

THE



WAY

SEPTEMBER 1982

N.A.

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only "One" requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A. but we suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. 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."

The N.A. Way presents the experiences and opinions of NAs. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply any endorsement by either Narcotics Anonymous or The N.A. Way.



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Dear Fellow Member,

We have some exciting news. The 1982 World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous has formed a new sub committee to: "Administer the publishing of a monthly magazine on recovery from addiction the N.A. way."

"The N.A. Way," our magazine, can become a reality with your help. We need articles on recovery from addiction, personal experiences on sharing our message of recovery, spiritual and inspirational articles, tales of humorous and thought provoking growth experiences, stories about becoming productive responsible members of society, reflective one-liners with impact, personal and group experiences in practical application of our Traditions. WE NEED YOUR INPUT.

Charter subscriptions will cost \$8.00 for 12 issues until the end of the Twelfth World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous. We believe this will be enough to get us started. A financial report will appear in each issue so there will be no question of accountability.

We will print all articles anonymously. Your support will help make our dreams a reality: to have a monthly forum for N.A. recovery, a journal to unify our Fellowship worldwide.

In Loving Service,

3 "The N.A. Way"

IDENTITY CRISIS —

For many years I pondered the philosophical question, "Who am I?" I searched for meaning in life through fantasy after fantasy. I sought purpose for my existence in cause after cause. Finally, desperate for an identity to reconcile my multi-faced personality, I began to expand my consciousness through drugs, from hippie to hype. I searched the world over for stories about drugs and the culture surrounding them. I scoured the realm of pills from doctors, the best and the worst of liquid potions. I went from upholstered sewers full of disco-glitter to cribs cluttered with filth on the nod. Nowhere could I find me. Not in the dealer, the jetsetter; in the biker, or in the burn-out. I came to this Fellowship totally lost. Not knowing who or what I was. I knew that I'd tried to be many things and had failed. I knew who and what I wasn't. My life only got worse when I used drugs - I wanted to stop.

My would-be helpers tried to convince me that I was an alcoholic, but I knew alcohol was only an occasional substitute. They tried to appease me by suggesting that I was a cross addict, but I didn't have any splinters in my shoulders from carrying crosses - I wasn't addicted to crosses. Well, maybe then I might be a dual addict (they were truly trying to help me surrender), but my possessions didn't include matched swords or pistols - I wasn't addicted to dueling at all. In exasperation they put it to me that I must be a poly-addict. However, to the best of my memory, I'd never smoked or shot or swallowed a bit of plastic. I survived the psychology and the would-be helpers caught up in their own chemical denial. I came to an N.A. meeting and finally heard

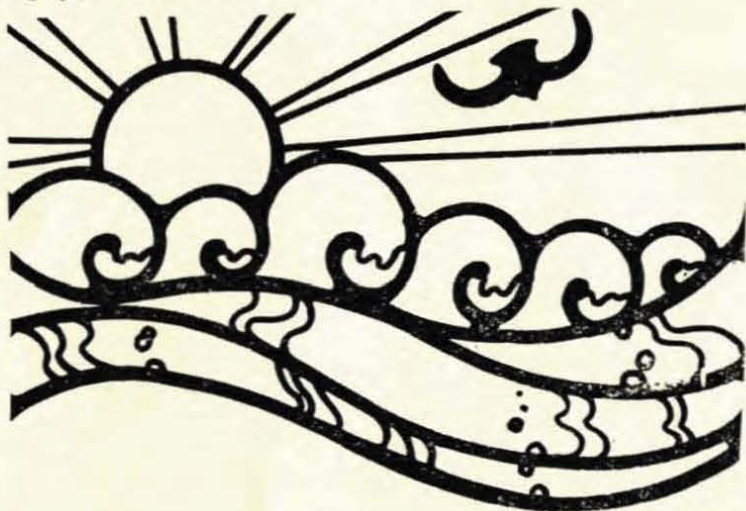
Who am I?

something that made sense. I was a person whose whole life and thinking had become centered in drugs in one form or another. Very simply...I am an addict. Now I knew what all that mumbo-jumbo about keeping it simple meant.

Eventually I was able to surrender to the idea of being powerless over my addiction, my life had become unmanageable. Today I realize that chemical identities are just a very insidious form of denial. My recovery is based on powerlessness over my addiction, not powerlessness over drugs. I'm sick, getting well the the N.A. way, recovering from my addiction. I don't think that I can recover from drugs. My body, and maybe my mind can get over their effects. Drugs are not incurable; addiction is. I can recover from my disease if I accept my powerlessness over it and work the steps on that basis. My denial is strong, the strongest part of my addictive thinking. I'm sure that my denial could lead me to say that I'm a drug addict, an addict-alcoholic, a cross addict, a chemically dependent pill head, or any one of a number of complex chemical-personality labels.

The Fellowship of N.A. taught me to identify myself according to my condition. I am an addict. None of the chemical symptoms of my disease, none of the drugs I used are any more important than the others. As an addict, I am addicted to all mood changing chemicals-whether I used them moderately, excessively, and even if I never used them at all. I'm an addict, recovering from addiction through the N.A. Program. The chemicals I used are not even the most important symptoms of the disease that I'm powerless over... today.

Total surrender can lead to unlimited recovery. To participate in my disease through denial of it would be to reserve a place for relapse to limit my recovery. I need to participate in my recovery at meetings where addicts help each other recover from addiction. I'm grateful for the gift of knowing who and what I am. I'm no longer caught up in the aura of drugs. I've surrendered to the N.A. Program and don't need to participate in any denial based on chemical hierarchy. I choose unconfused recovery expressed through my simple identity. I am, very simply, an addict.



* * * * *

I want to be me because I've spent so much time on me. If I had to start over on someone else, it would be more than I could handle.

* * * * *

If I ever learn to keep my mouth shut, my life would improve 50%.

* * * * *

HUMILITY

To me the simplest definition of humility is "humility is truth." Therefore its opposite, pride, is nothing but a lie, an exaggerated notion of one's self.

That is precisely why I usually am such a liar - I have such an exaggerated pride; that is why I so seldom admitted the truth and why I became such a frustrated personality - I was working on false premises.

Humility is not a denial of good qualities, for in truth it is the admission of all qualities both good and bad. I admit my faults and work to remedy them; I admit my abilities and accept and use them as a gift of my God. If I am absolutely truthful in the estimation of myself, I am humble.

Until such an attitude of humble evaluation of myself is achieved, I will not attain contented recovery. For it is without humility that I feel the Program is impossible.

Humility is the root of all my other virtues and the very cornerstone of my program. Humility is the root of faith, hope and tolerance. I find that each one is fortified and reinforced through true humility.

On the other hand, pride seems to be the root of my troubles. In some way or another most difficulties I encounter stem from pride. Resentment, self-pity, intolerance, bigotry, boasting, and control of others all come from my pride. The longer that I am clean, the more it becomes necessary to remind myself that I am what I am by the grace of my God. Isn't it great that a Higher Power can do so much with such poor material? Examples of difficulties and troubles stemming from pride are endless. On the other hand, the rewards of humility are unlimited.

Somebody once told me that, as I go through the day, I should pause when agitated or doubtful and ask for the right thought or action. I constantly remind myself many times each day "Thy will be done," that I am no longer running the show. I am then in much less danger of anger, fear, worry, self-pity, criticism or foolish decisions.

I become more efficient - humbly abandoning myself to my Higher Power - admitting my faults to Him and another addict. It works! It really does!!

The price of real maturity in my life is a realization of the mistakes I have made. Is such a realization discouraging? Absolutely, unless I fall on my knees and humbly admit it all to my God with heartfelt thanks that He knows and understands and will make allowance, full allowance, for my pitiful human mistakes. What more could I expect? When from my knees I rise and face the future, just for today, trusting far less in myself than ever before, with humble faith in my God and the Fellowship of N.A.

* * * *

The word that saved our lives....identity.

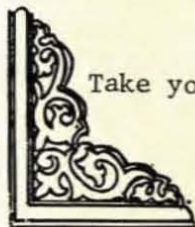
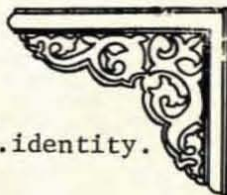
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Use your friends and the Program,
not the dope.

* * * *

Take your Fourth Step until noone else can.

* * * *



For Unity's Sake

A little over two and a half years ago I came to realize that I was dying from my addiction. During those last few weeks of my active addiction I began to see myself for what I had become. I was overcome by feelings of remorse, disgust and hopelessness. I hated who and what I had become.

Two and a half years ago I was led to the Fellowship of N.A. where I learned that no addict need ever die, including me. At the time of my first N.A. meetings I was attending another anonymous fellowship in order to "recover from my other disease." Somewhere within the first year of my recovery, I experienced a spiritual awakening as a result of accepting the First Step of N.A. This awakening led to my complete surrender to the N.A. Program and unconditional love for this Fellowship. Today my recovery is ongoing and based completely in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A.

This deep love and respect for our Fellowship and our Program has moved me to write. I know that the still suffering addict whether his drug of choice was alcohol or whether it was heroin can find recovery in N.A. N.A. can stand on its own two feet if we allow it to.

Last month I moved to a new area. I brought with me a few material possessions and a little recovery. Today I have some control as to the choice I make concerning my material possessions, but that part of my existence that I hold so dearly, my mental, physical and spiritual recovery, is to a great extent out of my hands. My recovery is a gift, a gift from N.A., and it is with you, the Fellowship in this new area, that

I must entrust my recovery.

There is nothing inherently wrong with the Steps and Traditions of N.A. These are the Program. But today there appears to be something desparately wrong with our Fellowship. The Steps and the Traditions are the same in the west as they are in the east as they are overseas. And yet N.A. from one area to another is almost unrecognizable. Why? I believe it is the result of our indifference towards the Traditions of this Program, the Program to which I owe my life. Today I hurt and am taking measures to remedy this. I believe my recovery is in jeopardy. You see I need meetings that talk to me about my disease and that do not try to confuse my identity. For me, N.A. is like dope. If all you know is the diluted stuff it will work for an addict, but I have tasted the pure shit, and nothing else works anymore. I do not attend N.A. to hear about recovery in another fellowship. I do not attend N.A. meetings to pick up the literature of another fellowship or organization. If I want their literature I would go to their meetings. I do not attend N.A. meetings to hear about club-houses or the schedule of meetings for other fellowships. I go to N.A. for one reason, and one reason only. I need hard-core N.A. recovery, not some diluted form of that recovery.

I sincerely apologize to anyone that I might offend. Please believe me when I say that this is not my intention. I have only the highest regard for all recovery orientated programs, but I am personally committed to just one - N.A.

I do not expect you, especially since I am an outsider, to receive what I have to say with an open mind. I believe that a Higher Power speaks through our literature because it represents the voice and experience of thousands of recovering addicts from around the globe. Please read what our book has to say about Traditions. If you cannot accept what I say, for Unity's sake please accept our book. I beg you because my recovery depends on it.

A Recovering,

Recovered Addict

Seeking Recovery!!!

I'm so tired of trying to figure out whether I'm a "Recovering Addict" or a "Recovered Addict." Hell yes and no, both and neither.

I'm a "Recovering Addict" in the sense that I'm an addict trying to stay clean and live a better life. However, I'm definitely not "Recovering" in the sense of "Don't mess with my head, remember I'm just recovering" or "Don't get on my case, what do you expect, remember progress not perfection. I'm not recovered yet." I'm not "Recovering" in the sense that recovering is a cop-out, an excuse for self-will, or a license to prolong my sickness.

I'm a "Recovered Addict" in the sense that my whole life and thinking are no longer centered in drugs: the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. I am "Recovered" in the sense that I'm clean and have lost the obsession to get loaded. On the other hand, I'm not "Recovered" because I have a disease for which there is no cure and which is only arrested a day at a time depending on my relationship with my Higher Power.

RECOVERED/RECOVERING -- it's really confusing. I guess that in some ways I'm a "Recovered Addict," in some ways I'm a "Recovering Addict," and in some ways I'm just a "Hold-on-to-your-ass-with-both-hands-Addict." All I really know is that I'm a CLEAN ADDICT, and my life is better that it used to be!

RESCUED



I was on a ship one day and the ship sank. It does not matter whether I was the captain of the ship, or just a deck hand. It's not important it was I up in the crow's nest or down in the boiler room. The fact remains that my ship sank and I was doomed.

Just when I felt hopeless and didn't have any will to live, I saw a lifeboat rowing towards me. I know this may sound insane, but I didn't want to get into the boat. The piece of wood that I was holding onto wasn't much, but I didn't want to give it up.

The people in the lifeboat pulled me in anyway, because I didn't have much fight left. They took me to an island and said that I could stay there for as long as I was willing to do twelve things. At the time, I didn't know what they meant, but it seemed like a nice place. Everyone was happy and smiling. Since I didn't have anywhere else to go, I choose to stay. I also noticed that around this island there were twelve sentry towers. I was told that the sentry towers were there to protect us from forces outside the island. They told me that if I worked hard and learned the twelve things to do on the island, and tried to live by them to the best of my ability, a day at a time, I could get better. I was also told that I must learn the twelve sentry posts and live

within their boundary so that the island would always be there for any shipwrecked person who wanted to stay. They told me that if I did these things, maybe one day I too could become well enough to venture out in a lifeboat and bring some hope to some shipwrecked person.

Today I'm a grateful recovering addict. The ship I just described to you was my life; my disease of addiction. The sea in which it sank was reality. The lifeboat was the Fellowship of N.A. The island they took me to was called Recovery. The twelve things that I had to be willing to do in order to stay on the island of Recovery were the Twelve Steps of N.A. The twelve sentry posts that guard this island of Recovery from internal and external forces are the Twelve Traditions of N.A. These two things mean everything to me today, because they are my new life.

The Twelve Steps of N.A. saved my life, and the Twelve Traditions of N.A. insure that I always have a place to go when I need to talk with another recovering addict.

I made a mess of my life because I was unable to deal with reality on its terms. I choose to escape using many means. The vehicle which I choose that got me here was drugs of one sort or another. The use of drugs took me to the point of feeling hopeless, helpless, and less than human. I really wanted to die, but I didn't have the courage to kill myself. I just wanted to quit hurting, but didn't know how. It seemed as though everything I did went sour. I felt like a failure and very inferior. I felt unaccepted and unacceptable.

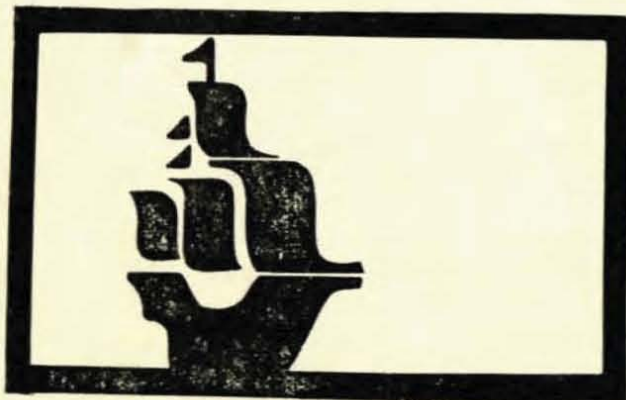
The Fellowship of N.A. was hard for me because I was very much afraid. The people in the Fellowship helped me to understand that I suffer from a disease - not a moral dilemma - and that made it a little easier. They told me that if I wanted to stay free of all chemicals, I must surrender to the fact that I was

powerless over my addiction and that my life had become unmanageable. I also learned that since I had a disease, I could recover.

For me today, my recovery from the incurable disease of addiction is active change of my ideas and attitudes, made possible when abstinent from chemicals. The only way that I can live the Twelve Steps of N.A. is by not taking that first fix, pill or drink. Going to meetings regularly helps me to stay clean and teaches me how to live the Program. The meetings provide an atmosphere of recovery and a place for identification. I feel total acceptance when I walk into an N.A. meeting. Today I have come to know unconditional love.

The Twelve Traditions of N.A. insure that an atmosphere of recovery and a place for identification will always remain. The Twelve Traditions keep our meetings free. Without the Traditions the group fails; without the group, the addict dies.

I am very grateful to the N.A. Program for teaching me how to love, laugh and finally giving me a life and teaching me how to live it. I can only express my gratitude for recovery through selfless service - anyway, anywhere, anytime I'm asked.



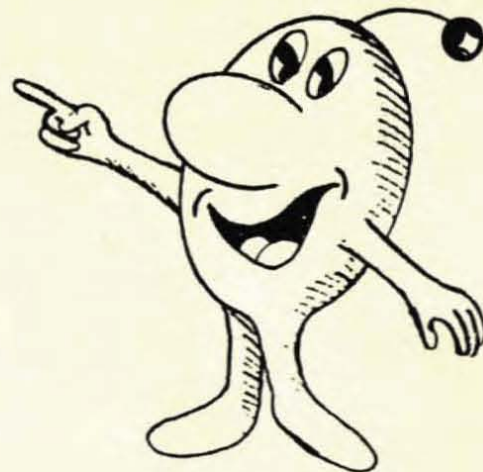
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If we never look up, we may never realize we aren't the highest point.

* * * * *

If we put off until tomorrow what we can do today, it may never get done.

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I know you understand what you think I said, but I don't believe you realize what you heard is not what I meant.

* * * * *

JUST FOR LAUGHS

I should have known I was an addict when at the age of two, my father took me to a local store. The owner of the store stretched his arm over to the counter and offered me a nickel, which I readily accepted. My father then asked me what I should say to the nice man, to which I greedily replied, "Give me another one."

RECOVERY —

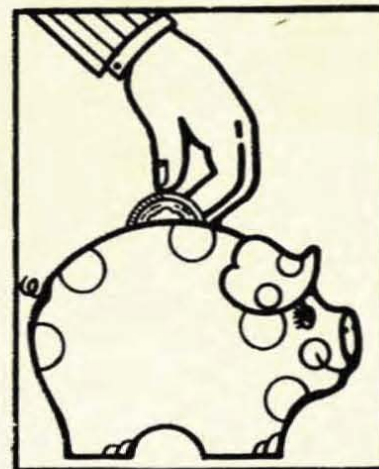
This evening I went to a discussion meeting and the topic was RECOVERY. It was a really good meeting and as people shared, it became clear that each of us has our own understanding of what recovery is. When I got home I looked in our literature and found a lot of beautiful descriptions of recovery, what it is and what it isn't, but I couldn't find a really good definition. (At least I couldn't find the kind of definition I was looking for.) Tonight's meeting was a big one and time ran out before I had a chance to share. That was OK with me, but I drank too much coffee and now I can't sleep or stop thinking about "What is Recovery?"

Most of us agree that real recovery is more than just being clean, but that being drug-free is necessary for recovery. Beyond this, recovery seems to be a very personal thing, and we each have our own idea of what it's all about.

To me, RECOVERY IS THE TWELFTH STEP; it is having had a spiritual awakening, carrying the message, and practicing these principles in all our affairs. Recovery is obvious in the lives of our members who have reached this point. They live a different way, by different rules than they did before they came to N.A.

Recovered addicts lives are based on faith; they have had a spiritual awakening. I hear a lot about spiritual experiences; they are great gifts. However, I feel that the true awakening of the spirit is the change we make from lives based on self to

my two cents worth



lives based on a power greater than ourselves. Recovery means that our own worst enemy is no longer running our lives.

Recovered addicts lives are based on service, on helping others find freedom. Service takes many forms, but is always designed to help another addict find or remember a better way to live. Recovery is obvious when we, who once were "takers and parasites" become "givers and sharers."

Recovered addicts lives are based on being the best people they can be. This is where recovery really shows. Recovered addicts no longer devastate themselves or those around them. Our lives are based on surrender, faith, humility, honesty, willingness, service, and other basic spiritual principles. When we live our lives within these principles, we don't hurt ourselves or others and we are freed from the burdens of guilt, remorse, shame, and unreasonable fear. The Twelfth Step gives us the ability to live inside our bodies and be who we really are.

Recovery is real - the only catch is that it is not automatic. We need to stay clean and work the steps in order to find it. Even after we've had a taste, old ways and old ideas sometimes take over and drag us down. I've never met an addict with perfect recovery. However, I've met some whose lives spoke of recovery most of the time. It seems that recovery is not an absolute or constant state; it seems that, just like life, RECOVERY IS NOW.



* * * * *

The only way to win a losing battle is to surrender.

* * * * *

Today I Choose Freedom

Today I have a choice. What a freedom those 5 words are. To know that I need no longer live in the prison of addiction. I thought that the prison I lived in was self-imposed upon me through chemicals. Through the love and sharing of the N.A. Fellowship, I learned that the prison was my disease. A disease that has the potential to destroy me physically, mentally and spiritually. My active addiction had very nearly done just that; it had almost destroyed me. I came into this Fellowship a shell, the spirit that I was born with had been destroyed by actively participating in my disease for years.

My ability to choose was gone. The only choice I had left was what means to use to destroy myself on any given day. My diseased mind provided me with numerous ways to do this. I could choose to use a substance which in and of itself was a means of physical destruction, or I could choose to destroy myself mentally by living in my negativity, concentrating on everything that was wrong in my life and in the world. My final choice was one of spiritual destruction. The use of people to fulfill my every self-obsessed thought. I only had the ability to choose what path to take; all roads led to self-destruction. Using, or clean, participation in the disease of addiction means death in one form or another.

Through surrender to the First Step -- accepting the fact that addiction is a disease, and that the lack of choice is my powerlessness over that disease, I have found the release and freedom I so desperately sought. Today I have a choice. I can choose to actively participate in my recovery. This choice for me says that I no longer need be locked into old thoughts and patterns. The choice is a freedom to change -- a freedom to live!

Now I Understand

I understand I must love myself
before I can love others.

I understand I must be open
so I can open others onto themselves.

I understand I must be honest
if I expect that of my friend.

I understand I must speak the truth
if I am to hear the truth spoken.

I understand that I must reach out to people
if I am to be touched.

I understand I must share
if I am to be given love.

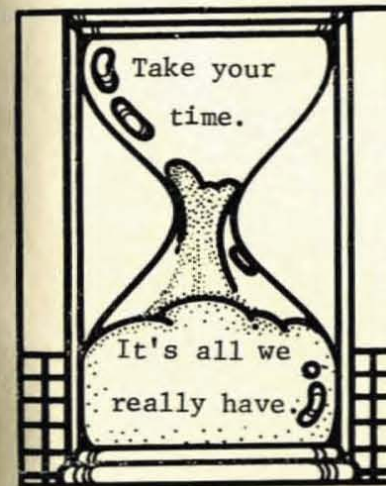
I understand my knowledge must be used
if I am to grow.

I understand you must have freedom
if I am to be free.

Spiritual Growth

It's true I've grown a little bit in the past few months. I feel as though each day I know more of myself. The real me, and not who I tried to be for so long. Those times when I feel all down and low and sorry for myself, when life gets like work and loses all of its sparkle, what helps me most is knowing that I have decided to turn my life and my will over to the care of God, as I understand Him.

Those few words mean so much to me. They are more than just words. God, as I understand Him, is Hope, the first thing I found in Him; Friends, so many he has given me; Fellowship, a place I can call home no matter what town I'm in; Acceptance, so necessary for survival; Guidance, a light to follow; A Program; and Love, a reason for it all.



Drug addicts are constantly getting out of something. Through N.A. we learn to get into things, including ourselves.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

A small puppy put his head in a pickle jar, probably out of curiosity, and got it stuck. A friend and I, with the help of some mineral oil, spent some time and freed the puppy. My friend put the jar on the porch, in a spot where the puppy could easily do it again. When I brought that to my friend's attention, the reply was, "He should know better this time." My only thought was, "Yea, but what if he's an addict, and thinks maybe this time it will work."

** Please mail all articles, subscriptions, **
** input, questions and letters to **
**
** The N.A. Way
** P.O. Box 110
** Lisbon, OHIO 44432
**



FINANCIAL REPORT

Starting Balance.....\$00.00

ASSETS:

Subscriptions - 26.....\$208.00

Donations.....\$204.00

Total Assets.....\$412.00

Balance.....\$412.00

EXPENSES:

None.....\$00.00
(as of 8/15/82)

FINAL BALANCE.....\$412.00

NOTE: The printing expenses for this issue, September, 1982, will be detailed in October's issue.

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My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.