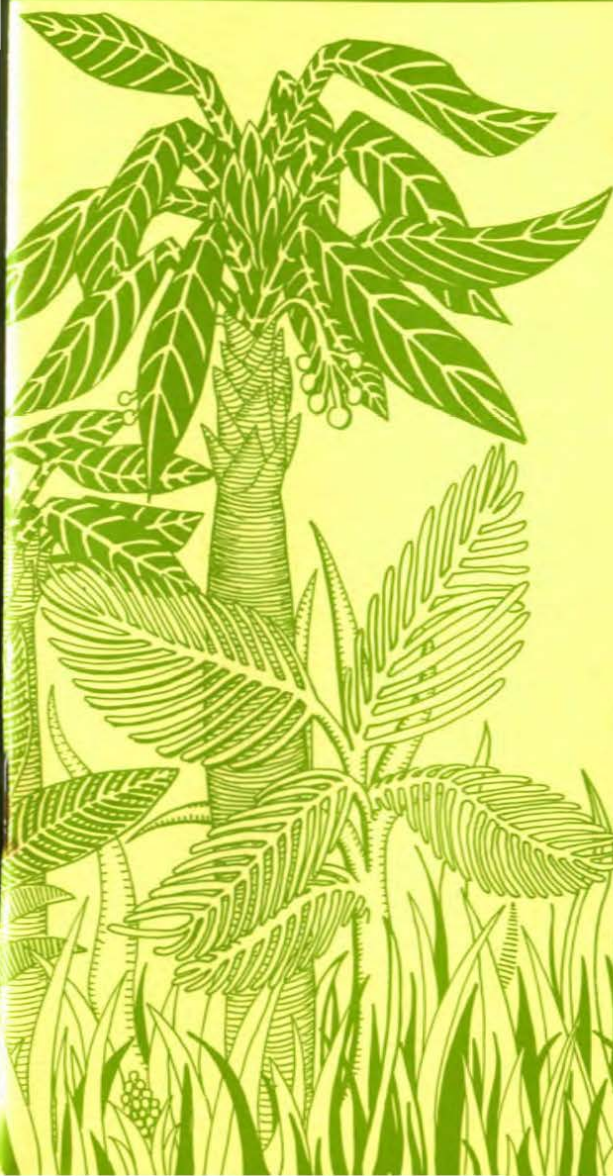


THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

June 1988 US \$1.75 CAN \$2.25



Brazilian N.A.
strides forward

p. 20

Are you an
N.A. fanatic?

p. 10

"I found the
ultimate
meeting"

p. 18

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 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.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE N.A. Way

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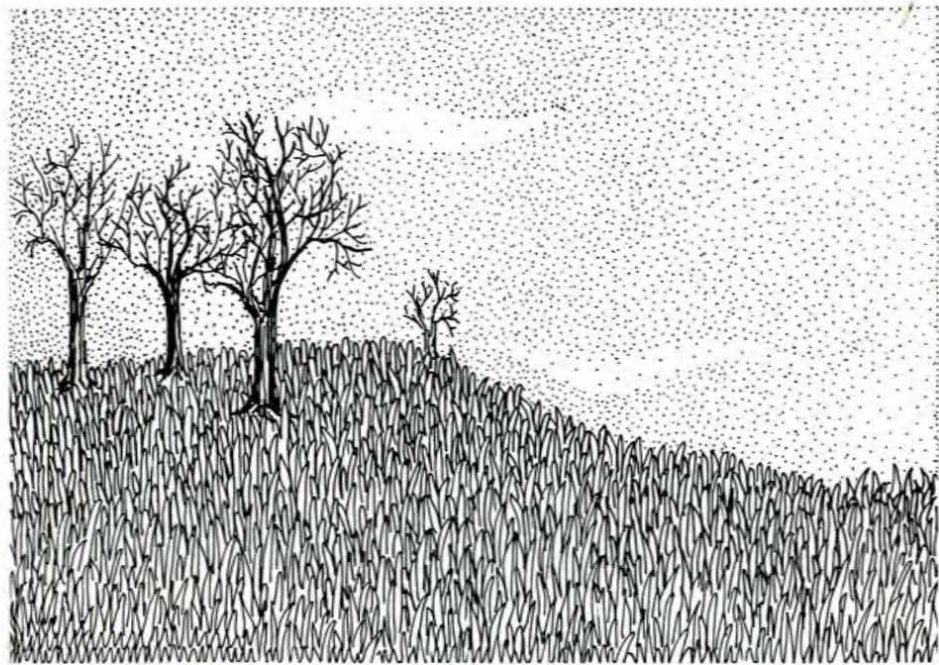
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Letter to a friend

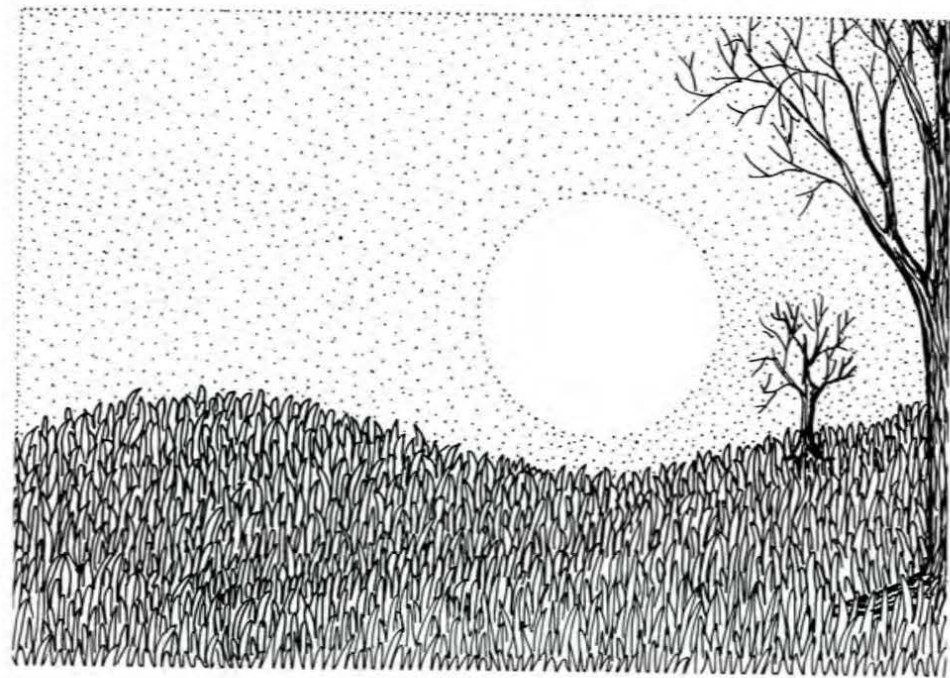
In a book I was reading recently, I found a reference to Narcotics Anonymous that troubled me. It was a book written for people in prison. As I will explain below, it had a very positive impact on me even though I have never been in jail. As I read the author's comments about N.A.—which were not entirely favorable—I stopped to reflect on how I might answer them. I decided to do just that, and wrote the author a letter. Here it is.

I am not incarcerated, but somehow your book has found its way into my hands and heart. I have been reading it slowly, bit by bit, and each time I

pick it up I get something else really concrete that I can assimilate into my own spiritual journey. I thank you for your loving clarity of expression. It is a true gift.

The reason I am writing is because I am a recovering addict. My spiritual path has led me to a home in Narcotics Anonymous. That is probably why I can identify so readily with the struggles of your incarcerated friends. I, too, was in a prison—one of my own making—for twenty-nine years, a prison built out of fear and pride. I was locked in.

The last fifteen months have been a joyous process of discovering freedom, and of coming to accept the fact that with freedom comes a deep responsibility. I've come to understand that, even though it seems paradoxical, my freedom comes from discipline, the spiritual discipline of meditation, prayer, and service.



To get to the point: In the course of reading your book, I came across a letter from a prisoner who was attending N.A. meetings in jail. His name is Billy. In your response you said, "That's my only complaint with groups like A.A. and N.A.; they seem to reinforce an attitude that you'll always be weak in certain ways. I don't buy it."

I don't think you could be more wrong. I feel I can say this to you, because from what I have read so far you seem to be very open-minded.

I must emphasize, I am not speaking for N.A.; I have no right to. For once, I'm learning how to be "Joe Banana, one of the bunch," and to feel good about it. I can only speak for myself and my own understanding of Narcotics Anonymous, the fellowship and spiritual path that has given me the chance to be fully alive, not just

surviving.

I've gained strength from accepting the fact that I have a disease—call it evil, the devil, fear, desire, or call it the disease of addiction, it's all the same. Part of my disease is physical: an over-sensitivity (most likely biochemical) to addictive substances—an allergy, if you will, that sets off a chain reaction of compulsion and obsession whenever I ingest "the first one."

I don't mean to sound sanctimonious or preachy, but I would like to convey to you my understanding that drugs (including alcohol) are not the problem; my disease is. Therefore, while abstinence is definitely a prerequisite for recovery, the former does not necessarily indicate the latter. I guess that's why I chose Narcotics Anonymous above any other Twelve Step fellowship, because our First Step fingers no symptom of the dis-

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

At the very beginning of this path, I was advised to maintain constant vigilance. I was told that this journey would be most difficult because I would be digging new roads for myself—changing the survival techniques I had developed on my own to cope with the insanity I had surrounded myself with for twenty-nine years.

"My only complaint with N.A. people is that they seem to say that you'll always be weak—and I don't buy that."

Of course, I felt I had to do this with grim determination, jaws clenched, teeth gritted, courageously forging onward. I can look back on that now and laugh. But then, that was what I needed to do just to stay clean for one day. Today I would not recommend that method to anyone.

My approach now is far more "enlightened" in that I can take the word "light" to mean spiritually joyous. After all, isn't that why we are here? If we do the best we can to channel God's love, maybe we'll be lucky enough to learn to move our "self" out of the way so that we can experience that love as it is passing through us. Anyway, that's how it's working for me today.

I have been told that true spiritual principles are never in conflict; therefore, if I find myself in conflict over something, I'm not working through the spiritual channels that are available to me. This does not mean I will never be hurt, or angry, or sad, or disappointed. Life is painful, but it is also as joyous as it is painful. The one thing I try and do for myself is to stay grateful, because in gratitude, I have found hope, courage, faith, willingness, and the strength to go on, even when I don't feel it inside me.

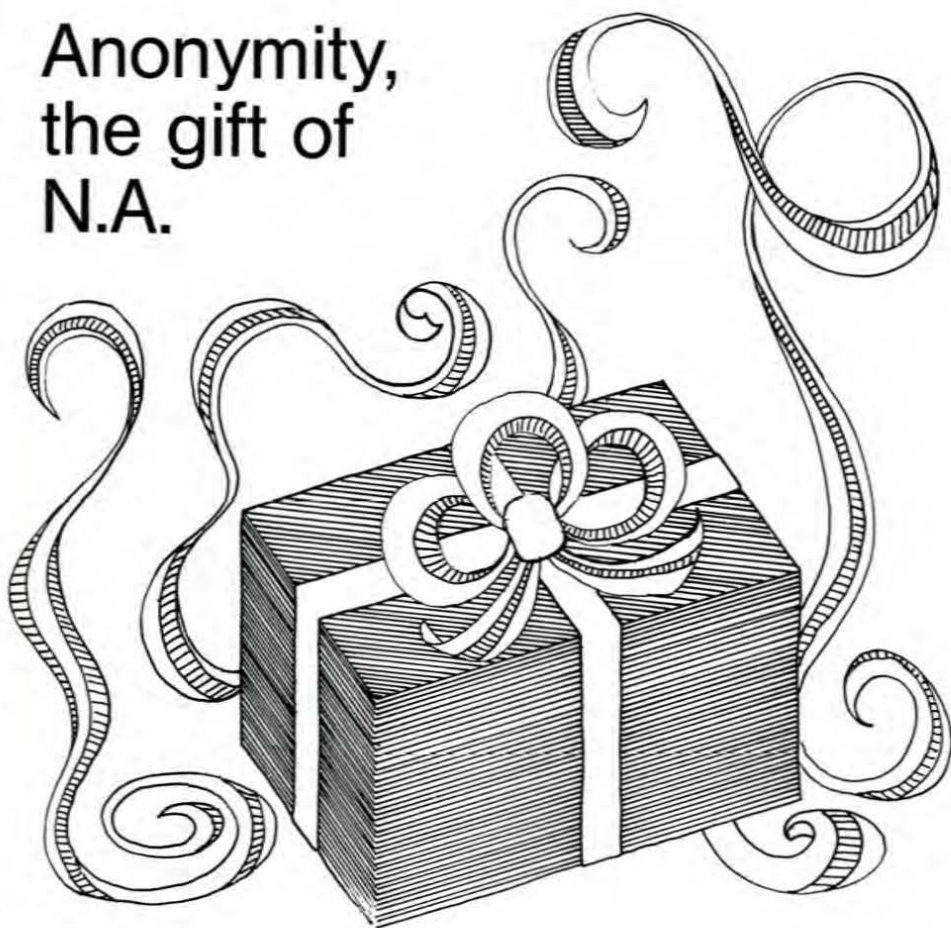
I heard someone say a short while ago, "It's not a miracle that I'm alive, it's a miracle that I'm grateful." I try to remember that every day. I have a lot to learn, but I've come a long way since last year. Two months ago I would have been angry at your comment, but now I feel nothing but love: love for a fellow traveller who is going to the same place but has chosen a slightly different path. We'll both get there in our own good time, no worse for the wear. Meantime, I can't afford to shut out anyone's "travel tips," because you never know who's going to save your life.

I hope I have expressed myself clearly, but mostly I am doing this for me. If you would like further information on N.A., I'm enclosing the address of the public information contact in your area. This may turn out to be a valuable resource for you in the future, as I am certain you deal with many (maybe even mostly) incarcerated addicts, recovering and otherwise.

I personally feel that the N.A. message, the N.A. journey, is in complete harmony with yours.

Yours in loving light and gratitude,
J.S., Massachusetts

Anonymity, the gift of N.A.



When I first came to the program, I thought of anonymity only in its most concrete sense. The emphasis on anonymity I heard at almost every meeting I attended seemed to be on not revealing someone's identity or violating their confidence. I was afraid that I would slip and do the unforgivable: break someone's anonymity.

The next level of meaning I found for anonymity was deeper and more abstract. I began to gain this understanding when I finally surrendered to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anony-

mous as a part of my First Step. This was the point at which I began to be simply an addict, to be like others who had surrendered.

This was a time of fear, for one door had closed and I was waiting for the other to open. I was being absorbed into the fellowship. I was learning to leave behind the familiar, to let go of those around me who were as yet unwilling to take N.A.'s First Step.

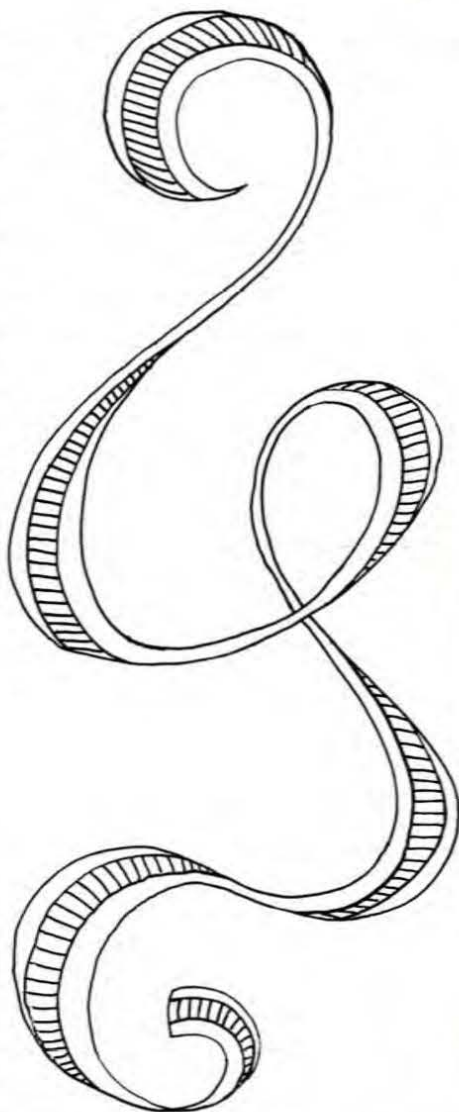
I felt very much alone during that time. I had this feeling despite all those who trusted in a Higher Power

and were there to guide me through. There were N.A. members around who trusted in my recovery before I had any. They were the people who reached back to me and let me know that it was okay to be an addict.

They did this by "caring and sharing the N.A. way." I found that when people shared their own experience, strength and hope at a meeting, a lot of it got through to me. Instead of having to listen to someone make a direct suggestion to me, which I was too self-centered to accept, I liked my newfound ability to hear and take an indirect suggestion. It was easier to think that I was still in charge, but at least it was a start. I was learning how to become willing. I was becoming involved in the recovery process.

*I am learning to
value the principle
and still not judge
the personality.*

At some point in my early recovery I became very impatient, and was hardened to those who were not yet ready. My impatience with the individual was not so much the problem. I came to realize that the problem was my impatience with my Higher Power for not "fixing" them in the time or the way that I would do it. There were times when I felt that it would be impossible for anyone to recover without me being involved with them. My rampant self-centeredness was waging a losing battle.



I also resented the person who was so adamant about things being done "his" way (people like myself!). I feared that he was hurting the program and the newcomers. If they were not doing it "my way," the way of N.A., how could they ever recover?! I was taking a lot of inventories, and (unfortunately) my own was not one of them. I did not yet know about the

process of surrender.

As time passed, this taking of others' inventories became my great inner conflict. I was trying very hard to live these principles, I thought. I would stand on a principle, trying to grasp it at its highest level, and would take the inventories of those about me who I felt were unable to aspire to the same dream. I brought my will into the fray and met others who had the same fight within themselves. The clashes became more difficult.

I believe that anonymity and the rest of these principles are tied together, and that the group is where we learn about them. I am learning through experiences like these how to temper my anger and deal with problems. The program requires that I surrender. I am learning to value the principle and still not judge the personality. I'm learning about anonymity from people who love me no matter what.

I am on the Third Step at this time. I need to invite God into this mess if I am to grow. There is no way that I can do it without him. He is helping me learn that I must surrender to *him*, and learn to be a part of the group as he works his will into the group conscience. In that realization, he is teaching me about anonymity.

The group has the better contact with God and carries out our purpose far better than I could ever do alone. I am a member of the group and must do my best to hold up my responsibility in light of the highest ideal I can aspire to: daily application of the spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous.

I believe that each one of us has a God-given talent to give to N.A. We

each give of that talent humbly, in the spirit of the Fifth Tradition. That's anonymity.

I am being given a gift. In my growing spiritual identification with the addict, I am losing my own identity. By working in a home group and helping to hold open the door, I am being given the grounding lessons that will grow into the Twelfth Step. I believe that when I made the decision to turn my life and my will over to the care of God as we understand him, I began to bond my lower self, the physical and mental, with our higher self, the spiritual.

The truth is that I am willing to learn through my experiences in life. To be able to do that, I must have faith that my God is a loving one who forgives me my way as I learn his. He knows my trials, and loves me through them.

The gift of the program, the gift of life—that is the anonymity of the Twelfth Tradition. It's the promise that I can learn selflessness through living the N.A. way. I believe that when we are all ready, when each and every addict is ready, we will, all together, pass through into the light. I am bound to you, my brothers. We are making this journey together.

Is this not why I need to drop my resentments and learn to carry the message? Is this not why I must let go of the personalities, including my own, and hold to the principles as they are revealed? Is this not why I must strive to grasp and more deeply live the anonymity of the Twelfth Tradition each day? Words into deeds, a day at a time.

G.C., Connecticut

Never boring

I read with some humor material you recently published concerning the "purists." I am heartened to see members who feel so strongly about preserving the N.A. message of recovery that they go to such extreme lengths. The purist movement is not the first that our fellowship has seen. This is also not the first good intention by members of our fellowship to go a little bit awry.

I got clean in 1980 in the midst of the original publication of our Basic Text. I found myself at nine months clean sitting in World Literature Conference (WLC) workshops. I first attended because I heard there was

going to be a dance and pretty women were going to be there.

I soon got genuinely caught up in the literature effort and traveled all over the southeastern U.S. to attend WLC's. There was a band of folks doing the same thing. The ingredients of camaraderie and purpose were just the thing to cook up a "fellowship within a fellowship." Let me tell you, those were some very inspired, intense times!

In between conferences there would be many long distance calls networked all over the country. "Anonymi"* was born out of this need to communicate with and support others involved with the literature effort. Then there was "S.W.A.T." (Service Workers Attack Team). Another movement on the more bizarre side was called the "N.A. Police" (complete with tin badges). I claim no association with the N.A.

Police; however, I heard they all threw each other in jail for tradition violations. I'm sure other such movements have emerged among members of our fellowship.

I'm not sharing this information in order to condone or condemn any of these activities. However, I do feel that all these entities were created out of sincere and good intentions. I still have my Anonymi button; it reads, "Unity Through Service."

On the more bizarre side was the "N.A. Police" (complete with tin badges). I heard they all threw each other in jail for tradition violations.

Without a doubt, these movements are a part of our fellowship's history. On a personal level, I felt a strong sense of being "a part of" by being involved in some of this history. And my involvement may very well have saved my life simply by keeping me

too busy to relapse!

Several years have passed since that period in my recovery. Today I have very strong feelings of dedication, commitment, loyalty, and allegiance to N.A. I am very grateful for this, for recovery in N.A. has absolutely never been boring. I attribute this to the intense involvement I had early in my recovery.

I still talk occasionally with others in the fellowship who were there with me and were a part of my recovery at the time. There is a special closeness that we share.

Things have changed a lot since then. Folks are flying all over the world hauling around two-million-K word-processors and datacommunicating umpteen-zillion pieces of information—you get the picture.

Don't misunderstand me. It's just really humorous, compared to hitchhiking to literature conferences or driving in some worn out clunker with twenty bucks in our pockets. We did that to carry the message!

The purpose and intensity is the same for me today as it is for others involved in service. But man, what a contrast in the way things are done! We sure have come a long way. I guess I'm still a country boy at heart and personally like to see things move a little slower. But let's not delay. Addicts are dying faster than ever.

Anonymi (still), Alabama

*Editor's note: At the 1983 World Convention in New York City I was sharing about my growing pains in the N.A. service "trenches." I was handed a card that read "ANONYMI: A world-wide N.A. home group designed to provide our trusted servants (whose service has sometimes isolated them from their local groups) with the love and understanding they need to survive."

R.H.

Am I a fanatic?

A while ago, a professional in the field of addiction gave me some very frank feedback about myself. She had my full consent, and she did an excellent job. She pointed out strengths I wasn't even aware of, and suggested ways to alleviate some perceived shortcomings. I felt that all her comments and suggestions were right on target. It was truly amazing for someone who had known me for just a few hours.

She was right, I feel, except for one thing. She observed me to be somewhat fanatical about Narcotics Anonymous. She compared this fanaticism to that of a newly "saved" Christian. She said this was not an uncommon trait for a newly "reformed" addict. Something deep inside me began screaming protestations. I've been mulling it over since then, and this article is my considered response.

First, I've found that in any discussion regarding semantics, the precise definition of the word in question is essential. I checked the dictionary and found that "fanatic" is defined as "marked by excessive enthusiasm and often intense uncritical devotion."

The relationship I've developed with N.A. in the past five years is not based on uncritical devotion. It is based in the fact that without N.A. I will die. This is not to say that I have not been a fanatic about N.A.; in fact in the past I have. I've been on a

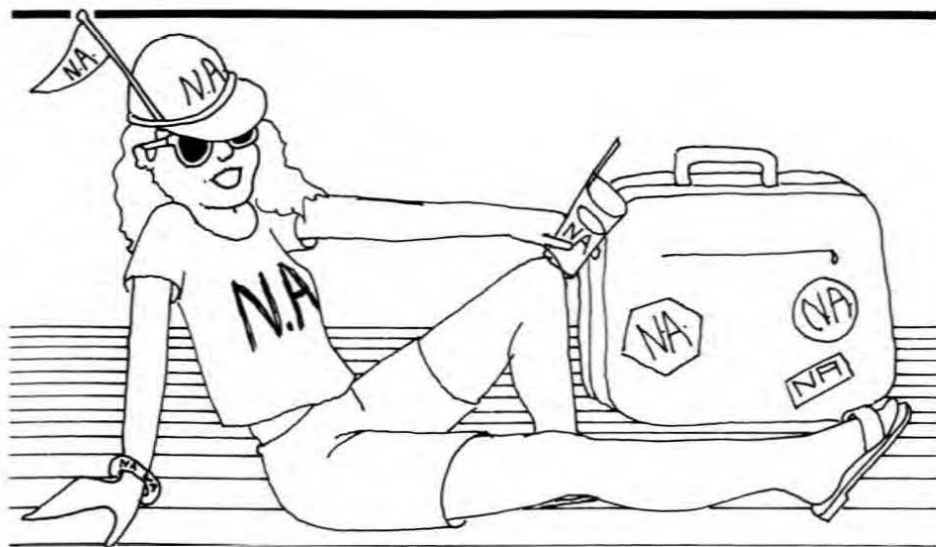
newcomer's high, obsessed with "saving" using addicts. I've spent time passionately trying to sway others to my way of doing N.A., in much the same manner a sanctimonious devotee does.

I believe I have grown past this. I know from experience that this program works. It does not need me to champion it. Although there are some similarities between the love I feel for N.A. and the fanaticism of a new convert to religion, there are also many differences.

The main and most important difference is that I wasn't going to church to treat a disease. When I quit going, I didn't get sick. When I stopped going to N.A. meetings, I did. I got sick enough to seriously contemplate suicide. I know that when I allow N.A. to become anything other than a top priority, I give my disease a toe hold. As N.A. decreases in importance, my recovery lapses, and conversely my disease becomes stronger. My disease can and does affect me even when my priorities are in order. Without N.A. as the most important part of my daily life, I am an easy prey for my disease. It's not only about drugs anymore. It's about survival.

"Fanatic: one marked by excessive enthusiasm and often intense uncritical devotion."

I decided about a year ago that I had learned all that I needed to, and I stopped going to meetings. I lost



contact with other addicts seeking recovery. I still practiced the steps to the best of my ability. I still read our book. But I started to buy into my disease without even realizing it. Before long I hated myself. My relationship with my husband was failing, my kids did not want to be around me because I was miserable, and I couldn't pray. I wanted to die. All this with more than four years clean time!

Narcotics Anonymous had lost its priority in my life. Before, N.A. had replaced my disease; now, my disease was replacing N.A. I was sick and getting sicker. I was doing the absolute best that I knew how to do, alone. Suicide became a viable option.

Several N.A. members were concerned about me and convinced me that, just like in the beginning, N.A. was the answer. I reluctantly returned to meetings. There, surrounded by the love and support of my spiritual family, I was able to admit that self-

Before, N.A. had replaced my disease; now, my disease was replacing N.A.

sufficiency is a lie. Many of our slogans like, "An addict alone is in bad company," and "I can't—we can," took on a new meaning for me.

Today I try to remain firmly centered in N.A. I feel good about myself and my life. I'm grateful to be a recovering addict in N.A. If I am a fanatic about N.A., then thank God! I don't think that I am, though; I'm just doing what I have to in order to recover from a deadly disease. Thank you, Narcotics Anonymous, for giving me a life worth living. Also thank you, professional person, for challenging me to think!

L.B., Michigan

Just good friends?



Imagine this scene: You are married. Both of you are recovering. The phone rings and it is your spouse's sponsoree needing support. Your spouse is unavailable. Do you:

- a) talk to the sponsoree, taking on the role of sponsor, or,
- b) tell them to call another member of the program of the same sex?

Males sponsor males and females

sponsor females; we all know that. But what happens when there are not enough males or females with the necessary clean time to sponsor newcomers? Or what about co-sponsorship? Never heard of it? Good! But I suspect that my story is not that unique. In the early days of the fellowship in my community, there were simply not the numbers of stable

recovering members to give me, in the scene above, the second choice of, "Why don't you call..." Today that is not the case in my community, at least among the males. We have the quantity and the quality.

Unfortunately, it didn't occur to me for a long time that this was the case and that I had a second option besides giving the support that I was being asked for. To make a long story short, I became very close friends with a man we will call John who my husband sponsored. A conflict developed between my husband and John, completely cutting their relationship. John and I, however, maintained ours.

I wanted to be his friend, but I couldn't be someone with whom he could share every dark secret.

Over a period of time, my spouse became threatened. The tension escalated to the point where he issued an ultimatum: he didn't want John in his house. He told me that I had no business sponsoring John.

Yes, we're talking control; but he had a valid point. Was I sponsoring John, or was I "just a good friend?" To this day, I don't have a clear-cut answer. But I took an honest inventory and discovered that I was getting some unhealthy needs met by having a male emotionally dependent on me, wanting my advice and support.

I thought back to different times that

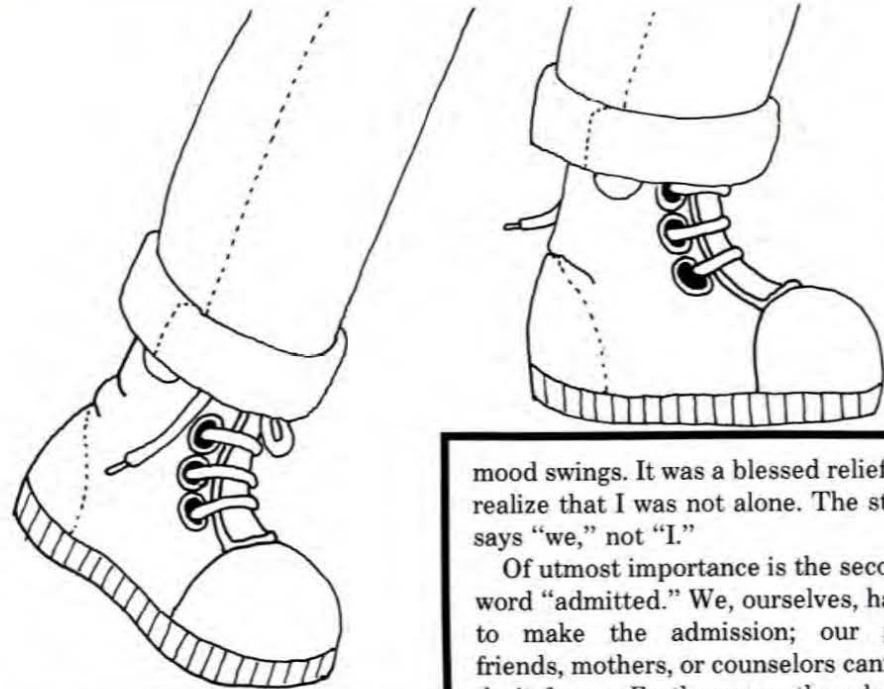
showed me this was true: his wife calling me after John relapsed, saying, "If he calls you first, call me;" John's counselor saying to him, "You shouldn't be sharing that much with a female." The amount of pain I felt when John relapsed was a red flag that something was not quite right.

So a heart-to-heart talk with John was in order. It was probably one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Part of my recovery as a female has been to learn to depend on and trust other females, and I had to encourage him to seek that with the men in the fellowship. I wanted to be his friend, but I couldn't be someone with whom he could share every dark secret. For my recovery and his, he needed to develop relationships with men. And in order to detach, I had to say, "No more phone calls, no more going out for coffee. I'll see you at meetings."

Today I am very careful with relating to men in the program. I try to be supportive and caring, but I am well aware of the dangers for me of emotional intimacy with a recovering man. I am still learning how to be a friend. I try very hard not to get involved in my husband's relationships with his sponsees.

It is very easy to sit in judgement on so-called "thirteenth steppers" who lust after the newcomer, but that's not the only way of working the thirteenth step. My experience has taught me that emotional intimacy with opposite-sex newcomers has its own share of pitfalls. So a word of warning: being "safely married" doesn't exempt any of us from the suggestion, "Males sponsor males and females sponsor females."

Anonymous, Kansas



The First Step: we must do it for ourselves

Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

This step has changed my life and the lives of thousands of others. In my twelve years of being clean in the N.A. program, I have come to appreciate the power of those fifteen words. Before coming into the program, I thought only in terms of "I." I took full credit for anything that I accomplished, but also took full blame when I failed. Such thinking set up massive

mood swings. It was a blessed relief to realize that I was not alone. The step says "we," not "I."

Of utmost importance is the second word "admitted." We, ourselves, have to make the admission; our girl friends, mothers, or counselors cannot do it for us. Furthermore, the admission is of powerlessness over our addiction. We don't admit that we sometimes use too much or that sometimes our drug induced behavior causes us a few problems. We must admit that we are powerless. Notice, there is no time specified. The step does not mean that we will at some time in the future develop a power to control our addiction.

Many who are not ready for N.A. will sit at the meetings and make note of how they are different than the others, who "really need this stuff." They come home and tell the family that they are glad they went because now they know for sure that they are not addicts. They say things like: "I never lost a job—one guy lost over thirty;" "I never went to jail—everyone who spoke had been in jail." If someone is ready for our program, they will grasp on to what we say; they will look for the similarities. If they are not ready, they will be listening for the

differences, so nothing anyone can say will be likely to convince them that they have a problem.

It has been said that we have to stay clean for ourselves. Doing it to please someone else just does not work. Often the addict white knuckles three months, six months, or a year of clean time. Then he goes back to drugs because he thinks he has proven with all of his clean time that he has beaten his addiction.

We cannot put any conditions on our program. We stop using one day at a time, even though life might not get perfect, even though we might lose a job or a wife. Many of us think that because we stop using drugs, life should always be wonderful; we think we should not suffer the same problems as the others down the street. We get very upset if our car breaks down or will not start; we think everyone should treat us super nice. It's as though we think we're doing the world a favor by not using. That line of thinking doesn't serve us very well. Again, we must stay clean for ourselves, not for praise or special privileges.

I came into the program to stop using for one year. After a year, I figured that I would have all my living problems under control, I would understand myself, and above all would not make the same mistakes as others. What made me stay was all those addicts who tried the same ploy, stumbled back, and reported their

misery. It seemed that every time I started to get complacent, my H.P. would show me someone who had relapsed. I still remember one person who had two years in the program. In one night he lost his job and his wife and went to jail. The many who relapsed planted in my mind a reasonable doubt that I could ever safely use again.

As our years of clean time build, another danger grows: our lives get better, even "normal." Then we are in danger of forgetting where we came from. We get educated, or we get a job, a girl, a license, a car; we get to look and smell like average people. Some of us drift away from meetings. We do a lot with normal, "Earth people." We see that we are as good as they are at running, bowling, fishing or cooking.

Everyone tells us we are doing well. They admire us for kicking the drugs for good. Since they are average people, they tell us we can now have a beer or smoke a little dope. Without reminders of how we used to be, we believe them. Our Twelve Steps do work; they completely transform our lives. And as we get used to living a transformed life, it is easy to forget that once an addict, always an addict.

A major symptom of our disease is denial. Our addiction will cause our lives to become unmanageable. As evidence mounts for proving our lives unmanageable, we start to rationalize. At this point, the drugs have us in their control, like some alien being that has entered us. We must do everything in our control to maintain our use. We must convince everyone,

including ourselves, that our habit is not causing us problems.

We blame our environment: the boss does not like us, the teacher does not like us, it was just our luck to get caught. We minimize our faults: everyone makes mistakes, I was just a little late, I just missed a few days of work (everyone does), no one could have avoided the accident, I just have the flu. We justify our insanity: I'm not as bad as most people, everyone uses, everyone comes in late, a wife needs to be beaten to be shown who's the boss, I need something to make me relax, I just use to get to sleep, I just need something to wake me up, nothing organic can hurt you.

*We don't admit that
we use just a little
too much. We admit
that we are com-
pletely powerless.*

Much of my denial emphasized what I did *not* do. I told myself that I did not drink in the morning or on the job. I forgot about the tranquilizers and sleeping pills. I did not think it significant that I wanted to die and frequently daydreamed of suicide. I did not go to bars and such places, but while home I was in "lala land." I had not lost my license, but I forgot that I made my wife drive all the time. One more traffic infraction would have resulted in the loss of my driver's license.

I thought that at least the electric and the phone had not been turned off. I overlooked the fact that we only

ate food that was on special sale, and that we never bought any clothes. My habit did not cost me my job, or so I thought. I had not counted the summer job lost through my drinking.

I paid all the bills, but with whose money? I forgot all the money my parents sent me each time I called them up with a hard luck story. I thought that I was in complete control of my life and managing just fine. I did not think it was important to file my income tax; besides, they would never know, because I had just moved.

Admitting that we cannot control something sounds simple and easy. For us addicts, it is one of the hardest things to do. We have strong wills. We will go to any length to try to solve the problem by ourselves. Some of us get rid of the problems that we think have caused us to use, such as girls and jobs. Yet, like a cancer, our problem just gets worse and worse. We think the answer is in discovering the right combination of drugs to make us feel the way we once felt. In my case, I tried to solve my problems with religion, self-help books, exercise, and self-hypnosis. Nevertheless, my problems continued to get worse.

I think it is wonderful that all we have to do is admit that we have a problem. We don't have to promise never to use again. We don't have to sign anything or swear to anything. We don't have to stand up to a large room full of people and confess all of our sins. We just have to admit that we are unable to control our addiction by ourselves. We do not have to be white, or educated, or insured. The people in the fellowship give you unconditional love: they love you just as you are.

J.S., New York



The good and the bad

An extremely heavy rain came and washed away the carefully constructed dam that the two young beavers had built. It had been a very tall dam that had spanned a wide stream. The two beavers thanked God for the good and the bad, and asked his blessing on the day to come.

Their spirits were high when the reconstruction began. The beavers were confident and worked quickly to complete the project. About half way through the endeavor a large log came floating downstream and busted the dam into a pile of rubble. Again, they thanked God and asked for his help in the day to come.

In the morning the beavers began building on top of the wreckage of their previous effort. This time they were a little more than half way through when a loose branch gave way and turned the structure into an even bigger pile of rubble.

This process happened eight times

before the dam was completed. Each time this would happen the beavers would not ask why; instead, they just thanked God for their misfortune and kept on going. When the structure was finally done, it was the sturdiest and most stable in the forest. The base had become so wide from all the wreckage, and the beavers so skilled from all their experience, that the dam could withstand much foul weather and misfortune.

*The two beavers
thanked God for the
good and the bad,
and asked his
blessing on the day
to come.*

The beaver's story is much like my own, except that my final success is counted at the end of each day. I am always building, and I always encounter mistakes and misfortune. I try to learn, trust God, and go on. The base of my dam keeps getting broader, and my building skills better. Today I can weather a storm.

D.D., West Virginia

The ultimate meeting

In these first couple years of recovery, I have never encountered a bad meeting. Each time the lifeline has been extended I have latched on, and have been pulled into yet another dimension of this beautiful life I now know. I often wonder why, after a thousand meetings with my fellow recovering addicts, my picture of recovery still becomes more splendid and refined with each new day. Just as I think I have found the perfect meeting, a better one comes along. At day's end, I lay on my bed contemplating how each new meeting is so perfectly suited to the renewal of this imperfect addict's recovery.

My lifeline is a loving Higher Power

who works through N.A. Out of an appreciation for His love, I decided to pursue an opportunity to share that love in Southeast Asia. Little did I know that my N.A. lifeline was going to manifest itself in a way which would leave me feeling like a man rescued from shipwreck on a deserted island.

The hour flight to Taiwan was filled with both excitement and fear. Suddenly I found myself in the midst of a new culture and foreign tongue.

I felt like an alien as I walked the busy street that first morning. Even the dogs seemed to shun my friendship. Every corner, every step, every time I turned my head I encountered new dimensions of life that rearranged

my old perception of reality.

Amid the challenges and joys, a longing was pounding at this addict's heart: if only I could be in communication and fellowship with those of my own type. After five weeks, the desire for an N.A. meeting was as intense as I

*I had found the
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could ever remember. Postcard meetings eased the pangs of starvation, and a letter from my sponsor blessed my socks off. But still, I was hungry...

I went to China and again saw, in contrast to much of my surroundings, and in spite of my loneliness, how grateful I really am to have my life as a recovering addict. Soon I found myself in Hong Kong, where English is widely spoken. I believe in miracles. On the phone to another Twelve Step program, I expressed my strong desire for an N.A. meeting. Sitting in that same room was one of our members. He informed me of the first official kickoff meeting for N.A. in Hong Kong. Even sweeter, that life boat was only hours away.

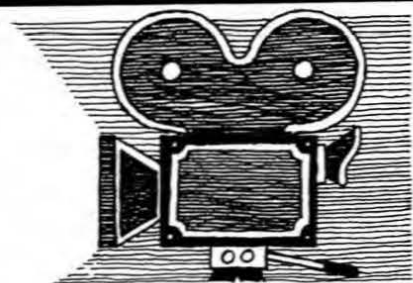
I found the N.A. meeting. The old familiar warmth of recovery filled the room. I had found the oasis, and the water tasted fresher than ever. I had found the ultimate meeting.

Tonight, as I sit peacefully at the end of another day of recovery, I ask myself this question: How did I make it through nine weeks with just one N.A. meeting? An answer comes. At the end of each day, with deep appreciation and thankfulness, I had encountered the *real* ultimate meeting; the same meeting in which I initially surrendered to my addiction almost three years ago—the meeting of my two knees, in humble submission, with the ground beneath them.

I'm thankful for H.P. and recovery in N.A., because now my future is solid, my past is redeemed, and my present is watched over. Sometimes it's a battle, but my knees meet the battle ground daily. I had known the ultimate meeting all along.

E.O., Montana

Feature



Toxicomanos Anonimos—N.A. in Brazil

The fellowship in Brazil faces some major decisions.

Brazil is a land of extremes: extreme beauty, extreme wealth, extreme poverty, an extremely warm climate, and an exceptionally warm people. Brazil has tremendous natural resources, but is relatively underdeveloped. As with most South American countries, there is a huge gulf between those who have and those

who have not. It isn't so recognizable within the membership of *Toxicomanos Anonimos* (T.A.), Brazil's N.A.; nevertheless, its presence is felt.

Streets and walkways are overcrowded. Poverty is clearly evident in the major cities. In Rio de Janeiro, slums cover the mountainsides overlooking the frenzy of the city streets below.

According to the Brazilian Consulate in Los Angeles, Brazil's rate of inflation was 366% in 1987, up from 80% the year before. The average monthly wage is between fifty and sixty American dollars. Most of the cars run on alcohol; gasoline is too expensive.

Many of the things that Americans take for granted are considered extraordinary luxuries by most Brazilians. Offsetting this is the incredible natural wealth and beauty of Brazil's land and human spirit; one sometimes forgets the poverty.

Addiction is a serious problem in Brazil. According to a survey published in 1986 in the U.N. *Bulletin on Narcotics*, 10% of the students in Brazil's largest metropolis, the city of Sao Paulo, were habitual drug users, and 14% more of the students were periodic users. Drug use ranges (in order of prevalence) from cannabis,

amphetamines, cocaine, tranquilizers and barbiturates, to morphine, heroin, and LSD. The need for the fellowship is evident.

Fellowship history hazy

Toxicomanos Anonimos began about six years ago. According to one source, its first meeting was held in Sao Paulo; another account places it in Rio de Janeiro. It's possible that both sources are correct, meetings starting more or less simultaneously in each city, neither aware of the other. It wouldn't be the first time such a situation had occurred in N.A. annals.

For example, members in New York tell of how three of the early meetings operating in New York City, each in different boroughs, were completely ignorant of each others' activities. Finally a member of one group, vacationing in Florida, was told there of the existence of the other two.

The Brazilian fellowship has taken tremendous strides in a short time. Independently translating Narcotics Anonymous literature, they've built the fellowship there from only one or two meetings a couple of years ago to almost forty meetings today in eight of the twenty-two Brazilian states. They are forming area committees in some of these states, and a National Service Committee was organized last July. Earlier this year, three Americans were invited to attend Brazil's second National Service Conference in Campinas, a city in the state of Sao Paulo.

Though the Brazilian fellowship is beginning to collect historical material for a booklet tentatively titled *A memoria do T.A. no Brasil* (*Remembrances of T.A. in Brazil*), it's not possible at the moment to pin down

any but the most general facts about the fellowship's development.

Part of this is due to the lack of documentary material. Part is due to the language barrier. Few of the established members of the Brazilian fellowship are completely fluent in English. To our knowledge, we currently have no world office staff members or world conference participants who speak Portuguese. Correspondence—coming and going—must be translated by a professional language service.

Bill, an N.A. member whose company is the North American agent for a Brazilian manufacturing firm, was among those invited to attend the conference in Campinas. He's had the opportunity to attend recovery meetings in Brazil on various business trips. Even he speaks only English.

Brazilian fellowship simply organized

Even across the language barrier, we have managed to gather the essential facts about how Toxicomanos Anonimos is organized in Brazil. "On a mid-1987 trip, I went to a group business meeting," says Bill. "There were between thirty and forty people there. It looked like an area service committee meeting. At the regular recovery meeting of this group there had been far fewer in attendance, but my translator assured me this was a group meeting.

"The impression I got was that some groups have two or three meetings at the same hall, and that those participating in all those meetings consider themselves a single body."

The Brazilian group occupies a



midpoint between the standard group steering committee and what we know as the area service committee. Most Brazilian groups send a representative to the service committee responsible to their state, called an area committee.

In July 1987, representatives of the area committees formed Brazil's National Service Committee (NSC). The committee is responsible for coordinating service affecting the fellowship nationwide. Between August 1987 and January 1988, the NSC held five regular meetings.

Those meetings took a wide variety of actions. They helped coordinate production of commemorative chips. They approved public service announcements for broadcast on a major radio station in Rio. And they considered the petition of another addiction-oriented anonymous fellowship seeking to join forces with Toxicomanos Anonimos in Brazil.

In December 1987, the first T.A. basic text was presented to the national committee. The softcover book is being sold for about \$1.50 U.S. The text is organized in three sections.

The first is a translation of much of what we know as the Little White Book, the "who, what, how and why" of recovery. The second and third sections are translations of chapters from the N.A. basic text on the steps and traditions.

No personal stories appear in the first edition. The national committee has asked the groups to begin collecting the personal recovery experiences of their members. They expect to print members' stories in future editions of the text.

The Brazilian fellowship is well aware of the value of good community relations. The national committee has placed high priority on immediate distribution of the book to libraries, treatment agencies and public officials all over the country.

"I could identify"

While we may not be able to provide a great deal of historical information, there is no such problem relating the warm empathy found in Brazilian recovery meetings. George, the WSO assistant director and one of the Americans in attendance at the Cam-



pinas conference, described a typical meeting:

"Meetings are usually two hours long. Each member is expected to share for about ten minutes. It is customary to end your sharing with a rap on the table while confirming aloud your desire for another twenty-four hours clean.

"Each group has a coordinator who is responsible for facilitating the meeting. When newcomers arrive for their first meeting they are immediately assigned a sponsor, male or female, and welcomed. In a large group the coordinator will choose members to participate in the sharing. On the blackboard in each meeting room are messages or phrases from

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the literature.

"Members take immense pride in their group. Coffee is readily available, and is actually served to you at your seat. At the end, the Seventh Tradition is observed and the meeting is adjourned with a prayer."

Bill described his first T.A. meeting in Rio in May 1987: "It was a sharing meeting—a small one, about six people. They sat down facing each other. One of them opened the meeting, and they talked. After one person would talk, the chairperson would ask another person to respond to what the first had said. A newcomer would talk, and then they would ask someone to talk to that person in the presence of everyone else. And that's the way they did it.

"What really impressed me was that, even though I couldn't understand the language, I could *understand*. I could identify with those people as clearly as if they had been the people from my home group in the States."

Growth forces decisions

The Brazilian fellowship began planning its second national conference at the December 1987 National Service Committee meeting. Concern with issues related to the fellowship's growth was foremost in the minds of committee members.

As the fellowship expanded, some members expected it to outgrow its simple service structure. They looked to the World Service Conference (WSC) *Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure* for help in reorganizing their work.

And as members of the international Narcotics Anonymous community, they asked themselves whether it

was appropriate to continue using another name for their national society. The Americans invited to the February conference in Campinas were asked to assist the Brazilian committee as they struggled with these issues.

"Campinas is a small city," Bill said. "When I say small, I mean half a million people. It's about sixty miles outside the city of Sao Paulo.

"The conference was being held at Villa Brandina, a Jesuit retreat house. The Jesuits have a treatment farm where addicts are detoxed and housed for extended periods. While they are there, they work on the farm. Villa Brandina provided housing as well as meeting space for the conference.

T.A. has placed great stress on the value of its relationship with the public. I think our entire fellowship should take notice.

"When we got there, we were greeted by a T.A. member. She brought us to the registration room. It was in a typically Brazilian building constructed with plastered-over tiles for the walls, roof tiles, and tiled floors. This particular building, we found out, was an historical one that had been there for a very long time.

"After we registered, we went out to introduce ourselves to the people there for the conference. They're not a 'huggy' group, which seemed a bit peculiar to me. It's not uncommon in

Brazil for men to embrace before they leave on a trip. When you greet a woman, you embrace her and kiss—or, what's more socially acceptable, make a kissing sound.

What really impressed me was that, even though I couldn't understand the language, I could understand the sharing.

"So right off when we met these people we reached out to hug them. They accepted it, but we got a definite sense that it wasn't something they do all the time. The first conference meeting started at 8:00 that evening, so until then we went about introducing ourselves and nodding heads and hugging people who weren't really comfortable with it but allowed you to do it anyway!"

A Friday night meeting served primarily to welcome those who had come for the conference. The weekend's real work began Saturday morning. George described the meeting: "There was an agenda to be followed, and as each issue was brought up there was a chance for discussion. Members of the National Service Committee gave their reports on the status of activities since the last meeting.

"As the morning moved on, we were reminded of all the service meetings we had been to back home. Hospital

and institutions work was discussed, but there are relatively few rehabilitation facilities in Brazil and currently no meetings in the prison system. There was also a discussion regarding the printing and distribution of literature and other materials.

"Periodically, members would request an opinion from the *nortes*. We offered our experience and tried to suggest solutions that had been effective in America and other countries, all the while trying not to present ourselves as ultimate authorities on what was best for them and their situation."

Change the name?

Recovering drug addicts in Brazil, using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, have worked very hard to establish a viable fellowship. The work they have done has been under the name, "Toxicomanos Anonimos," literally translated "Drug Addicts Anonymous."

As all of us can easily appreciate, they love their fellowship deeply. And since the identity of that thing they love is closely bound up with the name they have used for it, the discussion of whether or not to change that name created a good deal of tension.

"I think the people that were especially adamant about keeping the T.A. name," said Bill, "had it in their minds that the people from Narcotics Anonymous were coming down there with combat boots on, ready to kick butt and tell them what to do. It seemed to come as a shock to those people when we told them that the only reason we came was to be with them and to share with them if we could." As soon as this was under-

stood by all, the tension level markedly dropped.

"When the discussion came to the use of the name," George related, "they discussed several possible alternatives to the 'either/or' proposal. The name Narcotics Anonymous does have a direct translation into Portuguese, Brazil's national language: *Narcoticos Anonimos*.

The need is desperate. And that tremendous need is going to be knocking the fellowship's door off its hinges in very short order.

"But there are two good reasons why they have chosen to use the name Toxicomanos Anonimos in Brazil. The first concerns the association of the word *narcotics* with hard drug use only; *toxicomano* is a more inclusive referent for any kind of drug addict. The second is that they wish to avoid confusion with another anonymous fellowship in Brazil, Neurotics Anonymous.

"On the other hand, there is substantial support within T.A. itself for changing the name to Narcotics Anonymous. Those supporting this idea feel it would help the Brazilian fellowship be more easily recognizable as an N.A. community and to feel more fully a part of our worldwide society. It would also clear up any questions about affiliation and the proper use of

N.A. literature. There are some groups in Brazil who go so far as to refuse to use the T.A. name altogether.

"After much discussion at the conference—at times loud and impassioned—the service committee members forced a vote. There were three options: using Narcóticos Anônimos only; using both names with the N.A. logo, Narcotics Anonymous printed above in English on their literature, Toxicomanos Anônimos below as the accepted translation in Brazil; and just the opposite, T.A. above and N.A. below with the T.A. logo.

"The first option failed, eight to ten. The second was chosen as a request to the World Service Conference meeting in April 1988. They hope to be allowed to identify themselves in this way as part of the N.A. Fellowship. There was further discussion of this issue right up to the time of my departure, and I believe discussion will continue."

Forward motion

On Saturday night, the National Service Committee held a public meeting to familiarize community leaders, professionals, and national officials with the fellowship. Bill described the meeting: "It was held in the auditorium of the Campinas community center, which was unusual because it was a government building. There were probably 200 people there."

George continued: "The panel included members of both T.A. and the family group, ToxAnon, two priests, two doctors, and a local law enforcement official. In the audience were members of the general public, social workers, and of course all the rest of

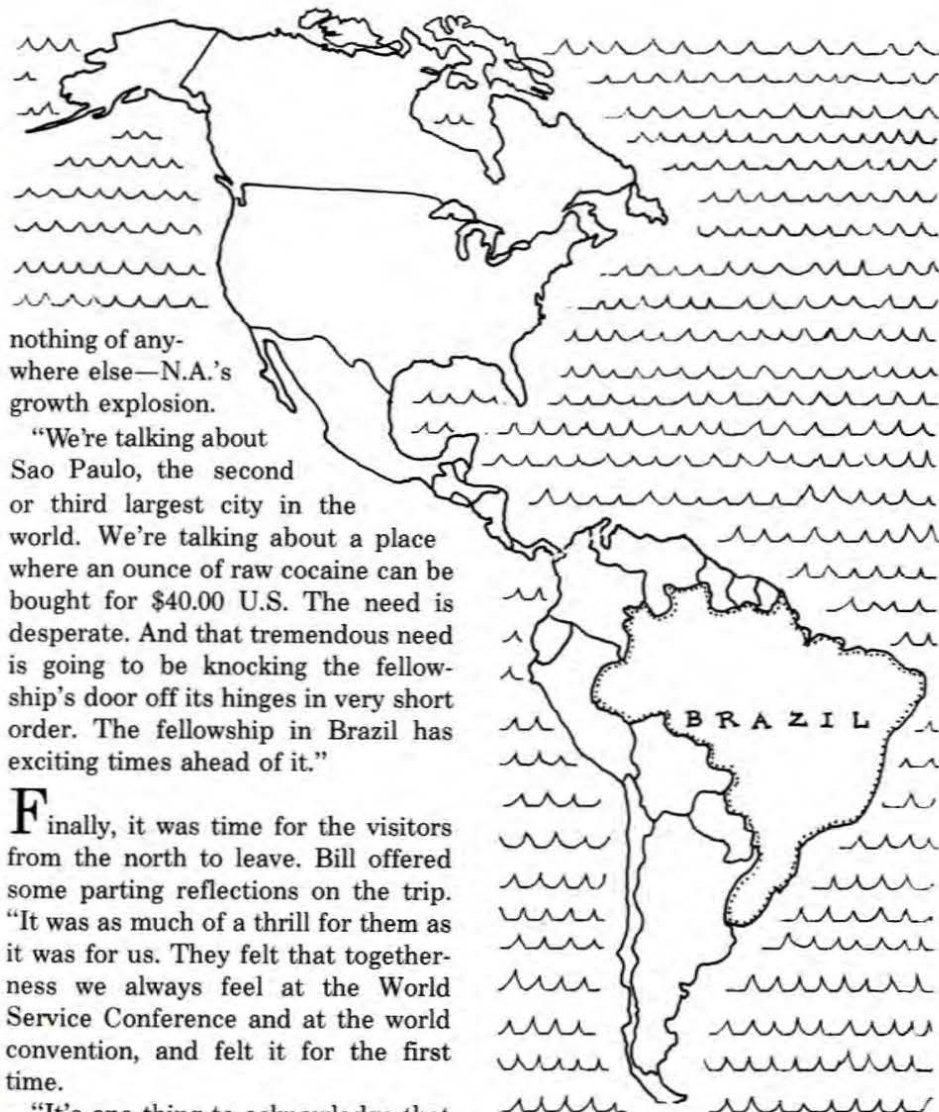
us. T.A. has placed great stress on the value of its relationship with non-addicts and the general public. I think our entire fellowship should take notice."

On Sunday, the conference addressed the matter of revising their organizational layout. They adopted and distributed a version of the *Temporary Working Guide* that had been translated up to and including the section on regions. With the new structure, they hope to have the flexibility necessary to accommodate future growth.

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Whether the Brazilian fellowship would be able to send a representative to the World Service Conference was doubtful, primarily because of the expense involved. One thing was not in doubt: if they could not attend in body, at least their hearts would be at the WSC, taking part in the annual gathering of the world fellowship's representatives.

"There was something else I kept trying to get across to them," Bill said. "They don't have any concept of what is surely going to happen very soon in Brazil. They have not had the opportunity to see in their country—to say



nothing of anywhere else—N.A.'s growth explosion.

"We're talking about Sao Paulo, the second or third largest city in the world. We're talking about a place where an ounce of raw cocaine can be bought for \$40.00 U.S. The need is desperate. And that tremendous need is going to be knocking the fellowship's door off its hinges in very short order. The fellowship in Brazil has exciting times ahead of it."

Finally, it was time for the visitors from the north to leave. Bill offered some parting reflections on the trip. "It was as much of a thrill for them as it was for us. They felt that togetherness we always feel at the World Service Conference and at the world convention, and felt it for the first time.

"It's one thing to acknowledge that there are Narcotics Anonymous meetings thousands of miles away, but you don't really *feel* it until you're in a situation like that. But you know, we're all the same. I got that. It came through real clear to me."

George, the assistant director of the World Service Office, closed: "The night we left Rio, we spent time with many of the members discussing what they could do next to help along the

situation in their country. Our answers came almost automatically: Practice the principles. Treat each other with respect. Believe that there is a loving God who will guide us to do the right thing. Insure that the newcomer has a place to recover.

"The tears welled in our eyes as we said our goodbyes. Till the next time, my friends, another twenty-four hours to you all. God be with you."

Editorial

A look at our literature

Our local fellowship, and perhaps the fellowship as a whole, has been experiencing some strife lately over the recent changes in the Basic Text. Since the release of the Fourth Edition, there has been quite a bit of controversy. I agree with some of what I've heard, and some I feel is exaggerated and unwarranted. However we resolve that conflict, I feel we need to look beyond the perceived problems with the Fourth Edition and take a critical look at our literature process itself and the quality of its products.

In my opinion, as an N.A. member and as a writer, the Third Edition falls far short of being first-rate literature. It bears the unmistakable imprint of being a collective work of many second- and third-rate writers, and I fear it is looked upon as such by many in the community outside of N.A. as well as by better educated persons within the fellowship.

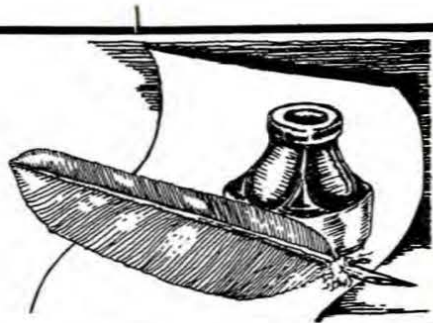
This is not to say that our public image should be our overriding, primary concern, but that we cannot afford to project an image of bungling incompetence in the outside world if

we are to offer our services to addicts seeking recovery. We are assessed, judged if you will, by the caliber of literature we send out through our groups, into institutions and to the public. We cannot afford to appear to be a fellowship where the best and brightest among us come up with half-baked, second-rate material. Correcting grammar and improving the caliber of literature made available will go a long way toward improving our public image.

All of this brings me to the following conclusion. As a fellowship, we ought to put even more of our literature production into professional hands. I am convinced that one of our "Achilles heels" in this fellowship is the very

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convoluted method we have for producing and approving literature. The wonderful, radically new vision of what recovery means to us as N.A. members is often obscured and even lost by the inept delivery of much of



our literature. Much of this ineptness, I'm afraid, results from the strong democratic tradition which pervades our processes: it is, in effect, a price we pay for our democratic mode of operation.

It is an unfortunate fact of life, though, that clarity and cogency have very little to do with collective processes and the compromises hammered out in these processes. Too many cooks *do* spoil the batter, especially if the cooks have never bothered to attain any degree of culinary proficiency. To try to strike a balance between the need for responsiveness to the group conscience and the need to produce top quality literature is apparently a difficult task, indeed.

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I'm not sure if any of this will make much of an impact, but I believe something needed to be said that will probably not be said by our local "trusted servants." As I write this there is an organized effort under way at the regional level to apply pressure to recall the Fourth Edition. I'd be more inclined to agree if we had something better to fall back on, but I believe we don't. The Third Edition, revised or otherwise, certainly doesn't qualify as an improvement.

I know the mention of A.A. (aka "the other fellowship") is generally frowned upon in our groups, but I hope it won't be taken the wrong way when I suggest that persons involved in writing our literature could learn a lot by critically analyzing some of their literature, especially their book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with respect to clarity, style, and consistency of vision. We need not mimic the other fellowship to learn from their approach.

In closing, I would like to remark that I personally have gained a great deal from my involvement with N.A. I truly view the contribution of N.A. to the welfare of suffering addicts as nothing short of astounding. I hope that we will not sink further into the quagmire of petty battles over semantics and dogma when so much more is at stake.

W.K., Michigan

Editorial replies

The following is in reply to the letter, "Redressing the Balance," published in the February 1988 N.A. Way.

From Oklahoma:

My dictionary defines "redress" as "setting right what is wrong." In the February "From our Readers" section, Michigan objects to the use of masculine gender in the steps. Maybe this is an impropriety; after all, who has such authority as to define the sex of God? Obviously nobody.

I have spent hundreds—no thousands—of hours meditating and con-

templating the nature of God. I know very little more now than I did at the start. My old sponsor used to say that if I had spent that much time and psychic energy focusing upon making a decent living, I'd be a wealthy man instead of the near pauper I am today. Perhaps he was right!

One of my early notions was to at least make this God fella unisex for the sake of the women in the fellowship. The answer to that one was, "Yeah, God might turn out to be a male chauvinist and zap us silly for trying to screw up his program."

The trouble with the steps, you say, is that they discriminate? O.K., ace, maybe you're right, but let's examine the other side of the coin!

How I did long to take this one to the Himalayas. I understand that conditions there are ideal for meditating. For the most part I have sat at my kitchen table. My view is rusty oil field equipment, Johnsongrass and dead scrub oak trees. But even under those circumstances I could see that this conclusion was based on fear, and fear was the bugaboo we were trying to get rid of, right?

A later meditation revealed two kinds of fear, normal and abnormal. Who wouldn't be afraid of a raging fire? Who wouldn't be afraid of a roaring tornado? Who do you know that has the courage to pet a live

rattlesnake, or step into the path of a speeding train? Surely no sane person. These kinds of fears seem sane and normal.

Do you want to hear a few of my suggestions for redressing the balance? I've got lots of them, from plans to reform our prison system and our schools to ways of improving religion and politics. If this weren't the N.A. Way, or if it weren't for the Tenth Tradition, I'd share them with you. But this is the N.A. Way, so let's talk about the steps.

The trouble with the steps, you say (here I am, talking to myself), is that they discriminate? Well now, O.K., ace, maybe you're right, but before we make any changes in the steps, let's examine the other side of the coin! May I ask you a few questions?

A. Did the steps save your life, just as they are?

B. Have they saved the lives of tens of thousands of addicts, just as they are?

C. Has there ever been anything, before or after these steps, that has even come close to showing addicts a way out, just as they are?

D. Is the recovery of a hopeless addict any less a miracle than the raising of the dead, the cleansing of a leper, or any other miracle that you've read or heard about? Have you not witnessed with your own eyes the mass healing of addicts using the steps exactly as they are?

E. Even if it were accomplished to change one word in the steps or traditions, is there any assurance that it wouldn't start a chain reaction that would split or destroy us?

F. Who am I to imagine that I could improve something that works so well?

J.H.

To "What message did we carry?", an N.A. Way editorial printed January 1988:

From New Zealand:

I am a new member of N.A. writing this letter from a prison cell. I have spent most of my life in prison (I'm twenty-seven years old) with my feelings locked away. However, in the last two months I have unlocked my feelings and let the N.A. way come into my life. I have never felt anything like it in my life. I am really looking forward to living the N.A. way of life, even though I know I have a long way to go.

I have just finished reading the January issue of your magazine. I was enjoying it to the fullest until I came to the editorial, "What message did we carry?" [regarding behavior problems at N.A. conventions]. It brought me down in a screaming heap. I have never respected anyone or anything in

my life until now with N.A., but I feel that there's no difference between this kind of behavior and the kind I'm trying to get away from. I have a name for this kind of behavior. I call it letting your left foot drop. Come on, fellow N.A. members, please don't let our left foot drop.

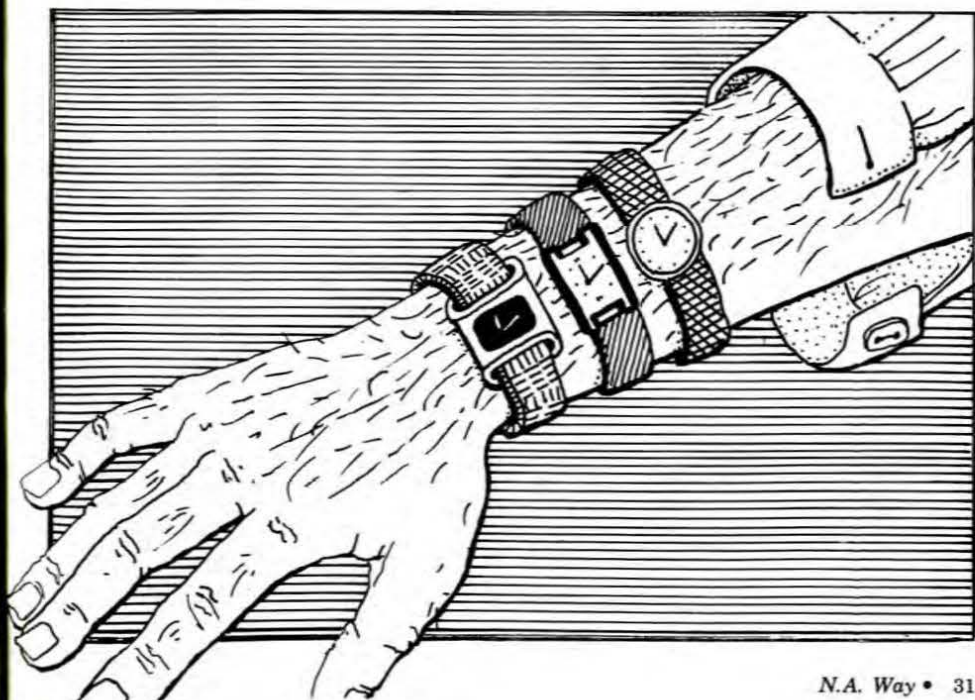
M.S.

To "Hey, Buddy, Wanna Buy a Watch?", an N.A. Way editorial printed February 1988:

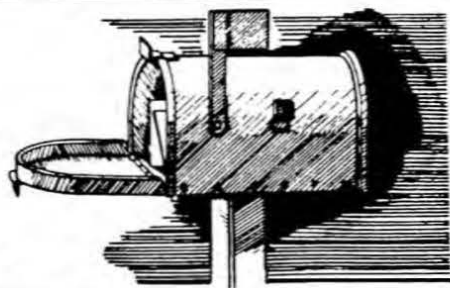
From Oklahoma

The way R.G. from Illinois handled the traditions in the February 1988 opinion section was superb. This masterpiece should serve as a lively basis for discussion in any group having problems with people selling things at meetings, or for that matter, any group wishing to avoid getting into such a situation.

J.H.



From Our Readers



Hard work

I have always been the type to promptly admit when I was wrong. However, I have seldom been wrong. That makes hard work of the steps, especially ten!

I have always envied the habitual screw-up type. It seems so easy for them. Now, it's tough being always on the lookout for the little personality flaws that can be construed as "wrongs" and used as a chance to work this vital step. But my big break finally came.

First, I must go back to my initial introduction to the Twelve Steps. It was in the mid-1950's in another fellowship. I made a terrific start, but later got bogged down and then faded away.

I made a comeback early in 1972 which still holds good. About this time a motley handful of N.A.'s were struggling to keep afloat in our area. I commiserated with them and half-heartedly tried to help now and then. But I, who knew practically everything, had no doubt that this thing would flop. Those interested in survival would best alter those big egos to fit into the other fellowship. I didn't come right out and say it, but I hinted as much to those whom I thought were bright enough to understand. (Those who have an ear, let them hear!)

Well, wouldn't you know it, some-

where along about then, a sprinkling of addicts (though it seemed to me like a major conspiracy) decided to prove me and God wrong! The darn fools pulled clear out of the other fellowship and put all their eggs in the one N.A. basket. When I heard that rumble, I knew for sure they were doomed, and said so.

This writing brings us up all the way to 1988. A recent N.A. *Newsline* article I read said that worldwide meetings have passed the 10,000 mark. Who knows where the growth is going from here, but it promises to be staggering. I am forever grateful to you for providing me with the opportunity to work Step Ten.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way

I would like to express to the N.A. Way my sincere gratitude and appreciation for continuing to publish this enlightening literature of recovery.

In the early days of my recovery all I had to look forward to from the postmaster were monthly billings for service rendered to me during the active phase of my addiction. Today I am both humbly proud and pleased to be looking forward to each successive issue of the N.A. Way magazine.

Not a month has passed since I began subscribing that I do not find a topic or discussion provided in the magazine that I can relate to my

personal recovery from addiction.

When the spirit of recovery is so amply represented in the articles and information presented in the magazine, no doubt can be left in the minds of readers that N.A. works, and that the fellowship and the lives of addicts who choose to participate in it are becoming fuller, happier, and more mature.

G.D., Connecticut

More is being revealed!

Yesterday, I was walking in a forest preserve. I often look to nature when I'm in a bad space. It reassures me of my Higher Power's love and the order and reason in life.

I came upon a tree stump and began to study it. I looked at the rings, trying to imagine each one as a year's growth. As I studied them, I noticed the great difference among the years. Some rings were almost unnoticeable, they were so thin, and others were unbelievably thick.

I couldn't help but wonder if there wasn't a message for me in this tree stump. Had the tree been living in worry, fear, and isolation when it hadn't been growing very fast? Had it lost its self-acceptance, or come to believe that its Higher Power didn't love it as much as it did when it was growing quickly, the year before? And, the next year, when it had grown so much, had its ego grown along with it? Had it felt superior to the other trees around it? Had it begun to judge them as "not as good"?

Then I looked at the living trees around me. I couldn't tell which ones were growing quickly and which ones more slowly. I couldn't tell from looking at what they had on the outside—bark, branches and leaves. The only signs of their growth would be found within.

I realized then that I am okay, no matter what, and so are we all. I have to try to love all of you, no matter where I am at or where you are at. And I have to love myself the same way, to live in faith, not fear; acceptance, not rejection; to look at the insides, not the outsides.

Anonymous

Editor's note

Better than half of you reading this note took part in our recent free trial offer. We hope that you're enjoying the recovery stories, features, and editorials we've shared with you. We're grateful for the opportunity you've given us to share in your recovery.

Response to the free trial offer has been phenomenal. Free trials have boosted our subscription level from just under 4500 in April to nearly 10,000 with this issue. Less than half of our total subscriptions, however, have been paid.

We're grateful for your interest in the N.A. Way. Not only does the increased number of subscriptions put the magazine on firmer financial footing, but it tells us that we're carrying the N.A. message further than we've ever been able to carry it before.

Now comes the moment of truth. You can keep those stories, features, and editorials coming to your mailbox, month in, month out, by sending us a check. Or, having had a chance to look at the magazine for a couple of months, you can let it go. The decision is yours. Either way, thanks for the chance you've given us to be a part of your program.

R.H., Editor

Comin' Up



ALABAMA: Sep. 8-11, 1988; Alabama-Northwest Florida Convention; Gulf Shore Park Resort; Regional Convention, P.O. Box 115, Decatur, AL 35601

ALBERTA: Jun. 3-5, 1988; Third Edmonton N.A. Convention; Highlands Community League, 11333 62nd Street, Edmonton; Barb H. (403) 423-0850; Barb H., #3-9321-101 A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5H 0C4

AUSTRALIA: Sep. 30-Oct. 3, 1988; Australasian Regional Convention; Petersham Town Hall, Sydney, New South Wales; phone contacts (Sydney) Melinda 698-2563, Brett 309-2135; Australasian Convention, P.O. Box B88, Boronia Park, Sydney, NSW AUSTRALIA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Jul. 22-24, 1988; British Columbia N.A. Rally; Henry B., (604) 434-8314; BCNAR #9, 4650 Fernglen Place, Barnaby, BC V5G 3W1

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Third Annual Northern Lights Outdoor Campout Roundup; Bidnisti Lake Resort, 35 mi. west of Prince George; contact Phil H. (604) 562-2931; Warren, Chris 563-5719; ROUNDUP, c/o Warren & Chris M., 2510 Upland Street #113, Prince George, BC CANADA

CALIFORNIA: Jun. 3-5, 1988; 1st Annual Northern California Unity Weekend Campout; 200 miles north of SF on Hwy. 101, Humboldt-Mendocino County line; Kenny or Lorraine (707) 826-2539; Unity Weekend, P.O. Box 6634, Eureka, CA 95502

2) July 8-10, 1988; San Diego Regional Convention; Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero, San Diego, (619) 232-3861; Elisa L. (619) 294-7240, Lea B. 560-5918, Ron G. 282-6777; San Diego Convention, P.O. Box 155, San Diego, CA 92118

3) Jul. 8-10, 1988; Central California Regional Campout; South Lake San Antonio, northwest of Paso Robles; Don A. (805) 528-7439, Howard 995-1429; Central California RSC, P.O. Box 267, Morro Bay, CA 93442

4) Sep. 1-4, 1988; World Convention of N.A.; Anaheim Hilton and Towers, 777 W. Convention Way, Anaheim; convention info (818) 780-3951; addl. info. Anaheim Convention Bureau, (714) 999-8939; World Convention of N.A., P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999

COLORADO: Aug. 5-7, 1988; Colorado Regional Convention; Clarion Hotel, 1345 28th St., Boulder, (303) 443-3805; Jon F. (303) 642-3273

CONNECTICUT: Jun. 3-5, 1988; Second Family Campout; Lone Oaks Campground, East Canaan; Jim S. (203) 264-0911; Sparky M. 598-7889; Denise R. 264-0049; 1988 Campout Committee, P.O. Box 1075, Woodbury, CT 06798

FLORIDA: June 30 - July 4, 1988; FRCNA-7; Stouffer Hotel, 6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando FL 32821, (305) 351-5555; contact Charlie M. (305) 588-6273, Lovell H. 291-6138, Richard C. 891-1867; Florida RCNA, P.O. Box 17807, W. Palm Beach, FL 33416

FRANCE: Jul. 22-24, 1988; 5th European Service Conference; housing reservations, Paris (1) 43-61-24-51; for more information in Paris, call Linda (1) 42-67-38-62, Jean-Pierre (1) 42-77-14-25, Michele (1) 47-90-11-01, Christian (1) 39-69-04-05; Narcotiques Anonymes, B.P. 160 04, 75160 Paris Cedex 04, France

HAWAII: Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Western States Unity Convention, Beachcomber's Hotel, Honolulu; Tom C. (808) 262-4631, Steve S. 254-1647, RSO 533-4900; WSUC-5, 1305 Aalapapa, Kailua, HI 96734

ILLINOIS: June 24-26, 1988; 4th Annual Flight to Freedom; Coy & Wilma's Campground, Rend Lake, Sesser, IL; Earl (618) 735-2409; Jim (217) 347-0305; Lawrence (618) 829-5387; Campout, 107 E. Lawrence, Effingham, IL 62401

2) Aug. 5-7, 1988; Fourth Midcoast Convention; Continental Regency Hotel, Peoria; Susie & Steve H. (309) 274-5675; Linda E. 382-3742

IOWA: Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Iowa Regional Convention; Hotel Fort Des Moines, 10th & Walnut, Des Moines, (800) 247-8057; Kelli O. (319) 354-7625; Dannie G. (515) 628-4677; Iowa Regional Convention, P.O. Box 1960, Des Moines, IA 50306

IRELAND: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 3rd Annual Irish Convention; N.A. Ireland, P.O. Box 1368, Sheriff Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

KANSAS: Jul. 1-4, 1988; MARC '88 Free Campout; Harvey County Lake, Newton; Anita or Warren (316) 687-3916, Pamela 524-3771

MAINE: Sep. 9-11, 1988; We're A Miracle V; Bruce & Kim (207) 772-4558; Stan & Jane (207) 784-5863; Bill (617) 563-5885; ASC of Maine, Convention Committee, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

MICHIGAN: Jul. 1-4, 1988; Freedom IV; Hope College, Holland, MI; Bob W. (616) 857-2583, Carl D. 344-7530; tickets, John F. (313) 987-8620; 4th Michigan Convention, 523 Butternut #106, Holland, MI 49424

MINNESOTA: Jun. 10-12, 1988; Upper Midwest Regional Convention; St. Johns University, St. Cloud; Rick, Steph (701) 235-3570; Cheryl (612) 251-5904; Upper Midwest Convention, P.O. Box 5393, Fargo, ND 58105

MISSOURI: Jun. 10-12, 1988; Show Me Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Westport, St. Louis; Rich L. (314) 949-0843; Show Me Regional Convention, P.O. Box 596, St. Charles, MO 63301

2) Jul. 29-31, 1988; 9th Annual High on Life Picnic; Orleans Trail Resort, Stockton Lake (417) 276-3566; info (417) 782-1467; Picnic, 119 Connor, Joplin, MO 64801

NEVADA: Jul. 15-17, 1988; Sixth Annual Stampede for Serenity Campout; Stampede Reservoir, Truckee, Nevada; information call hotline (702) 322-4811; Sierra Sage RSC, P.O. Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

NEW HAMPSHIRE: June 24-26, 1988; 9th ECCNA; University of NH in Durham; Jay N. (603) 437-5501; Brian (617) 452-7875; Shirley (617) 458-4808; 9th ECCNA, PO Box 388, Pelham, NH 03076

NEW YORK: Jun. 17-19, 1988; 2nd Annual Manhattan Area Convention; Michelle (718) 788-3289; Unity '88, 496-A Hudson St., Ste. K-39, New York, NY 10014

2) July 29-31, 1988; Third Northern New York Regional Convention; Wells College Campus, Aurora; Dave L. (315) 331-1361, Kim N. (716) 663-1386; N. New York Convention, P.O. Box 1014, Geneva, NY 14456

3) Aug. 5-7, 1988; Second Annual Recovery in the Woods; Yorkshire, NY; Lynne B. (716) 895-4916; Dan Z. 825-5334; Recovery in the Woods, Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

NORTH CAROLINA: July 1-3, 1988; 9th Carolina Regional Convention; Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, 3 Southern Life Center, Greensboro, NC; contact Marc (919) 855-3294, Ed 565-4913; Carolina Regional Conv., 6518 Dusty Road, Liberty, NC 27298

OKLAHOMA: Jun. 24-26, 1988; Seventh Annual Clean'n Crazy Campout; Cherokee Landing, Wildcat Park (Area C), Lake Tenkiller, OK; Mike A. (405) 382-8741; Chuck G. 372-4007; Patrick D. 372-1875

OREGON: Jun. 18-19, 1988; P.I./Phoneline Multi-Regional Workshop; Naterlin Community Center, 169 SW Coast Hwy., Newport; Karen G. (503) 929-3614, Carol N. 967-8807; Multi-Regional Workshop, 2804 Newton St., Philomath, OR 97370

2) Aug. 6-8, 1988; 3rd Oregon-Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Eugene Hilton Hotel; Laurie P. (503) 726-2449; OSIRCNA-3, 3255 Gateway #68, Springfield, OR 97477

PENNSYLVANIA: Jun. 10-12, 1988; 6th Tri-State Spiritual Retreat; Fresh Air Camp, Warrendale; Tom S. (412) 371-0151, Brenda S. 681-9616, Rich J. 371-3891; TSRSO, Inc., 133 S. 20th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

SASKATCHEWAN: Aug. 19-21, 1988; 4th Regina Area Convention; Glencairn Neighbourhood Recreation Centre, 2626 Dewdney E, Regina; Dave G. (306) 525-2686, Gina M. 586-1065, Shannon L. 775-1645; Regina ASC, P.O. Box 3563, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3L7

TEXAS: Jul. 8-10, 1988; Texas Unity Convention, Whitney; David (713) 332-8236; Texas Unity (Whitneys), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

UTAH: Aug. 19-21, 1988; Utah Campvention; Granite Flats Campgrounds, American Fork Canyon (outside Provo); Steve S. (801) 359-6607, Lou B. 467-8776

VIRGINIA: Jul. 16, 1988; Bull Run Area 1st Anniversary, N.A. 35th Anniversary; 9 a.m. 'til dark; Old Mill Park, Fredericksburg; Mike F. (703) 373-2769, Leslie C. 335-2603, Laura J. 335-5434; Bull Run ASC, P.O. Box 505, Triangle, VA 22172-0505

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Almost Heaven Area Convention; Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Front Royal, Virginia, (703) 635-7171; Jeff L. (301) 791-0830, Vicki G. (304) 263-5827, Kevin M. (703) 667-1814; Almost Heaven Convention, P.O. Box 1595, Martinsburg, WV 25401

WISCONSIN: Jul. 8-10, 1988; Christmas in July Campout; ALSO Multi-Regional P.I. Learning Day, Jul. 9; Horicon Ledge County Park, Horicon; Russell, days (608) 767-2385, eves 795-4567; Badgerland ASC, P.O. Box 649, Madison, WI 53701

THE N.A. Way

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the N.A. way*

What Is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover.

It costs nothing to belong to N.A.—there are no fees or dues. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.

For more information about N.A., see your local phone directory, or write us at the address inside.