the prison in Bali for the H&I Committee. I went in with a couple of members who also take an educational class on HIV to the women and men in jail. They translated for the girls and me. What can I say? Their eyes, ears, and faces carried the message to me, rather than the other way around. I could write a little story on that experience alone. God is very good to me.

I have traveled to many different places, and I have attended the APF before. As always, I get a deeper understanding of the power working in my life. I witness the unity of our worldwide fellowship, and my petty problems become smaller. I feel and live the gratitude, and my world grows bigger. I come home and go to my local home group in Sonoma and feel the love in the moment. I see the power of our primary purpose and feel blessed and happy to be a part of it.

Thank you, NA!

Kimmy Y, California, USA

Fellowship focus

While some of these updates may be old news to members involved with regional and world service, we still want to highlight them for members who may not have immediate access to their regional delegate or current information from NAWS. We hope you find this information helpful and informative.

Here is a brief overview of some of the happenings in the fellowship:

- The twenty-seventh World Service Conference took place 25 April through 1 May 2004. All of the motions presented by the World Board in the 2004 *Conference Agenda Report* were adopted, along with the long list of projects that accompanied the 2004-2006 proposed NAWS budget. For a summary of conference decisions, go to: www.na.org/WSC2004/draft_summary_of_decisions.htm
- Venezuela and Chile, the two regions that were recommended for conference seating, were unanimously approved by the conference and will be funded to attend WSC 2006.
- The conference approved the draft of the book *Sponsorship* that has been out in approval form since August 2003. This is the first new book-length piece of recovery literature that has been approved since the conference adopted the *Step Working Guides* in 1998.
- A new IP #11, *Sponsorship, Revised* was also adopted to replace the current IP. The new sponsorship IP also resulted in changes to *An Introductory Guide to NA* and *Just for Today*.
- Because we understand that many members use their *Just for Today* book to track clean time anniversaries, we will provide the option of stickers to replace the three new quotes in the revised book. The stickers will be available in a PDF file on our website so that you can print them from home. You may also obtain a copy of these stickers from us at no cost, but our minimum shipping charge of \$2.50 will apply. Please check our website for updates.
- The following projects have been given the highest priority to be completed in this conference cycle: a new preface and new stories for the Basic Text; Leadership Identification and Development; NAWS Communications and Publications; Public Relations Strategy; Service Handbooks; and Service Material. Projects that were given a medium priority include: Worldwide Workshops; Leadership Qualities in NA; Self-Support IP; Service Structure Relationship and Definition; and Targeted Literature. The projects given low priority are: Capturing Long-Time Members' Experience; Consensus-Based Decision-Making at the WSC; Fellowship Issue Discussions; and Literature Distribution and Convention Workshop. Visiting the Conference-Related Material page on our website at www.na.org/conference/ will become the easiest way to get updates about all of these projects.
- The 2004-2006 Issue Discussion Topics approved by conference participants are "Our Public Image" and "Infrastructure." These two topics come directly from our Strategic Plan and are critical to our ability, as a fellowship, to effectively carry NA's message to the addict who still suffers. We will be engaging you in a variety of discussions about these topics throughout the next two years and will attempt to make them relevant to each of us as members.
- The conference elected seven World Board members, two cofacilitators, and three HRP members.

WSC Cofacilitators

Mark H (Wisconsin Region)
Ubaldo "Roberto" J (Ontario Region)

World Board

Craig R (Carolina Region)
Mary B (Lone Star Region)
Michael C (Spain Region)
Mukam H-D (New Jersey Region)
Piet De B (Sweden Region)
Ron B (Australia Region)
Ron M (Florida Region)

Human Resource Panel

Dylan J (British Columbia Region)
Mindy A (Show-Me Region)
Sergio R (Panama Region)

Want to get involved? The World Pool Information Form is available on our website at www.na.org/HRP/wpif-default.htm. It can be downloaded or completed online. If you have not filled out the form and have five years clean, please go online and complete a new form. If you are interested in serving in any way, check it out!

History of Midday Miracles

This is a photo of the place where the Midday Miracles group meets, one of the first meetings started in Brooklyn, New York, back in 1984. Midday Miracles started as an offshoot of Brooklyn's second-oldest NA meeting, Stop the Drugs and Live.

Midday Miracles meets Monday through Friday at 10 am and again at 12 noon. Midday is fondly referred to as the "Emergency Room" because its morning and afternoon meetings are there for newcomers straight out of detox or rehab, or coming back from a relapse—anyone who needs a place to get recovery early in the day.

Midday has anywhere from thirty to fifty addicts at its 10 am meeting, and the noon group has from fifteen to twenty-five addicts. Because of a large attendance, Midday serves bagels, donuts, and other goodies donated by our members, along with coffee and tea.

The format of our meetings rotates: Monday and Wednesday are beginners' meetings; Tuesday is a speaker's-choice pamphlet meeting; Thursday is a *Just for Today* meeting (we read from the daily meditation book); and Friday is a rotating First through Fourth Step meeting.

The afternoon meetings are just as varied: Monday noon is a topic meeting. Topics in recovery are picked from a can, the speaker finds the topic in the daily meditation book's index, and then shares on it. Tuesdays and Fridays are beginners' meetings. Wednesday is a *Just for Today* meeting, and Thursday is a literature/book study meeting.

Midday has an interesting and colorful history as one of Brooklyn's oldest meetings. Old-timers remember when Midday first opened at the old 20th Street and 7th Avenue location—a clubhouse that was shared with AA until 1989. That meeting place had a bar in the back, and the room was filled with smoke. There were no nonsmoking meetings back in the 1980s. The group eventually lost that meeting place because of willfully

irresponsible behavior like rowdy hanging out, a proliferation of cigarette butts on the sidewalk, noise from motorcycle engines, and ultimately "works" found in the bathroom.

In 1989, Midday moved to a meeting place on 40th Street under the "El" (elevated subway). This spot was nicknamed "The Pigeon Coop" because of the pigeons that congregated under the highway. Back in the late 1980s, many recovering addicts who tested positive for HIV/AIDS requested that another meeting place be found because of the health risks associated with pigeon droppings and smoke and soot from the highway.

In 1993, Midday moved to a small church building at East 4th Street and Greenwood Road that had a couch and a little kitchen. Midday flourished in this space for about six or seven years until it mysteriously burned down. Rumor has it that it was a homeless member who fell asleep on the couch with a lit cigarette. Others say it was burned down by neighbors who objected to allowing NA to use the meeting place.

Midday's current home opened in mid-October 1997 in a church basement on the corner of 19th Street and Dorchester Avenue. Midday's trusted servants are extremely dedicated and caring individuals who work together to have meetings open early—about 9 am for the "meeting before the meeting"—heartily greet the newcomers, and show a warm welcome to all. Members who have moved away often return to Midday and visit old friends.

The historical information for this article was provided by recovering addicts who were—and still are—trusted servants at Midday Miracles who have seventeen, eighteen, and twenty-five years clean, respectively.

*Submitted in loving service,
Wilvena G, New York, USA*



What if...?

I thought of something the other day while attending my home group meeting that was on the First Step. I hope that this might be of use to someone.

What if we came to our first meeting and the First Step was up on the wall all by itself, with no Steps Two through Twelve to follow? How different would that be?

I think it would be a completely hopeless state to be in—to know that we were addicted, unmanageable, and powerless, but with nothing to do about it. I think that is the state addicts find themselves in when they commit suicide. In fact, I think maybe anyone who has ever felt suicidal about anything at all has probably worked a First Step on something or other.

The key, of course, is to move on to Step Two. It feels risky to try believing in a Higher Power, but what the heck, I did lots of mighty risky things when I was using. The danger of working Step One and not going on to Step Two is, in my opinion, even worse than denial.

So if anyone is feeling at the end of their rope, try praying to a Higher Power. Maybe sometimes it is not just about the steps, but the spaces between them. At any rate, my Higher Power, whom I choose to call Higher Power, has been a lifesaver for me.

Diana J, North Carolina, USA

WCNA-31

Speaker tape evaluators needed...

Help the World Board with the process of identifying potential speakers for the world convention. You must be willing to listen to and evaluate about 100 tapes between February and May 2005.

Qualifications:

Five years clean time, willingness to serve and commit the necessary time and able to work with short deadlines.

To Be Considered:

Please complete and submit the attached form by **31 January 2005**. You **MUST** also have submitted a World Pool Resume form that is available on our website at www.na.org.



Name: _____ Clean Date: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt # _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Day Telephone (____) _____ Evening Telephone (____) _____

Email Address: _____

Please Note: If you have submitted a tape and/or request to speak at WCNA-31 you may not serve as an evaluator.

Send completed forms to:

NA World Services
Attn: Speaker Evaluators
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
Fax: (818) 700-0700 Email: events@na.org

If you have additional questions please call (818) 773-9999.



So you want to speak at WCNA-31...

Aloha! We are looking forward to joining together in a worldwide celebration of our recovery in the Polynesian paradise of Honolulu, Hawaii, 1-4 September 2005! It promises to be a fabulous experience, and we are asking for your help with finding workshop speakers.

Clean time requirements are: ten years clean for main meetings and five years clean for workshops. Workshop speakers will be selected from the convention's pre-registration list.

To submit names and/or tapes of members wishing to speak at a world convention workshop, simply complete the form below and send it to the WSO via mail, fax, or email. Recommendations/tapes for workshop speakers must be received no later than 31 January 2005.

Name of person to be considered as a workshop speaker _____

Street Address _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Postal Code _____

Daytime Telephone () _____ Evening Telephone () _____

Email _____ Clean Date _____/_____/_____

Name of person who is submitting name/tape _____ Telephone _____

Please fax or email completed application to (818) 700-0700 or WCNASpeaker@na.org.

Mail to: NA World Services
Attn: WCNA-31 Speakers
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA

◆ Please Note ◆

While tapes are not required in order for someone to be considered to speak at the convention, they are very helpful. All members are encouraged to submit one if possible.



WCNA-31

1-4
SEPTEMBER
2005



Oahu means "the gathering place," and that is exactly what we plan to do... gather in Oahu for WCNA-31 to celebrate our recovery!

Aloha! Can you imagine pristine beaches with turquoise waters? Can you imagine tropical breezes and picturesque sunsets? Now, imagine sharing the miracle of recovery with "thousands of your closest friends" on the mystical island of Oahu!



CONVENTION SITE



WCNA-31 will take place at the Hawaii Convention Center with some events held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & Spa.

The Convention Center is a state-of-the-art meeting facility that combines beauty and comfort to create an ambiance that is uniquely Hawaii. The soaring forms and breathtaking architecture call to mind tropical palm trees and Polynesian culture.



REGISTRATION

Convention registration and hotel reservations open 1 December 2004.

Do not call the hotel directly because they cannot make reservations at our WCNA-31 discounted rates.

Reservations can be made only through our housing bureau using any of the following options: Internet, mail, fax, or phone.



HOTEL



The Hilton Hawaiian Village, one of only two hotels in all of Waikiki that sits directly on the beach, is the headquarters hotel for WCNA-31. Nestled on 22 acres, the hotel has the widest stretch of white sand, a serene beachfront lagoon, lush tropical gardens with cascading waterfalls, majestic views of Diamond Head, stunning seaside sunsets, and much more!



Five more official WCNA hotels will be available so there is something for every budget. Room rates for single/double occupancy start as low as \$99 and go up to \$189 per night.

All official WCNA hotels are within walking distance of the Convention Center.

Bus shuttles will be available only to and from official WCNA hotels.

NOTE: All official WCNA hotels include a small rebate in the room rate to help pay the rental costs of the Convention Center. You help support the convention by staying in official WCNA hotels.





TRAVEL INFO

Special airfare discounts are being arranged for WCNA-31 convention registrants with the island's largest travel specialist, **CLASSIC CUSTOM VACATIONS**.

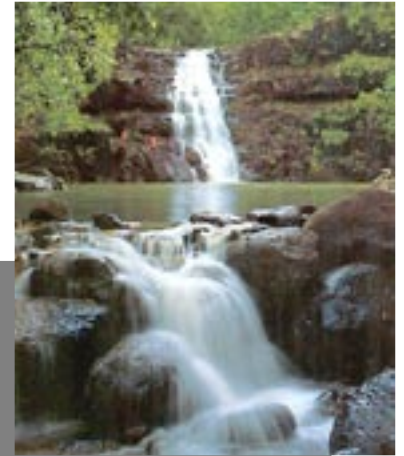


Make payments on your airline tickets! Convention registrants will be able to make airline reservations with just a \$100 deposit and the balance due 45 days prior to travel.



TRAVEL COSTS

We have put together an estimate of what your trip to paradise might cost so you can plan ahead!



Here are some examples of travel costs:



The totals below include round-trip airfare, and a five-night stay arriving on Wednesday and departing on Monday, and are based on double occupancy or two people per room (based on current airfare pricing as of 15 July 2004).

Airline & official WCNA-31 hotel - per person:

	Hilton Oceanview	Hilton Gardenview	WCNA Oceanfront Hotel	WCNA Mid-priced	WCNA Economy
New York	\$1140	\$1028	\$985	\$911	\$840
Baltimore	\$1201	\$1089	\$1046	\$972	\$901
Atlanta	\$1281	\$1169	\$1126	\$1052	\$981
Chicago	\$1181	\$1069	\$1026	\$952	\$881
Dallas	\$1194	\$1082	\$1039	\$965	\$894
Los Angeles	\$1119	\$1007	\$964	\$890	\$819

NOTE: These prices are just an example and may change since NO ONE can guarantee airline prices until October 2004. The Federal Aviation Commission does not allow airlines to lock in schedules & prices until eleven months prior to departure.

Watch for updates at www.na.org
as we continue planning this extraordinary convention.

**REMEMBER, CONVENTION REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS
BEGIN 1 DECEMBER 2004!**



MAHALO!





Another gift from NA

I just returned from my first World Service Conference, and I hope it is not my last. What a wonderful experience it was!

To arrive and see so many addicts in recovery doing service for their regions was overwhelming. I even recognized some faces I had met at the Latin American Zonal Forum. The ever-so-kind host committee picked us up at the airport after a fifteen-hour flight, which included connections and long waits at the airport.

The kindness, fellowshiping, and attention that we received were proof of our host committee's desire that we feel comfortable.

I never imagined how labor-intensive the work on the agenda would be during the conference. And I also realized how vitally important it is for the alternate regional delegate to attend.

There were so many people—all so different—and so many regions working together toward a single objective. It was very exciting, and I cried every day due to the gratitude I felt. Everything excited me, and I was extremely emotional. I tried to capture, understand, and assimilate everything.

Thanks to NA World Services, which provided three translators for the Spanish-speaking delegates, I was able to feel comfortable in the conference, and I participated without any limitations. I felt a little bit ashamed when I realized that we demanded everything to be translated for us, while there were other non-English-speaking regions that did not have translators at all.

I loved the visit we made to the WSO. I was able to see how the process works for translations, literature shipments, group services, etc.

Adapting to the meals and the time zone changes was a little difficult, especially in the dry climate. I come from a very tropical environment. I needed humidity. My skin dried out, and my nose bled every day. My roommate experienced the same thing. You have to drink a lot of water.

When I was told that I had to share a room with the RDA from Puerto Rico, I felt apprehensive because I had never before shared a room with anyone. I have always spent a little bit more money to be alone, but I could not afford this luxury in US dollars.

So I was willing to share, and getting to know this person was another of the gifts my Higher Power gave me during the WSC. We became good friends quickly. We shared our feelings every day. It was like having a little sister with me. What a beautiful person she is.

Another of the gifts that I received was that I returned home with a sponsor. It had been six years since I had known another member whom I could identify with and who did not live in my city. Each time I ran into her at service events, I tried to figure out a way to ask her to be my sponsor.

But in the middle of a laugh attack during an event, I got the courage to ask her to be my sponsor, and she accepted in a very touching and loving manner. What a beautiful gift! We have already chatted via the Internet.

Something that really caught my attention was that we were told to have fun. Generally my region's conferences are no fun. We tend to take everything so seriously, but at the WSC I did have fun, and I enjoyed everything.

My feelings took me to places that I could not comprehend. But I knew that if my Higher Power had brought me to the WSC from a faraway place, it was my responsibility to take advantage of everything. I also felt that it was funny that in the suggested ground rules one of the guidelines was: *No kicking, scratching, or biting permitted!*

I laughed, because there were times during our regional service conferences when I felt like doing exactly those things.

At one point, I got upset and very afraid when some wise guy fired off a firecracker outside the hotel. In my country we hide when we hear a noise like that because it could be a gunshot.

On the other hand, the field trip to the ranch was spectacular. The food, the sports, and especially sharing with other members under those beautiful trees in that magical setting were moving. From my seat, I could see one of the NAWS staff decked out in his cowboy outfit and making sure everything was okay. Thank you so much for a memorable experience.

The energy drain that could be felt in the hotel on Saturday during the closing ceremonies was no doubt due to the emotional charge we all had.

To conclude, I hope that all NA trusted servants can someday experience what I felt at the WSC. There were so many emotions from so many beautiful situations—the comradeship, despite the fact that we could not understand each other's languages; having lunch with people from other countries; and the people from the WSO who were so dedicated to making sure that we were all well, making the conference comfortable and fluid.

The World Board, the HRP, there were so many wonderful people and enjoyable situations that will always live in my memory and in my heart.

It would seem as if I only had fun during the conference, but I can tell you that all the points of the *Conference Agenda Report* were completed, and I was happy that everything turned out so well.

That was my conference experience, and it was my most wonderful experience in recovery.

From the bottom of my soul, thank you to all of my dear translators, the NA members, the World Board trusted servants, the WSO staff, the Southern California Region, my dear delegate friends, and to my loving region for trusting me and allowing me to serve.

*With gratitude in service,
Angela T, Santiago de Cali, Colombia*

Service begins with me

Service, an important aspect of my recovery, begins with me—my willingness, my commitment, and my desire to stay clean.

Many times I have heard our trusted servants whine and complain that there is a lack of addicts willing to serve, then try to manipulate others into serving. True, there is a lack of addicts who are willing to commit and serve in our fellowship, but...

I believe we need to make service *attractive*. Whining, complaining, shaming, and manipulating are not very attractive to most people—myself included. We need to talk positively about our service experiences to let addicts know of the opportunities for growth and recovery that exist within service. Why not politely invite a sponsee, a friend, or the person sitting next to us at our home group to attend the next group conscience/business meeting, or an area subcommittee meeting, or the area service committee meeting?

I have had the opportunity to work with addicts at every level of NA's service structure: group, area, region, zone, and world. The experience, knowledge, and spiritual growth I have received from this involvement have been immeasurable in my recovery. But you do not need to start off as cofacilitator of the World Service Conference to receive these benefits; just start, as I did, at your home group.

My involvement with my home group gave me (and still gives me) the opportunity to meet new people and really feel a part of Narcotics Anonymous, as does my work at all service levels. In

addition, I have learned to work with others, discovered some of my abilities and talents (one being the ability to "disagree without being disagreeable"), improved my self-esteem, become aware that I did not need to be right or have my way all the time, and developed some very strong, loving relationships.

I suggest that recovering addicts get involved in service. Anyone can attend a group conscience/business or subcommittee meeting and anyone can receive the benefits and personal growth that come with giving away what was so freely given.

I have heard it said that service is gratitude in action. So please show your gratitude today.

*A grateful addict in service,
Mike B, Manitoba, Canada*

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, page 1

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

Where no meeting has gone before

One thing that is repeated in meetings and can be heard from any number of addicts is the phrase "addicts hate change." I can attest that, for the most part, this is true.

I am the co-secretary for a meeting in the Greater Hollywood Area (Los Angeles, California, USA) called Saturday Just for Today. The format is simple. The chosen leader reads that day's portion of *Just for Today* and then shares his or her experience, strength, and hope on that reading. This particular meeting was started nine years ago and still enjoys the same meeting location.

It so happened, during my tenure as co-secretary, that the people we rented from informed the group about a problem—a major crack had been discovered in the roof. The management would not take responsibility for any mishaps or accidents should the roof cave in during a Narcotics Anonymous meeting.

At the same time, the sink that was used to fill and clean the coffee pot for the meeting was backed up, and the water was turned off. In addition, our rent was increased from \$20 a meeting to \$25 with the condition that we sign a year's lease.

We held a business meeting and called upon the spiritual principle of group conscience to decide what the meeting should do. After a hesitant beginning to the discussion, we voted on whether to move or to weather the storm of insecurity, possible bodily harm, and increased financial burden. We decided that the co-secretaries and two volunteers would search the Hollywood area for other rooms to which we could move the meeting. The search was on. Little did I know that this search would cause such mixed emotions and separation anxiety.

I spent a week making appointments, traversing the boundaries and scoping out rooms, churches, meeting places, parks, etc., to have almost everyone ask the question: "What kind of meeting is it?"

When I explained that it was for Narcotics Anonymous, I received many a sour look and wrinkled brow. I got the response that we could have the meeting in a smaller room on an alternate night since the bigger room was for special functions that could occur at a moment's notice or had been on the calendar for a long, long time. Mostly, unfortunately, we ran into a lot of closed doors and "thank you, but no thank you." Well, I may have received a nose full of splinters, but I must admit they were of very good wood and from very good doors!

I found one church hospitable to the idea of having a twelve-step meeting in their education building, which was directly across the street from the church. They were especially interested in a meeting like ours that offered recovery to a mix of people. Their one uncertainty was that their congregation had never had any type of meeting at their church, and they wanted my co-secretary and me to meet with the church elders before a decision was made.



I brought this information back to the next business meeting. The news was met with both enthusiasm and trepidation. There was still some resistance from a minority of group members who wanted to maintain the status quo. I was not daunted. I proceeded to present the proposition, having our group representatives meet with church leaders at their Sunday lunch and bake sale.

Meeting with a group of people who had virtually no comprehension of what or who Narcotics Anonymous is can be an interesting experience. In keeping with the traditions, my fellow co-secretary and I did our best to paint an objective and true picture of what our fellowship was, what our group was like, how we answered to the call of responsibility, and how we were self-supporting.

Questions were asked about how we helped other people, and how we could be contacted if one of their children or a member of their congregation asked for help with a drug problem. All of this was discussed openly and honestly over Chinese chicken salad, Japanese seafood rice, and green tea. They told us that they would contact me about their decision after a meeting among themselves.

A week went by. Prior to the next meeting, I received the call from the church and was informed that our meeting was accepted, and we were welcome. I had no inkling that a bigger task would confront me.

I had assumed that when the group conscience voted to move the meeting, the fellowship would be supportive of the move. It just seemed logical. Our first meeting in the new location did bring in people who had not attended the Saturday Just for Today meeting before—but most of those people did not attend the following Saturday.

The regular attendees of the meeting seemed to not want to go to a new location with new surroundings, new traffic conditions, new this, new that. It was curious to me. I always thought that a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous was about the people and recovery, not about the building and location of the building. So, I came to realize that the old adage was true—addicts *do* hate change.

The meeting is changed, the location is changed, but the message remains

the same. If a person wants a meeting in Hollywood on a Saturday night where they can learn that they can live a life without the use of drugs, then the meeting that was started over nine years ago is still listed in the area directory and still offers good fellowship, strong recovery, and a solid NA message.

Michael G, California, USA

Our readers write

Dear *NA Way Magazine*,

I want to respond to an article I read in the July 2004 magazine entitled "My Dilemma." In the article, Carlos describes his dilemma about whether or not to put an eternity medallion in his friend's grave. My suggestion is this:

Carlos, perhaps in missing your friend and wanting for him what you have attained for yourself, you seek to put some closure to the relationship that ended so abruptly. My experience is that people who have passed from my life while I have been in recovery are only gone physically. What remains are the parts of them that are forever a part of me, like the things I learned from them and the moments when they were my hope.

Perhaps the solution to your dilemma is to carry your belief in your friend's desire to recover with you by keeping his eternity medallion in *your* pocket. Each time you reach for some change or your keys, there will be a physical reminder of his life, of his wishes—and, most importantly, of your unconditional love for him as you press on in your life. I hope this helps.

Thank you for your article.

*Forever circled,
Jim G, North Carolina, USA*

Picture this

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



Day by Day Group meets five days a week and is located in Woodside, New York, USA. The group celebrated its twenty-first anniversary in June and usually has about thirty to forty-five members in attendance.



Serenity Prayer and Steps One and Eleven

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

If you are anything like me, you have marveled at the powerful simplicity of the Serenity Prayer. In that prayer, I recognize that serenity is a worthwhile goal and reflects my discovery of acceptance, courage, and wisdom within myself.

We say the prayer together because we need one another to make it happen. I also recognize that it is God who bestows this gift upon me. In my case, it means I need to have the God of my understanding working in my life. Also implicit in this prayer is the fervent hope that I am truly capable of claiming and holding onto these gifts once they are presented.

So why do we say this prayer at the beginning and end of every NA meeting? (At least this has been my experience.) I do not even want to guess at the sheer number of responses that could be offered as reasons for us saying this prayer.

I believe all the varied answers to my question would end up being about the same. The number of responses would be limited only by the diversity of the fellowship. Every one of us might have a different response, and we would all be correct.

The Serenity Prayer is so much a part of the NA program that one would have a difficult time separating it from the program. Yet, the Serenity Prayer is not listed in the index of either the Basic Text or *It Works: How and Why**. I do not find it unusual that this prayer is not listed in either index. My belief is that this prayer is so intertwined with the NA program that it does not need to be listed in any index.

So where exactly is the Serenity Prayer in the NA program? Our path to the fruits of the Serenity Prayer—acceptance, courage, wisdom—leads from Step One to the Eleventh Step. And I want to point out that the process demands that the steps following the first one are necessary in order to be able to achieve Step Eleven.

"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."

By admitting my powerlessness in the First Step, I accept the "things I cannot change" mentioned in the Serenity Prayer. The power and depth of the NA program begin with working Step One. Only in coming to grips with the extent of powerlessness in my life can I hope to begin to find the acceptance that goes with coming out of denial and stepping into the light of surrender.

The first part of the Serenity Prayer does indeed have me humbly asking that this miraculous gift be bestowed upon me. Therefore, if my prayer is truly sincere, I need to work the First Step.

Yes, I do want the power of serenity to be an active force in my life. When I say this simple prayer, I seek the transformation from what I am to what I can become. With

***Editor's Note:** Although NA uses the Serenity Prayer, it was written and revised by others a long time ago, and as such, it is not quoted or does not appear in either book. The name, however, appears as a reference in one of the personal stories on page 147 in the Basic Text.

my first step forward, I have dealt with the initial problem of seeking serenity: acceptance and awareness of the things all around me, which I cannot change.

My program now tells me that I need to work a series of additional steps and undergo the corresponding changes before I can hope to acquire the gifts found in the latter part of the Serenity Prayer. If I am thorough in this process, I will finally arrive prepared at the Eleventh Step.

"We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Upon arrival at this step, I am not the same person who initially embarked upon this Serenity Prayer realization quest. I have gone through many changes by this time, and I now have a "God of my understanding" by my side and the means to find the courage to which the Serenity Prayer alludes.

The Eleventh Step also tells me how to acquire the "wisdom" mentioned in the Serenity Prayer. When I work the Eleventh Step, I bring to fruition everything I have learned through the course of this life-changing process. I realize, once again, that I need to reach deep within myself to become more connected with the "God of my understanding." I do this in order to gain knowledge of this elusive serenity and the power this gift holds for my life.

The simplicity of the program once again reveals itself. The Serenity Prayer speaks of "courage" and "wisdom," and the Eleventh Step simply tells me that, through understanding His will for me, the "God of my understanding" empowers me. This, in turn, helps me realize my quest for the awesome gift of serenity.

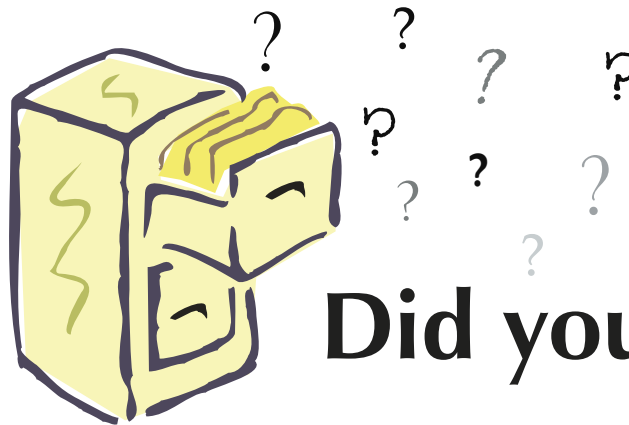
As imperfect as I am, the fulfillment of my quest—to realize the gifts found in the Serenity Prayer—is now embodied in the "spiritual awakening" of the Twelfth Step. The true extent of my success will be reflected in the serenity I have found.

When I first began this quest, I knew it would be worthwhile. Although I was suffering in the beginning, I could still see

and feel the power of serenity working in others' lives. I saw it in many varying degrees. My hope was that it could one day be mine.

I did not find the Serenity Prayer in the index of the various NA books because I believe the Serenity Prayer is the prayer for the hope that Narcotics Anonymous offers my life.

Philip W, Indiana, USA



Did you know?

The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has come a long way since our early beginnings in 1953. We have grown from that first meeting held in Sun Valley, California, USA, to over 31,700 weekly meetings held in over 113 countries worldwide. Our history is rich with diversity, and we want to share the facts of that history with you, the little-known, as well as the well-known. If you have an interesting and historic fact, send it to us at naway@na.org or NAWS, Attn: *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

- Did you know...** That you can access bulletins on our web page at <http://www.na.org/bulletins/bulletins.htm>
- Did you know...** That NAWS Fellowship Services is sending a group starter kit to Macedonia to begin their first NA group there?
- Did you know...** That Greece was the newest seated region to attend the 2004 WSC? It was the region's first time at a WSC.
- Did you know...** That Greece has eighty meetings, twenty-three groups, and committees such as H&I and PI?
- Did you know...** That NA-Lithuania is ten years old?
- Did you know...** That NAWS Fellowship Services is sending out an H&I group starter kit to Belize Central Prison? Groups "behind the walls" are happening in Central America!
- Did you know...** That the group readings are available online? Go to <http://www.na.org/ips/> for a listing of the available languages.

2004-2006 Fellowship Issue Discussions

In an effort to provide you with more effective discussion tools, we are trying something different with issue discussion topics this year. Normally, we send out a *News Flash* with questions about the specific topics chosen for that conference cycle and last year included this information in an online discussion board. This time we also have provided an illustration of some of the more successful discussion sessions. How we have a discussion can be just as important (if not more important) than the discussion itself. We hope that this format will be a helpful tool for discussions at your groups, areas, regions, committees, and wherever else you find the opportunity. Tell us what you think! Let us know if this works for you!

PURPOSE & SCOPE OF ISSUE DISCUSSION TOPICS

To begin incorporating new methods of problem-solving by utilizing discussion as a way to get to the underlying issues affecting local members.

To embrace the idea that not everything of value happens fast or produces a tangible result. Sometimes just discussing things will lead to a solution in the future.

To raise our awareness by asking questions about our personal and/or collective behavior and experiences.

To provide real life experiences and examples that world services may share with other members (i.e., when members call the WSO or in NAWS publications).

Tips for how to set up a discussion session:

It's a good idea to set aside sixty to ninety minutes for each topic. It also works best to ask one person to facilitate the group who can give everyone a fair opportunity to speak (keeping time if necessary) and prevent domination by individuals. Make sure to explain **Ground Rules**** and **Brainstorming Guidelines**** to all participants. Use them as support tools—take what works for your group and leave the rest. Remember, the goal is to share ideas and experience, not engage in debate or argument.

The discussion profiles are meant to support your discussions. You may decide that a more simple type of discussion would better suit your community. No matter how you decide to discuss these topics, we encourage you to try using small groups to discuss different points. Let us know what works for your community.

If desired, use some NA resource material, e.g., *It Works: How and Why*, *Twelve Concepts for NA Service*, *The Group Booklet*, IP #2 *The Group*, IP #6 *Recovery and Relapse*, IP #9 *Living the Program*, and/or any other informational bulletins and/or reports your area and region have available. You can notify the WSO and purchase (or request) some of these materials if you do not have access to them locally.

**For sample versions of ground rules and brainstorming guidelines, please go to www.na.org/discussion_boards.htm or contact the WSO.

For the facilitator:

Whoever is conducting the workshop should read all of the material prior to the discussion. The facilitator should also work to keep the discussions going in both the large and small group sessions. When in small groups, it is helpful to remind participants when they have five minutes left to discuss their topic. *Please note that we have outlined one way to have these discussions. There are many ways to have productive discussions and the most important thing is that we are having these discussions at all.*

Helpful discussion tools:

- Copies of Ground Rules and Brainstorming Guidelines for participants
- A large flip chart or post-it pad of paper, white board, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Clock or stopwatch to keep time
- Set up the room with tables or groups of chairs for six to ten members

Some ideas about where you might have a fellowship issue discussion session:

An ASC or RSC could plan a special workshop, using one or both discussion topics (note there are **two News Flashes** that address one specific issue each), scheduled during, before, or after the regular committee meeting or plan a separate Topic Discussion Learning Day or workshop. If it is not a separate event, we strongly suggest that you only discuss one topic at each meeting. You may generate enough ideas on a topic like infrastructure that you may wish to schedule another time to talk about possible solutions. The issue discussion question(s) could be used as topics at your local convention workshops.

While issue discussion topics are, as their name implies, designed to be discussed, it is up to you how to present the results of that discussion. You may choose to use the discussion as a way to generate ideas and get people thinking but determine that each individual who wishes can write something to send to the board. Or you may decide to have someone take notes of the discussion and write something as a group to send in. Please send your ideas to:

**World Board
c/o NAWS, Inc.
19737 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth, CA 91311, USA.**

You may also fax or email the information to 818.700.0700 or WorldBoard@na.org
Your region or regional delegate will also be interested in the discussion results so please make sure that you send your delegate a copy.

**GO TO WWW.NA.ORG/DISCUSSION_BOARDS.HTM
FOR ALL THE LATEST INFO ON ISSUE DISCUSSION TOPICS
AND PARTICIPATE IN
ONLINE ISSUE DISCUSSION BULLETIN BOARDS!**

INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue Discussion Topic Session Profile

Infrastructure

in.fra.struc.ture \ 'in-fr?- , strɔk-ch?r, -frä-\ *n* (1927) 1: the underlying foundation or basic framework (as of a system or organization)

“In preparation for this meeting, I thought I would call what I thought would be a central [NA] office, which turned out to be Dave somebody’s answering machine, and two days later got a call back.”

Psychiatrist/Addiction Medicine Specialist

What is infrastructure? Basically, it is our service structure and the system in place to help us carry the message of recovery. It is the group, area, region, and committees and how they relate to each other. It is the framework that supports what we do in NA.

In our efforts to coordinate discussion within the fellowship, we thought this might be a good opportunity to share a unique global perspective with you. It has become especially clear that our fellowship’s infrastructure is in need of some attention. We have common problems—whether in rural communities or large metropolitan areas, whether our local fellowship is made up of newly clean members or members with longtime recovery. We hear the same things from members throughout the world as we heard from delegates in their regional reports to the World Service Conference:

- ❖ areas that don’t meet regularly due to lack of trusted servants,
- ❖ not enough willing members to serve on committees or get involved in service,
- ❖ phonelines going down or going unanswered,
- ❖ issues with mismanaged funds,
- ❖ problems with unity,
- ❖ losing meeting venues, and
- ❖ unproductive service meetings.

We all know that if there were easy answers to our infrastructure weaknesses we probably would have found them already. Discussing local infrastructure with other members may not produce immediate solutions, but as we know—*not everything of value is quick or tangible*. Sometimes the creativity we need to actually solve our problems can come from having a real discussion outside of the normal business of our group, area, regional, or committee meetings. Just think about the ways our personal recovery has evolved through honest sharing and listening to what others have to say. Solutions come over time and instant gratification does not always serve us in recovery or in service. This much is clear: *in order for us to make NA’s message truly available to any addict seeking it, our fellowship’s infrastructure will have to become steady and reliable*. It will take all of our many ideas, and our various perspectives to *begin* the hard work of strengthening our infrastructure.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

You may want to begin the session with a community-building exercise. It is our experience that this type of icebreaker is a crucial component to successful discussions. You could ask each participant to share with the group why they came, what fears they have about being there, what service positions they have held, or simply where they are in their personal recovery?

- As one group, begin the session by explaining what this session is, what you hope to accomplish, and provide a brief bit of background. Then ask participants the following question: **What are some of the specific issues affecting our local community's ability to carry the NA message?**
- Once you have a list of some specific problems (e.g., no area H&I chairperson, theft of funds, fights at meeting facilities, etc.), **then draw out the underlying issue of the specific problem—no H&I chairperson could become *apathy*, problems with funds could become *dishonesty* or *lack of accountability*, fights at meeting facilities could become *irresponsibility* or *selfishness*.** The goal here is to find a word or phrase to describe the issue that creates the problem—not just that one particular problem. Be sure to ask the participants if the core issues you have chosen adequately sum up their concerns.
- As one group, acknowledge how the issues you've listed are relevant to various aspects of your community's ability to carry the NA message to addicts who still suffer.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Now break into small groups and distribute a piece of paper with the core issue identified and written on the top (make sure each group has a different topic—if there are more groups than topics, repeat the topic, if there are more topics than groups, give each group more than one topic to discuss).

Each group will be given fifteen minutes to discuss the topic they've been given. Remind participants that this is a brainstorming exercise—it's not the time to edit what might be bad ideas or explain why something won't work! Diversity and creativity should be encouraged, not stifled. Some questions to get the small group discussion started could be:

- **What are some creative solutions that could address _____ [core issue] in our local infrastructure?**
- **What's getting in the way of those solutions?**
- **What ideas have been ruled out because "*that's not the way we've always done things*" or *it seems unrealistic*?**

After each group has had time to discuss one or two topics, have participants gather into one group to share the ideas they discovered in their small group discussions.

SMALL GROUP REPORTS/WRAP-UP

Ask each table to report on a topic. You can keep the reporting session as structured or loosely structured as the group prefers or as time permits. You might close the reporting session by asking if there is anything missing or any "burning desires."

- **How can you relate what you just discussed to strengthening our infrastructure?**
- **What can you personally do as a result of this discussion?**
- **What follow-up discussions do we need to have?**

OUR PUBLIC IMAGE

Issue Discussion Topic Session Profile

Our Public Image

“When you’re working with adolescents, it’s even more difficult, because I may say, I may be thinking emotionally I think this adolescent will really connect with this particular meeting, but this particular meeting is also pretty well-known for its predatory males, and so I won’t send a young woman to that meeting.”

Treatment Program Counselor

NA’s public image is often directly dependent on the strength and stability of our fellowship’s infrastructure. When we conducted the Public Relations Roundtable meetings with professionals who interface with our fellowship, their concerns sounded familiar:

- ❖ confusion about which NA phone number to call in a large city (and no one available to answer the phone once a number has been found),
- ❖ a lack of confidence in the safety and recovery available at NA meetings (that is, predatory behavior at meetings is a direct reflection upon NA’s image to the public),
- ❖ NA being overwhelmed by potential members sent from drug courts,
- ❖ lack of identification in some meetings by target populations—youth, prescription drug addicts, professionals, etc.,
- ❖ not seeing NA as stable or reliable, and
- ❖ a lack of awareness of the existence of various NA literature or periodicals.

These are only examples of how professionals see us and don’t even include the difficulty most of us face with NA’s public image when trying to find a meeting facility or start a new H&I panel. Whether it’s a professional considering sending an addict to one of our meetings or a high school administrator taking a chance with a presentation to their student body, a positive public image is crucial to our primary purpose. We feel that it is time to begin squarely facing some of the messages we’ve been putting out to the public. Our relationship with the public is something we cannot avoid. We are not a secret society—we are an effective and viable solution to drug addiction and it’s time we consistently behave that way. The first step is being honest about the challenges we face in our own local communities, which is the place where practical solutions can arise. As our literature says, “if a solution isn’t practical then it isn’t spiritual.”

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

You may want to begin the session with a community-building exercise. It is our experience that this type of icebreaker is a crucial component to successful discussions. You could ask each participant to share with the group why they came, what fears they have about being there, what service positions they have held, or simply where they are in their personal recovery?

- As one group, begin the session by explaining what this session is, what you hope to accomplish, and provide a brief bit of background. Then ask participants the following questions: **What is NA's image in our local community? Why is it important to improve? What are your personal experiences with NA's public's image? (positive and negative)**
- Next, ask participants to discuss **what some of NA's public image problems are in the local community**. List the various responses and then draw out the underlying concern (behavior at meetings, no volunteers to answer the phone, meetings closing, lack of trusted servants, outdated meeting schedules, no plan on how to work with professionals, treatment, or institutions, etc.). Be sure to ask participants if the key areas you have chosen adequately sum up their concerns.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Now break into small groups and distribute a piece of paper with the underlying concern discussed in the large group and written on the top (make sure each table has a different topic—if there are more tables than topics, repeat the topic, if there are more topics than groups, give each group more than one topic to discuss).

Each group will be given fifteen minutes to discuss the topic they've been given. Remind participants that this is a brainstorming exercise—it's not the time to edit what might be bad ideas or explain why something won't work! Diversity and creativity should be encouraged, not stifled. Some questions to get the small group discussion started could be:

- **How might our group, area, region, or committee improve this particular challenge?**
- **What tools or resources do we need to make those changes?**

After each group has had time to discuss one or two topics, have participants gather into one group to share the ideas they discovered in their small group discussions.

SMALL GROUP REPORTS/WRAP-UP

Ask each table to report on a topic. You can keep the reporting session as structured or loosely structured as the group prefers or as time permits. You might close the reporting session by asking if there is anything missing or any "burning desires."

- **What can I personally do as a result of this discussion?**
- **What can our local service community do?**

BRAINSTORMING GUIDELINES

One good idea leads to another... good idea.

“No” and “can’t” do not exist.

Creativity has no limits.

Be part of—participate.

Think fast, analyze later...
Judging, evaluating, and criticizing are *not*
brainstorming.

And above all...

HAVE FUN!

SUGGESTED GROUND RULES

Stay open-minded.

Listen and share the time.

Remember to play well with others.

Don't forget why we're here!

Stay focused on the subject at hand.

Lively conversation is productive.

To agree and to disagree...that is the process!

One more time—Avoid repetition.

It's important to start and stop on time.

and

NO KICKING, SCRATCHING, OR BITING ALLOWED...!



CALENDAR

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

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

Argentina

Buenos Aires: 19-21 Nov; CRANA Convención Regional Argentina XII; Un Camino de Serenidad, Valor y Sabiduría; Av. Chiossa, San Bernardo; event info: +05401143425464, +05401143426659; www.na.org.ar

Australia

New South Wales: 5-7 Nov; Sydney NA Convention; Sydney University, Sydney; event info: +61.412.644.068; event registration: +61.403.393.353; www.na.org.au/news.htm

2) 25-27 Feb 2005; Spiritual Retreat; Collaroy Centre, Sydney; event info: timb8@hotmail.com

Brazil

Rios Grande do Sul: 14-17 Oct; XIV CRNA Décima Quarta Convenção Regional; Centro de Convenções do Hotel Serrano, Gramado; hotel rsvns: +55.51.33305367; event info: +55.51.6715384; www.na.org.br/crna/xiv_crna/index.htm

Canada

British Columbia: 29-31 Oct; Pacific Northwest Convention XXVII; Renaissance Hotel Harbourside, Vancouver; hotel rsvns: 800.905.8582; speaker tape info: 604.707.0827; event info: 604.879.1677, 604.785.1352; write: PNWCNA XXVII, Box 549, 3495 Cambie St, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6Z 4R3

New Brunswick: 22-24 Oct; Canadian Convention XII; Coastal Inn, Saint John; hotel rsvns: 800.943.0033; event info: 506.847.4678; speaker tape info: 506.847.4678; write: North East Atlantic CCNA XII, 140 J Hampton Rd, Ste 212, Rothesay, NB Canada E2E 5Y3

Ontario: 4-6 Mar 2005; Toronto Area Convention IV; Wyndham Bristol Place Hotel, Toronto; hotel rsvns: 416.675.9444 or 800.996.3426; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Jan 2005; write: Toronto Area, Box #5700, Depot A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1N8; www.torontona.org/events.htm

Quebec: 8-10 Oct; Quebec Regional Convention XVII; Hotel des Seigneurs, Saint-Hyacinthe; hotel rsvns: 866.734.4638; event info: 514.220.7207, 450.464.0283

2) 4-6 Mar 2005; Youth Convention IX; Days Inn Hotel, Montreal; speaker tape info: 514.766.4794; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Dec

Colombia

Manizales: 16-18 Oct; Colombian Regional Convención XIII; La Recuperación Está en Nuestras Manos; Hotel Carretero Sede, Manizales; hotel rsvns: +011.6.8802400; event info: +310.8302186, +310.2311666; email: na_manizales@yahoo.com

Dominican Republic

Santo Domingo: 19-21 Nov; III CONARD Convencion; Creciendo en Unidad; Hotel Coral Hamaca, Bocachica; event info: +809.44508643; email: fer_na_do@hotmail.com

Mexico

Baja California: 8-10 Oct; Convención Baja California XII; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; hotel rsvns: Mex: +01.800.0266.007, USA: 866.472.6385; speaker tape info: 858.277.6438; event info: 818.765.5593; event registration: 925.753.5074; write: Area Baja Costa, PMB-80, Box 439056, San Diego, CA 92143-9056

New Zealand

Wellington: 22-24 Oct; Living the Programme; Aotearoa-NZ Regional Convention IX; The Boatshed, Wellington; event registration: +64.49347280; event info: +64.274886255; write: Aotearoa-New Zealand Region, Box 9051, Wellington, New Zealand; www.nzna.org/events.html

Poland

Poznan: 16-17 Oct; Regional Convention; Hotel Exploris, Poznan-Kiezk; hotel rsvns: +0048618428195; event info: +0048601876866, +0048501289643, +0048507142757; write: Poland Region, Kazimierza Jagiellonczyka 8/8 St 87-100 Torun

Switzerland

Fribourg: 8-10 Oct; A New Way of Life; 15 Years of NA in Switzerland; Centre de Charmey, Charmey; event info: +0041.796099124, +0041.218026169, +0041.792920990; write: Suisse Romande, Case Postale 181, 1000 Lausanne 9; www.narcotiques-anonymes.ch

Turkey

Mugla: 22-24 Oct; NATK II; A New Way of Life; Otel Aries, Fethiye; hotel rsvns: +90.252.6135198; event info: +90.555.3573202; write: Turkey ASC, MBE 123, Mecidiyekoy 34394, Istanbul, Turkey; www.nalinks.org/turkiyena

United Kingdom

Gloucester: 23-24 Oct; We Do Recover; Four Counties Area Convention; St Benedict's Catholic School, Cheltenham; email: info@oneistoomany.com; www.oneistoomany.com

United States

Alabama: 12-14 Nov; Greater Birmingham Area Convention; Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 205.337.2591, 205.853.7246, 205.586.3092; speaker tape info: 205.854.9373; write: Greater Birmingham Area, Box 321324, Birmingham, AL 35212

2) 14-16 Jan 2005; Free at Last VIII; Guest House Inn Hotel & Suites, Montgomery; hotel rsvns: 334.264.2231; event registration: 334.613.3985; speaker tape info: 334.868.0426; event info: 334.538.0774; write: Central Alabama Area, Box 230572, Montgomery, AL 36123-0572

3) 4-6 Feb; Out of the Darkness into the Light IX; Holiday Inn, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 256.355.3150; event info: 256.383.3512, 256.381.8041; write: North Alabama Area, Box 2404, Florence, AL 35630

4) 18-20 Mar; Greater Mobile Area Convention; Mobile Marriott, Mobile; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 251.391.1898, 251.648.1689, 251.438.2438; speaker tape info: 251.895.4278; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 Nov; write: GMACNA VIII, Box 6561, Mobile, AL 36606

Alaska: 8-10 Oct; Alaska Regional Convention XX; One Promise, Many Gifts; Alyeska Prince Hotel, Girdwood; hotel rsvns: 800.880.3880; event info: 907.277.8796, 907.561.6919, 907.240.7508; write: Alaska Region, Box 232635, Anchorage, AK 99523; www.akna.org

California: 22-24 Oct; Western Service Learning Days XVIII; San Francisco Airport Marriott, Burlingame; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 415.452.9592, 707.374.5039; write: WSLD XVIII, 3931 Alemany Blvd, Ste 2002, PMB 206, San Francisco, CA 94132-3206; www.wsls.org

2) 26-28 Nov; Southern California Regional Convention; Unity in Recovery; Pasadena Convention Center, Pasadena; hotel rsvns: 800.457.7940; event registration: 818.248.4852; write: Southern California Region, 1925 S Myrtle Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016

3) 14-16 Jan 2005; Monterey Bay Convention; Monterey Convention Center/Doubletree Hotel, Monterey; hotel rsvns: 831.649.4511; event info: 831.384.8670; event registration: 831.601.8751; write: Monterey & Santa Cruz ASC, Box 932, Marina, CA 93933

4) 18-20 Feb; Central Coast Regional Convention XIII; Ventura Beach Marriott, Ventura; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 805.934.7998; write: Central Coast Region, Box 2170, Santa Maria, CA 93455; www.ccrna.org

Colorado: 8-10 Oct; CRCNA XVIII; Vail Marriott Mountain Resort & Spa, Vail; hotel rsvns: 800.648.0720; 720.938.1330; write: Box 1437, Denver, CO 80201; www.nacolorado.org/crcna

Connecticut: 7-9 Jan 2005; Connecticut Regional Convention XX; Stamford Marriott Hotel, Stamford; hotel rsvns: 203.357.9555; event info: 203.865-6232

Florida: 15-17 Oct; Heartland Area Convention; Until in Desperation; Westgate Resorts, Haines City; hotel rsvns: 888.792.1243; event info: 863.968.0106, 863.968.0106, 863.646.6373; write: Heartland ASC, Box 7428, Lakeland, FL 33807-7428

2) 29-31 Oct; UCACNA VIII; Life Is Good; Adam's Mark, Daytona Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.411.8776; event info: 352.371.7918; write: Uncoast Area, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32603; <http://gnv.fdt.net/~ncoastna/>

3) 12-14 Nov; Rainbow Weekend VIII; Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel, Fort Lauderdale; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event registration: 954.732.7739; speaker tape info: 305.651.5024; event info: 754.422.5599; write: New Path, Rainbow Group, c/o Lambda Clubhouse, 1231 East Las Olas Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301; www.rainbowweekend.org

4) 17-20 Mar 2005; North Dade Area Convention; hotel rsvns: 305.446.9000; speaker tape info: 786.295.9711; event registration: 786.229.3367; event info: 954.443.8225; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Nov 2004

Georgia: 7-9 Jan 2005; Peace in Recovery XVII; Sheraton Augusta Hotel, Augusta; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event registration: 706.364.6173; speaker tape info: 706.364.2934; event info: 706.364.3464; write: Central Savannah River Area, Box 2484, Augusta, GA 30904

2) 3-6 Feb; GRCNA XXIV; A New Day, A New Experience; Wyndham Columbus Hotel, Columbus; hotel rsvns: 706.324.1800; event info: 706.325.5230, 404.452.1731, 229.244.0274; www.grcna.org

3) 4-6 Mar; Spirituality Is the Key VI, The Therapeutic Value of One Helping Another; Renaissance Pineisle Resort & Golf Club, Lake Lanier Islands; hotel rsvns: 800.468.3571; event info: 706.543.5393, 770.297.8362; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Dec; write: North East Area Georgia, Box 907911, Gainesville, GA 30503

Hawaii: 28-31 Oct; Hawaii Regional Convention XIII; Radisson Kauai Beach Resort, Lihue; hotel rsvns: 808.245.1955; event info: 808.332.0031; event registration: 808.821.9366; speaker tape info: 808.823.0276; write: Box 1240, Kilauea, HI 96754; www.na-hawaii.org/Main_Pages/HI_Reg_Convention.htm

2) 1-4 Sep 2005; WCNA-31; 31st World Convention of NA; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311

Illinois: 12-14 Nov; Greater Illinois Regional Convention VIII; Just Stay; Holiday Inn Select Conference Hotel, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 217.422.8800; speaker tape info: 217.422.2592; write: Greater Illinois Regional Convention, Box 3214, Decatur, IL 62524-3214; www.gircsna.org/convention.html

Kentucky: 15-17 Oct; Bluegrass-Appalachian Regional Convention; Ramada Inn Conference Center, Paintsville; hotel rsvns: 800.951.4242; write: BARCNA, Box 910512, Lexington, KY 40591-0512; www.barcna.org

2) 25-27 Mar 2005; Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Louisville; speaker tape info: 502.290.1164, 502.439.2923; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Nov; write: KRCNA, 4003 Sunny Crossing Dr, Louisville, KY 40299

Massachusetts: 7-9 Jan 2005; BACNA X; Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers, Boston; hotel rsvns: 800.225.2008; event registration: 617.778.3949; event info: 508.653.2342; write: Boston Area, 398 Columbus Ave, Ste 278, Boston, MA 02116; www.newenglandna.org

2) 4-6 Mar; NERC XI; In the Solution; Sea Crest Resort & Convention Center, North Falmouth; hotel rsvns: 800.225.3110; write: New England Region, Box 2033, Center Abington, MA 02351; www.newenglandna.org

Michigan: 25-28 Nov; Through Change Comes Freedom VI; Marriott Hotel, Troy; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 313.205.7987, 313.371.2915; speaker tape info: 734.728.2627; write: Metro-Detroit Region, 403 Livernois, Ferndale, MI 48220; www.michigan-na.org

2) 28-30 Jan 2005; Southwestern Michigan Area Convention; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo; hotel rsvns: 269.343.3333; event registration: 269.353.7773; speaker tape info: 269.808.2176; write: Southwestern Michigan Area, Box 50746, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Mississippi: 15-17 Oct; Mississippi Regional Convention XXII; Executive Inn, Tupelo; hotel rsvns: 662.841.2222; event info: 662.422.2368, 662.401.6609, 662.512.8940; write: Mississippi Region, Box 892, Iuka, MS 38852; www.mrscna.com/2004convention.html

Missouri: 8-10 Oct; SLACNA I; Staying Connected by Carrying the Message; Millennium Hotel, St. Louis; hotel rsvns: 800.325.7353; event info: 314.771.9902, 314.531.5435, 314.832.1699; write: St. Louis Area, Box 3540, St. Louis, MO 63143; www.slacna.com

New Jersey: 5-7 Nov; In the Spirit of Unity X; Sheraton Hotel, Newark; hotel rsvns: 973.690.5500; event info: 732.499.7529, 908.245.1567, 732.969.8699; write: Northeast NJ Area Convention, Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

2) 19-21 Feb 2005; Ain't No Stopping Us Now; Newark Airport Sheraton Hotel, Newark; event info: 973.497.1598

New Mexico: 18-20 Mar 2005; Rio Grande Regional Convention XVI; Opening the Door to Recovery; Santa Fe Courtyard by Marriott, Santa Fe; hotel rsvns: 800.777.3347; event info: 505.438.9206; speaker tape info: 505.670.9961; event registration: 505.310.1760; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Nov; write: Rio Grande Region, Box 4848, Santa Fe, NM 87505; www.riograndena.org

New York: 29-31 Oct; Western New York Regional Convention IX; McKinley's Inn, Blasdell; hotel rsvns: 716.648.5700; event info: 716.282.4920, 716.834.1871, 716.873.4218; write: Western New York Region, Box 218, Buffalo, NY 14220-1919

2) 28-30 Jan 2005; Nassau Area Convention II; Hilton Huntington, Melville; hotel rsvns: 800.HILTONS; speaker tape info: 516.369.0062; event registration: 516.322.1061; write: Nassau Area Convention, Box 531, Hicksville, NY 11801-0531

3) 18-21 Feb; Circle of Sisters VIII, The Wind Beneath Our Wings; Marriott Hotel, Brooklyn; hotel rsvns: 888.436.3759; event registration: 917.990.4477; speaker tape info: 718.882.8217; event info: 718.251.7042

Ohio: 26-28 Nov; Greater Cincinnati Area; Thanks for the Miracle XIII; The Joy Is in the Journey; Kings Island Resort and Conference Center, Cincinnati; hotel rsvns: 800.727.3050; event info: 513.478.2099; event registration: 513.521.1823; write: GCANA, Box 19439, Cincinnati, OH 45219

Oklahoma: 12-14 Nov; Oklahoma Fall Retreat XX; Camp Waluhili, Choteau; event info: 918-742-8701, 918-283-2679; www.okna.org

Pennsylvania: 19-21 Nov; Start to Live XXII; Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion; hotel rsvns: 800.452.2223; event info: 412.996.4422; write: Tri State Regional Service Office, Box 337, Homestead, PA 15120

2) 19-21 Nov; BHABCNA XV; A Celebration of Life; Ramada Inn, Wilkes-Barre; hotel rsvns: 570.824.7100; write: BeeHive Area, Box 291, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18704

South Carolina: 18-21 Nov; Serenity Festival XXII; The Sea Mist Resort, Myrtle Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.SEA.MIST; event registration: 910.772.6402; speaker tape info: 910.473.0207; event info: 910.381.0846; www.serenityfestival.org

Tennessee: 24-28 Nov; Volunteer Regional Convention XXII; Marriott Hotel, Chattanooga; hotel rsvns: 800.841.1674; event info: 423.517.0857, 423.266.1407; event registration: 423.400.5106; write: Volunteer Region, Box 11552, Chattanooga, TN 37401

Texas: 29-31 Oct; 25th Year Silver Celebration; Anyone May Join Us; Sterling Hotel, Dallas; hotel rsvns: 214.634.8550; write: Dallas ASC, 7038 Greenville Ave, Dallas, TX 75231

2) 4-6 Feb 2005; Tejas Bluebonnet Regional Convention VI; Omni Marina Towers Hotel, Corpus Christi; hotel rsvns: 800.TheOmni; event info: 361.882.3219; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Nov; write: Tejas Bluebonnet Region, Box 10539, Corpus Christi, TX 78460; www.tejas-na.org

3) 24-27 Mar; Lone Star Regional Convention XX; Sheraton Grand Hotel, Irving; hotel rsvns: 800.345.5251; event info: 800.747.8972; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 Nov; write: Lone Star Region, 1510 Randolph, Ste 205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Vermont: 12-14 Nov; Champlain Valley Area Convention; The Ties That Bind Us Together Will Set Us Free; Wyndham Hotel (formerly the Radisson), Burlington; hotel rsvns: 802.658.6500, 877.999.3223; event info: 518.566.0595; event registration: 802.864.2623; speaker tape info: 518.563.7063; write: Champlain Valley Area, Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406-4714; www.together.net/~cvana/cvacna.htm

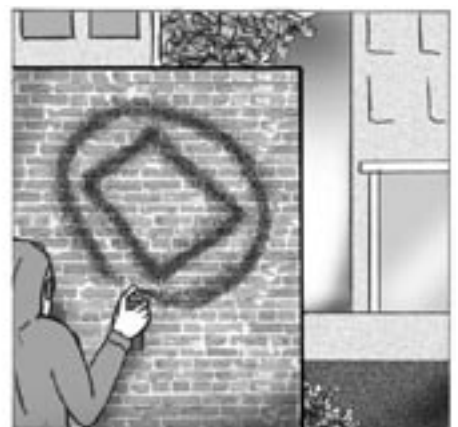
Virginia: 7-9 Jan 2005; Virginia Area Convention XXIII; Hampton Holiday Inn & Conference Center, Hampton; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event registration: 757.928.0509; speaker tape info: 804.413.2035; event info: 757.246.3044

2) 18-20 Mar; TACNA V; Let the Healing Begin; Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel, Portsmouth; hotel rsvns: 888.839.1775; event info: 757.735.8800, 757.487.0597; speaker tape info: 757.406.7054

West Virginia: 22-24 Oct; True Colors XVIII; Surrender Is the Key; Cedar Lakes, Cedar Lakes, Ripley; hotel rsvns: 304.372.7860; event info: 304.325.9803; write: Mountaineer Region, Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502; www.mrscna.org

Wisconsin: 29-31 Oct; WSNAC XXI; Recovery Rocks; The Park Plaza Hotel, Oshkosh; hotel rsvns: 800.365.4485

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