

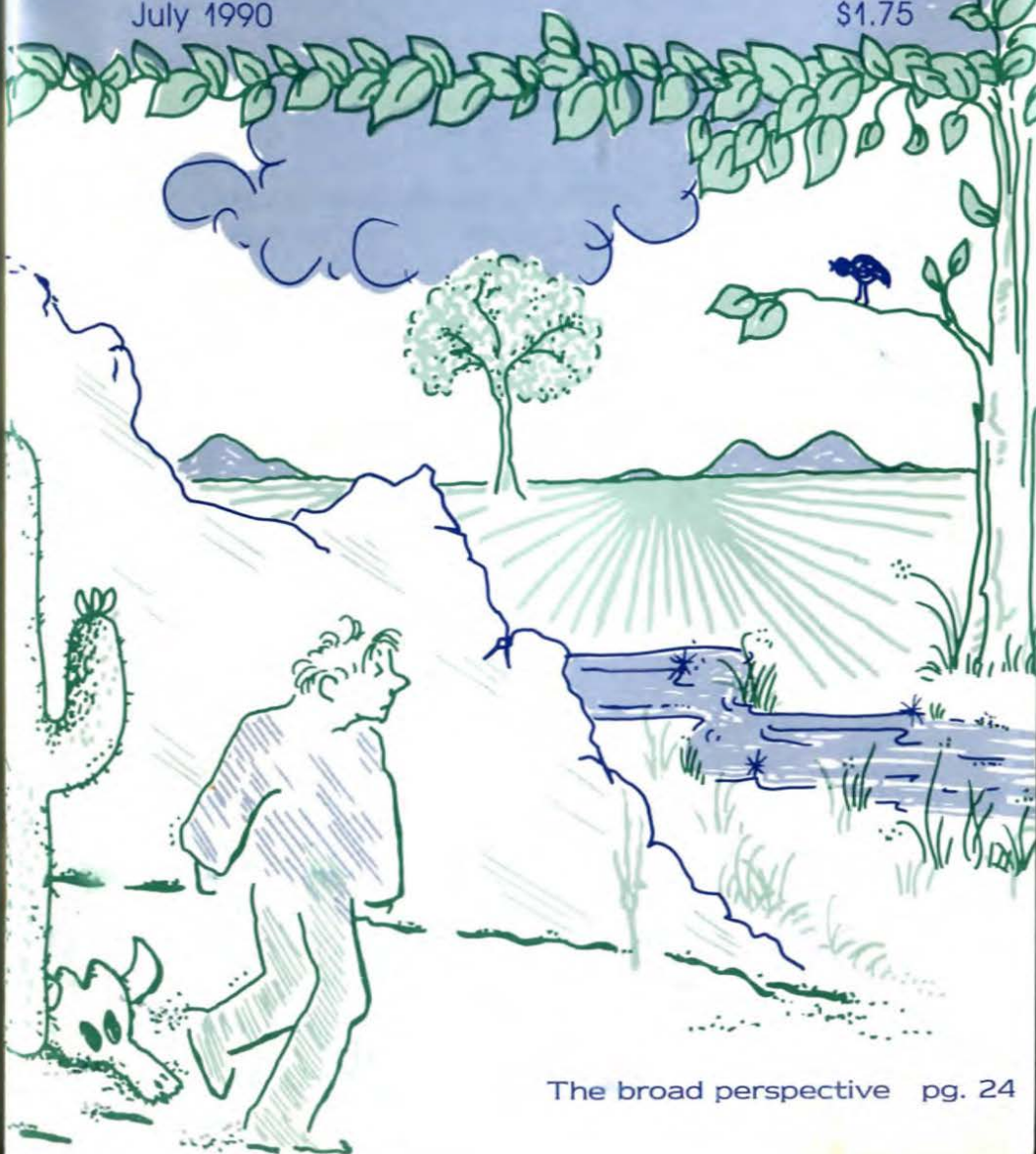


THE N.A. Way[®]

MAGAZINE

July 1990

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The broad perspective pg. 24

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.

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THE N.A. Way[®] MAGAZINE

volume eight, number seven

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meeting in print	
To anyone in N.A.	2
First ninety days	5
Humility	7
So much more than simply	
“not using”	8
Grieving but growing	10
The 30 day glow	11
Just for today	14
Seasons of decision	15
home group	
The shadow returns	18
feature	
Report on India	20
news	
The broad perspective	24
viewpoint	
On prejudice	26
Objection to cover text	28
Boring!	29
Plea for anonymity	30
from our readers	
Letters and short articles	31
comin' up	
A worldwide N.A. calendar	34

The N.A. Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire N.A. Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on N.A. matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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To anyone at N.A.

This series of three letters was recently received in the WSO and referred to the Group Services department. Freddie A., whose task often is to share the joy and pain such correspondence portrays, was so moved by this particular writer that he approached the magazine when he got the second letter. After discussion it was decided that the notes should *not* be used because, even though touching and representative of many addicts' struggles, some readers might take 's story as an excuse for more chemical maintenance. At the conclusion of that meeting, about April 15, someone said "Let's hold off, maybe she will send another letter." She did. They are printed here with respect for the spirit that struggles to overcome isolation, by whatever means necessary.

April 9, 1990

To anyone at N.A.,

My name is and I am an addict. I was introduced to N.A. through a halfway house after I came out of a detox. Upon this date I've been out of detox for 19 days. When I got out I was still withdrawing, so they haven't

been 19 clean days. I was 5 days in detox and had someone bring me some heroin for the first 2 days, so when I came out I was really withdrawing. I didn't want to go home to my apartment, still feeling like that, because I knew I was going to start using dope again. I really wanted to stop, so I thought. So I went to a halfway house, and from there I was sent to a N.A. meeting an hour after my arrival. I was greeted with a flower from a complete stranger with a card that said, "This is the first day of the rest of your life," signed "G."

Well, I can't express what my reaction to all of this was. Here I was in a room full of dope fiends and when I announced I was an addict and it was my first day clean everyone clapped and hugged me. I said to myself these people aren't for real, they still have to be getting high. Nobody does this for nothing. But that night I was sent again to another meeting and I found myself looking forward to it.

Please excuse how I write this and in what form. I'm just writing what I can't say at my meetings. Oh! By the way the guy who gave me the flower had shared in the meeting and had said he was HIV positive and had a couple of other diseases due to being HIV positive. Well that did it for me, you see I am HIV positive for the last three years. When I heard him say that I said to myself this is where I belong, with someone who understands what I'm going through. Well after the meeting I found myself going up to the this guy and told him about my disease. In return all he said to me was, "You got a friend here and it gets better."

Well, I went back upstairs with such

good feelings only to start feeling sick again. But I didn't want to use drugs so I went to the store and bought a sleep aide. I thought it was okay. It came from a drug store and was legal. And I hadn't slept in days. Well I took it and it lasted for about three days. After that I didn't use it anymore and I was sleeping okay. I continued going to N.A. meetings, about three a day. It was going great, I felt wonderful, until it was time to go home, about seven days later. I went home because someone at a T.C. where I went to an interview told me that I could lose my apartment. So I went home as an outpatient, convinced that I was not going to use again. Well I really tried.

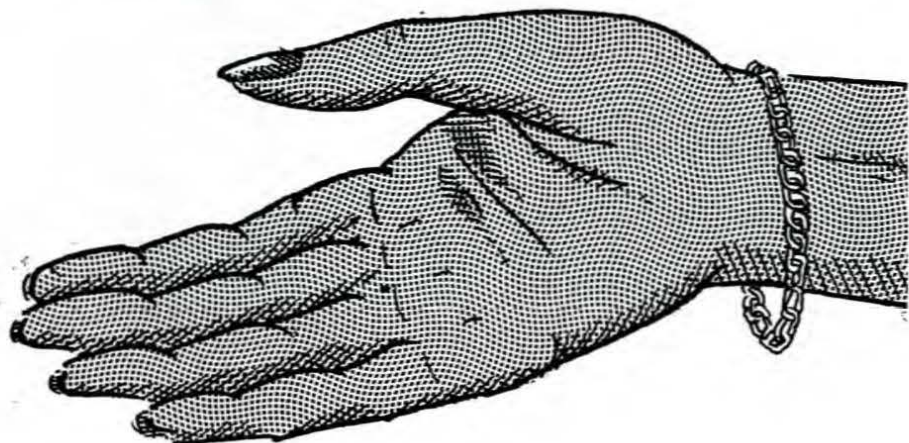
I was saying the serenity prayer all day long and it helped for awhile. The next day I woke up with bad withdrawal symptoms all over again. It took only one day before I was back at the cop man buying more dope. Well the rest is history. It's been nine days and I have a full blown habit again. I am still going to N.A. meetings, but I feel so much guilt and shame that I can't share any of this

at my home meetings. But I keep coming back.

Today I went to a methadone program and they accepted me. I am on 10 milligrams today and tomorrow they will give me 20 milligrams. On the third day they will give me 30 milligrams and that is as high as I go. My intentions are to stay there for no longer than two weeks until I can feel less sick from my withdrawals. You see, I can't let anyone in my family know that I have had a relapse since I've come out of the detox or I will lose my daughter, 12 years old.

So this is the only way I see out, so my mom can't see me sick, because she will pick up on it quick. Oh how I need my Higher Power God in my life, but I don't know how to do it. I'm writing you because of it being that I feel so ashamed to share at my meetings. I feel a little better letting someone in N.A. know how and what I'm going through. Something must be happening to me when I keep coming back. I desperately need help. If someone out there has any suggestions please write or call collect.

Anonymous, New York



To Narcotics Anonymous,

I am writing to you because I would like to get a list of the World Directory of registered N.A. meetings. I also would like to be part of the Loner Group. I would also like to receive the bi-monthly newsletter Meeting By Mail. And as I keep coming back to the meetings and reading literature I find more and more things and literature that I am very much interested in reading and receiving. I would like to subscribe to the Newline and the *N.A. Way magazine*.

I've already sent a letter sharing my experiences and hope to N.A. without knowing about the Loner Group. As I wrote in my letter, I'm a newcomer and I need all the help and suggestions I can get. I can't share at my home group just yet, but maybe with someone's suggestions from the Loner Group, maybe someday soon, I will be sharing. All this is new and hard for me, but I find it easier to write and I can be completely honest this way for now. I want to learn how to be able to share at my home group.

I want to have what they have and most of all I want to stay clean one day at a time. So I'm reaching out the only way I know how right now. But with my Higher Power's help and the N.A. Fellowship maybe I will be able to achieve all of that. I've already bought the N.A. Text Book and I'm enjoying every page that I read.

Anonymous, New York

Dear Freddie,

I'm hoping that at the arrival of this letter you and everyone else in N.A. in California are in God's everlasting care.

As for me, I'm doing great. I was so happy to receive your call, but your letter made me feel even better. I am honored that you want my letters for the *N.A. Way magazine*. Just as you hoped I am free from Methadone with my Higher Power's help. Things are going good for me. I've gotten a sponsor and she has helped me a lot. I'm going through a hard time right now but it's not as bad as before because I have a Higher Power and new friends in the fellowship who are making things much easier for me to handle.

My health is not so good now and I'm not able to make as many meetings as I would like so I can't thank you enough for the Loner's Group magazine. Things can never be as bad as picking up. As long as I stay clean for today things will get better for me, and I am living proof of that. I can't thank N.A. enough for a new way of life that has been given to me. I hope someday we will be able to meet in person. So if you're ever in New York please call. And please keep in touch. Your card and letter made me feel so good when I thought nobody was there for me. Again, thank you for being you, and today I have a new friend in California.

Thank You from a new friend,

The first ninety days

I completed my first ninety days in 1970. I had just returned from Southeast Asia and found I didn't fit in with the peer group for which I yearned. I wanted to become part of the new generation of pot smoking long-hairs. With my military haircut and lack of expertise in the "counter-culture" I found myself spit on by some, shied away from by most, and once chased through a park on Marthas Vineyard by people yelling "narc, narc." Later, back at school, I could not make friends. My solution to this was simple: I would sell drugs. Having bought a couple of hits of LSD to sell to two guys in a campus restaurant, I sold them for what I paid for them. And so the first drugs I sold were purchased by two state cops. My first ninety days were spent in the slammer.

I carried a major resentment for the last twenty years over the time I spent behind bars. And I hated authority figures, especially my jailers. I always said that anyone who took a job as a screw was probably a juvenile delin-

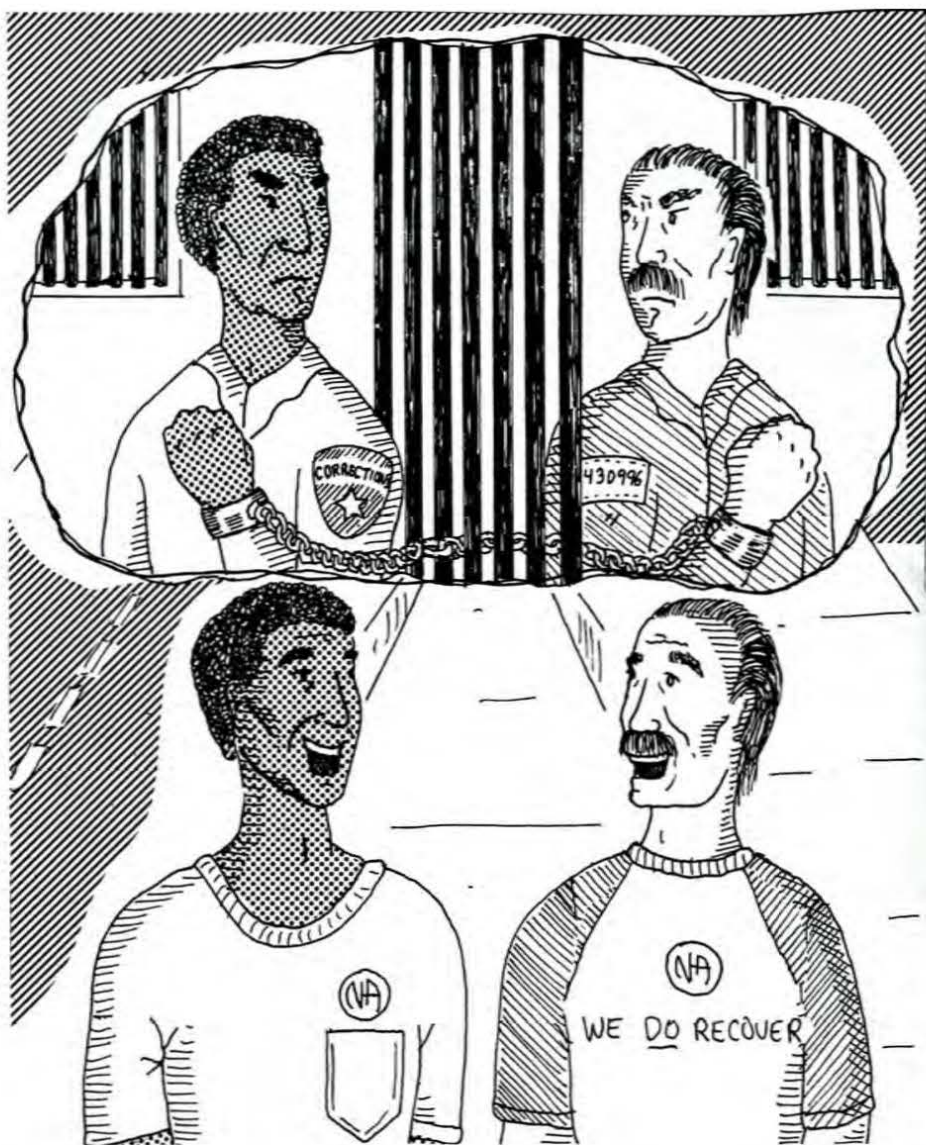
quent, and had to have been the school bully.

Yesterday, after a meeting, I spent several hours with a newcomer to the program who was going through a painful separation. As we talked I began to like this guy. Even though he was new to the program he was on a path to recovery that was inspiring to me.

As he shared some more of his story it became clear he was having difficulty meeting people, something I could identify with. He seemed reluctant to talk about his job and said people judged him harshly for what he did. Often, he said, people would look at him with contempt. I couldn't understand why anyone would find this man to be anything other than a compassionate, caring human being, struggling on his own path to recovery, and making progress.

I found out he was a *guard* at a prison down the road, hated his job, had six years till retirement and was thinking seriously about quitting. He had not identified with the convicts he'd been guarding for the last fourteen years, and looked on addicts with disdain. I was an outlaw, an addict, and a convict; and had carried a sizable chip on my shoulder for men like him for twenty years.

I think we were at that meeting and spent those hours together for a reason. After that I found the chip (burden) on my shoulder, no longer existed. I hope he learned at least one person does not judge him for what he did, but for who he is, a fellow traveller on the road to recovery.



Coincidence that we both came together in that time and space? I doubt it! I no longer believe in coincidence.

In a week's time I will have another ninety days clean. It's not the first ninety days, nor even the second, but

one day at a time I am confident this will be the last "First Ninety Days." I am finally perceiving change. Metamorphosis has come slow for me, but it is coming.

G.B., Maine

Humility

It has taken me almost six years of being clean and gaining a trust of God as I understand him, and much prayer and faith within myself, to work a honest, true, seventh step.

Even though I accept who I am today (and who I thought I was before I found recovery through N.A., a hard-core, ruthless, worthless human) to try to be gentle, caring, loving man is not easy at times. But I am a marshmallow man in recovery. Even so, I still at times put up walls of defense towards others, because I am still scared to allow others to know me. I have even gone as far as having tattoos put on me in unlikely places to ward off friends, but no matter what I have said (or what clothes I have worn) there are a lot of N.A. folks who love me very much. At times I feel like a little boy, with many tears rolling down my cheeks. It is hard for me to cry, even when I'm alone. I have to force the tears out.

Today I know, no matter what, my God is with me. At times I pray without ceasing, all thru the day.

I know when four or five friends bring something to my attention I am not aware of, no matter what it is, I know they are telling me in love and I take a look at what they say to me. Either its my attitude, or a shortcoming I am unaware of, or one I still go with.

Today I value what others think of me. Even though I am not perfect. I know I must work my recovery for me. I used to think what others thought of me wasn't my business but it is, for I can affect others around me and I can't help those who still suffer if I'm high on self ego. For me today ego stands for "edging God out," which can get me moving back to old ways of headed towards destruction.

No matter what the pain I go thru today it is a good pain for I can feel today and work thru the hurts and at the other end of it all my God and me relying on him. He sees me thru clean. I will always depend on God and others in N.A. to help me thru the hard times of living life, for I am willing to hang in one more day. I know thru a spark of faith comes much hope and I do believe I will make life easier on me if I stay humble within myself to recover from my old ways of doing things. I have been praying a lot lately for my defects to be removed.

In this last year I've felt more spiritually free in my recovery. Up to now, and as the days go by, I change, even if I am unaware of the change. I do change, for I am still clean and all I've done is do my best to be humble and be me.

S.S., Oregon

So much more than simply "not using"

There have been a number of times in my recovery that I have heard another member share something touching and emotional about the gifts of this program. In my very early days I listened to statements expressing profound gratitude to Narcotics Anonymous with some cynicism. I didn't exactly think that a speaker was putting everyone on, but I didn't really think I was hearing heartfelt emotions either. As time went on, I would periodically hear someone share that they'd overcome a disease, and I would think that they probably didn't really have what they thought they had in the first place, so overcoming it was not really very impressive.

As the days stretched into weeks, months, and years, I began having more and more faith in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of our fellowship. I came to realize that these people who shared these wonderfully healing things were not bullshitting themselves or me. They were simply telling the truth about recovery. Recovery isn't just not using drugs, (although

that is a miracle in itself) recovery is a process of spiritual healing and growth.

I always blamed my father for all my shortcomings in life. I've been bitter about how he treated me and I've always been resentful that he wasn't the way I wanted him to be. When I shared at meetings it would frequently come up, and I'd always talk about him in a very negative way.

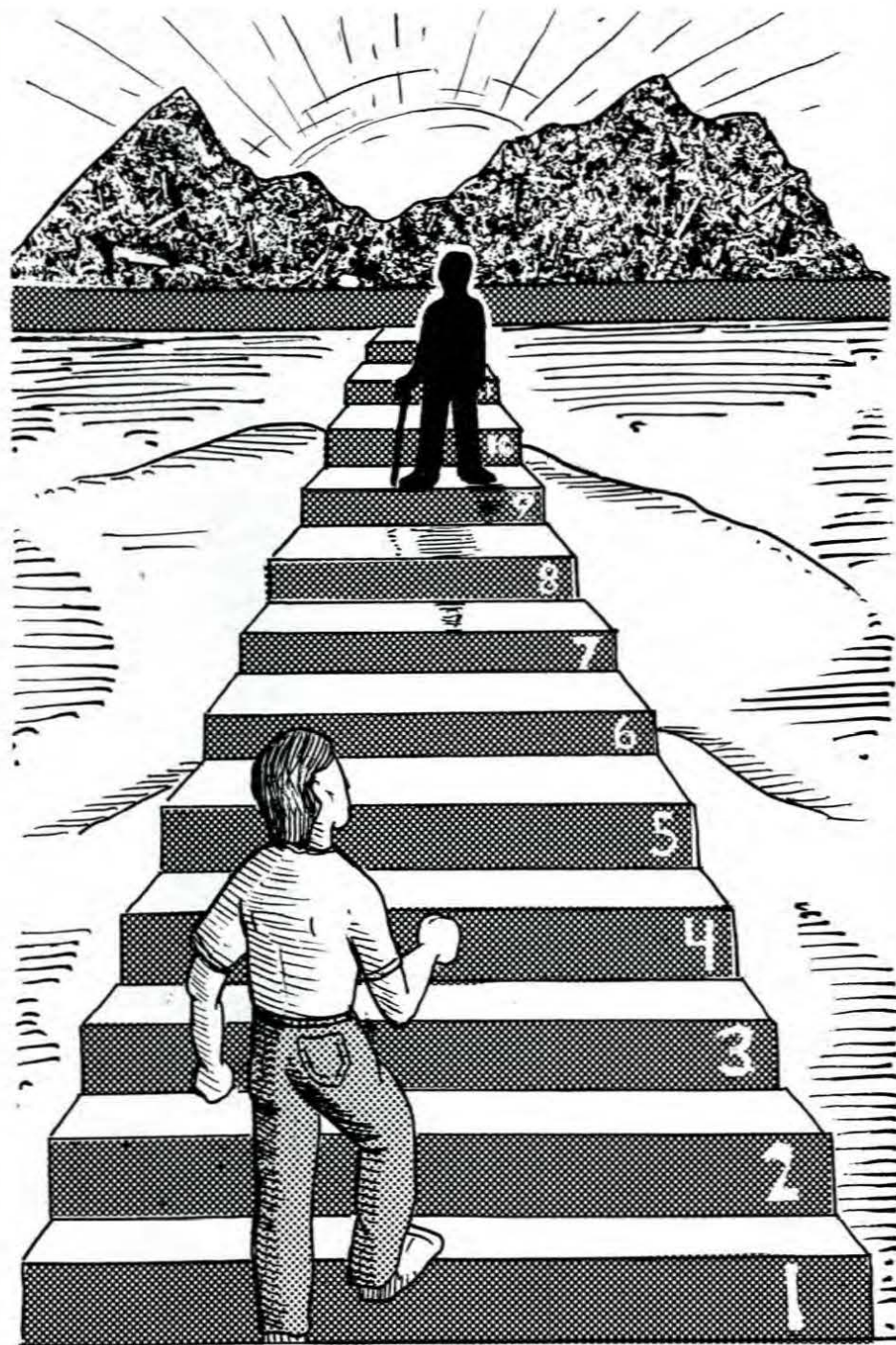
A month or so ago I was asked to speak at a meeting. When I began sharing about my childhood I talked about my father. Lo and behold, all the pain was gone. The rancor, the hurt, the blame, had all been lifted, finally, thanks to working a program in Narcotics Anonymous. What was left was a deep feeling of understanding and forgiveness towards my father. I felt the love for him that was absent for so long in my life, and I felt the need to make amends to him for my part in the tragic history of our relationship.

I spoke to my sponsor about this. I spoke to my mother about this. I bought a plane ticket to New York to coincide with my father's 77th birthday.

I flew back and made amends to him. It was a very emotional weekend for my parents and myself. It was one of those things I thought might be possible for you in your recovery, but was never going to be possible for me. It is one of the gifts of the program that cannot be anticipated because they come in God's time and not ours.

It is one of the reasons that recovery is so much more than simply not using drugs.

J.G., California



Grieving but growing

I need and want to share something that is going on in my recovery. Like a great number of addicts, when I came into the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous and recovery I wasn't brimming with love, honesty or trust.

During my active addiction I lost my father to this disease. I hated my father and I blamed him for all of my problems. To this day I still don't remember his funeral. That was seven years ago and finally last September, through the Twelve Steps of N.A. and my Higher Power, (who I choose to call God) I was able to sit down and write my father a letter of amends. I took this letter to his grave and read it, and then destroyed the letter.

This brings me to something my sponsor and I worked out that is helping me today to deal with life on life's terms. My mother is dying from cancer and this disease. When I first found out my mother had cancer I stopped working my program. I was angry at God and I didn't see how the Twelve Steps of N.A. could possibly help the pain I was feeling and I relapsed. That had to be the hardest time I have ever gone through. People in the fellowship continued to love me, but not enable me to hang onto my negativism. I know the difference today.

My sponsor suggested I write an ongoing letter to my mother, so I won't have to deal with the held-in feelings of anger, hate and resentment, when she dies. When that happens I can put this ongoing letter in her casket, so her spirit can read it.

I wrote that letter and I add to it on occasion. The letter did help me to let go of the anger, the hate and the resentment I have felt for so long.

This letter has also given me a lot of freedom. I no longer blame her for the problems of my life and today I am free to love her in a very special way.

My defensive system of anger and hate that protected me for so long are gone. I am feeling very vulnerable, but along with the vulnerability comes true feelings, self love, courage and the serenity I have searched for in my relationship with this beautiful lady.

She is still dying and through this I am learning some valuable lessons. I am watching her surrender gracefully and I am learning what real courage is all about.

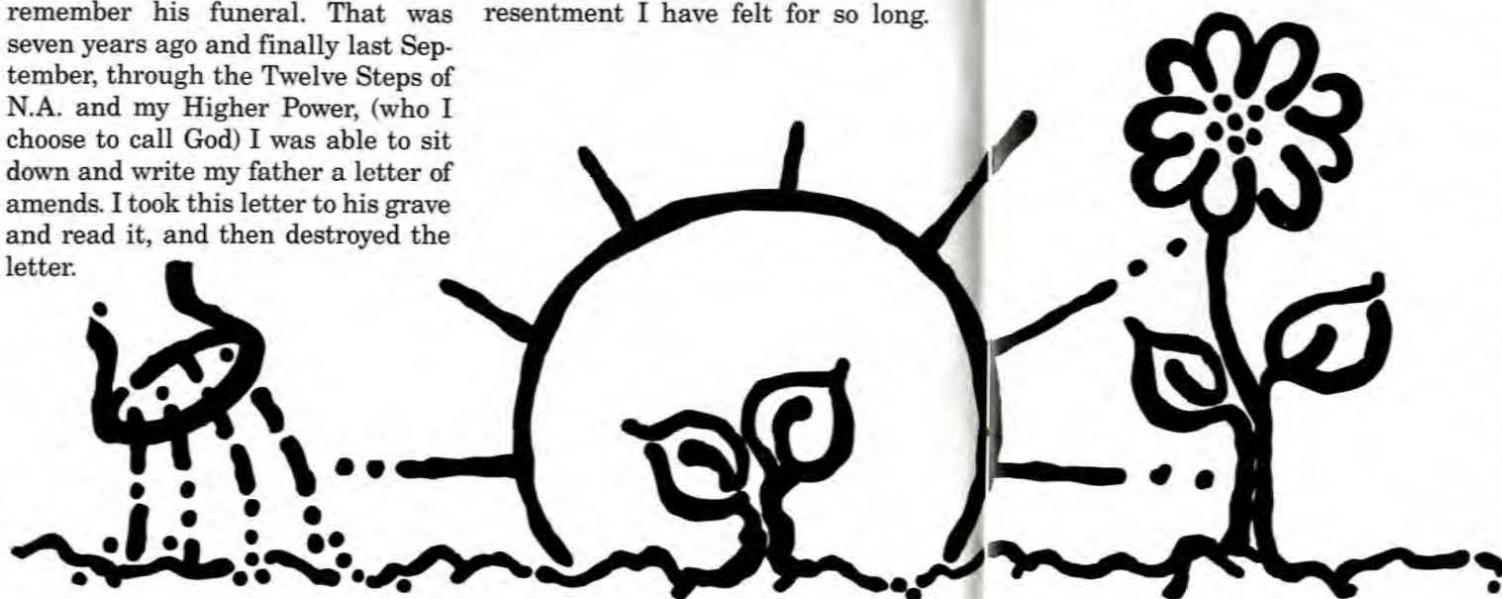
I thank you for letting me share this part of my recovery with you because if it were not for Narcotics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps I would be dead today.

H.W., Indiana

The 30 day glow

Often times I am amazed by the subtle ways some of the most meaningful messages of recovery are conveyed. They come in many forms and places, but I find these messages most prevalent in our meetings. That's why I attend regularly as suggested in our Basic Text. I must search these meetings for recovery just as I searched the cess pools of addiction for drugs. Recently, I received a very powerful message at a meeting when my anger and stubbornness attempted in vain to prevent me from obtaining what I must, if I am to remain clean just for today. In other words, I brought my body to the meeting, and my mind soon followed with a message...in spite of myself. Ridiculous?! Let me share this experience with you.

Earlier that same day it was necessary for me to transfer a small sum of my own money from one family residence to another. At eight months clean, I willingly surrender the wages of my labor for safe keeping (keeping it safe from me). Even a small sum could become a large threat to my recovery if it is not handled properly.





the door as if he were going to miss a piece of recovery.

He noticed me slouched against the counter, hands in pockets, with a look that said "don't ask." He quickly asked if I were o'kay. I abruptly answered "yeah." He responded with "my name is 'Newcomer,' what's yours?" In a sharp tone I told him. The newcomer then motioned for a hug and I declined. He could see that I was troubled but

I have defined "handled properly" as anyone other than myself. Recognizing and admitting my own fears and weakness in this area, I humbly asked my sponsor and my family to help me do what I am unable to do for myself.

I became angered at the very thought of my situation. A thirty-five year old man, clean from the horrors of active addiction for eight months, and still not feeling strong enough to handle my own money.

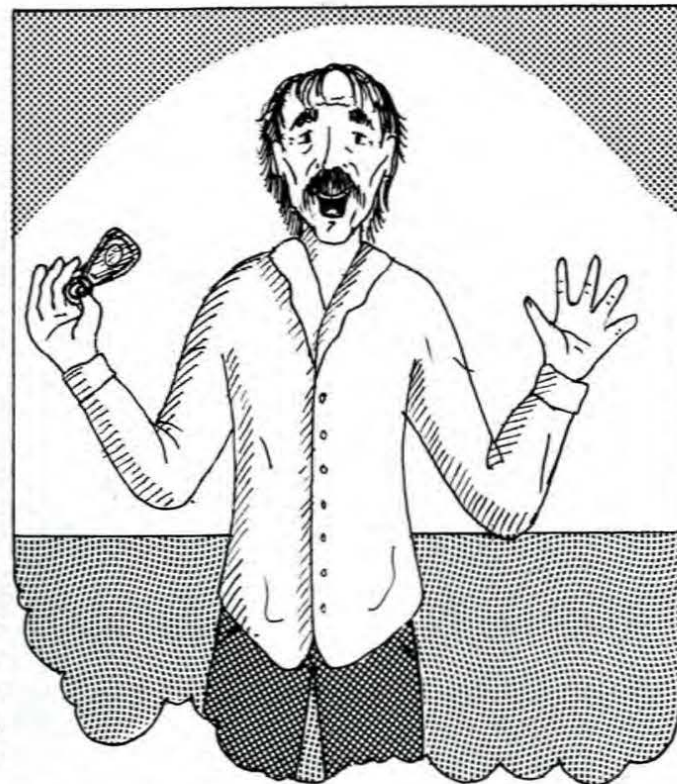
I carried anger about this to a meeting that same day and refused to hug or acknowledge anyone. I wanted to be miserable. I wanted to bathe in my own self pity and I wasn't about to let one of you good, sharing addicts drain

my private tub of anger, so I almost immediately de-seated myself and went into the coffee room to sulk in privacy.

By order of fate, I think, an addict interrupted my pathetic attempt at self pity. About one minute into my coffee-room misery he soared in like the "Road Runner" to get a cup; periodically peeking toward

was unable to get through to me. After a couple of more rounds of idle one-sided conversation about the coffee selection and the man on the moon, this newcomer turned to me and said "I just picked up my thirty day chip and I feel good."

There it was. My message staring me in the face. I needed to see this "newcomer glow." As I identified with him, my self-centered anger weakened and passed. Suddenly,



it didn't really matter who handled my money if the end result was a clean day. I remembered how it was when I got thirty consecutive days clean. The flutter of my heart, the sparkle in my eye, even trumpets seemed to sound, as I took that applause-laden walk down the N.A. aisle of the thirty day chip.

For years, the

only way I was able to achieve thirty consecutive days clean was when a judge said "thirty days" or more. If you can remember that thirtieth clean day, then you know how grateful I became at that moment. If you have yet to experience that day, just keep coming back clean and you will.

I congratulated the newcomer and asked him to please come again. I thank God for reminding me through this newcomer.

Anonymous

Just for today

A twenty-year addict and career-criminal walking the streets a free man, clean from all mind/mood altering substances, is a miracle.

I was labeled a bum after twenty-three months of extensive in-patient treatment on three separate occasions in a local treatment center. I always thought "when I got my life together, I could handle drugs." This thinking always led me back to my active addiction. I was hopeless, useless and lost; destined to die a practicing drug addict, or so I thought.

The pain of my addiction eventually forced me, in desperation, to reach out to Narcotics Anonymous.

It was truly a miracle. Self-labeled a "hard-headed, slowly recovering addict," I have managed to string together six consecutive months without using drugs and I'm not in jail. Imagine that!

During this period I have begun to experience strange and unusual occurrences directly related to my abstinence from drugs; such as a steady job, a radical change in appearance, and a lessened desire to use drugs again. I figured that my daily attendance at the meetings and my new associations were largely responsible for

this continuing miracle, but my figuring soon progressed to thinking that if I had come this far in six months, where would I be in a year or two, or five? So let me share this:

I put on my three-piece and best smelling sauce to attend an early Sunday morning meeting and accept my six month chip. As fate would have it, the format for this particular meeting was open participation. What better way for me to share how I had done it than in the format of an open talk.

Thank God, one addict shared his experience before my turn came. I had come to know this addict. We shared together, read our books together, identified with each other and partied at N.A. dances. Whenever we met at a meeting or anywhere else our hugs were genuine. On this Sunday morning, he shared that he had been using just hours before the meeting, and that he couldn't seem to put more than ninety days together without using. This time he used with eighty-eight days clean. With that pain shared, he fell to the floor sobbing. We became intensely quiet as we watched this powerful message on the floor.

I got up to share with a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. I was speechless, but I had to share my message. At that moment I realized that the six months I had achieved before this day and the carefully laid plans I had for tomorrow were meaningless in the here and now. I had gone from six months... to Just For Today in an instant.

J.C., Michigan

Seasons of decision

What a process recovery has been! I've been clean now almost five and a half years and so much has changed. I came to this program a shattered woman/child, incapable of emotional intimacy. Today I know that I am getting stronger and more certain every day of who I am and what my needs are.

I got married to another addict in recovery the week after my second N.A. birthday. We got clean together, and as often happens, our friendship quickly developed into a relationship.

What hopes and expectations I placed in that marriage! What I hadn't looked at, however, was how little I knew about myself. After a short time and a move to another state to attend college, I began to notice signs of his drug use. I immediately went into denial; I was in my last year of work on a Bachelor's degree at an expensive private college, and in short, I couldn't afford a crisis, either financially or emotionally.

When I get in enough pain in this program, I take an inventory. The reason I must be in overwhelming pain before I do this fearless thing is that I know that to be rigorously honest I will be forced to look at my own mo-

tives. Not a pretty admission to make, but husband's drug of choice was not mine and he hid his pills from me, so I chose not to force the issue until I could do it on my terms. The month I graduated from college, I went home for two weeks to where I had cleaned up and felt very safe and loved, and tried to sort out my thoughts and feelings. I was tired, and very angry.

I returned to the Bay Area, and gave him an ultimatum. Either we go for counseling, or I would leave. We went to a therapist, a specialist in family related drug issues, and he managed to stay clean for few months. Soon, though, my gut told me he was using, although he denied it. When he went to our weekly therapy appointment obviously loaded, I realized in a moment of clarity that he didn't want to get clean. I wanted him to get clean. We separated, and I experienced wrenching emotional and physical pain that left me suicidal. I changed jobs, which distracted me for awhile, increased my meetings and tried to reach out to my women friends in the program.

Although my husband and I separated physically, he moved only a short distance away, and soon we were as enmeshed as ever, only this time by telephone. He decided to enter treatment soon after, and went through a twenty-one day program. I promised myself I wouldn't take him back until he had a year clean, but as soon as he got out of treatment, we again decided to live together. At first we went to meetings regularly, and agreed to stay on a long-term urinalysis program and resume counseling with our therapist. Whatever the

reason, he was unable to commit himself to these actions and soon stopped going to meetings, and, again, our marriage floundered.

Throughout the turmoil of our years together I concentrated on the Eleventh Step. I continuously asked God what his/her will for me was, in terms of my marriage. I didn't pray for my husband to get clean, because I knew that his Higher Power was quite capable of taking care of him. It took a long while for the answers to come. My sponsor taught me that this step has two parts; we pray for the knowledge of his/her will, and also, for the power to carry it out. Both parts don't necessarily arrive at the same time.

I believe that I got the knowledge of my Higher Power's will long before I received the power to carry it out. Stuck in that space between knowing

what to do, and gaining the ability to take action, is a very painful spot. I lived in fear and anger, constantly stuffing down feelings, constantly making changes in my life to try to forestall the inevitable decision I would have to make, and dreading the pain that I was sure would follow.

One morning, as I came over a bridge and pulled my car into the parking lot at work, I suddenly realized I was no longer afraid of leaving my husband. All the things that I imagined in the worst-case scenario my addict mind automatically creates no longer imprisoned me. I was able to go home that night and tell him, in a loving way, what was in my heart. We had grown apart, and as painful as it would prove to be, I must end our marriage.

I had filed for divorce the previous year when I left him, but the final papers had yet to be filed. Once I made the decision, I was able, for the first time, to take them down from the shelf where they lay and look at them. I'll be filing them this week. Since I dread telling my family, I am doing it in writing, and practicing saying "The matter is not open for discussion," for those people who traditionally don't respect my boundaries.

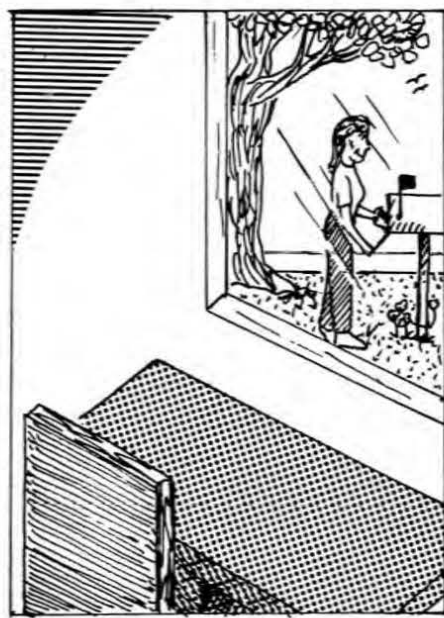
I know that there will be painful times ahead, and some days I fight constant suicidal feelings. But what I understand is that a great deal of my pain has not been in the change that is inevitable in this life, it is in the resistance I have to change. I thought that if I worked my program hard enough, and denied my needs, that I could make this marriage work. I'm not thinking of it as a failure, because

I have learned so much about myself through these past years. I have acceptance around the suicidal feelings, because I know that a part of me is dying, an unhealthy, needy part that I will be better off having shed in the long run.

When I truly understood that I couldn't accept my husband for who he was and for what he was capable of giving to the marriage, then I was able to make the decision to let go.

Thank God for this program and my friends in it who have experienced what I have gone through, and have been willing to come to meetings and talk about what is really going on with them, risking their "good look" for true recovery. One day at a time, I will continue to blossom into the individual I was born to be.

N.G., California



Home Group



OH, WELL THAT MAKES IT ALRIGHT, THEN...

The shadow returns

As a direct result of the concern expressed by many readers we are happy to present *The Return of Slugg*. Though suffering-by-choice still seems to surround him with a near-solid aura, it has not been strong enough to keep him from the company of others in N.A. meetings. His mien suggests Slugg still has a lot of strength with which to resist the meddling of the do-gooders who are always trying to interfere with his solitude.

Notice the crafty air that is only briefly surrendered during the quick walk to the front of the room. Association with others may be required for Slugg to stay alive, but he certainly doesn't have to like it.

Join us as we share the plight Slugg now faces. Imagine how he might behave after having to admit, again, that he can't do it alone? Will he get a new sponsor? Will anyone have him? These will surely be trying times. Those of us who have shared that we care about Slugg now face some choices. We told him to keep coming back, and he is trying pretty hard, against an inner voice that

often tells him we don't really give a hoot.

During the months ahead Slugg may test our resolve to carry the message. We can start by imagining the kinds of behaviors an isolated, fearful and stubborn person might display. If any of you have had experiences of that kind, please make a note of them and mail 'em to the N.A. Way Magazine. We will pass those notes on to the artist and if the idea is used, credit the individual or area that developed the thought.

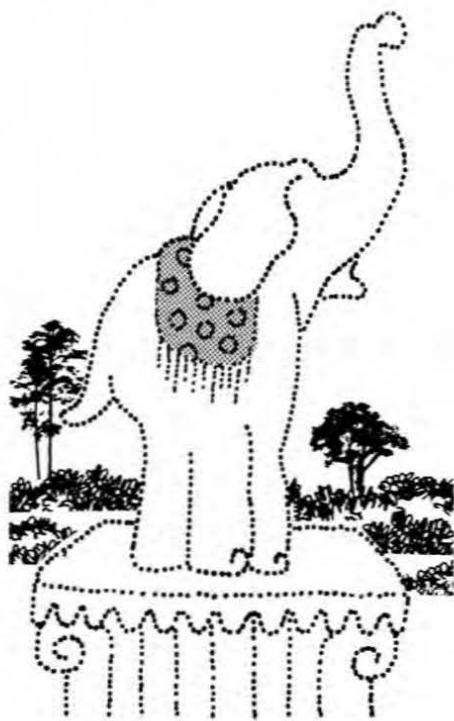
Slugg, with the help of his acquaintances (He said not to call them his "friends") in the *Home Group*, can surely dramatize behaviors for our mutual benefit. Think about it. Will Slugg go to the world convention? Will he even go out for coffee, or just go on home and threaten his house-plant?

If you want to get really wild, consider Slugg on the lit committee! What a concept! No, that's getting a bit too far out... But, as you can see, the shadow of Slugg can be imagined in many places.



Report on INDIA

The following is a report on the visit made in the early Spring of 1990 by two world service personnel, Mario T. (WSB) and Anthony E. (WSO staff), to India.



Bombay

Our plane touched down at the Bombay airport very early on a Tuesday morning, and as soon as we arrived things became quite complicated. Anthony had a compact disc player in his possession and it drew a great deal of interest from Indian customs officials. It seems that the local government frowns on people importing foreign versions of electronic devices which are also manufactured in India. We were detained in customs for about forty-five minutes before the situation could be straightened out.

That was just a preview of the kinds of things that would happen, again and again, as the trip progressed.

When we finally did get out of customs, we were met by a group of people holding up an "N.A." sign. They were the Bombay ASC's current chairperson, the ASC secretary, and the previous ASC chair. Were we ever happy to see them!

Fellowship profile

On Tuesday evening, we attended a meeting of Bombay's oldest N.A. group, begun four years ago. The meeting was held in an open classroom at a school run by St. Michael's Church in Mahim, another suburb of Bombay. Narcotics Anonymous members in Bombay range from several days clean to six years, but mostly have between ninety days and three years in recovery. There were about twenty-five members present at the meeting, all male, mostly middle class. "Middle class" in India means that you can afford to live in a building, use public transportation, and eat regularly. The only N.A. member

with a car was the one who took us to the meeting. The only other vehicle present was a motor scooter. Everyone else walked or took the bus.

A member shared with us that street people came to meetings from time to time, but never stayed around for long. He said that this was because, being considered a lower class, they felt extremely uncomfortable around the middle class people who predominated in Narcotics Anonymous. To the question "Is there a language barrier?" the answer was "No." The uneasiness was simply because of the class distinction.

This member did tell us, however, that literature translated into Hindi would help these people become more comfortable in Narcotics Anonymous, because only the better-off Indians speak fluent English. Also, Hindi literature would be of immense benefit to rural areas. While there are many languages used in different parts of India, Hindi is the most prevalent of the native tongues.

At present, there are no female members attending N.A. meetings, but none of the local members seemed to think this was out of the ordinary. Culturally, it will be difficult for Indian women to attend regular meetings, especially at night. Her parents may not allow it; if she is married, her husband would almost certainly forbid it. Although the government is encouraging a change, women still have far less status there than men.

The format of the N.A. meeting was somewhat different from those to which we are accustomed. There was no reading from literature to start the meeting—there was no literature. It

was difficult to hear the members who were sharing because of traffic noise. There were no doors or closable windows in the classroom.

The Seventh Tradition brought in around 35 rupees (\$2.10 US). After tea was purchased from street vendors only 10 rupees (66 cents US) was left to add to the group treasury.

At the conclusion of the meeting, all stood, heads bowed, hands clasped, and said the Serenity Prayer.

The ASC meeting

The Bombay Area Service Committee convened after the N.A. meeting, in the same room. The GSRs in Bombay had previously agreed specifically to hold this meeting on a date when we could attend. The three main topics on the agenda were literature supplies, translations, and an N.A. public information symposium scheduled for March 13th, 1990.

They were inviting clergy, social welfare officials, community workers, and clean and using addicts to hear a range of guest speakers talk about Narcotics Anonymous. Among the speakers was to be the Catholic priest who had been instrumental in the foundation of Bombay N.A., as well as the sheriff of Bombay.

There was serious division within the ASC about this event, particularly about including the sheriff in the program. Although we saw serious problems with the whole idea, we tried not to unduly influence the committee's decision-making process. We shared our experiences with such events, going to great lengths to explain that it was best to read the P.I. handbook before planning such an af-

fair. We mentioned similar plans having gone wrong in the U.S.

The discussion then turned to Bombay's problems with maintaining a stock of N.A. literature. Anthony informed them that WSO would supply a certain amount of literature to the ASC without costs for a limited period.

'...Women still have far less status there than men'

We found it amazing how these groups have developed without the tools of recovery that most of us take for granted.

The Bombay ASC had more literature business to discuss. A locally printed, slightly altered version of the WSO-approved White Booklet had appeared. The locally-printed edition had extra art work around the N.A. logo, and an A.A. pledge had been appended to the back page, though it had been altered for N.A. use.

We explained, in as loving a manner as possible, the basic reasons why this is normally not done; and, (at the same time) that we understood they had just been trying to have something in print available at N.A. meetings.

The final topic discussed was Hindi translations. A couple of members had been working independently on them, and we suggested that they form an ASC subcommittee to work collectively on each translation. We

talked with them about WSO translation policy, but left feeling that more communication would be required.

We visited the U.S. Consulate and obtained details on import duties as it applies to N.A. literature, and some facts about Indian copyright law. We were told that the fellowship would not be charged import duties on the Basic Text, pamphlets and White Book, so long as literature shipments are identified as containing "educational aids." We also obtained a directory of local printers who are members of a printers association, which may prove useful in the future.

Bombay summary

Bombay can serve as a suitable Indian center for the translation of N.A. literature, and may also be the best choice when a major literature distribution center for India is selected.

There are many variations of the Hindi language, but initial emphasis on standard Hindi is what is needed. The Bombay committee has decided to seek help from other N.A. communities, such as one beginning in the town of Madras, to help insure that the Bombay translations will be useful elsewhere.

Calcutta

Our introduction to Calcutta was very frightening. At the airport we found ourselves in the middle of a rally and general riot by protesting cab drivers. We had to accept a ride in a car for hire at a very inflated price, with two men we thought capable of attempting to take further advantage of us.

N.A. members from the communities of Madras and Bangalore, whom we'd planned to see, were unable to meet us in Calcutta because flight engineers from Indian Air were on strike. It seems strikes are a way of life in India.

The next morning, we made contact with a Reverend Pawomani from the Samaritan Community Centre. He sent his car and driver to collect us from the hotel. Reverend Pawomani seemed very excited to meet us, making reference to us as a "high-level" delegation from N.A. world services.

We were introduced to the staff, and were asked to sit in on a group therapy session. That session was the first and last time we met women in recovery in India—two, in fact. It was interesting to note a clear emphasis on the Twelve Steps, which just happened to be the topic of that particular session.

The reverend seemed to have a good understanding of twelve-step fellowships, including the traditions.

He informed us that he was searching for a way to have an N.A. meeting that would be independent of the center. He also said that they were endeavoring to start something he called "Dependents Anonymous"—a place where "addicts" and "alcoholics" could meet together.

Reverend Pawomani made arrangements for his driver to take us to a recovery house with which the Samaritan Centre was associated.

The "Aruno Day Midway Home" is located about an hour's drive from downtown Bombay. The director of the facility is a retired Indian Army colonel. He identified himself to us as an "ex-alcoholic."

There were perhaps twenty residents, all young males of the provincial middle or upper classes, from various regions of India. They had an in-house N.A. meeting, but the only piece of literature evident was one Basic Text.

We were asked to share our stories, which we did, and we noticed our driver sitting in on the group. He seemed to be listening more intently than anyone else.

Calcutta summary

One place we have learned about but were unable to visit during this trip was the St. Joseph's Rehabilitation Centre, Calcutta, which Mother Teresa helped establish. Her involvement in that center might mean it is a charitable organization which would serve street addicts. We believe this contact should be made in future visits.

Apparently, there are no N.A. meetings in Calcutta except for ones that are in some way connected to treatment centers. One of the major problems is finding adequate places in which to hold independently operated N.A. meetings.

At present, N.A.'s future in Calcutta seems to hinge on our relationships with Reverend Pawomani and his supporters.

We believe a follow-up visit in about a year would be of great general benefit. Bombay workshops on the steps, traditions, and service would ultimately help recovering addicts throughout India.

The broad perspective

The Broad Perspective is a new feature of *The N.A. Way Magazine* designed to provide updates of committee activity and other information likely to be of interest to the fellowship as a whole.

May J.A.C.

The Joint Administrative Committee, (which includes representatives from each of N.A.'s world level committees and boards, the WSC chairperson, the vice-chairpersons, and treasurer) met May 19 and 20 in Van Nuys, Ca.

Among major topics discussed were plans for the WSC workshop meeting set for the weekend of July 13-15 in Virginia; and the manner in which individual boards and committees might be affected by the gap between the conference-adopted 1990 "Optimum Budget" (in excess of \$400,000)

and the basic realities of the fund flow from regional donations. The new budget is almost twice the amount of Seventh Tradition support passed on to the WSC last year, and was approved by 75 percent of the conference in a roll call vote requested to dramatize the commitment its approval implied.

Arlington WSC Workshop

The July weekend workshop is being designed especially to allow fellowship participation. On Friday some individual committees will conduct standard work sessions, but on Saturday and Sunday the format is tailored to lend itself to easier participation by non-committee people. Beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday boards and committees will have presentations and open discussions regarding their specific areas of service. The Hospitals and Institutions Committee has planned a special, all-day learning event. Saturday afternoon will feature a schedule of consecutive panel presentations, each followed by a period of open discussion. Possible themes for discussion, put forth at the J.A.C., include "N.A. literature development—tool or mandate," "Who's missing from our rooms?" "The image of N.A., inside and outside," and "Where are we going in world services? Are we a national fellowship with international interests or a worldwide fellowship?"

Ad Hoc Committee on Isolated Groups

The Ad Hoc committee on Isolated Groups was effectively given a vote

of confidence by the 1990 WSC and directed to continue its efforts during 1990. Last year this ten-member committee gathered insight about meetings and/or groups isolated primarily because of their incarceration; and is now polling the fellowship for contact with meetings and groups isolated by other factors.

RSC's and ASC's were slated to begin receiving a revised questionnaire from this ad hoc committee during June and July. Responses pertaining to such gatherings may be channeled to the committee through the Group Services department of the WSO. This committee also plans to convene during the Arlington workshop.

World Convention

The 1990 World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous is set for Aug. 30 to Sep. 2 in Portland, Oregon. The main meetings, workshops, convention store and registration activities will occur in the Memorial Coliseum Inn, (503 239-9900) located at 1401 North Wheeler. Some workshops will also be held in the Red Lion Lloyd Center Hotel, 1000 NE Multnomah, (503 281-6111) and there will be marathon meetings and hospitality rooms at both the Red Lion and the Portland Hilton (503 226-1611) located at 921 SW Sixth Ave.

Along with the Red Lion Center and the Portland Hilton, the Best Western (503 239-9900) at 10 N Weider Street and the Heathman Hotel (503 241-4100) at SW Broadway and Salmon Street have agreed to offer convention rates if reservations are made before August 1. These facilities have reserved the right to charge

standard rates for reservations made after that date.

Additional hotel information may be obtained from the Portland Oregon Visitors Association Housing Bureau (503 279-9799).

Events planned during the convention include:

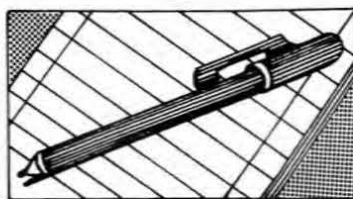
Thursday—a "Lewis & Clark Expedition" two-hour boat ride up the Columbia River Gorge starting at 11:30 a.m. and a 10 p.m. D.J. Dance at the Portland Hilton Thursday evening;

Friday—Theme banquets, speakers, and D.J. dances at several of the convention facilities Friday evening.

Saturday—a Salmon bar-b-que at the local Holladay Park from 3 to 7 p.m., Saturday, including talent presentations by volunteers. To help, contact WCNA-20 Entertainment Committee at P.O. Box 86887, Portland, Or., 97286. Also on Saturday night, a "Live Oldies Show" will be presented at the Memorial Coliseum Inn; and dances are planned in the Red Lion Center and the Portland Hilton.

Sunday—Brunch from 8 to 10 a.m. in the Memorial Coliseum and an "Alternate Store" in which souvenirs of different regions will be offered. Regions wishing to participate in the Alternate Store event must submit written requests to the WCC care of the WSO by August 15. No other merchandise of any type may be sold in any convention hotel or facility by unauthorized vendors at any time.

The Portland Host Committee may be reached at (503) 230-1196.



Viewpoint

On prejudice

About two years ago, while at what I'll call a "Semi Gucci" meeting, I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing another one of the negative forces, or I should say "silent killers" that exist and persist in our fellowship.

For the purpose of this commentary, I will call the main character "J.D." He was not the kind of person you would find in the society column or dining at the Ritz. When you looked in his face it was easy to see the physical, emotional and mental scars that years on the street often seem to leave. J.D. did not appear to be any different from millions of other dope-fiends living on the streets, trying to get through each day without being sick and staying alive. He was the kind of you might see selling his blood to a blood bank, or selling coats out of funeral parlors, just trying to reach the next bag of dope alive and well

enough to shoot it. He reminded me of myself in many ways, which is one of the reasons I have decided to write about an incident that took place in the fellowship.

J.D. and I lived in the same apartment building and when I would run into him in the hallway or elevator he would have a smile and a good word to say. He brought that attitude into meetings and even though I knew that he was just "acting as if," for the most part, and really did not feel as good as he pretended—I respected his positiveness. It was something that I could not even come close to when I first started coming to meetings. I felt that he was really trying to help himself and was putting a great deal of effort into it. This was a newcomer that was doing a little something extra, in spite of a lifetime of the opposite. There were even times when I felt a sense of jealousy. I felt that if he would just stay he would surely be a winner.

As far as I am concerned the coffee makers are some of the most important people at meetings. J.D. was a coffee maker, getting to the meeting early and leaving late. He was a colorful kind of person who carried out his coffee-responsibilities with a good attitude and a smile when you came up to the table. His personality reflected

sincerity, which is something I feel the fellowship can always use more of!

On a warm summer evening I was standing outside of the meeting talking to a few people. Someone brought up the idea of going to a restaurant and asked me if I would like to come along and hang out. I usually don't go on these after meetings convoys because they sometimes turn into a dialogue which to me is really an unhealthy trip. This is not to say that I'm any better or worse than anyone else in the fellowship. I surely have more than my share of character defects that I have to work on and ask God's help with. What I am talking about here is pathological attitudes and behavior that maligns what I think the fellowship stands for. On this occasion I said yes, because I really was hungry and would probably have went out for a pizza anyway. Just as we were about to leave, J.D. walked out of the meeting hall. He had just finished cleaning the coffee urns.

I asked him if he would like to join us. He accepted, but he had a look of uncomfortableness and reluctance. As we walked over to where the cars were parked I did not anticipate any problems—I was wrong! As everyone began getting into the cars J.D. just stood there with a strange look on his face. He did not know which car to get into and seemed to me to be getting really scared. I realized he could not fit in the two-seater that I was driving because I already had a passenger and three people would have been an impossible fit. I walked over to where he was standing and said "get into this car," pointing to one. Before he

could make a move a person told him "we don't have any room," but they did have room, and everyone knew it, including J.D.

J.D. said "oh, that's OK, I'll walk, which restaurant are you guys going to, anyway?" I was trying to think of something I could say or do but could think of nothing that would ease what had taken place. I turned to J.D. and told him where we were going. He smiled and said "OK, I'll meet you there in a little while,"—then he turned and walked away.

One part of me was saying "calm down" while the other half was telling me to come out of one of my street bags that would definitely get me into serious trouble. I wanted to escape the situation but realized that I could not, nor could I escape my feeling.

There was a sign that said "Closed" in the window when we got to the restaurant. Everyone decided to go to another place, which was just a few blocks away, but I realized J.D. would be coming to the first one. I realized he would go to the restaurant and then head for home. I told everyone that I would meet them in a few minutes at the new restaurant, and then headed home to explain briefly to the desk clerk what had happened and tell her to tell J.D. where we'd be.

I kept looking at the clock in the restaurant trying to second guess how long it would take him to get the message. He never showed up. When I came home that night I asked the desk clerk if she had given him the message. She said "yes" and that he really didn't answer her and went up to his room.

There wasn't going to be another time for J.D. About a month and a half later he died in his sleep (CLEAN) of natural causes.

I feel that what happened that night had its roots in racism and discrimination. The fact that J.D. was not white and everyone else was, his physical appearance and the limited amount of clean time he had, all played major factors in what took place.

There might be those who are reading this story who say to themselves, this is very inconsequential, it doesn't mean very much. To some that might be the case but to me it does mean something.

I grew up and spent most of my life in an area of Brooklyn where racism and discrimination are so imbedded in the culture that it was nauseating. I know it when I see it, and what happened to J.D. was IT. I choose to believe that he is in a place now where he is truly loved and is not being denied freedom, individuality and where he is not being told "there is no room!"

J.H., California

Editor's Note: Included in a "History of the N.A. Way" published in our May 1990 Issue there was made a request for reader in-put on the magazine's "image." The two following letters specifically address that topic, and it is hoped there will be many more. All letters that are deemed to contribute to the task of the magazine, however critical, will be published, and utilized in evolving editorial policy. Please keep writing.

Objection to the cover text

I am writing this letter in response to our recent phone conversation. I hope that this will help you in your efforts to publish the best *N.A. Way Magazine* possible.

As I flipped to the back cover of the April and May issues I noticed some of the wording under the section "What is Narcotics Anonymous?" that is not consistent with our conference approved literature. This troubled me. I feel that these changes are not an improvement over the italicized section of Chapter Two of our Basic Text. The word "drugs" is used twice in places where in the past it was left off. Specifically: "It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past" and "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using drugs." After speaking with several other N.A. members, I found out that I was not the only person who found the alteration of our Third Tradition particularly offensive.

When I came to N.A., I was told that the drugs aren't my problem, but only a symptom. The disease of addiction is my problem. The Basic Text states that the disease of addiction is made up of three things: obsession, compulsion and self-centeredness. My disease focuses on more in my life than

drugs. This understanding gives me the freedom to work this program to stop using drugs. After stopping my use of drugs, I still have the desire to stop using. I have the desire to stop using the other things, people and places that my disease grabs hold of also. This is why I can still meet the only requirement for membership in N.A.

The argument that some addicts might not find enough identification in our literature as it is written is ludicrous. The name Narcotics Anonymous is enough in itself to tell anyone that this program has something to do with people who have used drugs. Our literature as it is written allows for those who feel it necessary, to infer the word drugs, while at the same time allowing for others to work this program on other issues as well. I would be opposed to anything written that isn't consistent with our conference approved literature in this respect. I would like to request that you replace the existing section of the *N.A. Way*, with the italicized section from the beginning of Chapter Two in our Basic Text.

G.A.P., Kentucky

Boring!

I would like to share a few concerns about the *N.A. Way*. First of all, I really appreciate the viewpoint column. It is nice to find some controversial is-

ues being discussed. For a long time I considered the *N.A. Way* to be very boring. All the articles sounded alike, almost as if one single person had written them all. This is even true for the contents. It seems very strange to me that a fellowship like N.A. produces such a uniform magazine. When I go to meetings I meet very different people, sharing very different opinions. It is true, we do agree on the most important issues. The ties that bind us are very strong. But this provides us with the opportunity for honest sharing.

When I first came into those meetings the people there encouraged me to be honest and open. They told me that I could share anything I wanted to. They told me that openness and honesty were very powerful tools against my disease. They taught me about tolerance, which to me is one of those spiritual principles which I try to apply in all of my affairs. They taught me that if I get angry about some statement I have to take a look at myself. I need to have this mirror. I don't necessarily have to like that. But there are many things I dislike, even though they help me to grow. At some points of my life I don't even like those steps which saved my life and which are still the only approach to life I know to work. There are a few more things I'd like to criticize about the appearance of the *N.A. Way*. I'm tempted to first explain all the possible pros to it's state at the moment. I know all those arguments, like the potential negative impact on our public image. But I believe we don't live on a pink cloud. There are many problems and controversies in N.A.,

as in the rest of the world. Any good newspaper is a small picture of a part of reality. So please don't censor or "edit" articles anymore. I think anybody writing an article deserves the right to be published. If the article for some reason in your opinion cannot be published, please call the author and discuss that with her/him. I hope that this policy might improve the quality of the magazine as a whole. Now most articles appear as pretty superficial to me. Sometimes the sticky, positive stuff with which almost every problem is covered sounds like cynicism to me.

Another point I dislike are the drawings. They contribute to the boring, naive overall image. If you pay artists to do those drawings, I wonder why you don't use their skills better. Most of the drawings are centered, the proportions and perspectives don't fit. The last might be an instrument of the artist. But the violation of the basic rules can be used to create more interesting pictures. If the artist is a volunteer you might ask the fellowship for input and publish drawings of different artists. Often the drawings don't fit the contents of the articles, at least the main statements, nor do they express anything on their own. I would like to see some more cartoons, like a few years ago. Another thing you could do is to ask more members with substantial clean time. Those members, at least the ones I have met over the years I have been involved, tend to be authentic, having their own experiences and opinions, very much different from one another. I think if the N.A. Way was less professional, but more color-

ful, using a whole variety of fellowship input, it could be a big benefit to our recovery.

Uli, Germany

Plea for anonymity

I have been only to two N.A. conventions but I've been clean in N.A. five and a half years. I've seen what I believe to be a problem for some people in our program, that of T-shirts, hats, mugs, etc., with the N.A. logo on them. Is this not stating that we are members of Narcotics Anonymous? When I wear this hat or T-shirt or large N.A. medallion and by accident am shown on TV. or photographed for the newspaper am I not breaking anonymity at the level of press, radio and films?

People in public offices, movie stars, and media personalities can not wear these shirts as they are in the public spot-light. To place on sale an item which could break a persons anonymity at the level of press or films may allow compromise of Tradition Twelve. We are a program of attraction, individuals breaking the chain of addiction. Promotion is detrimental to ourselves and our fellowship as a whole.

Anonymous

From our readers

Appreciation

Thanks so much for being part of my life today. I have a large lump in my throat from a feeling of gratitude, and I can feel myself starting to cry here in this fast-food, snowed-in, traffic-jam breakfast morning-visit with my HP; courtesy of the N.A. Way, my step-work notebook, and a surprise snow storm.

I'm so overwhelmed that I feel tears of joy at life being given back to me by this program. Last night I had one of the most powerful drug dreams yet, and woke up saying the words my sponsor has soothed me with: "thoughts, and dreams are not reality. You're going to be okay." And I have faith today that that's true. Until two years and a couple of months ago I only had faith that life sucked, especially mine, and that if I lived until my children didn't need me any more that we'd all be lucky. It's so painful remembering how I felt when I first hit the rooms of N.A. I must need the gift of knowing what desolation I could look forward to if I ever go back, as my nightmares tell me I could, because I've been terribly aware of how miserable I was those forty using years before these two recovery years. Ever since my second N.A. birthday it seems that huge curtains of blackest denial are opening

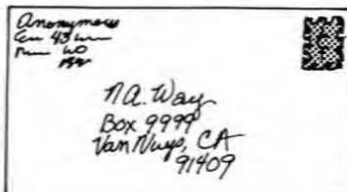
to give me the courage, hope, and acceptance I need to continue staying clean by working these steps in my life just for today, one at a time. Most of the time I feel a lightness and a gladness about living life, watching my children grow and my patients get well. I never even imagined what could be mine during those nightmare years of existing in and out of that miserable fog of "controlled using."

C.L., Norfolk, CT

Direction and purpose in my life!

When I first came to Narcotics Anonymous, I was almost in a trance, like a zombie. I was scared to death, and had a self-esteem so low you could walk right over it without missing a step. Although I think I had known it for quite some time, I finally admitted that I was a drug addict. I was finally out of my fantasy world-admitting my addiction to myself and others was the first dose of reality for me.

Nobody turned me away, scorned me or looked down their noses at me. People smiled at me, and I was welcomed repeatedly as individuals shared. When they shared, I heard all about myself, and realized I wasn't alone with this thing. I was given



phone numbers, encouragement and lots of hugs. After that first meeting I knew there was hope for me.

For me new friendships formed easily, as I know we all share a common bond. I heard all about "having a program" and "working the steps." I thought maybe I could go to the library and find out how to work a program, or something. I just didn't know. So, I finally asked a new friend "what kind of a program do I work, and what are the Twelve Steps all about?" My friend just happened to have two N.A. basic texts at home, and he gave me one! This was my new beginning.

Today, I have a program, and I am slowly coming to understand the true meaning and importance of the Twelve Steps. I never have to feel alone again. My higher power is with me always, no matter what. I have a husband and teenage son who have never given up on me, and who support me in every way. And I am part of the loving fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, which is my lifeline.

I have been free from all drugs for over a year, which is proof that it works, if you work it. This is an ongoing process in order to stay clean.

I am involved in service work, and sponsorship. I have purpose and direction in my life today. What a wonderful feeling to wake up each day and say "Just for today I don't have to use, and I'm glad to be alive!" The most wondrous thing of all, is that I can even say this on my bad days.

Clean by the grace of God, and the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous!
W.P., Oregon

Being clean rocks!

Today thanks to all of you I have one hundred and six days. Days of incredible changes and challenges; fears and emotions that, if it weren't for N.A. and all my beautiful friends, I wouldn't have. Today I am learning to walk through my pain, instead of staying in it and numbing myself against it, and today I'm knowing the joy that lays on the other side of my pain. Joy I never knew was there, and didn't feel I deserved. I'm far from "fixed" and I've only begun to understand how to use the tools this program offers. But I'm a helluva lot better off than I was when, crying for days in desperation, in isolated loneliness... in a basement... I knew I was dying. I was that close. And now with the help of some real friends who care and who are showing me about love and understanding, I'm beginning to realize that I'm not a bad person, and I do deserve good things and people in my life. I'm learning I can have fun without doing whatever drugs; in fact I can go to a concert and remember the whole thing. Being clean rocks!

For me recovery is all things becoming reality, a reality I never could understand. Thank you all for helping me. Also I need you, HP, cause sometimes I still get very afraid.

R., Washington

Letter from inside

A good friend of mine has recently ordered a subscription of the *N.A. Way* magazine for me, and has sent me his old issues from the past. I would like to share this story with the many people who read the magazine.

I am twenty-three years old and

have been abusing drugs for the past twelve years. I have been in four residential treatment programs and have spent as long as twenty-five months in one of them; and I have spent time in prison due to drug related crimes.

I've been told time and time again to take things one day at a time but if I was to just do that where would I be when I finally do get paroled to the street? I have to plan now, which is not easy at all! The hardest part about prison is getting released. I participated in one kind of program, but after twelve weeks I was given a certificate and told not to attend any more meetings.

The counselor made it seem as if we were cured after twelve weeks and had nothing to worry about, but believe me, I'm far from cured. I need a lot of help, but I cannot get it in here. They say nothing is impossible, so hopefully I will be able to turn my life around and lead a drug-free life. But can someone who has been getting high and abusing every mind-altering substance he can get his hands on really change? Can someone who's been getting arrested since the age of thirteen turn around and lead a positive, drug-free life? My answer is "yes" because nothing is impossible. It will take a lot of hard work and patience but I must strive to better myself and think positive.

I play the biggest part in my fight against drugs, and *The N.A. Way* has good viewpoints and information which does help me. I look forward to reading this magazine and continuing to attend N.A. meetings upon my release.

S.P., New York

Dream realized

I just returned from a vacation in Ireland and would like to relate my experience from this holiday. I have been clean since November 9, 1987. I always lived in the fantasy land that my mind created while using. One of the fantasies I had during the twenty-five years of my active addiction was that "when I got some money together" I was going to Ireland. This year, because of N.A., I got to turn that fantasy into a reality.

Because I'm clean and can actually accumulate money today, when the opportunity to go to Ireland came (like so many things do today, because of being clean), I took advantage of it and realized my long held dream.

When I got there I immediately got in touch with the Dublin N.A. group and went to a meeting the very first evening. I was invited out to coffee and made some friends that helped me get to a meeting each day during my visit. The strength of the Ireland fellowship is great and those N.A.'ers made me feel right at home.

The fellowship, meetings and the steps made this trip possible for me. I am very grateful to N.A. for all the things that are in my life today. Things that I only could talk about before but never do anything about.

And I am also grateful to the members of Dublin's N.A. group for helping to make my trip wonderful and clean. I haven't made it to a university in Europe yet... but I have made it to Europe—thanks to N.A.

H.R., Oregon



Comin' up

LET US KNOW!

We'll be happy to announce your up-coming events. Just let us know at least three months in advance. Include dates, event name and location, N.A. office or phoneline number, and a post office box. (Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

The **N.A. Way**
MAGAZINE

P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409.
(818) 780-3951.

ALABAMA: Aug. 17-19, 1990; Celebration of N.A. History; Ramada Inn, 8716 Highway 20 West, Madison, AL.; rsvn.s (205) 772-0701

AUSTRALIA: Sep. 28-30, 1990; Sydney Combined Areas Convention; Enmore Theatre, 116 Enmore Road, Enmore; tel. 61-202112445; CAC-90, P.O. Box 1376, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Jul. 20-22, 1990; British Columbia N.A. Rally; Beban Park Rec. Complex, Nanaimo

2) Aug. 24-26, 1990; 11th Annual Regional convention; Nanaimo Curling Club; rsvn.s (604) 756-2351 or (604) 753-1294; B.C.N.A., P.O. Box 107, Drawer 1300, Nanaimo, BC V9R 6J8

CALIFORNIA: Aug. 10-12, 1990; South Lake Tahoe Campout; Camp Richardson; rsvn.s (916) 541-4100; South Lake Tahoe Campout, P.O. Box 7121, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95731

2) Aug. 17-19, 1990; Set Em Free Campout; Oakwood Lake Water Slides and Campground, Manteca, CA; For more information call (408) 688-5817

CANADA: Oct. 5-7, 1990; "Chaque jour nous en revelera davantage" 3rd Quebec Regional Convention; Grand Hotel, in downtown Montreal, next to Square Victoria, metro station; C.R.Q.N.A.3, Station B, P.O. Box 1871, Quebec CANADA, H3B 3L4

COLORADO: Jul. 27-29, 1990; 3rd Annual "Standing on Higher Ground" Weekend; Viking Hotel, Telluride, Colorado; rsvn.s (303) 728-6621; hotline (303) 728-6094; NA Retreat, P.O. Box 10, Telluride, CO 81435

2) Oct. 26-28, 1990; 4th Colorado Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, 425 West Prospect Road, Ft. Collins CO 80526; rsvn.s (303) 482-2626; Colorado Reg. Convention, P.O. Box 5183, Englewood, CO 80155-5183

CONNECTICUT: Jul. 13-15, 1990; 5th Annual N.A. Campathon; Seaport Campgrounds, Old Mystic, CT.; rsvn.s (203) 536-4044

GEORGIA: Aug. 3-5, 1990; Marietta Area Convention; Raddison Hotel, Courtland Street, Downtown; rsvn.s (404) 659-6500; MAC, P.O. Box 81677, Atlanta, GA 30366

ILLINOIS: Jul. 20-22, 1990; 2nd Basic Campout; Okaw Bluff Group Campsite, Lake Shelbyville, IL; phoneline (217) 373-2063; New Beginnings Area, P.O. Box 689, Normal, IL 61761

INDIANA: Jul. 27-29, 1990; 6th Mid-Coast Convention; Hilton at the Airport, 2500 S. High School Rd., Indianapolis; rsvn.s (800) 445-8667 or (317) 244-3361; send speaker tapes; MCC-6, P.O. Box 47462, Indianapolis, IN 46227

KANSAS: Aug. 10-12, 1990; 3rd Just For Today Campout; Thunderbird Marina, Rolling Hills Area of Milford Lake; phonelines (913) 776-9933 or (913) 762-3861

2) Aug. 24-26, 1990; Hugs Not Drugs (By Choice) Rock and Roll weekend campout; LaCygne Lake at Linn County Park, 30 miles south of Kansas City, Kansas. Call (913)-294-9430 for information.

MINNESOTA: Aug. 4-6, 1990; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; rsvn.s (507) 345-7551

2) Sep. 22, 1990; Twin Cities Banquet, St. Albert's Church, 2833 32d Av., Minneapolis, Mn. Rsvns. via T.C.N.A. Banquet Committee, P.O. Box 18354, W. St. Paul, Mn. 55118

NEBRASKA: Sept. 14-16, 1990; Holiday Inn, North Platte, NE 69101; NCRNA VII, P.O. Box 2254, North Platte, NE 69101

NEW BRUNSWICK: Jul. 13-15, 1990; A Celebration of Recovery; Fredrickton, N.B. CANADA; International ACC, P.O. Box 20064, Fredrickton, N.B., CANADA, E3B 6Y8

NEW JERSEY: Aug. 17-19, 1990; 2nd Unity Convention; Summertime Serenity; Parsippany Hilton, 1 Hilton Court Parsippany, Troy Hills, NJ, 07054; rsvn.s (201) 267-7373

NEW YORK: Jul. 13-15, 1990; 4th Recovery in the Woods Campout; phoneline (716) 878-2316; Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

2) Jul. 27-29, 1990; 5th Northern New York Regional Convention; Wells College Campus, Aurora, New York; NNYRCNA, P.O. Box 142, 2604 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14618

NEW ZEALAND: Oct. 26-28, 1990; New Zealand Regional Convention; Victoria University, Kelburn, Wellington; NZRSCCC, P.O. Box 12-473, Molesworth Street, Wellington,

OHIO: Jul. 13-15, 1990; 6th Columbiana County Campout; Chaparral Campground, 10136 West Middletown Road, Salem; Camp-Venture, P.O. Box 451, Salem, OH 44460

2) Sep. 14-15, 1990; "Literature Awareness 1990," Ramada Inn East, 2100 Brice Rd., Columbus, Ohio. Rsvns. (614) 864-1280. Ohio RSO, (614) 236-8787

OREGON: Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 1990; WCNA 20-The Journey Continues; Host Committee, WSO; P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91499-4198; rsvn.s (503) 230-1196, (818) 780-3951

PENNSYLVANIA: Sep. 7-9, 1990; 9th Little Apple Area Birthday Celebration; George Washington Motor Lodge, Rt. 22 and 145, Allentown, PA; L.A.A. Sub. Comm., P.O. Box 4475, Allentown, PA 18105

PORTUGAL: Jul. 27-29 1990; 7th European Conference and Convention; Colegio Pio XII, Av. Forcas Armadas, Lisbon; VII E.C.C.N.A., Apartado 21644, 1137-Lisboa Codex,

PUERTO RICO: Jul. 27-29, 1990; Primera Convencion de Puerto Rico; Hotel Caribe Hilton, P.O. Box 1872, San Juan PR 00902; reservacion (809) 721-0303; Comite de Convenciones, P.O. Box 10524, Caparra Heights Sta., PR 00922



N.A. Way

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3TEA

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.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.



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 dues or fees. 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.

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