

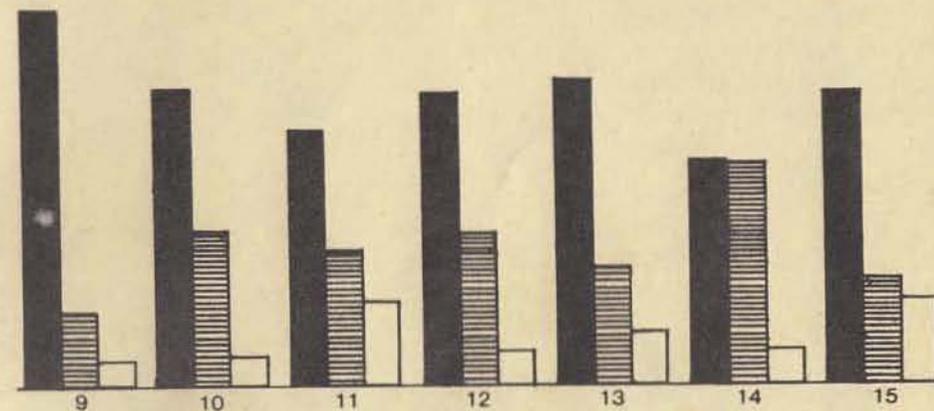
AUGUST
1986

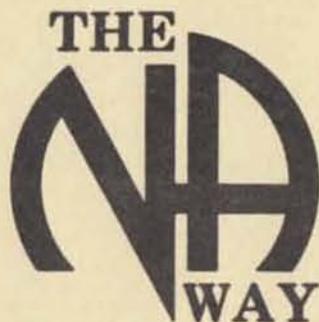
VOLUME 4

NUMBER 8

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

N.A. Way Survey Results





THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I'M PART OF SOMETHING	1
NATURE'S WAY	4
A NEW SURRENDER	6
24 HOURS	8
MIRACLES	10
LOWER POWER VERSUS HIGHER POWER	14
SPECIAL FEATURE: SURVEY RESULTS	16
THE ROSE	21
GOD-PLAYING: END OF COMMUNICATION	22
THE LAST PLACE I LOOKED	24
FROM OUR READERS	26
COMIN' UP	31
SUBSCRIPTION FORM	33
COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM	34

The *N.A. Way* presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous, the *N. A. Way* magazine, or the World Service Office, Inc.

Copyright © 1986

Permission to reprint from this publication is granted to all other service boards and committees of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

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 to 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 be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. 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 the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address below.

All members of Narcotics Anonymous are invited to participate in this "meeting in print." Send all input, along with a signed copyright release form, to: The N.A. Way; World Service Office, Inc.; P.O. Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409

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.*
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.
11. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*
- 12.

Reprinted for adaptation
by permission of Alcoholics
Anonymous World Services, Inc.

I'm Part of Something



Shortly after I found the N.A. Fellowship in 1983, I was introduced to service work. I now know that it was at that point that my life really changed course. It was then that I went from being an observer of the Fellowship to being a part of this Fellowship.

I fell into N.A. service in a very natural way. I attribute much of this to the way I was introduced to service work. It seemed that all the people at the meetings were talking about what the area was doing and what projects they as individuals were working on. Everyone seemed to be involved with something. I just assumed that being active in service was part of belonging to N.A.

I had heard it announced that the area service committee would meet that Saturday at a member's home and that anyone could attend. On Saturday I went to see what it was they did there. As the meeting got under way, it seemed as though everyone had different ideas about what needed to be done and what projects were the most important. Some wanted to write letters to hospitals, doctors, judges and probation officers. Others felt we needed to start a helpline. Some felt we needed to do more H&I work, and still others thought we should have a dance. Someone asked me what



I thought we should do. I told them we ought to make an area meeting list. I told the others that it had taken me nearly two weeks of looking to find an N.A. meeting. Counselors and A.A. had sent me to various locations all over the city where they thought N.A. meetings were held.

To my surprise the other members at the area meeting listened to me. They even agreed that a meeting list was real important, and that we should have a new list printed as soon as possible. I felt great because they had listened and agreed with me. We would soon have a new list printed for our area. It was at this point I realized that service work involves much more than showing up and stating your opinions. I learned that service involves action. I don't know who I thought was going to do the footwork to get our new lists printed. I just hadn't considered how ideas and decisions became reality. Fortunately some of the others had some experience in that area. I don't remember any discussion about who should do what on this particular project. I was just given the job in such a matter-of-fact way, that I never questioned their decision that I should do it. When I think about it, I am astonished that these people would trust me with such an important project.

When my head quit spinning, it occurred to me that I was going to need money to pay the printer. I asked the group about it. Somebody got up, went down to the basement, came back up with a sack and handed it to me. In the sack was a bunch of T-shirts left over from an N.A. function that had happened earlier that year. I was told to take the shirts to meetings and sell them, that would be where the money came from to pay the printer. Once again I just accepted that that was how things were done.

I left the meeting with a sack of old T-shirts, a whole lot of encouragement and something I now know as self-esteem. I can't describe how good it felt to know that people had faith in me. Even though, in reality, the group had risked very little on me (a sack of old T-shirts), I thought I had been given the biggest most important job ever. I saw that I had something to offer, that I counted and could make a difference. I really felt like part of something and that was a new feeling for me.

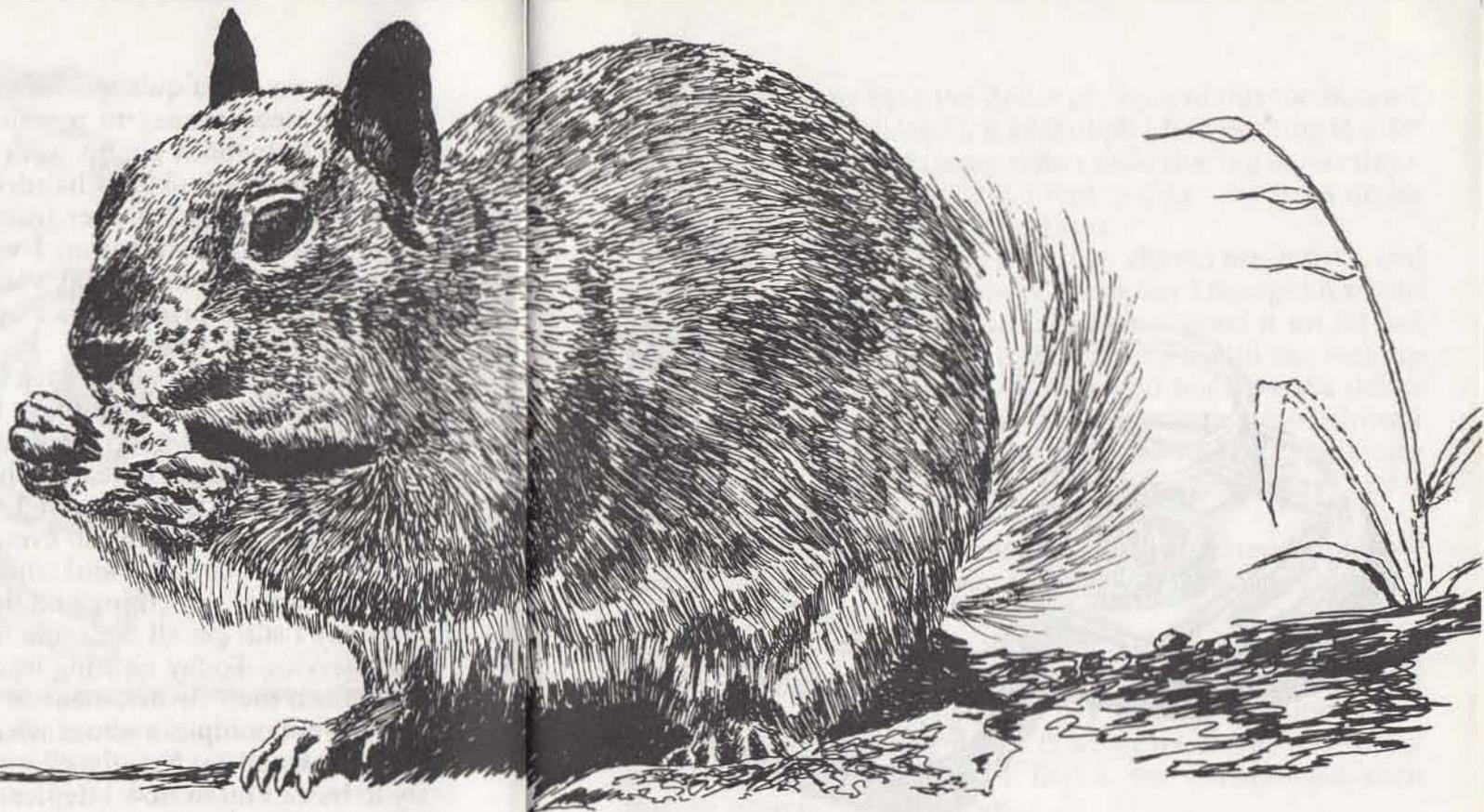
Today I still get all the same feelings from participating in N.A. service. Today nothing warms me like watching others grow from their involvement in N.A. service. Today I find it easy to not complain about what I do, as all I need to do is look back and see benefits of service work in my life. Today I try to be careful of how I depict service work to newcomers, I focus on the benefits, I introduce them to service much the way it was introduced to me. In this way I don't spoil the newcomer's opportunity to find what I have found.

Thanks to God I'm alive today, and thanks to Narcotics Anonymous I'm clean today.

R.W.
Michigan



Nature's Way



The place that I live has a few trees inhabited by families of squirrels. Being clean I've had the opportunity to watch the squirrels as the seasons change. As winter approaches, their fur becomes full and they dig holes in the yard to store their food for winter. It's amazing how they know to save for the winter. The squirrels let me know through their actions that spring approaches. They scurry around the yard, chasing each other, building nests, and mating. Soon I see the young ones as they follow the example of the older ones, learning how to survive.

I love that feeling of being in harmony with nature, of being unified with that of which I am such a part, and which has its effects on me. Nature has its way. When I was using, there was a time when I felt "oneness" with nature, with the universal power, with God, or whatever one chooses to call it. But it was a false unity, a false peace, a false serenity. As the disease progressed, I became aware of the disunity, the disharmony, the discord within myself. I became aware of the falseness, that drugs were not the way to God, to peace, to

serenity. Nature was trying to tell me, but I continued to use. That is the insanity of the disease, the fact that I kept on using. My search for harmony, peace, and serenity was not wrong but the way I was going about it was wrong for me.

Through the spiritual principles of N.A., I am gradually being restored to unity with nature's way. I feel many times separated from nature's harmony, but it is only temporary. I don't want to use today, because I don't want to be separated from nature, from God, from my associations in N.A. and from the love of those I have recently met. Today, I have laughed and I have cried. Actually, I've cried more in the last two days than I have in a long time. It's like the dam broke. My defects are a barrier to nature's way, and yet there are Steps to open the way, to open my mind and heart to that which I so desire.

C.B.
South Carolina

A New Surrender



I'm an addict. Plain and simple? This is not a new realization for me. I have been a member of Narcotics Anonymous for over three years now, and I have just recently begun to understand the First Step.

When I came to N.A., the First Step was very easy for me. I was so near to the pain, despair and financial bankruptcy. The unmanageability was very evident. It was not at all difficult to admit that I was powerless over my addiction when I was so entirely beaten by the disease.

I moved on with the steps and continued to do what was suggested by experienced members and our Basic Text. Being human, of course, I was never perfect; however, I worked a program to the best of my ability for three years.

At some point around my three year anniversary, I began to feel very much like a newcomer. I started having more thoughts about using than I had had in my whole recovery. They began to occur more and more often. I continued to go to meetings and reluctantly shared where I was at.

I soon began to have the desire to use, and this too became more often. Before long I felt as though I had nothing to offer anyone, and I began passing rather than sharing at meetings. After a few weeks in this state, I had to share about my desire to use—both in and out of meetings.

For two months, I went to meetings, shared my desires, and waited for the feeling to go away. Each day I thought it would get better. I began to fantasize about how good it would feel to use. It was all I could do to pray that I would not pick up the first one. I kept wishing that I would not have the desire to use on a daily basis. I felt that I was doing everything I could to the best of my ability to recover and do the next right thing. And yet those feelings were not going away, and I could not control them.

I went to a First Step meeting and I shared about my despair, and I cried. I was scared! I didn't want to use, and I couldn't lose the desire.

After the meeting, someone from out of town came up to me. He hugged me and said, "It sounds like you finally understand powerlessness." My first reaction was defensiveness. After all, I had three years clean! But in my gut, I knew he was right. I had never experienced such intense powerlessness before.

So today I have a new understanding of the disease of addiction. I have been reminded of how cunning it is. And I am reassured that it is still alive and kicking within me.

I know that we grow and learn through pain in our recovery. I believe that my Higher Power wanted me to remember why I came to N.A. It wasn't because I needed to learn how to have relationships or how to hold a job. I came here, and I keep coming back, because I cannot stay clean alone! I have taken my Higher Power's hint and am now getting back to basics. I am moving on to the Second Step, and that's right where I'm supposed to be—*Just for Today!*

T.H.
Illinois



24 HOURS

When I first stumbled into the program, the idea of living just for today was unthinkable. After following some of the suggestions, twenty-four hour living became a goal. When I asked someone to be my sponsor, God (my Higher Power), blessed me with someone who delivered me into living for the day. He drilled this idea into my head. Every time we talked in the beginning, either on the phone or at meetings, living just for today was the main topic discussed. It got to a point that my girlfriend thought I was losing my sense of reality.

In time my life became more orderly; living twenty-four hours at a time was part of my routine. My gratitude for the program grew as my clean time grew. I married my girlfriend, and throughout the planning stages, when most everyone was projecting all that had to be done, this addict kept his cool. I kept telling everyone things would get done, and that worrying about them wouldn't get them done any faster. All

that can get done is today's business. This was a very hectic time for me, but the attitude I got from the program allowed me to enjoy the entire experience—clean!

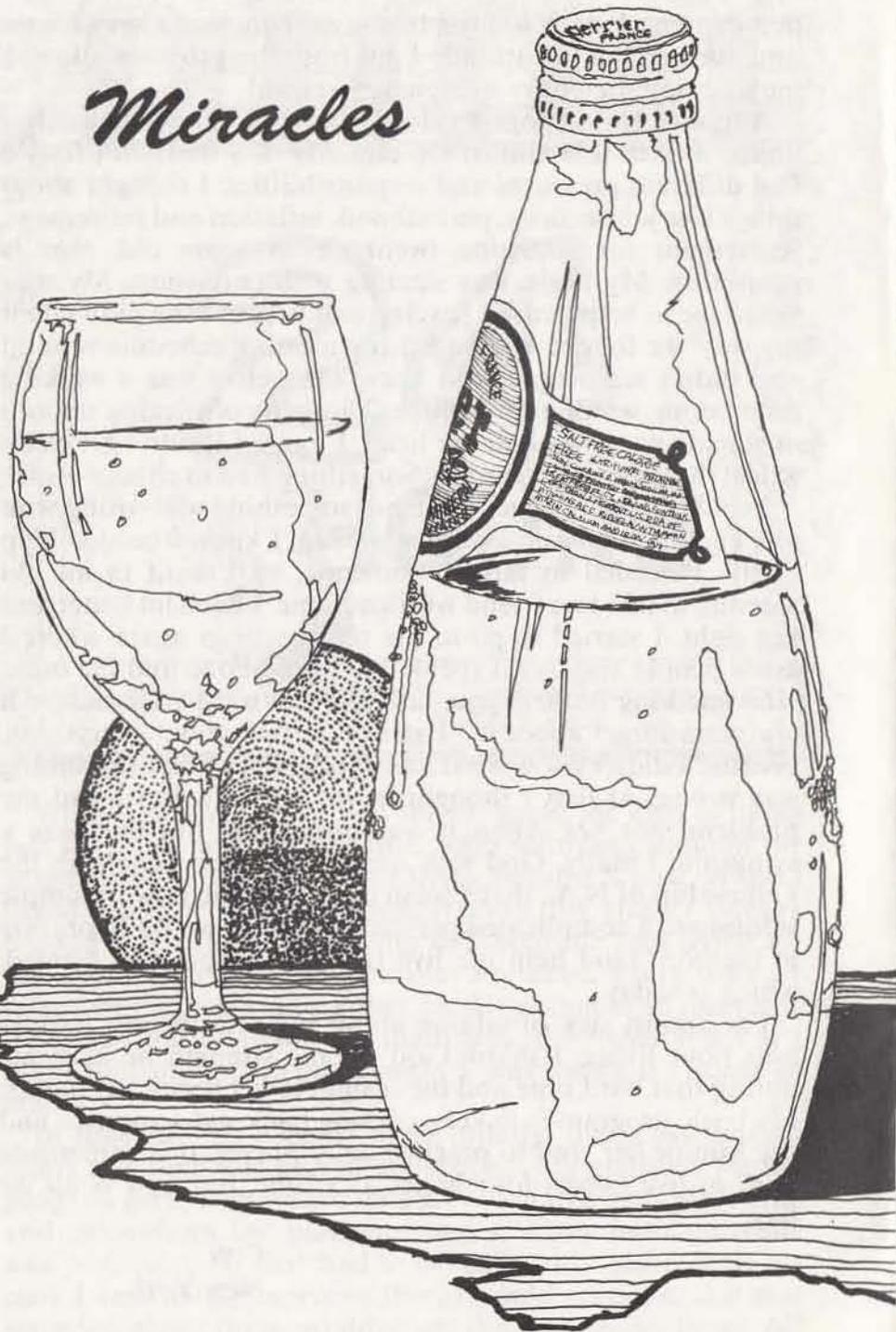
Attitudes can change so slowly that the change is hard to notice it until it is almost too late. My new married lifestyle had different pressures and responsibilities. I thought about things like job security, parenthood, inflation and retirement. Retirement for someone twenty-seven years old, *that* is projecting. My brain was sizzling with confusion. My wife asked me to help her sell jewelry, and because she didn't do it my way, we fought. I changed my meeting schedule around and didn't see people who knew me well. I was a walking time bomb, waiting to explode. Thoughts of picking up and of suicide went through my head. I figured I didn't get clean to feel these types of feelings. Something had to change—me!

I couldn't put a finger on it, but something was wrong with me. Feeling like things were at a head, I knew I needed help badly. I needed to talk to someone, so I went to an old meeting to talk to a friend who knew me. I felt a lot better, but not right. I started to go to the old meetings again where I knew people and could speak freely. Someone told me once, "If something bothers you, talk about it until your sick of it and then forget about it." I started to talk about everything, because I didn't know what was wrong, but I knew something was wrong. At first I thought it was my wife, but I had the problem, not her. Then it was projection, but that was a symptom. Finally, God told me, through the people in the Fellowship of N.A., that I wasn't living in the now. A simple solution to a complicated person. I changed my daily prayers to include "God help me live in the kingdom you created, which is today."

I'm almost sick of talking about my rebirth into twenty-four hour living. I thank God for the strength he gave me during that hard time and the insight to keep with my basics. My basic program is to keep coming back, get a sponsor and use him or her, and to practice daily prayer. It is sometimes hard to live twenty-four hours at a time, but now is all we have.

C.W.
New York

Miracles



My life has been full of lovely little miracles. Even now, as I sit, I can still feel the wonder of the most dramatic miracle of my life—getting clean. In my wildest imagination I couldn't conceive of a world without my drug, without pain and frenzied running, circling, circling, all the time going faster and gaining nothing. The distance always remained the same, no matter how I tried to outrun it. The distance between me and sanity, between me and a little peace. The distance between me and having choices was always the same—white wine, please, chilled, no ice. I had stopped hoping for change, stopped wondering if there could be anything but this madness. Almost stopped caring the morning after my last rampage, staring down at the ocean wondering how cold it would be. Lovely little miracles... I was whisked away to a treatment center after a frightening confrontation with myself, one that I had been avoiding for years. One that I lost, hands down, without a prayer.

My life is a sigh of relief these days. It's the very calmness that I had always mistaken for boredom that so inspires my gratitude for this newfound existence laced with peace and serenity. I have no regrets about the wildness of my erstwhile frantic lifestyle, for if I had only known peace and tranquility, I doubt very much that I would have such a keen awareness and appreciation of it now. It occurs to me now that my pursuit of fast-lane frolic wasn't as destructive as it was empty and meaningless. Spinning my wheels and having no idea where the brakes were. Drugs had obliterated my past, made my future unimportant and my present a treadmill. At best it made the days and nights a blur, and therefore less offensive, and at worst it made living on the edge of madness a "comfortable" stance. Time was something that flew by, and I was always two steps behind it.

And here I am, sitting back with dignity and gratitude, still marveling at all the lovely little miracles that take place as a matter of course in my "brave new world." Perrier is wonderful, and so is the freedom that recovery has given me. The distance between me and my dalliance with destruction is still the same—white wine—and it will always be that way. But I've found a way to keep the cork on the bottle—I've found program.

I go now to basements instead of barrooms, and I find the air much easier to breathe. Watching people change their lives, listening to the sounds of people growing and finding acceptance of who they are, who they were and who they want to be, that's program. Program is watching hope fill the room. It's life and the belief that we are where we should be, nowhere else. It's hearing someone else say exactly what you've been feeling but you couldn't find the right words. It's knowing that you're not alone when you change your friends, your habits, your lifestyle, your job, your lover, your life. Program is understanding that no one is as good or as bad as you thought, and that no one is too far gone to turn their life into something good, something special. And it's finally realizing that nobody can walk in your shoes, but that lots of people are walking beside you and can help make the journey a lot easier and much more fun. It's learning how to live your life the way you choose and letting others live their way. It's learning how to laugh at yourself and how not to be too harsh on yourself. Program is choosing life over death and being grateful that we have the chance.

Lovely little miracles... The word now is hope. Hope for us all. A word that was never anything but an illusion, and a faint one at that. Hope is the light of a whole new world, a world that promises growth and acceptance, freedom and peace, choices and solutions. Trust. Joy. A life second to none. And always, those lovely little miracles.

K.S.
Massachusetts



DRUG PROBLEM?!!
NOT ME, OH I
USE A LITTLE...
SOCIALY.



Lower Power

versus

Higher Power



I've been wanting to write for quite some time. I've received so much from the Program of Narcotics Anonymous, and my recovery is very important to me. By the grace of God I have a little over a year. There are no words to describe the freedom, love, joy, and just plain feelings I have felt in this short period of time.

I try to stay as positive as I can, but sometimes my addiction (my "lower power") slips in. This usually happens when I don't keep in contact with my Higher Power which I

choose to call God. Well today it happened; I got angry. I lost control over my feelings. Before N.A., when I got angry, I always got physical. My arguments were usually with my husband and they were terrible. I believed he had the problem, not me, and that I was just doing what any other woman would do when she had a bad husband. I was in absolute denial of my disease.

Yesterday I allowed him to push my buttons, and in a blink of an eye I was my old self—throwing things, punching, hitting, screaming—all the irrational thinking and behavior of my using days came back. I was the old addict I'd been for sixteen years. My four-and-a-half-year-old immediately took over the three-year-old. Something she hadn't had to do in over a year. In my irrational state, I knew that I was right and he was wrong. I had an emotional and behavioral relapse. The only thing I didn't do was use. When I looked in the mirror I was shocked. It wasn't me.

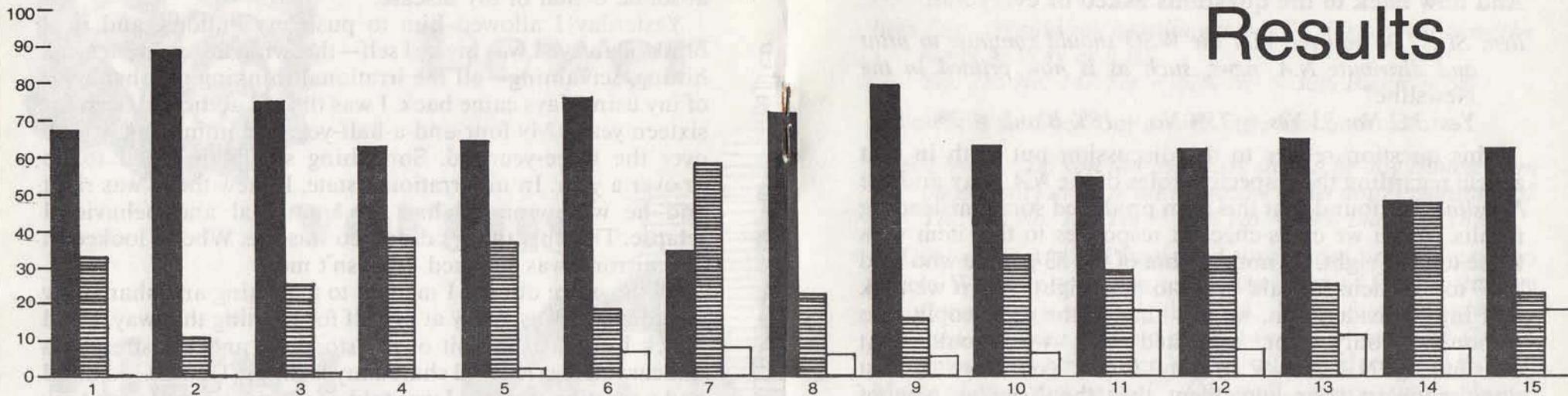
By the grace of God I made it to a meeting and shared my experience. I was angry at myself for reacting that way. I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach, and the stress was unbearable. I cried and shared my feelings. Thank God that I had a meeting to go to! I was told about prayer, and about my Higher Power, about making amends and forgiving myself. I was told to remember that just because I have a year, that doesn't mean that my character defects are gone. Old behavior doesn't die easy. It rears its ugly head from time to time. When I walked out of the meeting I wasn't the same person who had walked in. I had gotten the unconditional love I needed and was able to go home and make amends for my actions.

By the grace of God I'm clean today. I thank God and N.A. for their love and caring. I hope I never have to experience that old me again because it was very painful. But if my God thinks it necessary, I pray that together we handle it better than I did alone.

R.W.
Mississippi

SPECIAL FEATURE

CODE
 YES ■
 NO ▨
 BLANK □



Earlier this year we sent out a survey with both the *Newsline* and the *N.A. Way* regarding the future of the *N.A. Way* magazine. We wanted to see just how much and what kind of support existed for the magazine among the Fellowship, so that the some decisions could be reached regarding the magazine's future. The response to that survey was heavy. We would like to thank all those who took the time to participate in this information gathering effort.

To understand the above graph, it is important to note that questions two through five were only directed at non-subscribers, and the rest of the questions were directed at both subscribers and non-subscribers. In other words, when we show that question two was answered "yes" by 89%, we are saying 89% of the 152 non-subscribers. When we say that question six was answered "yes" by 75%, we mean 75% of the 459 people who responded before our cut-off date of May 20.

To start out, let's give a simple listing of each question as it appeared on the survey, the statistics we gathered from your responses on each item, and a brief discussion of each one.

N.A. Way Survey Results

Item One: Do you subscribe to the N.A. Way magazine?
 Yes: 307 No:152 Yes = 67% No = 33% Blank = 0%

This question was asked, of course, so that we could look at the responses in the end and see how subscribers' answers compared to non-subscribers' answers. About two thirds of those who answered were people who subscribe to the magazine.

For items two through five, total responses = 152 (those who answered item one "no")

These items are self-explanatory. They were designed to give us a feel for the level of exposure the non-subscribers had to the magazine.

Item Two: Have you ever heard of the N.A. Way magazine?
 Yes: 136 No: 16 Yes = 89% No = 11% Blank = 0%

Item Three: Have you ever seen a copy of the N.A. Way magazine?
 Yes: 113 No: 38 Yes = 74% No = 25% Blank = 1%

Item Four: Have you ever read the N.A. Way magazine?

Yes: 94 No: 58 Yes = 62% No = 38% Blank = 0%

Item Five: Have you ever planned to subscribe, but just never got around to it?

Yes: 95 No: 54 Yes = 63% No = 36% Blank = 2%

And now back to the questions asked of everyone:

Item Six: Do you feel that the WSO should continue to print and distribute N.A. news, such as is now printed in the Newslines?

Yes: 342 No: 83 Yes = 75% No = 18% Blank = 7%

This question relates to the discussion put forth in that article regarding the respective roles of the *N.A. Way* and the *Newslines*. We found that this item produced some misleading results. When we cross-checked responses to this item with those to item eight, we noticed that of the 83 people who said "no" to this item, 79 said "yes" to item eight. When we took that into consideration, we saw that of the 459 people who responded, only four indicated that we should quit distributing *N.A.* news in any form. You were almost unanimous in your agreement that the *Newslines* type of information should still be distributed.

Item Seven: Do you feel that the WSO should continue to absorb the \$33,000 to distribute this news free?

Yes: 154 No: 266 Yes = 34% No = 58% Blank = 8%

A clear majority of you, though not an overwhelming one, felt that this information should not be distributed free of charge. Thirty-four percent of you felt the WSO should continue to absorb these costs.

Item Eight: Do you feel that a section should be added to the N.A. Way magazine to include this type of information in addition to its current format?

Yes: 328 No: 103 Yes = 71% No = 22% Blank = 6%

Your answers to this question frankly surprised us a little. We had been operating on the assumption that there was quite a bit of strong feeling that we should not make any substantial changes to the format of the magazine. You clearly indicated, both in your answers to this question and in your essay responses, that you would support an expansion of the format of the *N.A. Way*.

Item Nine: Would you be willing to pay \$15.00 per year to receive such a combined publication?

Yes: 363 No: 74 Yes = 79% No = 16% Blank = 5%

Again, these numbers speak for themselves. You have told us that an expanded version of the *N.A. Way* would be worth paying more for.

Item Ten: Would you be willing to pay \$15.00 per year to receive the N.A. Way as it is?

Yes: 285 No: 147 Yes = 62% No = 32% Blank = 6%

You still said yes, but a with little less enthusiasm.

Item Eleven: Do you feel that there should be any change from the current format of the magazine under any circumstances?

Yes: 242 No: 133 Yes = 53% No = 29% Blank = 18%

This was just a bad item, and turned out not to mean too much. We were trying to assess the level of feeling that we mentioned earlier—that the *N.A. Way* should never be changed. We tried to avoid putting you in a "yes I don't" kind of position in your answer, but we still failed to make it clear. Many of you just said "?". Oh, well... every survey should have at least one meaningless item.

Item Twelve: Do you feel that such a position ought to be created?

Yes: 278 No: 149 Yes = 61% No = 32% Blank = 7%

"Such a position" referred to a group level *N.A. Way* representative whose responsibility it would be to see that the magazine had plenty of exposure at the meetings. This idea seemed to get a cool reception, judging from your answers to this item and the next three. We elected not to move ahead with this idea, at least for the present. However, that does not stop any group who feels that this is a good idea to pursue it on its own. Our only decision at this time is not to coordinate anything through our office.

Item Thirteen: Do you feel that the creation of such a position in your group would generate more sales of the magazine in its current form?

Yes: 294 No: 114 Yes = 64% No = 25% Blank = 11%

Item Fourteen: Would you be willing to hold such a position?

Yes: 214 No: 210 Yes = 47% No = 46% Blank = 8%

Item Fifteen: Would a member of your group most likely follow through with this responsibility?

Yes: 280 No: 100 Yes = 61% No = 22% Blank = 17%

CONCLUSIONS

Space limitations prevent us from discussing here such specifics as the differences between subscribers' and non-subscribers' answers. Suffice it to say that these details were carefully analyzed by the WSO Board of Directors, who then came up with the following decisions during their most recent meeting.

First, the magazine will be expanded, in keeping with your responses to item eight above, to include an "N.A. News" section and a "General Forum" section. The news section will include short points of interest submitted by various committees, boards, trusted servants etc. The General Forum will comprise a monthly essay written by a world level trusted servant or special worker, followed by a section of responses to past essays. This section may take on more of an editorial flavor than we have seen in the magazine in the past. Responsible views on a variety of issues related to our philosophy and development as a Fellowship will be printed.

This move represents a shift in our perception of ourselves. Our primary focus will remain on the "meeting in print," which will still appear with artwork, and will still dominate the magazine's overall layout, but we now view ourselves as a publication with much broader possibilities. We expect to be fluid and changing, striving to meet the needs of a fluid, changing, growing Fellowship. You will see these changes begin to take effect as of the October issue. We hope you are as excited about our future as we are.

The second change that will take place is that we will increase our subscription price to \$15.00, in keeping with your responses to item nine. We will publish the new format for a few months first at our current price of \$12.00 to give everyone a chance to get on board before the new price goes into effect.

An interesting side benefit of the survey is that our subscriptions are booming. When we wrote the article for the *Newsline* we had just under 3,000 subscriptions. At this writing we have just under 4,000. You have spoken in more ways than one.

The Rose



When I was using, I had a supervisor tell me, "life isn't a rose garden." I think he was upset because I was losing patience and tolerance with the job. You see the job was the problem, not the drugs. It couldn't have been the way I was coping with the problems that do occur occasionally on the job. Like man, my attitude was all right; it was *your* attitude that needed changing.

The rose is a beautiful flower. A symbol of both life and death, of caring and loving. I think maybe life is a rose garden, I just have to be careful of the thorns. If I go rushing in and grabbing, I'm bound to get stuck. But if I'm very careful and gently pick the rose, then I'm less apt to get stuck. I then can focus on the beauty of the rose. You see, when I get stuck I usually focus on the pain and the negatives and cuss a little bit. The rose is there, and its fragrance and its beauty are free to the one who chooses to enjoy the beauty.

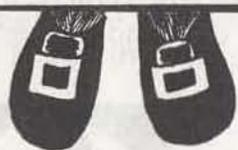
C.B.
South Carolina

God Playing: End of Communication



My hardest struggle in recovery has not been to stay clean—OH NO! It's been trying to remove my defect of God-playing. Naturally, I was totally oblivious for a long time to the issue of my God-playing. When confronted with it by my sponsor and a well-meaning friend, I became hysterical with humor, sarcastic, hostile and defensive. WHO ME??? Play God! Truly absurd! They just didn't realize that I was uniquely qualified to know what was best for me and everyone else. What YOU should do. What you're doing wrong and how to change it all, what path in recovery you should take, and (naturally) how to live your life for optimum happiness and enjoyable recovery. Let me fix you, dear people (ha ha).

I had fixed myself (I forgot about the role my Higher Power played in that one), so let me tell you how to run your failing life, and let me make you all better. I know, I've been there! Let me change you and the whole world and we'll all be so much the happier! Just stop being so obstinate and listen to me.



These are the ravings of a very sick, self-obsessed addict. Thank God, through the help of some very loving friends, I woke up, saw myself, and was relieved of the burdensome responsibility of being in charge and knowing best for everyone else!

I truly have learned that others can only upset me and ruin my day when I give them the power to do so. What a revelation to learn I don't know what's best for anyone else, thus learning to *live and let live*. How can I know what's best for you when half the time I don't know what's best for me? It's nice to be able to allow myself to be wrong, a luxury I rigidly fought! It's a relief to be responsible for myself only—such a release from worrying about everyone else.

I learned when I was busy God-playing, I truly couldn't relate or communicate. I was always on that soapbox preaching, teaching, lecturing, and dictating. It was a way for me not to work on myself, change me, or face my insecurities. I was never able to talk about me, I was too busy talking down to you. I was never able to see your pain, I was too busy searching for my solution for you. I wasn't able to share my faults, I was too busy taking your inventory.

I'm grateful to my Higher Power that I finally hit a painful bottom with this defect, and became willing to rid myself of its stifling grasp and change myself. It was an unforgettable lesson in total humility, and helped me start "fixing" my ego. It made me totally accept what I am, a fragile human being who needs ya'lls love and support.

When I awakened, I became able to communicate, open-up and truly share, and really empathize rather than sympathize or worse yet, cast my judgments. It changed my clean time from quantity to quality, from stagnation and routine to true enjoyment. I became able to reach out, give, and receive. I tell you, it's great. Today I am truly reasonably happy. Remember, alone I can't, but together we can.

T.T.
Virginia

THE LAST PLACE I LOOKED

I'm an addict free of drugs today. I found in my first drug, alcohol, that the pain of living would leave me when I was high. I grew up with all sorts of resentments and fears, and fell into a pattern of blaming people and situations for the way I was feeling. At the age of fifteen, my family and friends had noticed that I was out of control when I drank. I would go to parties or dances and want to fight or start some sort of a scene. Over the next two years my drinking became more and more out of control.

On my seventeenth birthday, I found myself in a police station being charged for some serious crimes. For the first time I had to look at my life. It was suggested to me that my drinking was a problem. This didn't sit too well with me, but I agreed.

At this time I became suicidal. I couldn't see a way out of what I was in, and felt like a piece of dirt. A doctor had prescribed me valium to help me sleep and relax a little. One night I decided to eat them all, crying out for help. I was taken to a hospital to have my stomach pumped, and from there to another hospital to rehabilitate. I stayed in this hospital for five weeks and was introduced to a Twelve Step Fellowship. I went to the meetings every night and admitted that drinking was a problem for me—but I didn't accept it.

I left the hospital and decided that I wouldn't drink, but I would smoke marijuana, and did so. Over the next eighteen months I still went to meetings once or twice a week, sitting on the outside not feeling "a part of." I had a court case and a family to keep off my back. After I had been to court and everything was falling into place for me, I started to question why I was still going to these meetings. I was thinking to myself that I haven't done what these people have, I'm not as bad as they are. I was smoking marijuana on a daily basis at this stage and didn't want to go to the meetings as I thought my life was under control now.

So I stopped going to meetings and moved to another state. I started to drink very heavily soon after moving, and I met up with some people who were into all sorts of other drugs. I decided I was going to experience anything and everything that came my way. Within six months I had used heroin on a number of occasions. For the next three and half years I

became a daily user of many different drugs, from alcohol to heroin to LSD to pot. Over this time I made alcohol and pot my choice as I felt safe with them and would always go back to them after a binge on heroin or LSD.

During this time things that I had heard at the meetings of that other fellowship were coming to mind, like "this is a disease and a progressive one at that," and I was progressively becoming sicker and sicker. I was noticing that I had absolutely no control once a drug had entered me and the "other man" inside me would take over; a physical and mental obsession would set in. I had to have something. I realized that I had no choice in the matter. But I still wanted to be a "social user," and I continually looked around me and said to myself, "Well, I'm not as bad as him or her, I'm still doing all right."

I moved back to my home state thinking that things would change for me. The scenery changed all right, and the jobs, when I managed to hold one. I didn't want responsibility. I couldn't handle it. Ninety-nine per cent of the time I felt very scared and lost.

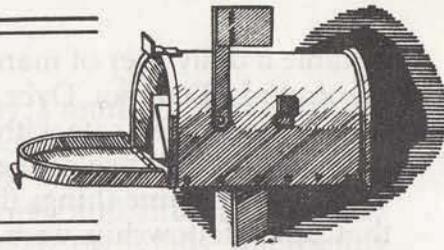
After about twelve months of consciously trying to be in control of my life, I admitted that I wasn't, and that I couldn't do it on my own. I had an idea that there was a place where people who had been using drugs were living drug-free like the people in the Fellowship I had been to lived free of their drug. I found out that N.A. was such a place, and I went along to an N.A. meeting.

I listened to people speaking of how they had felt and lived before coming to N.A. and how by coming to N.A. they were able to live a happy drug-free life. I felt and had lived much of what these people were talking about; these people said that their lives had changed by coming to N.A. I needed to change, I was sick of living and feeling the way I was and I made a decision. I wanted what these people had. I talked and listened to people, and they suggested things to me. I tried them and they worked. I found myself believing that I too could be drug-free and happy.

I continued and still continue to do the things that were suggested to me, and I'm living drug-free within society today, and enjoying it.

Anonymous

From Our Readers



Dear *N.A. Way*,

FEELINGS

Full of fears and feelings of inadequacy, I never felt I was as good as others. As far back as I can remember I tried to change the way I felt. I excelled in school and sports, but even with these achievements, I didn't feel any better. Discovering that drugs, including alcohol, kept me from experiencing these bad feelings, I spent the next twenty-five years loaded on one chemical or another.

Then the drugs stopped working. All the bad feelings came back regardless of what mixture or amount I consumed. I came to this Fellowship of N.A. full of despair and pain.

My sponsor got me to work the steps from the start. I discovered what good feelings felt like. When I discovered that being honest, giving unconditional love and working with newcomers keep the bad feelings away, I began to live the spiritual principles of this program.

Today I feel the good feelings most of the time. If bad feelings are back it is because I am doing something wrong. I can correct it and get back to enjoying life. I am no longer a prisoner of fear and inadequacy, through the grace of God and Narcotics Anonymous!

M.S.
California

Dear *N.A. Way*,

MY GRATITUDE SPEAKS

What a blessing. Another year of recovery! This is a thank you letter to the Fellowship at large from a very grateful addict. Just when I thought that my life was great just the way it was, I was catapulted into another dimension of recovery. Please, don't beam me up, Scottie, I love it here!!

During our February Round-up, God put more teacher's in my life than I could ever use. It was just the goose this old fart needed too! I experienced that total willingness to follow

my heart, to take that leap of faith and grow. It felt like the first year again. Only this time I embraced the changes. I showed up at the teacher's door and said, "Let's go!" Can this be the same suffering addict that was terrified of people seven years ago? Yes, only now I had the Twelve Steps on my right, the Twelve Traditions on my left, the Fellowship pushing from behind and my Higher Power inside running the show.

Thank you for the chance to embrace the Program once again. Thank you for the love, enthusiasm and willingness I feel even stronger today. I love N.A.!

Aloha
C.L.
Hawaii

Dear *N.A. Way*,

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

I came into Narcotics Anonymous after seventeen years of using. I almost lost everything I had. My employer gave me a choice, either lose the career I'd had for fifteen years or go into treatment. I chose treatment only because in my sick mind I figured I needed the job to make money so I could go back to using afterwards.

Thank goodness the facility allowed Narcotics Anonymous meetings to come in and share about how good life can be without using. I heard what I needed to hear and had the desire to try it the N.A. way.

Today I am still clean after three years. Life is great! As long as I use my sponsor, go to meetings, carry the message, work the steps and take life one day at a time... Just for Today.

B.R.
Florida

Dear *N.A. Way*

THIS IS ME

I remember first coming into N.A. two and a half years ago. People used to tell me to keep coming back and to share honestly in meetings and with my fellow members so people could get to know who I really was. I remember thinking, "Why do they want to know me? All I did in my years before I got here was hurt other people and hurt myself. These people don't want to know who I really am."

After hanging around here for a while, I am beginning to understand that they could care less who I was before. All they care about is the real person inside of me that I never knew existed. I learn more good things about myself the longer I stay in this program. And if it weren't for all the real friends in the Program of Narcotics Anonymous, I would still think I was a terrible, awful, evil person.

Today I am someone special in God's eyes, and I do have good points. But most of all, I believe in myself, and with that I can accomplish anything.

A.T.
Georgia

Dear *N.A. Way*,

It is about time, I think, to contribute something to the *N.A. Way* magazine that has been freely given to me. I have been clean for just under two years at the time of this writing (one year, eleven months, and seven days to be more exact). I remember well the feeling of almost total despair I had when I first entered the rooms of N.A. in the early part of May, 1984. I am sure my despair would have been total, had it not been for some of our literature, which had planted a big seed of hope in my otherwise tortured existence. I also remember clearly how my illness told me that I didn't need N.A., and many other things that, had I acted upon them, would have caused my exit from a world I had come to loathe as a result of my addiction.

I learned many things in my first few months clean. The most important one was that "I am okay." I didn't understand anything except that I suddenly wanted to live again, after many years of wanting to die, eventually believing that I was the worst person alive. I found out, slowly, that I had and still have a choice in everything I do or say.

Today, my life is richer and more exciting than I could ever have dreamed of it becoming. It is all due to the love and help I have received freely from everyone in N.A., our wonderful Steps and Traditions, and my Higher Power.

Thank you for your
love,
S.R.
England

Dear *N.A. Way*,

Often I have thought about writing and then I wondered about what? The great feeling of seeing newcomers at their beginning of a new life, the closeness and gratitude of being a sponsor and sharing experience, strength, and hope, the many new real friends I have gotten to know, the chills I get when you watch someone grow, watching someone who's getting through the self-obsession through being involved with service to Narcotics Anonymous, or the overwhelming feelings of being at a convention—well, I could go on, but if you are reading this, you know that these are common things. These experiences are available.

What I want to share is gratitude. This feeling we don't experience enough being addicts. So I thought through sharing this experience a little gratitude could be felt by many.

Recently I have been preparing for the State Board Examination for certification of public accountants. This exam lasted three days. Well, needless to say I had some weeks of hard times. To start with, I was placed by my Higher Power in a new job. Along with this change I broke up with my friend and moved back home with Mom. The tax season was on, and I was putting in sixty to seventy hour weeks. Throughout all of that I attended a review course for this exam. Thank God I had the support from my N.A. friends to get me through.

Finally time was running out and the pressure was on, it was time to review heavily. Throughout the last few weeks I have had to say thanks to N.A. Often I could hear myself say, "It doesn't matter, ninety-eight percent of the people don't pass on the first time." The other reaction was on the other extreme—isolation and depression.

Here's just a couple great experiences that kept me striving and doing the best I can. Friday, I was already feeling deprived of lack of entertainment and such. I was really into studying and wanting to do good when a good friend called and asked if I was going to the meeting? Of course my answer was, I don't think so. Fortunately, my friends are there when I need them and even when I think I don't. So off I went to the meeting. After the meeting a sixteen-year-old and I talked for a while. It really put perspective back in my life. I could really

relate, because I came to the program over five years ago. Thanks to the Twelve Steps and the many people who kept urging me on to follow my dreams.

All in perspective I was able to continue to study and review and do the best I could—just for today. The little things kept me going, like some roses from a friend, the calls to see how I was doing, and the people who just put up with me.

Into the second day of the exam I started to think of how easy it would have been for me not to be here. Most of all I looked around and felt really grateful for just being here. Knowing its a miracle as a result of being clean. Thanks for keeping me out of myself and out of complacency. Most of all thanks for the ability of becoming me with all the Fellowship's help and strength and honesty.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way,

CONVENTION CONCERNS

I recently have been informed of some upsetting news regarding conventions. Two N.A. conventions recently have used security people to make sure that registration is paid for. I've been a member of N.A. for a little while and am very bothered by this. I believe that no addict needs money to attend meetings at these conventions. Are we about making money or carrying the message of recovery?

P.R.

New York

COMIN' UP

This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least two months in advance. Include title, location, dates, contacts.

CALIFORNIA: Aug 22-24; Unity Weekend; Mill Creek County Campground; M.C.A.S., PO Box 792, Ukiah, CA 95482; (707) Ray 964-3535; Sue 463-1484

2) Oct 24-26; So Calif 8th Annl Conv; Hyatt Regency, Long Beach, CA; CC of NA, Box 60846, Pasadena, CA 91106-6846; Valerie (213) 370-8052; Peggy (818) 505-8505

CANADA: Oct 10-12; 2nd Bilingual Convention Montreal 86; MBCNA, Victoria Stn, PO Box 313, Westmont, Mont., Quebec H3Z 2V8; (514) Paul 484-4048; Beverly 489-1748

2) Aug 29-31; 3rd Calgary NA Roundup; 1423-8 Avenue S.E., Calgary, Alb, Canada; (403) Doug 283-5143; Donna 284-0800

ENGLAND: Aug 28-31; World Convention-16, Wembley/Conference Center; Registration in the U.S.A., Vida (818) 780-3951, P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409; Registration outside U.S.A., P.O. Box 667, London, England NW8-7JW

FLORIDA: Aug 24; 3rd Annl Group Picnic; Tradewinds Park, Pompano Beach, FL; Dave S. (305) 566-1526

2) Sep 19-21; London Alternative Conv for NA; LACNA, PO Box 2514, Ft. Myers Bch., FL 33931; (813) Pauline 263-2274; John 332-3467; Joe 332-4083

3) Nov 13-16; Serenity By The Sea; Colonnades Hotel, Singer Island, WPB, FL; Recovery 5, Box 164, Delray Bch, FL; (305) Ray 734-2601; Joe 499-2354

ILLINOIS: Aug 1-3; W Central Ill Area 1st Birthday; URSA Retreat House; Ursa, Ill; (217) Carol 222-9079; Linda 222-0406

IOWA: Jul 18-20; 3rd Annl Iowa Reg Conv; Coralville Lake and 10 So Gilbert St; IRCC, Box 2521, Iowa City, IA 52244; (319) Marty 354-4532; Jon 354-5485

MAINE: Sep 12-14; We're A Miracle III; ASC of Maine, PO Box 5309, Portland ME 04104; (207) Bruce C. 772-4558; Lisa D. 773-5492

MISSOURI: Aug 8-10; High on Life Picnic; Stockton Lake; 112 Hillcrest, Carl Junction, MO 64834; (417) Bob 781-6770; Bud 649-6377

NEVADA: Aug 1-3; 4th Annl Campout; Sierra Sage Reg Serv Comm, PO Box 3344, Sparks, NV 89431; 24 Hour NA Hotline (702) 322-4811

NEW JERSEY: Jul 18-20; 3rd Annl Campout; Wharton State Forest, Hammonton, NJ; 14 Forrest Dr, Turnersville, NJ 08012; Sonya F (609) 227-2319

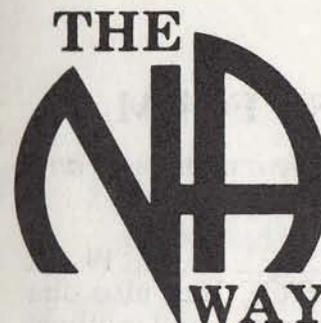
OHIO: Jun 12-14 1987; 8th East Coast Conv; Kent State Univ; Box 1492, Youngstown, OH 44501; (216) 545-4387

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct 31-Nov 2; TSRCNA-IV; TSRCNA-IV, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; (412) Bob P. 563-6854; Jeff W. 363-8444;

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov 7-9; Serenity Festival IV; Myrtle Beach, SC; David Pressley, PO Box 91, Columbia, SC 29202; Stan (803) 781-2841

TENNESSEE: Nov 26-30; 4th Regional Conv.; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fourth & Union, Nashville, TN; PO Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212; Charlie (615) 868-3150

TEXAS: Jul 11-13; Texas Unity Conv; 6942 Narcissus, Houston, TX 77087-2618;
UTAH: Aug 22-24; WFASC Campvention; WFASC, P.O. Box 6157, Salt Lake City, UT 84106-0157; George N. 364-1231
VIRGINIA: Aug 29-31; Labor Day Wkend Conv; Cedar Lakes Conf Ctr; Mountaineer RSCNA PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381;
WASHINGTON: Oct 24-26; 9th Annl Conv.; Everett Pacific Hotel; PNWCNA #9, Box 5393, Everett, WA 98201; (206) Mike S. 672-6848; Russ F. 259-4904
WISCONSIN: Oct 24-26; 3rd Wisconsin Conv; WSNAC III, P.O. Box 3305, Madison, WI 53704; (608) 258-1747 (phoneline)
2) Aug 1-3; Mid-Coast Regional Conv II; Sheraton Manitowoc; Mid-Coast Reg Conv Com, PO Box 347, Manitowoc, WI; (414) Kathy C 921-4044; Bill L 233-6037



*THE INTERNATIONAL
 JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
 OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS*

N.A. WAY MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please enter _____ subscription(s) to the *N.A. Way Magazine*.

1 to 9 orders: \$12.00 per subscription per year.
10 or more orders: \$9.60 per subscription -- a 20% discount.

Billing instructions -- check one:

_____ Enclosed is my payment of \$ _____
 _____ Please bill me. I have enclosed no money.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Send to: The *N.A. Way*; P.O. Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409

For gift subscriptions, enter the name and address of the giver: _____

Your name on the enclosed card? Yes _____ No _____

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM

Please fill out the following form and include it along with any article you submit to the N.A. Way.

AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____, 19____, by and between *WORLD SERVICE OFFICE*, Inc., also dba *N.A. WAY MAGAZINE*, referred to as "assignee," and (author/artist's name): _____, hereinafter referred to as "assigner." Assigner is the owner of the attached material, story, saying, art work or other matter which is described as the following (title of work): _____

The assignee heretofore first referenced is the publishing arm of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The assigner hereby grants and transfers to assignee as a gift, without exception and without limitation, any and all of assigner's interests and copyrights and rights to copyrights and rights to publish, together with all rights to secure renewals and extensions of such copyright, of said material.

Assigner hereby covenants, warrants and represents to assignee, and this agreement is made in reliance thereof, that assigner is sole owner and has the exclusive right to use of said material, and that the material is free and clear of any liens, encumbrances and claims which are in conflict with this agreement.

This agreement is binding on assigner's heirs, assigns, administrators, trustees, executors, and successors in interest, and such are directed to make and execute any instrument assignee may require to protect copyright for assignee.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this agreement at (assigner's address): _____

state of: _____ zip: _____, (phone): _____,
on the day and year first above written.

ASSIGNER: (SIGNATURE); SPOUSE: (SIGNATURE)

ASSIGNEE: (TO BE COMPLETED LATER BY WSO)

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving
2. 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.
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.
6. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
7. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
8. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
9. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
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.
10. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
- 11.
- 12.