

## **Special Report (1984)**

### **TO: The World Service Conference on Trustee correspondence**

Over the past year we have had several requests from individuals desiring access to the World Service Board of Trustees files. It was advanced that the Fellowship needed the information provided by those files; the N.A. Fellowship was growing at a rapid rate and the trustee files would yield much needed answers to tradition questions that continually were surfacing. The Board of Trustees discussed at length this issue and came to the conclusion that individuals writing the Trustees sometimes brought very sensitive issues to them and that the Trustee's needed to preserve the anonymity of those writing them. On the other hand the trustees recognized the Fellowship's need for the information contained in our files. As a result we went through the files and looked at all of the questions asked over the past two years. We put those questions most often asked of us and our answers together in the following report.

We would like to bring the two questions on the last page of this report to the attention of the conference.

The question regarding use of the name Narcotics Anonymous and the question regarding the listing of Nar-Anon meetings with a disclaimer in our N.A. directories has been brought to our attention often.

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**Q.** We are having a controversy in our group regarding the patients in a methadone program. A large number of these addicts are beginning to attend our meeting and some of the members of our group believe these addicts cannot attend regular NA meetings, others of us believe these individuals should be welcome in our meetings. Are there some guidelines concerning this situation?

**A.** Our Third Tradition states that "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using" and outpatients in a methadone program should be encouraged to attend N.A. meetings. Our Third Tradition does not state that certain types of addicts in certain programs are barred from membership in NA. Further our Fifth Tradition states that "each group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." Outpatients in a methadone program certainly fall into this category.

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**Q.** In our meeting format it states that newcomers are welcome and that it is alright to attend the first meeting using but “thereafter come clean. This is for the protection of the group.” Is this statement a violation of our Traditions?

**A.** It is our belief that this statement does in fact violate Tradition Three, the assumption being that it is alright for an individual to come “under the influence” to one meeting the first time he or she attends, but thereafter come clean.

Our literature and our Third Tradition states “the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using”. Our Fifth Tradition states “Each group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.” To use a format which prohibits the still using addict from meetings is contrary to our traditions.

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**Q.** A member of our Fellowship brought an infant to one of our meetings, and as a result our group found itself involved in a controversy. Some members claimed this was a violation of the Traditions because there was no way the baby could have a desire to stop using. Our question relates to whether the presence of a baby or children in meetings constitutes a violation of the Traditions.

**A.** The issue of babies or small children in meetings is not a Tradition question but rather a matter for the group conscience. In discussing this matter the concern is not the baby or whether the baby has an honest desire to stay clean, but rather the mother’s or father’s welfare and recovery. The real issue seems to be whether an addict with a baby or a small child who is unable to obtain a sitter for the child can attend the meeting.

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**Q.** We use the Day by Day book published by Hazelden in two of our meetings here. Our group knows that this is not N.A.-approved literature, but our group conscience feels it is not in violation of any of our Traditions.

**A.** Each month the World Service Board of Trustees receives at least two or more letters regarding the use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature. This month there are three such letters: One was regarding the use of A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book, one regarding the reading of the Bible in an N.A. meeting, and yours. All three letters state that their group conscience approves of the use of these materials, and

that they have the right to use any literature of their choice by virtue of the group conscience.

Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction. It is not a program of recovery as set up by A.A., the Bible, or Hazelden. When we dilute our message of recovery with literature other than N.A.-approved literature, we create confusion in the minds of the newcomer. They are often confused as to whether the N.A. Program is really A.A., a religious Bible study, or a part of Hazelden. The World Service Board of Trustees believes that the use of literature other than N.A. approved literature by a group does affect other groups and N.A. as a whole. The seeds of controversy, chaos, and disunity are planted which ultimately are capable of destroying N.A. as a whole. The distinction of our Fellowship as a separate entity is clouded and unfortunately newcomers may be lost in the confusion.

Many of us use literature other than N.A. literature in our personal programs, as an adjunct to recovery. Some utilize meditation guides, some read the Bible, and some members read other literature regularly as a part of their recovery process. However, literature other than N.A.-approved literature belongs outside of our meetings.

We suggest that if your group feels strongly about having a meditation book or pamphlet, you form a literature committee and begin to generate material for a meditation guide for Narcotics Anonymous.

We have Twelve Traditions. Group conscience is a part of Tradition Two and when it is followed in conjunction with Tradition Four it does not allow one to override another or any other Tradition while remaining a part of N.A. An N.A. meeting to be considered an N.A. meeting must fully comply with all of the Twelve Traditions.

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**Q.** Our group reads the “One Day at a Time” meditation guide published by a private company. Someone has informed us that this is a violation of Tradition Six. Is this true?

**A.** The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has, over the years, been successful in offering to its member’s recovery from drug addiction, one day at a time. Narcotics Anonymous does this by utilizing literature approved by the Fellowship. It is the position of the Fellowship that reading of literature other than approved N.A. literature at an N.A. meeting constitutes a violation of our Traditions.

Much has been written and is available that is of benefit to individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. Many of us read materials we find helpful to us as a part of our own personal programs. However, in order to adhere to our Traditions, it is essential that

we read only N.A.-approved literature in our meetings to prevent our program from becoming diluted.

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**Q.** Our group has taken two group conscience votes on whether to sell the Day by Day book at our meeting. One member of our group states this is a violation of Tradition Six. How can this be when we have taken two group consciences, and does the principle of group autonomy allow us to do this?

**A.** While the Day by Day book may be a very valuable adjunct to recovery, it cannot be sold in N.A. meetings if the meeting is to be considered an N.A. meeting. The selling of this publication in a meeting is a clear violation of Tradition Six.

Even though a group conscience vote may have been taken on this issue, group conscience does not override the Traditions. A meeting cannot read, sell, or distribute literature other than N.A. approved literature and consider itself an N.A. meeting.

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**Q.** One of the members in our area has taken to reading passages from the Bible in our meetings. What is your opinion regarding this practice?

**A.** The reading of the Bible in an N.A. meeting is a serious violation of our Traditions. The primary purpose of any N.A. group is to carry the message of recovery through the N.A. Program to the addict who still suffers. The N.A. Program consists of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature in meetings constitutes a violation of Traditions, and this includes the reading of the Bible. The use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature dilutes the message of recovery and causes controversy and disunity within the Fellowship. An addict seeking recovery from addiction comes to our program seeking a way to live without using drugs, and needs to hear the message of recovery which is provided in our literature.

The Bible or any other literature from religious, spiritual, or philosophical organizations, while often helpful to many of us, is not a part of Narcotics Anonymous and belongs outside of N.A. meetings. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues, and the Bible is definitely an outside issue.

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**Q.** Our group wants to start a Nar-Anon and Nar-A-teen meeting. We have found a place large enough to accommodate three meetings at the same time and are very excited about helping our family members also find recovery. How do we go about starting these meetings?

**A.** We believe that it is extremely important for family members to look at their part in the disease and their responsibility for recovery. We are pleased that your group was able to find a place which can also accommodate Nar-Anon and Nar-A-teen meetings. However, we caution you with respect to our Sixth Tradition. Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Program for addicts seeking recovery from addiction. Nar-Anon and Nar-A-teen are for family members seeking recovery. Narcotics Anonymous groups should not start a Nar-Anon group, nor should they start a Nar-A-teen group. If we are to adhere to our Twelve Traditions, Nar-Anon and Nar-A-teen groups need to be started by individuals desiring membership in that fellowship or individuals who are already members. Narcotics Anonymous is a separate and distinct Fellowship and is not in any way affiliated with any other Twelve Step Fellowships, including Nar-Anon.

**A.** As individual members, we may encourage our families and friends as well as the family members of other recovering addicts to attend a Twelve Step Fellowship for their own recovery. While we would be wise to do this, we cannot as a group make announcements in our meetings regarding the activities of any other Fellowship, including Nar-Anon, nor can we list any meeting other than an N.A. meeting in our directories. To reiterate; Narcotics Anonymous is a separate and distinct program and we need to avoid affiliation, whether it be with Nar-Anon or any other organization or fellowship.

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**Q.** In our area a number of family members attend open N.A. meetings and these family members often raise their hands and participate. Is this alright?

**A.** It is a violation of our Traditions for family members to share in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship intended to carry the message of recovery from addiction to the addict who still suffers. Our meetings provide a place where one addict can share his/her experience, strength, and hope with another addict. N.A. meetings are not a place for members of another fellowship or for family members to share.

Family members and members of other Twelve Step Fellowships cannot share about recovery from drug addiction; Narcotics Anonymous is for drug addicts. There are other Twelve Step Fellowships for family members.

Family members who are sharing in N.A. meetings should be politely informed of the Traditions, and perhaps it could be suggested that they form a Nar-Anon group.

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**Q.** We are enclosing a list of referral sources including hospitals, state and county agencies and Nar-Anon, which we use for referral sources on our telephone hotlines. We use a disclaimer with these referrals. Is it appropriate for us to do this?

**A.** We believe that making specific referrals through our N.A. hotlines would in fact violate the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous, with or without a disclaimer. In order to remain consistent with the Twelve Traditions, the entire referral page listing referral services and numbers needs to be removed.

Hotlines are comprised of individual members of the Fellowship. These members share their experience, strength, and hope with the individuals who call. Sometimes members suggest that the caller receive medical attention; however, specific referrals should be avoided and common sense needs to be exercised.

With respect to Nar-Anon, we believe that again the individual answering the call might state that while we are not affiliated with Nar-Anon, it has been our experience that family members of addicts have often found help for the chemical problems in their family through Nar-Anon.

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**Q.** We have just organized a hotline for Narcotics Anonymous in our area and have received some calls from family members and from one individual obviously in need of medical help. We would like some suggestions on how to handle these calls. Some of us would like to refer family members to Nar-Anon and also recommend medical help when it seems appropriate. How can we do this and stay within the Traditions?

**A.** It would be extremely difficult to withhold information regarding Nar-Anon to family members who call on the N.A. hotline. It would also be inappropriate not to advise someone who was obviously in need of medical assistance that they need to get medical help. However, care needs to be exercised when suggesting Nar-Anon for family members or medical assistance. The languages used to convey the information should be such that an endorsement is not made or implied concerning these resources. For example, the information could be imparted in this manner: "While we are a helpline operated for the purpose of allowing addicts the opportunity to discuss their desire to stop using, we are frequently asked for information by family members or for information about medical facilities. We cannot endorse any specific facility."

"Concerning medical facilities; there are many listed in the phone book and you should perhaps go to the one closest to you. On the subject of family members; some of our members families have found help in Nar-Anon. Although we are not affiliated with Nar-Anon we can get an address or phone number."

We share our experience, strength and hope on hotlines and some of that experience, strength and hope can involve Nar-Anon and our suggestion of medical assistances but it should not in any way constitute our endorsement of those organizations.

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**Q.** In our area we have an N.A. clubhouse and another club whose members are also N.A. members. Our local newsletter often includes notices for fund-raising activities by these two groups. In the opinion of the WSB, is this a violation of the Traditions?

**A.** There should be a separation between the internal but “official” communication of the local N.A. membership and announcements of “more fellowship” activities. It is necessary for non-N.A. activities to be handled separately even though the participants also happen to be members of Narcotics Anonymous. Your newsletter should not include fliers or notices for non-N.A. activities even if they have members in common. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any clubhouse, social group or club. Social clubs and groups have their own guidelines, rules, and stipulations for membership. They are not Narcotics Anonymous, nor do they fall within the N.A. structure or comply with our Twelve Traditions.

To affiliate the two as you describe is a violation of our Sixth Tradition.

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**Q.** Some members in our area are making announcements and passing out fliers for prayer and meditation workshops. Some of us believe this to be a serious violation of Tradition Six.

**A.** Making announcements and passing out fliers for a prayer and meditation group is a very serious violation of Tradition Six. Only N.A. related announcements can be made in a N.A. meeting and only N.A. fliers can be passed out in meetings. Narcotics Anonymous is not a prayer and meditation group nor is it affiliated with a prayer and meditation group. We are a Twelve Step Program of recovery from addiction.

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**Q.** Our group decided by group conscience vote to have the “12 promises” and the “Third Step Prayer” from A.A. put up during an N.A. meeting here. Is this a violation of the Traditions as some have said?

**A.** An N.A. meeting using the promises from Alcoholics Anonymous and/or the Alcoholics Anonymous “Third Step Prayer” constitutes a violation of Tradition Six. In order for a meeting to call itself an N.A. meeting it must adhere to all the traditions,

including Tradition Six, which states that we are not affiliated with any other organizations including Alcoholics Anonymous.

When we use literature or recovery material from another organization or fellowship we, in effect, affiliate with that fellowship. Alcoholics Anonymous gave Narcotics Anonymous permission to adapt their Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to our program. They have not given us permission to use any other A.A. material.

The World Service Board of Trustees has consistently held that only N.A.-approved literature and materials may be used in N.A. meetings.

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**Q.** We are a new area and many of our members attend both N.A. meetings and A.A. meetings. We recently started a newsletter in our area and make a practice of listing members who are celebrating clean time anniversaries and at which meeting they will be taking a cake. Some of these members are taking cakes in A.A. and the A.A. meetings where they will be taking cakes are listed. Some of us believe this practice is in violation of our Sixth Tradition.

**A.** You are correct; listing an A.A. meeting in an N.A. newsletter, flier or other publication is a violation of Tradition Six as this constitutes affiliation. It is a violation even if an N.A. member is celebrating his/her anniversary at the A.A. meeting. This practice should be discontinued and effort should be made to encourage these members to take their anniversary cakes in N.A. meetings.

It sounds as though your area is having the same kind of tradition problems that other areas and regions have when there is very little long-term N.A. recovery in the area.

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**Q.** The chairperson at our N.A. beginners meeting identifies himself solely as an alcoholic. Is there a tradition break?

**A.** The program of Narcotics Anonymous is a program for addicts seeking recovery from the disease of addiction. While alcohol is a drug and an alcoholic is therefore an addict, in order to participate in a N.A. meeting, one must be able to identify as an addict and talk about recovery in N.A. This is for the protection of the group and the newcomer.

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**Q.** Our question is whether an N.A. member can hold a service position in Narcotics Anonymous while maintaining membership and a service position in another Twelve Step Fellowship?



**A.** First, there is no violation of any tradition for an N.A. member to be a member of another Twelve Step Fellowship. Second, it is equally not a violation of Traditions to serve in more than one Fellowship. There would be no violation of the traditions as long as the individual left the other Twelve Step Fellowship out of his service work in N.A. An individual, for example, might be serving as a treasurer in another Twelve Step Fellowship and might also serve as a secretary of an N.A. meeting.

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**Q.** We have a two part question for you. First we would like to know about the Board of Trustees decision which states that it is a violation of our traditions to mention A.A. in an N.A. meeting? Also we have a question about a couple of members who recently began attending our meeting here; one is an alcoholic who never used any other drug. The second is an addict who got clean in A.A. and began attending our meeting two months ago. Can the first individual share at our meeting and what is the clean time of the second member? Some of us believe it to be 13 months; others say it's only two months.

**A.** The World Literature in its guidelines has stated that in writing and developing literature, whenever A.A. appears, the phrase "another Twelve Step Fellowship" or "Program" be substituted. To the best of our knowledge there is no decision anywhere which prohibits an N.A. member from mentioning A.A. in an N.A. meeting. It is important that the members share in N.A. meetings about working the N.A. program and talk about N.A. recovery. However, we would not presume to tell anyone how to share their experience, strength, and hope in an N.A. meeting.

Alcohol is a drug and someone who used alcohol and no other drug should consider themselves an addict and identify themselves as such. He would also need to talk about Narcotics Anonymous and recovery from drug addiction. Addiction to alcohol is addiction to a drug.

While we would not presume to decide anyone's anniversary date, as this is a matter best left to the individual, his conscious and his sponsor, it is our opinion that an individual's clean time begins following the last use of mind or mood altering chemicals.

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**Q.** We are having a Tradition problem in our area. We have some members of our Fellowship who got clean in A.A. and have recently joined our Fellowship. When they share in meetings they talked about their recovery in A.A. and N.A. This is upsetting some of our older members who claim this is a violation of Tradition Six. What do you think?

**A.** It is true that some of the members of our Fellowship initially found their recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous and later found their way into Narcotics Anonymous. The express purpose of our meeting is for one addict to share experience, strength, and hope with another. Every member of our Fellowship should be encouraged to share their story. If A.A. is a part of an individual's story it should not be inappropriate for that individual to share it.

We cannot, however, dictate what an individual shares in a meeting. Many members use the phrase "another Twelve Step Fellowship." Those who have done so avoid controversy without having to feel dishonest because they wanted to share openly that another program was a part of their recovery. Our members should develop patience for each other and allow others to freely express themselves without undue criticism, judgment or evaluation.

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**Q.** Last night at our regular Tuesday night meeting a member of our group was sharing about how he had found Narcotics Anonymous after attending A.A. meetings for a period of several years. At this point another member jumped up and accused him of violating Tradition Six and our group is in conflict over this incident.

**A.** The World Service Conference Literature Committee in its guidelines provides good advice on this issue. They require that the phrase "another Twelve Step Program" be used rather than making specific reference to A.A., O.A., G.A. etc., when it is appropriate. However, many of us in Narcotics Anonymous were first introduced to N.A. through another Fellowship such as A.A. and it is inappropriate to dictate the way one member shares his experience, strength and hope. As your area grows in maturity and understanding of the traditions, it will experience a corresponding growth in patience and tolerance.

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**Q.** Our Sixth Tradition speaks of endorsement. In our approved literature, "Why Are We Here," we refer to acknowledgement made to A.A. Is this not an endorsement?

**A.** The reference to A.A. in "Why Are We Here" is not a violation of Tradition Six. It does not constitute an endorsement but rather is an acknowledgement of the origin of our Twelve Steps and Traditions. It goes on to give some background in them and expresses gratitude towards A.A. for allowing us to adapt their steps and traditions to our program.

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**Q.** We question the practice of selling convention registrations, tickets to dances, picnics and other N.A. activities to non-addicts. Is this practice consistent with our Seventh Tradition?

**A.** There is not a tradition problem with accepting donations for convention registrations, banquet tickets, dances, picnics, etc. from non-addicts. The following points may be helpful:

1. Friends and family members often attend these functions with the addict.
2. Many non-addicts attend these functions to find out about the program only to later identify themselves as addicts.
3. A common sense approach to the Traditions is helpful and the Seventh Tradition is not generally interpreted as preventing an addict's loved ones from attending a recreational activity sponsored by N.A., but rather to ensure that we remain self-supporting.

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**Q.** We have held a number of dances, raffles, picnics and other fund raisers and are now in the process of selling T-shirts to raise money for our first N.A. Convention. The wife of one of our members bought one of these T-shirts and the question was then raised: Is it a violation of the Seventh Tradition for a non-member to buy T-shirts, raffle tickets and admission to dances and other N.A. activities?

**A.** T-shirts, cups, posters and other such items are commonly purchased by family members, friends and others significantly related to members of our Fellowship. There is no violation of our traditions in allowing these individuals to purchase these items. The matter of raffle tickets, admission to dances, banquets etc. should be considered in the same manner. However, it would be inappropriate and a violation of our traditions to actively solicit the purchase of tickets and other items from non-N.A. members.

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**Q.** May we sell copies of the Basic Text to our members for less than we paid for it?

**A.** We see no problem with your group's practice of selling the Basic Text for less than you paid for it. We believe that this is a matter of group autonomy as long as you are self-supporting through your own contributions.

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**Q.** Our area raises money to finance activities and to help new meetings meet their rent when they are unable to do so, by selling the Basic Text for slightly more than we

purchase it for. One of our members believes this violates the traditions. Could you provide clarification please?

**A.** Many groups and area committees sell the Basic Text for more than the purchase price as a way of financing activities and purchasing other literature. However, it may be wise to advise members at the time of purchase, the nature of the increase, and how it serves to further our primary purpose. If the groups who make up your area service committee are in agreement with this practice, we see no difficulty whatsoever. This practice does not constitute a violation of our traditions but is a matter of group anonymity.

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**Q.** A half way house in our area would like to put on a BBQ for Narcotics Anonymous. We are a new area desperately in need of funds for the purchase of literature and could really use the money but are questioning whether it is within the traditions for non-N.A. organizations to conduct activities which benefit N.A. What is your opinion?

**A.** Groups should follow Tradition Seven and decline outside contributions. This would include organizations conducting activities which benefit N.A. We realize it becomes tempting to get money from other programs, because it helps with the purchase of literature or other essential expenses. Never-the-less it needs to be an element of our recovery as individuals and also as a group that we become self supporting. To allow other organizations to hold fund raising functions to benefit Narcotics Anonymous is a violation of Traditions Six and Seven.

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**Q.** An individual in our area worked for a produce company and our area's entertainment committee is putting on a fund raising dinner. The company this person works for wants to donate a large quantity of vegetables, salad fixings and fruits to us for our dinner. Someone told us this would be a violation of traditions. Would you clarify?

**A.** We understand that a produce company is donating a large quantity of vegetables, fruits and salad fixings to your entertainment committee for fund raising activity of Narcotics Anonymous. We suggest that service boards and committees not accept this type of donation as we are self supporting through our own contributions, and need to avoid outside contributions. We believe the acceptance of such donations sets a dangerous precedent, and some type of payment needs to be arranged.

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**Q.** Our area is considering holding a swap meet sale. Would this be a violation of Tradition Seven as we would be soliciting funds from outside our membership?

**A.** N.A. must always be self-supporting through our own contributions and for that reason efforts to generate funds must, of necessity, be from within the Fellowship. To solicit funds from outside the Fellowship violates the Seventh Tradition. Conducting a sale for Narcotics Anonymous at a public swap meet would therefore constitute a violation of our Traditions.

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**Q.** We are looking for ways to raise money to fund some of our activities. Car washes, raffles, and selling T-shirts have all been discussed at length. We wish to know whether these fund-raising activities fall within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions. Can we use the N.A. logo? What about anonymity?

**A.** The Board of Trustees sees no difficulty whatsoever with using the N.A. logo on T-shirts, provided they are sold at fund-raising activities of Narcotics Anonymous by members of Narcotics Anonymous and not by private entrepreneurs. The initials "N.A." could represent any number of things and individuals who wear these shirts do so because they choose to.

Raffles are also acceptable provided that the tickets are primarily sold within the Fellowship at N.A. activities and functions, and not in public places such as grocery store parking lots, church or school yards, or similar places accessible to the general public. In some areas and states raffles are illegal. We do not condone raffles in areas where they are not sanctioned by law. If raffles are to be sold, it is important for those selling them to make sure they are in compliance with the local statutes covering them. Car washes need

to be made primarily available to members of the Fellowship and under no circumstances should signs be posted stating “N.A. carwash.”

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**Q.** Our area would like you to provide us with some guidance with respect to raffles, car washes and bake sales. Are these activities within the Traditions?

**A.** The Board of Trustees has no difficulty with car washes, raffles and bake sales. In some areas or states raffles are illegal. We do not condone raffles in areas where they are not sanctioned by law. If raffles are to be sold, it is important for those selling them to make sure they are in compliance with the local statutes covering them. These activities constitute legitimate fund raisers. They remain within our traditions as long as they are generated by the Fellowship and for the members of the Fellowship and not the community at large.

Bake sales and car washes are perhaps not the best choices for fund raising activities. Since the area may not contain sufficient members to justify the effort.

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**Q.** We are considering the sale of N.A. T-shirts to help finance a regional office. Is this all right? What about the use of the N.A. logo on these T-shirts?

**A.** The board of Trustees sees no difficulty whatever with use of the N.A. logo on T-shirts, provided these are sold at fund raising activities of Narcotics Anonymous by members of N.A. for N.A. and not by private entrepreneurs. Members of the Fellowship really like their T-shirts and we see nothing wrong with your region selling them.

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**Q.** In order to remain within the guidelines of our Traditions, especially Tradition Eight, would not the current practice of employing N.A. members to work in our World Service Office be considered a violation of this Tradition? Shouldn't the employees be non-addicts?

**A.** The Eighth Tradition states that N.A. should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. As our Fellowship grows, so do our needs. With this increased need comes the necessity for the Fellowship to employ special workers. These special workers are hired because their abilities and skills, whether they be in business, computers, or journalistic, make them reasonable choices and acceptable applicants for their positions. The World Service Office does not discriminate against addicts in their hiring practices. The primary determinant for employment is that the

workers possess the necessary skills to do the job effectively. The decision is not based solely on the fact that they are nor are not N.A. members.

With respect to special workers who also happen to be N.A. members, every effort must be made to reach a clear understanding with them as to what constitutes their duties as special workers. They are employed as editors, computer programmers, secretaries and shipping clerks; not as N.A. members. The N.A. member employed as a special worker must have the ability to separate his/her personal program from his/her job. In other words, these individuals need to incorporate good judgment and maturity in order to differentiate between their jobs and their personal programs. Those responsible for hiring special workers need to look very closely for this quality in N.A. members whom they employ. No service board, center, committee or office should ever employ an individual who is not directly responsible to those (she-he) they serve -- the Fellowship of N.A.

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**Q.** What about the importance of anonymity?

**A.** Our Eleventh and Twelfth Tradition talks about anonymity. Tradition Twelve states that “anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. Tradition Eleven cautions us to maintain our anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

When an individual member of the Fellowship finds himself or herself in the limelight as a member of Narcotics Anonymous, this results in that individual speaking for Narcotics Anonymous. It also creates an artificial barrier between the particular member and other members of the Fellowship. It taps into the grandiosity that is a part of our individual characters and sets the person up as an expert which of course, none of us are. Breaking anonymity at the level of press, radio and films is dangerous to the individual’s recovery and might be a deterrent to other individuals coming into the Program. They may feel that we can’t be trusted to maintain their anonymity or that they will be required to discuss their addiction and recovery on a public level.

The Fellowship at all levels -- area, regional and world -- needs to very carefully select individuals to do P.I. work. There are individuals who actively seek media exposure and these individuals are probably the least qualified to do P.I. work. Those individuals best qualified are those who value anonymity and are willing to serve out of love for the Fellowship and not out of ego needs.

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**Q.** In writing to radio and television stations, judges, hospitals, detoxification centers etc., should a P.I. chairperson or committee members use their full name?

**A.** If there is any reason to believe the letter will be published or find its way on the air then it is important that last names be avoided. Wherever there is a chance that this may occur; a non-addict should be used to write the letter. Where this is not feasible, the use of the first name and last initial is appropriate. It has been our experience that letters without a full signature often have less credibility in the eyes of the recipient.

Above all else we need to adhere to our traditions and maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. Some of our members have had the unfortunate experience of having those individuals from press make promises that their anonymity would be maintained only to later see their names in print.

One member wrote a letter to a school board regarding Narcotics Anonymous and the board turned the letter over to a reporter who was writing an article on drug usage in the school system. These types of experiences have taught us to exercise extreme caution in these matters.

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**Q.** How can we answer the question “Who is the founder of Narcotics Anonymous”?

**A.** The history of Narcotics Anonymous is different from that of Alcoholics Anonymous and some other Twelve Step Fellowships. While much of A.A. beginnings came from two people, Narcotics Anonymous involved as the result of a group effort and did not have a single founder. Along the way a number of individuals played key and important roles. The process through which Narcotics Anonymous grew and developed highlights one of our strengths -- the strength of the group. It is the strength of anonymous people.

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**Q.** When is it appropriate to use non-addicts to provide information about our Fellowship to the media or outside agencies?

**A.** We believe that non-addicts should always be used to provide information about our Fellowship on national television, radio, magazines, newspapers, etc. With respect to local T.V. stations we believe it would be helpful for a non-addict to appear but also realize that a non-addict may not always be available for this purpose.

With respect to outside agencies, it may be beneficial to use non-addicts, depending on the agencies. For example, in approaching the American Medical Association it might be helpful to have a physician who is a non-addict explain how physicians might utilize Narcotics Anonymous in working with their addict patients. Endeavors which target federal agencies might find it helpful to utilize a non-addict who has knowledge or expertise in the agency being approached.



We believe that we need to avoid the use of blacked-out faces, silhouettes and shadows. Some of these techniques have been used to maintain anonymity. However, these techniques are also used by the media to protect the identity of criminals, informers and other nefarious characters and therefore denote a very negative image. It gives the impression that we have something to hide. They are not only ineffective but cause a negative image. Something we have and are working very hard to get away from. For this reason non-addicts who have an understanding of our Fellowship, our steps and our traditions are important to us.

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**Q.** I recently received a call from a parole officer who asked me to provide verification that a member is, in fact, attending N.A. meetings and is involved in our Fellowship. This parole officer will not accept a “court card” because he maintains that anyone can sign it. What do we do?

**A.** Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction. The Twelve Traditions make possible our Fellowship and therefore our recovery. Tradition Six prohibits us from affiliation with any other organization or outside enterprise. We are not affiliated with anyone, including probation offices, state parole offices, or correctional institutions. To report on another member’s attendance or participation in our Fellowship to any agency or institution is to affiliate with that agency or institution.

In addition, our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions protect the anonymity of our members. In our meetings we have a place to share our experience, strength and hope as well as the trials and tribulations we encounter in our struggle to progress in our recovery. Without the freedom to express ourselves without fear of what may or may not be reported to an outside agency of a person charged with our supervision, our recovery and the recovery of others in our Fellowship would be severely inhibited.

Sometimes courts, parole agencies and probation officers require that “court cards” be carried by the persons they supervise and signed by the secretary of the meeting. This is a transaction between the supervising agency and the individual member involved. The individual is free to attend or not attend, participate or not participate. When we as N.A. members actively report to a supervising agency regarding another member, we break our Traditions, affiliating ourselves with the supervising agency. We break another’s anonymity, and we jeopardize the chance for that person’s recovery within our Fellowship.

It is our suggestion that the parole or probation department officer be visited by several members of the area’s public information committee so that an explanation of our program

may be supplied along with information regarding our Traditions and the importance of adhering to them. It has been our experience that when individuals in the community gain an understanding of how our program works, and have the opportunity to see that it works through meeting with addicts who have found recovery through our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, they become as supportive of them as we are.

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**Q.** We are writing to ask if it is alright for some of our members to take photographs during an N.A. meeting.

**A.** The World Service Board of Trustees feels it is a violation of our Traditions to take photographs at any N.A. meeting, regardless of whether it is a regularly scheduled meeting of Narcotics Anonymous or a meeting held at any N.A. function or activity.

Taking photographs at banquet dinners, dances and picnics seems to be a common practice throughout the Fellowship. We believe this practice does not constitute a violation of our Traditions provided those individuals whose pictures are taken have no objection and that the photographs are for the enjoyment of the individuals involved and are not ever to be used at the level of press, radio, or films.

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**Q.** We are a small rapidly growing area. IT has been extremely difficult for us to find meeting places where we are allowed to smoke. As a result of this we are holding five meetings in that same location. Last week at the regional meeting we were told we could only hold two meetings a week at the same location. Is this correct?

**A.** There is no limitation in the number of meetings which can be held at any one location. While it may be advisable to spread the meetings over several locations rather than have five in the same location, it is the needs of the members of the group who dictate the meeting place. Further it is a matter of group autonomy, with the members of each group deciding where to hold the meeting.

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**Q.** We are thinking about starting a meeting for addicts only and would like to know if this would be a violation of our Traditions.

**A.** You may start a closed meeting of Narcotics Anonymous and remain within the principles of the Twelve Traditions. A closed meeting is any meeting which is for addicts only, and excludes visitors and family members.

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**Q.** This question concerns the pamphlet The Use of Medication in Recovery and its removal from circulation at the recommendation of the Board of Trustees. We would like to know why that was done and what suggestion you would offer someone regarding the use of medication.

**A.** The pamphlet The Use of Medication in Recovery was removed from circulation at the recommendation of the Board of Trustees by an action of the World Service Conference. The primary reason was that the pamphlet offered advice on matters which were outside the scope of the N.A. Program. In addition, it was observed that some individuals were using the pamphlet to justify the use of prescription medication.

The World Service Board of Trustees holds that the Fellowship cannot offer medical advice. We believe the use of medication or non-use thereof is best left to the individual, his/her sponsor, physician who is himself/herself recovering be consulted in the matter. We further suggest that if medication is recommended outside of a hospital setting, that a second opinion be sought as to how essential that medication is and what alternatives are available.

These, however, are only suggestions. The policy of Narcotics Anonymous with respect to medication is not to have an opinion on this matter which is outside the scope of our program.

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**Q.** Some of our members are wearing T-shirts, some with “outside issue” logos and others with N.A. logos to our regular N.A. meetings and also the H&I meetings. What is your opinion on this practice?

**A.** You have asked for an opinion from us in regards to the wearing of T-shirts. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on the wearing apparel of its members. While T-shirts advertising or endorsing outside issues may offend some people, others may have a positive response to them. T-shirts which utilize the N.A. logo do not violate our traditions as long as they do not use the words “Narcotics Anonymous” but rather the N.A. initials.

With respect to wearing apparel for an H&I meeting, we would suggest that care be exercised so that we present a favorable image to the institution and thus ensure their continued support for the N.A. H&I meeting being held there.

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**Q.** May a group choose to announce the time and location of the N.A. meeting in newspapers, radio or TV in order to reach still-suffering addicts in the community?

**A.** A group may announce the time and location of the meeting in newspapers, on radio or TV in order to reach still-suffering addicts, but should do so only when it is absolutely necessary. Whenever possible hotline numbers should be used in newspapers, radio and television announcements. We realize that this is not possible in some smaller areas and regions which do not have the resources necessary to maintain a hotline. These areas and regions can then announce the times and location of meetings until they are able to maintain telephone hotlines.

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**Q.** Is it a violation of any tradition for members of Narcotics Anonymous Public Information Committees to participate in a public health fair? Would members talking in person about N.A. amount to a breach of anonymity? Can a P.I. Committee pay a fee to participate in a health fair?

**A.** Participation in a public health fair would be an appropriate endeavor for an area, regional or world level P.I. effort. Health fairs provide a good opportunity for the members of our Fellowship to let the community know who we are and what we do. A booth or table is often provided at these functions where we can make literature available and tell people that we exist and can help anyone with a drug problem to recover.

This participation would not be a violation of anonymity. Individuals talking in person about Narcotics Anonymous do so of their own volition and at this level anonymity is a matter of personal choice. We would suggest that first names be used and further would caution participants that at the level of press, radio and films anonymity needs to be maintained as specified by our Eleventh Tradition and Twelfth Tradition. Photographs should not be allowed under any circumstances.

It would no more be a violation of our traditions to pay a fee to participate in a health fair than it would be to participate in one. It would, however, be necessary for any funds expended in this fashion to go through an area, regional or world level budgeting process.

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**Q.** When an outside organization or agency requests a Public Information speaker and offers to pay travel expenses, can the P.I Committee or individual accept such reimbursement?

**A.** Sometimes these offers come from organizations or agencies who do not understand our program, our steps, or our traditions. These organizations and agencies are often accustomed to paying a fee or offering reimbursement for expenses as a matter of course. However, this is not appropriate for Narcotics Anonymous. We are self-supporting

through our own contributions and we cannot accept a fee for P.I. work nor a check for expenses incurred. It is important that we explain our traditions and the reason why it is not appropriate to accept this type of fee or reimbursement.

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**Q.** Can a member of a P.I. Committee be reimbursed by the P.I. committee for travel expenses?

**A.** Members of a P.I. Committee can be reimbursed by the P.I. Committee for travel expenses. Reimbursement for travel expenses is a very responsible course of action by a P.I. Committee and is well within the Seventh Tradition.

Area, regional or world level committees are all responsible to those they serve. This reimbursement must go through the budgetary process which has been set by the area, region or world.

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**Q.** Is it appropriate to use the N.A. logo in P.I. materials to go out to the public (PSA's, billboards, posters, etc.) or should the name Narcotics Anonymous be used?

**A.** The N.A. logo and the name Narcotics Anonymous can both be used in P.I. materials. P.I. work involves informing the public about who we are and what we do. In order for us to do this effectively we need to be able to use our name Narcotics Anonymous. The N.A. logo is also attractive and we are proud of it, we should most definitely use it when appropriate.

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**Q.** Our public information committee is currently using the N.A. logo and the name of our Fellowship "Narcotics Anonymous" on its stationery. It has been brought to our attention that this may be a violation of our traditions. Can you clarify this matter for us?

**A.** There is no tradition violation in the use of the N.A. logo and the words Narcotics Anonymous on area P.I Committee's stationery. The confusion in your area may stem from a motion passed by the World Service Conference in 1982. The motion stated only the N.A. logo and not the name Narcotics Anonymous was to be used on convention and activity brochures and fliers. This motion does not apply to stationery. Hence the name Narcotics Anonymous may be used on stationery of service boards and committees at an area, regional and world level.

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**Q.** Can we use billboards in our P.I. work and are they considered attraction or promotion?

**A.** A billboard can be one of attraction or promotion depending on its content.

In order to remain within the parameters of attraction, billboards need to be simple and provide very basic information regarding the N.A. Program, and include the local N.A. hotline number.

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**Q.** Is it promotion or attraction when a P.I. Committee contacts schools, probation officers, county or government officers and treatment centers to let them know about N.A.?

**A.** Our Eleventh Tradition tells us that our public relations policy is one of attraction rather than promotion. When P.I. committee members go out into the community and inform government agencies and individuals who work with addicts about whom we are and what we do they are operating well within the level of attraction. We provide information regarding our program and letting those agencies and individuals know we are a Twelve Step Program of recovery from the disease of addiction. Care needs to be exercised to avoid any promises or to make any commitments we cannot keep. When we begin to do this we have crossed our line into promotion.

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**Q.** Are PSA ads on the radio attraction or promotion?

**A.** Whether PSA's on the radio and television are attraction or promotion depends directly on the content of the material presented in the advertisement. It seems to us that there is a fine line between attraction and promotion. Providing basic information and letting the public know who we are and what we do is another area of attraction. When we go beyond the act of letting the public know who we are and what we do, we get into the area of promotion where we start making exaggerated promises which are beyond the scope of recovery from addiction; we have crossed the line into promotion.

All video materials need to be carefully reviewed by the World Service Board of Trustees to ensure that they stay within an informational framework.

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**Q.** What about P.I. endeavors for or at N.A. Conventions?

**A.** P.I. efforts at conventions have often been informal, haphazard and sometimes disastrous. If it is a regional convention we suggest that the regional public information

committee be involved and that the committee provide a specific, formal set up for any public relations effort.

One regional convention held a public information meeting. Beforehand, they sent out letters to the press, radio and television as well as judges, probation officers and doctors informing of the date, time and place where the meeting was going to be held. It was extremely successful.

A world convention should ask the World P.I. Committee to assume responsibility for P.I. efforts at the world convention.

P.I. efforts at conventions need to follow a specific plan and have a P.I Committee fully responsible for them.

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**Q.** Is it appropriate to convey the message that addiction is a disease in our P.I effort?

**A.** Addiction is a disease. Our literature states addiction is a disease. Our Basic Text states “We have a disease: progressive, incurable and fatal.” We, as a Fellowship, have had first-hand experience with thousands of addicts. Based on our first hand experience we believe we have a chronic, progressive and fatal disease which if untreated will result in jails, institutions and death for us. We believe it is absolutely necessary to state these basic facts about addiction in our public information endeavors.

We are in a stage of public understanding of the disease of drug addiction where Alcoholics Anonymous was with the disease of alcoholism in the late thirties. It was at that time widely held that alcoholism was a moral weakness caused by a lack of character in the alcoholic or it was a psychiatric disorder whose treatment consisted of instilling character in the individual or by treating the underlying psychiatric disorder whereby the excessive drinking disappeared. Alcoholics’ Anonymous members were the first to suggest that alcoholism was a disease. As a result of the efforts of members of the A.A. Fellowship, today, there is universal acceptance of alcoholism as a disease and the stigma attached to alcoholism has substantially diminished.

There is still an enormous stigma attached to drug addiction and as long as addicts and those individuals working with addicts believe that drug addiction can and should be controlled by the addict, addicts will die trying to find ways and means to develop control. A by-product of public information committee activities will be the educating of the addicts and those working with addicts; that drug addiction is a disease and the addict is powerless over it. We need to accept ourselves as persons who have a disease and we need to inform those who work with us and those who love us that (addiction is a disease). We can best do this by talking about addiction as a disease in our P.I. efforts.

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**Q.** Should local area or regional P.I Committees produce TV spots?

**A.** It has been our experience that most regionally produced P.I. video spots have been of a very poor quality. In some incidences the local P.I. Committee expended considerable time, energy and money only to find the spots they produced did not meet FCC standards or the local stations refused to use them because of their overall poor quality.

In the past it has been necessary for regional and area level P.I. Committees to make video spots due to the fact that the world level P.I. Committee had not produced videos. This year, videos have been made by the P.I. committee and will be available following the World Service Conference. These will be available from the World Service Office for a nominal price. They are professionally done, have been carefully reviewed by the World Level Trusted Servants including the Board of Trustees and are well within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions.

We recommend that with the availability of these videos area and regional P.I. Committees use their time and resources in other more needed areas.

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**Q.** Why is it not advisable for a P.I. Committee to do P.I. work separate from an area or regional service committee?

**A.** When a committee acts on its own or is not a part of a regional or area service committee, it is not accountable to anyone. The P.I. Committee is responsible for area, regional or world level P.I. work -- these committees have responsibility to the Fellowship.

Any committee acting apart from the greater whole creates a very dangerous situation both for the individuals involved and for the Fellowship. P.I. Committees must be formed by the area or region in order to be P.I. Committees.

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**Q.** Why is it not advisable for an individual to do P.I. work separate from a P.I. Committee?

**A.** Our First Tradition states that our common welfare comes first and that personal recovery depends on N.A. unity. This tradition teaches us that the “we” comes before the “I.” Often, what may seem like a wonderful idea to an individual turns out to have disastrous results. Most of the very serious anonymity breaks which have occurred over the past several years resulted from individuals acting on their own and did not occur as the result of public information committee members carrying out projects discussed and decided upon by a public information committee.



When we act on our own we tend to be grandiose, and often operate on self will. One of the reasons we found our way into Narcotics Anonymous is that we could not do it alone. With respect to public information the “I can’t, but we can” still applies. Sometimes when a P.I. Committee does not accept our idea or project we want to rush out and do it anyway. We grow in our recovery when we can resist this urge.

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**Q.** Our area just formed its first Activities Committee and we are in the process of planning fund raising activities for which we would like to have fliers made up, and we would like some guidance. Can we use the name Narcotics Anonymous and the N.A. logo?

**A.** The World Service Board of Trustees cautions against the use of our name Narcotics Anonymous but believes that the use of the initials N.A. and the logo is appropriate for fliers and for announcements for N.A. activities and events.

**A.** The World Service Conference determined in 1981 that the logo could be used for this purpose but the name Narcotics Anonymous should not.

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**Q.** Can Nar-Anon meetings be listed in our N.A. directories?

**A.** The World Service Conference adopted a motion in 1981 which states “no outside enterprises be listed in meeting directories.” Although Nar-Anon is an organization supportive of our Fellowship and we likewise should be supportive, the notion of the Conference is very specific. Nar-Anon is a Fellowship which is separate from N.A. and in order to avoid affiliation of Nar-Anon and Narcotics Anonymous, separate meeting lists need to be maintained.