

# THE N.A. Way<sup>®</sup>

M A G A Z I N E

August 1989

\$1.75 U.S.

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Off and away to WCNA!

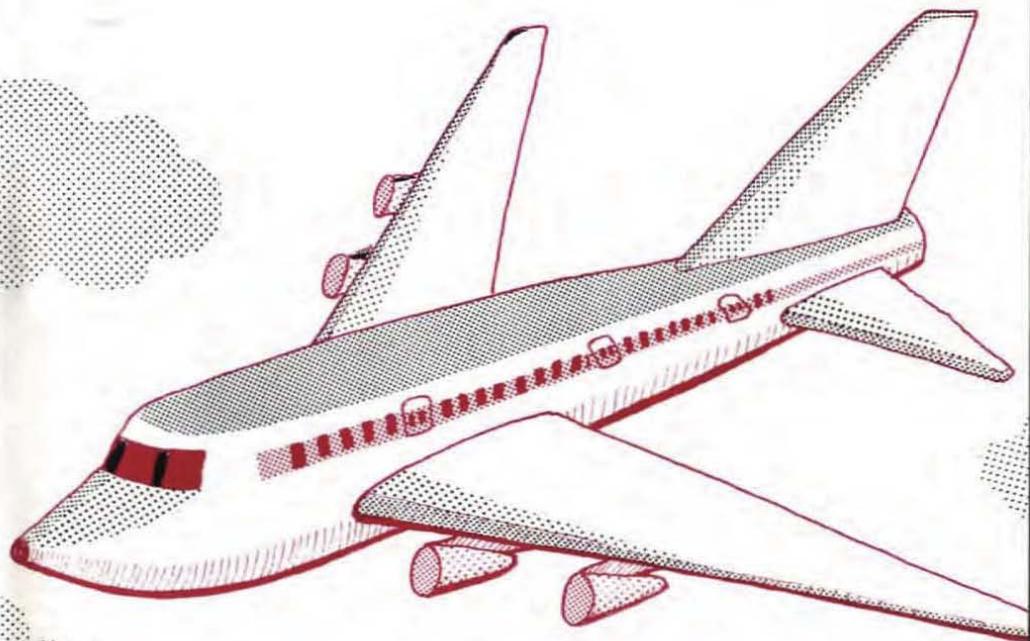
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World convention info

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Gunfight at the  
N.A. corral

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## 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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M A G A Z I N E

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*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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## Children at meetings: a solution

I want to share how the *we* in this fellowship works for my family. I am a grateful recovering addict. I am also the mother of two young children. When I was court-ordered into this program, I was not grateful—I was very angry. I found out while I was in a hospital detox unit that I was pregnant. I already had a year and half old son whom my parents had to care for while I was in a treatment center for thirty days.

When I got home I did “ninety meetings in ninety days.” With my parents’ help I was able to afford babysitting, but it got to be very costly. My first year, while on probation, I was required to attend five meetings per week.

My husband went from jail into treatment, back home for three months, then back out for more “research.” He is now serving an eighteen month sentence in jail. He could not help me out financially, and needless to say, I was feeling the child care cost pinch.

I had tried taking my child to meetings. While it might have been distracting for the other members in the room, it was doubly distracting for me, especially after my daughter was born when I was eight months clean. I could not focus on the speakers if the kids were with me, and sharing seemed like an impossibility.

Throughout this time I tried different ways to remedy this. I attempted to share child care with another recovering mother in my house while one of us got out to a meeting. I also got permission to use child care facilities at our hospital and community service center where most of our meetings are held. Then some of us mothers who wished to participate watched the children in shifts while the rest attended the afternoon or early evening meetings.

These two solutions worked briefly. I think the main drawback was that the people who really needed a break from the kids were the ones watching not only their kids but others’ as well.



I was ready to give up, when an N.A. member who knew of the situation made a suggestion. She asked, why didn't I pass around a sign-up sheet and get the whole group involved in child care? I was very skeptical. I was by now chairperson of the additional needs subcommittee for our area and having no success getting members involved. But I was desperate, and anyway, our rent agreement already covered the use of the child care facilities in the same building.

We tried it. I made up a piece of paper with the hour and a half time broken into fifteen minute sections with a blank for a name. This sign-up sheet was passed around the room at the beginning of the meeting, and lo and behold, it was filled in before the opening readings ended.

We now have two co-op child care meetings on a regular basis. We place an easy-to-read clock in the room so everyone can be responsible for their

own time. It is a form of service without a long commitment; a member signs up only if he/she wishes to, and only for fifteen minutes at that particular meeting. Everyone seems to enjoy their time spent with the kids.

I believe this could work at all sorts

## We now have two regular co-op child care meetings.

of meetings, and for children of all ages. I was recently at a fundraiser for our region, and since my kids are small, I kept them with me at events like the speaker meeting after the dinner. When they got restless, we went for a walk.

The older kids were playing out in the lobby of the parish hall we were renting. As I stood watching my children, I heard a man from the church complain that these children were causing damage both to the rug in the foyer and the grounds outside. My opinion is that these children would benefit from adult supervision.

I feel that this issue fits into the category of additional needs. This is why I am involved with that committee in my area. I feel child care at meetings and events is desperately needed, both for the parents' sake as well as the children's. I know not having child care has kept me away from meetings. Now my kids look forward to meetings, and so do I.

N.M., Massachusetts

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## The lesson of a penny (Turning it over)

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It was a beautiful, lovely summer day to most recovering addicts, but not me. At seven months into recovery, my life was shattered by my own destructive thoughts. I walked morbidly off the job site on that summer day feeling like doing great harm to someone.

I had given custody of my daughter to my sister, an addict who was on methadone, while I was in a mental institution. Her promise to bring my daughter on visiting days was never kept. In my insane state of mind, I feared she was dead.

For many days prior to this, I was hating myself for not searching for my daughter or going to the neighborhood for the fear of hearing that something drastic happened to her. On this day, ever since I had gotten out of bed, I was down on myself for that. Nevertheless I brought the day in with a prayer.

On the way to work, the feelings were devastating. I snapped at work and quit. At the bus stop, surrounded by street people, I started kicking myself hard about my daughter,

asking God if she was dead. I felt like that penny near the gutter, its head down (oh, how I related).

When I jumped aboard the bus, I realized it was early enough to reach the methadone clinic. With rage churning up my sickness, I felt like that penny. I had to get off for a transfer, and there again was that penny, heads down. It was so real and tormenting: "Oh, God, please help me!"

I was in deep fear when I was still five miles from the clinic where my sister and her husband would be getting their juice in a matter of minutes. As I was getting nearer, my mind was pounding with violent anger. "Help me, my sweet God. If you are as strong as they say in the meetings, now is the time to help me. Please make the bus turn."

One block before the clinic, the road was blocked by a disastrous collision.

*I felt like that  
penny near the  
gutter, its head  
down (oh, how I  
related)*

The bus turned around, following the detour route. "Oh, God, what's going on?" I felt a great inner sadness.

A few blocks down and with a somewhat stronger conscious contact with God, it started to sink in. My head lifted a degree toward the purpose of continuing in the program.

As I was stepping up to my next



transfer—there was that penny again. Guess what? You got it! It was heads up. Does God have a sense of humor? I took another detour, and transferred to a bus home.

About a week later, after several months of torment and pain, I

received a phone call. Right again! It was my daughter. She's been with me ever since—for six years now. Every time I see a penny, I smile when it's heads up, and when it's heads down I just reach out and turn it over.

*S.E., California*

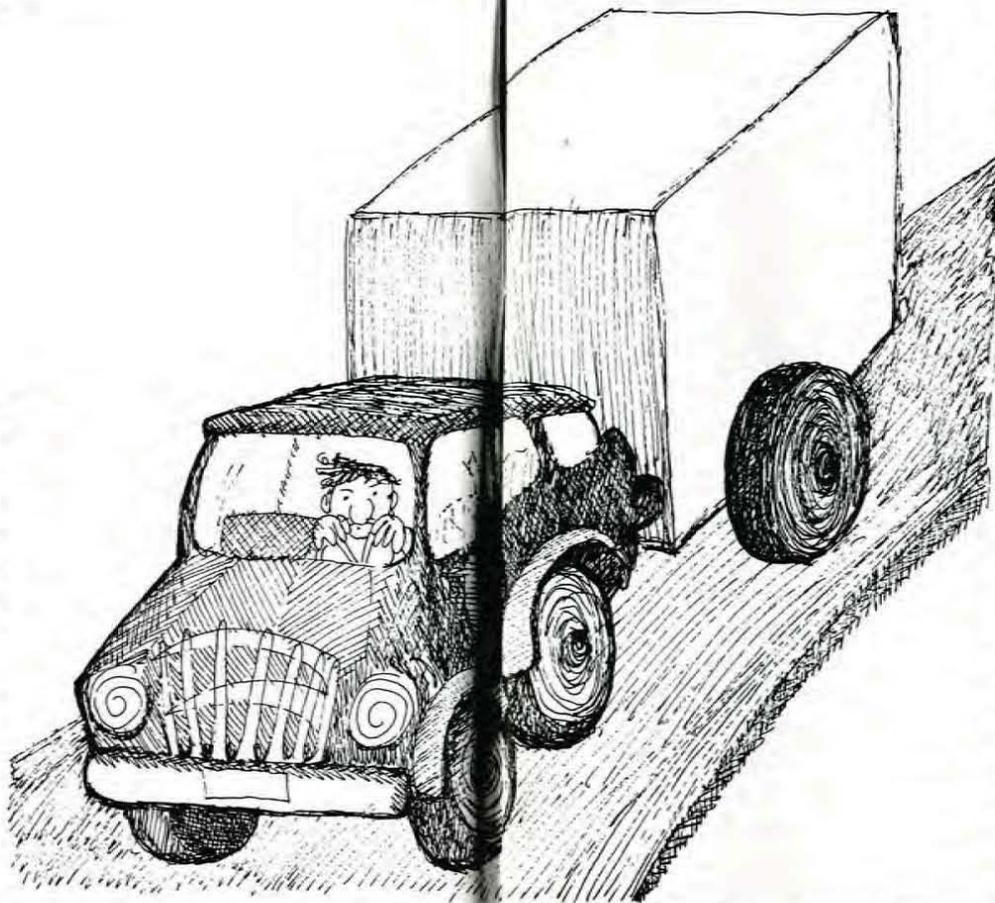
## A "moving" story

"The more I know, the more I know I don't know." "The only thing constant is change." I don't know why these clichés should make me feel better at a time like this, but they do. I'm moving to the other coast, and I'm *scared*—like down-to-the-subatomic-particle type terror.

At the same time, my faith in my Higher Power is crystallizing and strengthening with every breath. "This, too, shall pass." As soon as I finish my Fourth and Fifth Steps, me, my material possessions, and (oh, yeah) my H.P. are driving to California to get settled before I begin graduate school in the fall.

When I'm in a centered frame of mind, there is excitement and challenge, and there is joy in realizing that the rewards of recovery are making themselves apparent in my life in a big way. I'm starting to take the first major steps toward a seventeen year old dream that has been evolving in my soul. But when I'm feeling off—*Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired* (serious or sick)—I begin to focus on the dark side: my fears.

I believe that if I gyp myself out of the natural process of grieving the



separation from my home group, my friends, my sponsor, my service connections, and my spiritual home, I will be missing an essential part of the journey. Change and loss and separation have never been easy issues for me to face. Over the last two and a half years, though, I have been given the tools to distinguish between a legitimate feeling that is "situationally appropriate," and one that stems from one of my character defects.

It's perfectly normal in my circumstance to feel afraid, and at the same time to experience the faith that I am being taken care of. It's also okay to feel sad about leaving the family I

have emotionally grown up with, that I have learned to trust and respect and feel comfortable with in so many different types of situations. At the same time, I feel thrilled at the prospect of meeting new people, and moving on to new experiences which are bound to enrich my soul.

It's all very confusing, like a tangled ball of yarn in my heart, but I'm giving myself plenty of room to untangle the ball—all the space, time and assistance I need, and it's working. The *real* pressures are intense enough that I don't need to compound them with synthetic worries.

The meetings on the West Coast are

different from those on the East Coast; it would be pointless to deny it, and I feel myself using regional chauvinism to justify my feelings of separateness. But the recovery text tells me, "...recovery is what happens in our meetings." I know from my own experiences of going to meetings all over the world that if I don't hear recovery at an N.A. meeting, it's because I'm not listening. So, it looks like I'm going to have to get off my butt and reach out to both newcomers and experienced members.

I'm going to have to make that extra effort to let people know my feelings, both the uncomfortable and the comfortable ones. And, hardest of all, I'm going to have to learn to listen with wide-open ears to the message coming from people's hearts. I'm only cheating myself when I judge or isolate myself in the warm shroud of self-pity and self-centeredness, rather than staying open-minded enough to accept that there just might be more than one "right way" to do things. I suspect that *no matter what*, I will learn and grow from this move.

Almost always, the tense lines of fear and apprehension on the faces of new people when they arrive mellow into comfort and serenity. The feeling of being a part of N.A. is made up of a lot of different kinds of people and things. All I need to remember is that, all over this planet, our primary purpose is the same: to stay clean for one day, and to carry the message of hope to the addict who still suffers. And I need to remember that I belong here—in Narcotics Anonymous.

Wish me luck.

Anonymous

## A loving misfit in a new world

A small rabbit which dies of fear way before the dog kills it: that's the best description I have for the beginning of my surrender to the fact that I have an incurable disease called addiction.

The feelings of living in an unlearned environment. Being placed in a time which I am supposed to understand, yet the reality does not exist in my mind. Questioning my own sanity and comprehension of right from wrong. People treat me as if I am like them, yet I do not know how to act like an adult (or like a child, for that matter).

What are human feelings? I have never allowed myself to be a human being; I do not know how to be one. Yet I am one. I have denied my humanness for so long that I do not know how to be a part of the human race.

**T**rying to learn how to grow up, while I act as if I know how to be an adult. Yet no one has taught me. My life has become a trial and error expedition. I can only learn by taking risks and making mistakes. I feel as if I am one of the first of the species, trusting in a Higher Power I do not

understand, yet I must trust it with the control of my life.

I feel like the lion cub raised by goats. When I found out I was really a lion, I had to relearn how to be something I had always been!

The denial of reality and the acceptance of fantasy has been my life for so long. It is terribly frightening to find myself in a place which I have avoided at all costs for the majority of my life.

I allow the fear of living in this so-called real world to take over my mind to the point of desiring the fantasy-life to return. I lose the faith in my Higher Power, thinking that I do not belong in this world or the reality part. I start craving an escape. So I create my own world again, trying to deny this world's existence.

At this point I withdraw into self, trying to push away all that represents the "real world." Yet I am unable to comfortably become lost in my fantasies. Without drugs, I have

nothing to induce a total fantasy world, so I can't find the secure haven I want my fantasies to create for me.

At some point I begin to look beyond self, and I slowly realize that life is

*I slowly realize  
that life is not as  
bad as my fears  
have colored it*

not as bad as my fears have colored it. Life becomes an exciting challenge again. I feel as if I have been far away, yet I have been here all along. Accepting reality takes time for me. I have to be gentle with myself and allow myself to do what I need to do to learn how to live.

God is the only one who can guide me through this new world, protect-

ing me from my own desire to self-destruct. When I start to lose the way, I receive a loving hand, a comforting word, the sense that everything is going to be all right.

**I** no longer have to abuse myself for not knowing how to be a human being. How can I expect myself to know something which I have never properly learned? I am a child trying to learn how to live in an adult's body without parental figures to point out the way or to support me while I grow up. I am having to parent myself to a certain extent, and learn how to ask for help from others.

God has granted me the gift of Narcotics Anonymous. The steps and the fellowship of other addicts are my guides to life. I can choose my attitude. As I look at each day through a child's eyes, I can either see an unopened present, or a dreaded dark room. The choice is mine.

*Anonymous*

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## The presence of spirit

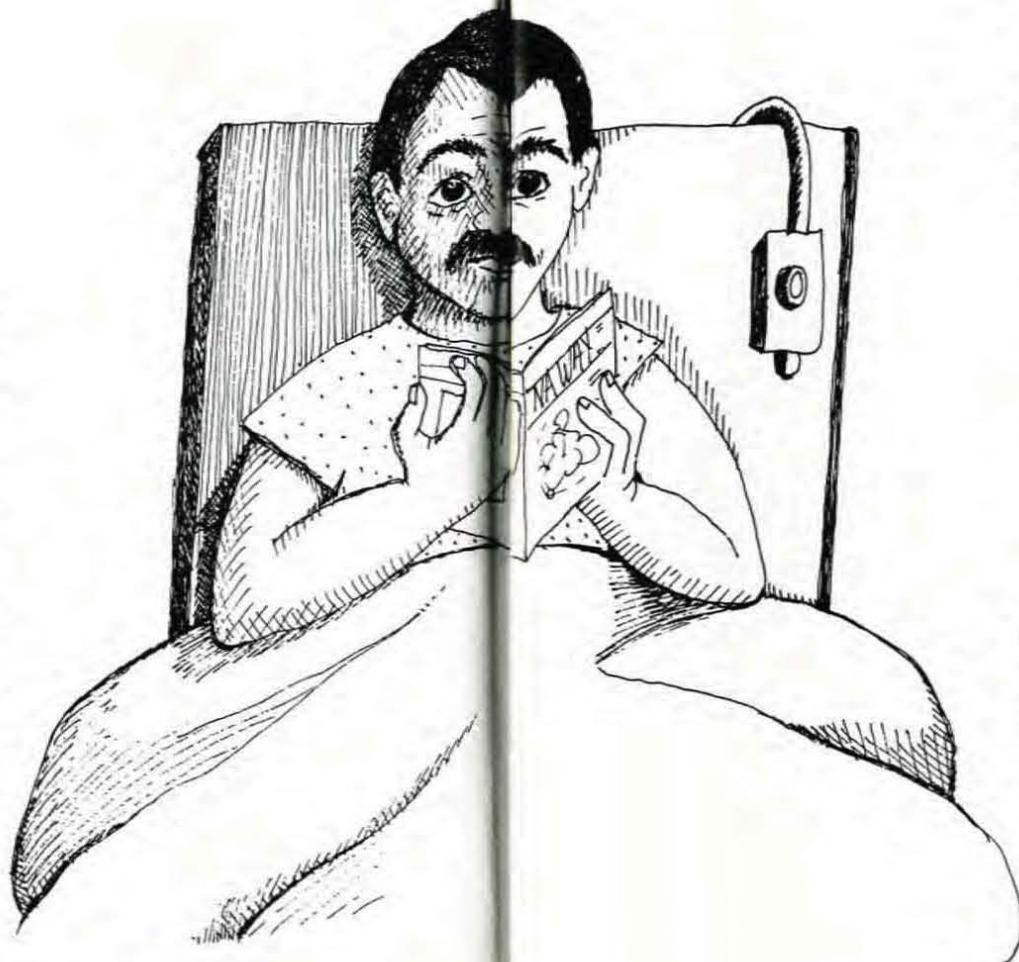
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At the meeting of Narcotics Anonymous I attended last night the topic of discussion was "the presence of God in my life." It was a good meeting; I thought about the topic well into the night, with the light of the full moon streaming in through the windows.

In my years and years of active addiction, God was never a presence in my life because I was never able to open myself to God. I was much too full of fear and self-doubt to ever have room inside for something like God. In fact, I hated my life; I felt that if there *was* a God, he was a cynical force who either didn't care about me or was powerless to do anything about my wretched situation.

Talk about projection! I was the master of projection, denial, cynicism, and negativity. I thrived on negativity; I thought it was cool. I had finally found a comfortable niche for myself.

Since I have been involved in Narcotics Anonymous, my life and my attitude about life have changed dramatically. This might not sound very surprising, since it seems as if everyone who sticks around for a while has a dramatic attitude change, but mine happened in the midst of a storm of physical adversity.



When I was new to the fellowship, still living in a recovery house, I had to have surgery to repair a hernia. I was able to leave the hospital quickly after the surgery and return to the recovery house. I was in considerable pain, but I was without the need for narcotic pain killers.

Shortly after my hernia operation, I had to have extensive dental work done to reconstruct my teeth, which had suffered from years of neglect. I

ended up having some teeth extracted and other surgery done, but again, I was able to walk through it without having to take narcotic pain killers.

While after this I got very ill, and for a long time didn't know what was wrong. The doctor finally diagnosed a bacterial infection in the lining of my heart. I had to spend an extended period in the hospital, culminating with open heart surgery to replace

the damaged aortic valve with a man-made one. Two days after the surgery, while still in the surgical intensive care unit, the nurse had me up and on my feet. I was able to leave the hospital soon afterward without the need to take narcotic pain killers with me.

*I was in considerable pain, but I was without the need for pain killers*

So when I hear that the topic for discussion is the presence of God in my life, I don't have to look too far. I know. God has manifested itself to me in Narcotics Anonymous through the rest of you beautiful people.

During all of the physical adversity I mention to you here, my brothers and sisters in Narcotics Anonymous were there every step of the way. During my long stay in the hospital, every single day brought the people of the fellowship to see me, bringing me strength and renewed commitment, and bringing me God. We had everything from informal sharing in my hospital room to outright meetings on Thursday nights.

It is a wonderful and joyful thing to sense spirituality and to feel God in my life. It took me forty years to get that, and a society of men and women who call themselves Narcotics Anonymous to bring it to me.

*J.G., California*

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## No longer running the show

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In this program there are no rules, only suggestions. That was one of the things that kept me coming back. I could make the choice myself whether or not to follow the suggestions and recover.

Unfortunately, at first I chose to ignore many of the suggestions. I was still trying to run my own life, and although I knew that the things others suggested were good, I thought I was different. I wanted to have recovery and still run my life the way I wanted. I was very lucky that I managed to stay clean. I can only attribute that fact to the help of a Higher Power.

One suggestion someone made—which I chose to ignore at first—was to stay out of new relationships for a while. I rationalized that I had been seeing someone when I first came in the doors. I ignored the fact that he broke up with me just before I went to my first meeting. I came into the program to win him back. Nobody could tell me that I needed some time to get to know myself before I could have a good relationship. I thought I

was different. I thought I could make it work.

The relationship lasted for two years. It came before anything else. When he quit going to meetings, so did I. I told myself that as long as I had him, and he was staying clean, I could talk to him. I told myself that it could be a daily meeting with only the two of us. I quickly became very irritable and did not work the steps. I could talk to him, but since neither of us was going to meetings, it seemed that all we did was complain about how life was treating us.

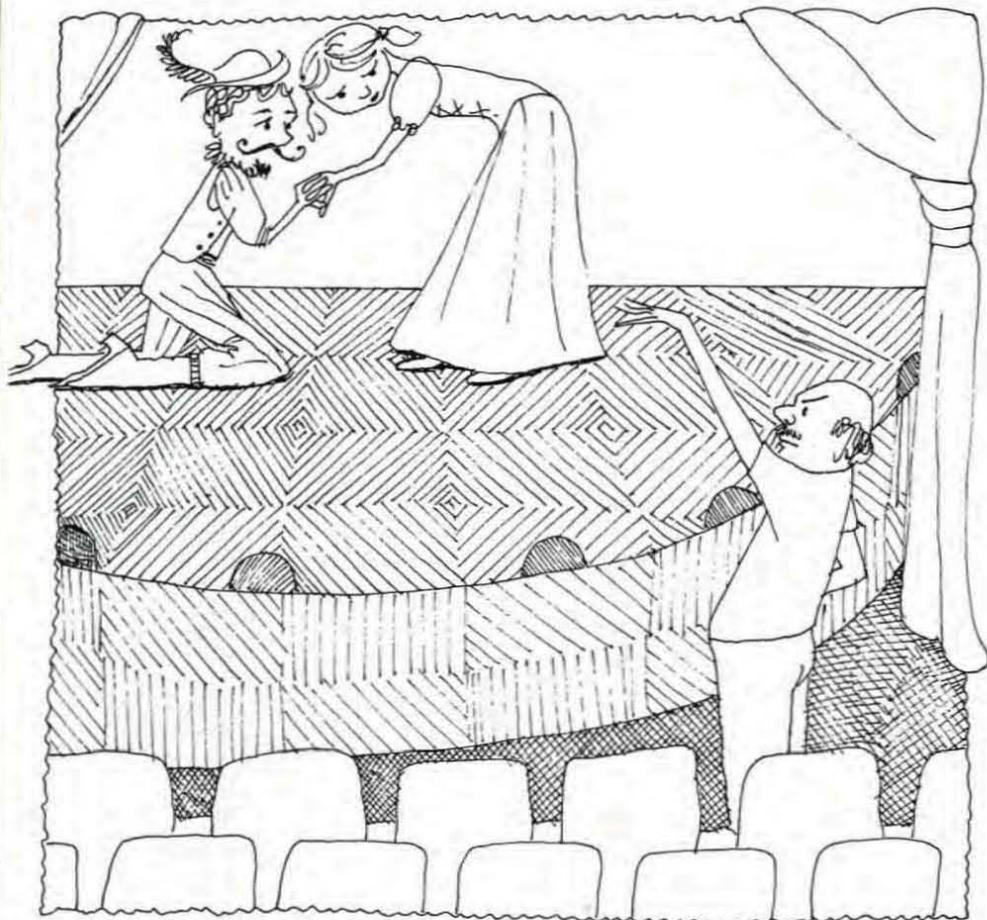
After two years, he broke up with me. The first thing I thought of was going out and getting high so I wouldn't have to face the crisis. Lucky for me, I followed the suggestions I had heard before and got on the phone. I didn't use.

I got a sponsor, but again I ignored the suggestion that I get a female

## I wanted to have recovery and still run my life the way I wanted

sponsor. For almost a year, I had a male sponsor. I told myself that, after all, I had always been "one of the guys" and found it easier to talk to men. I was unable to figure out why I always felt a little guilty when someone asked who my sponsor was.

Later, when I was talking to another woman in the program, I could see why that was suggested,



aside from the obvious possibility of developing a relationship or allowing sex to get in the way of my recovery.

She asked me if I had ever considered the possibility that one reason for the suggestion that women sponsor women was to help us get over being uncomfortable with other women. I had never thought of that. When she mentioned that, I realized that I needed a woman to sponsor me, so I asked her to be my sponsor. That was the best thing I could have done for myself.

Today, when someone makes a suggestion, I choose to listen. I have

learned the hard way that those suggestions are there to help me. I thank God for the program and the people who keep making those suggestions, because that's what keeps me clean. Today I celebrated my third anniversary in the program. It is also the first year that I have really *worked* the program.

Now I am really starting to recover. Today, recovery is more than abstinence. It is working the steps, listening to suggestions, and trying to improve myself with the help of a Higher Power. This program works if I work it.

K.S., Illinois

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## An exercise in faith

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Contemplating going to the world convention of Narcotics Anonymous in Orlando, Florida? Does it seem all too impossible? Money tight? Time slight? Would you really like to be there but there are just too many "buts...?" "If onlys...?" "No ways...?" Well, have you got a minute? I mean, can we talk? I just want to tell you about a not-so-minor miracle that just might help you come to believe that *anything is possible* if you just *exercise your faith*.

Let me start in June of 1988. I desperately wanted to go to the World Convention of N.A. in Anaheim, California. However, it was far beyond my budget. I had spent all of the money I had saved buying my first car a few months before. Therefore, as far as I could see, going to California was out.

I appeased myself by making a conscious effort to thank God for the car and all the conventions that I had been given the opportunity to go to before the car investment. A lot of people hadn't been to half the places I had been fortunate enough to visit. Gratitude couldn't help but settle in.

Then came July. I was getting used to paying a car note, insurance, and

Everything else it takes to own and operate a vehicle. Plus, of course, there were my other fixed expenses. Well, I said to myself, it's not so bad after all. Sure, I can't fly here and there anymore; but now at least I can drive to some closer conventions.

August arrived. I had no thoughts of the world convention and wasn't trying to stir up any. It's all right, I thought contentedly. I'm right where I'm supposed to be.

The middle of August arrived. Two weeks before world convention time, I get a phone call. It's a lady I sponsor. "Are you going to the world convention?" she asked. "No way, I told you that months ago," I replied. She simply said, "Well, I'm going and I want you to go." I remember thinking to myself, "The girl must not be listening." Her next words were, "I'll buy you a round trip flight ticket."

Well, needless to say, I was overwhelmed, and thought this must be an answer to an unspoken prayer. I hopped right on it. As far as I was concerned, God had made a way out of no way.

September—world convention time! I had no hotel room, no transportation from the airport once in California. However, I focused on what I did have. I had a round trip airplane ticket, exactly \$40 in cash, and a whole lot of faith. After revealing my plans to go to California, my mother said, "Girl,

you got clean to get crazy? I wouldn't go to the next town with \$40."

Like second nature, without hesitation, I heard my voice in reply, "Momma, it's gonna be all right!" I understood where she was coming from. She didn't know about the power and hope that's generated when a bunch of recovering addicts get together within the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous.

I remember expressing my fears of going to California with only \$40 to one of

my sponsorees, and without hesitation she said, "A small bankroll never stopped you before."

"That was different," I told her. "Those trips were to Ohio, North Carolina, places closer to home."

"Are you saying that your faith doesn't stretch to California?" She

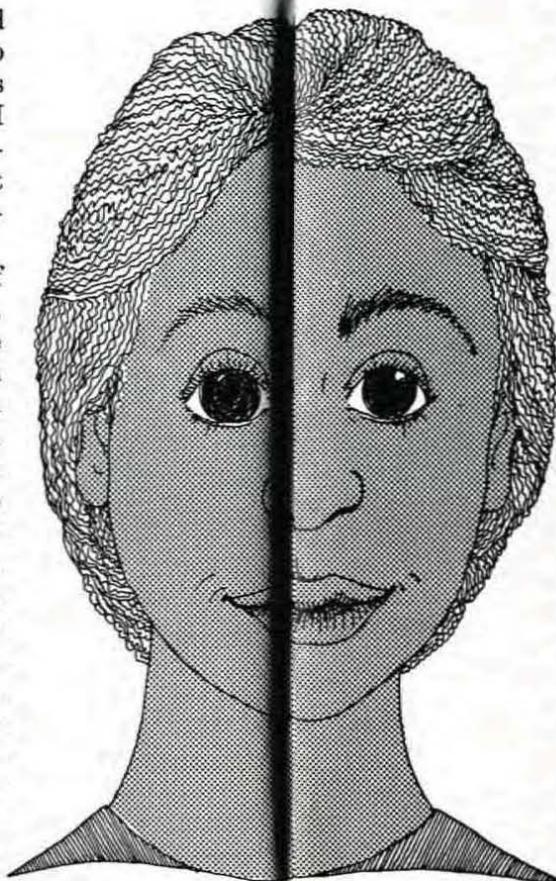
rested her case. I had been given the emotional and spiritual support I needed to make the journey. The fear vanished; I was not alone!

Once in California, I bought a bus ticket to travel from the airport in Los Angeles to the hotel in Anaheim (which, of course, dented my bank roll). Next on my agenda: somewhere to sleep. I had already visualized, weeks prior to the trip, someone in the lobby just waiting to put me up for the night. I looked around the lobby for

**I had no thoughts of the world convention and wasn't trying to stir up any**

my "guardian angel" with a room to share. I saw no familiar faces. A silent prayer went up: "God, maybe I'm just ahead of your schedule.

"I'll take care of registration first," I thought. You see, before leaving D.C., I had called WSO and requested an indigent registration package and was told, "Upon your arrival, go to the desk and we'll take care of it." Remembering this, I proceeded to the convention registration desk. The committee would not give me an indigent package because I was not a newcomer. I was surprised, disappointed—one level beyond crushed. I had come so far. "What now?" I sighed. I scanned the room once more, "Surely my guardian angel is here now," I prayed. Still, there was no one I recognized.



Already, it was past midnight. I was physically and mentally exhausted after the long flight and bus ride. I was hungry and angry, and all of a sudden I felt alone. I couldn't hold back the tears. I was utterly powerless. Negative thoughts filled my mind: "Momma was right, I am crazy."

I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned. There he stood: my "guardian angel," a friendly face I recognized from my home town. My heart swelled with thanksgiving, and yet I felt awful for having momentarily doubted. I told my guardian angel my dilemma, and without a moment's hesitation he took my luggage and simply said, "It's gonna be alright, come with me, I have plenty of room."

This guy carried my incredibly heavy luggage over ten blocks to his hotel. I was amazed at his kindness and impressed with his physical stamina.

## ***Out of all the guardian angels, God chose this particular guy to help me***

Out of all the guardian angels at God's command, He chose this particular guy to help me. We didn't talk much back home. However, he was one of the six people who twelfth stepped me at my first N.A. meeting when I had wanted to leave and get high. "It's gonna be all right, one day at a time," he had assured me then.

And here he was again, saying those same comforting words three clean years later in Anaheim, California.

After getting settled into the hotel room, we ventured back to the main convention hotel for the dance. I never expected to find anyone in particular in a crowd of thousands; but five minutes after I arrived at the dance, I saw one of the ladies I sponsored. "My friend and I brought you a registration package, I sure hope you don't have one yet," she said with excitement. God had already worked that out.

The next day a recovering addict from Florida gave me a banquet ticket, another from D.C. gave me a Sunday morning spiritual breakfast ticket, still others took me to lunch and dinner. I treated myself to one McDonald's meal.

That night, a woman from D.C. allowed me to stay in her room in the main hotel. Since my return flight wasn't until Monday afternoon, someone else furnished a place for me to stay Sunday night. I was totally overwhelmed. It was all so wonderfully awesome. My feet barely touched the ground the whole time. There was no question in my mind that I was right where I was supposed to be and that God was in complete control.

On Monday morning, after the N.A. convention was officially over, the hotel desk clerk took me to a meeting. While at that meeting, someone volunteered to take me to the airport in L.A. Once at the airport, he parked his car, checked on my flight, treated me to breakfast, and talked with me until it was time for me to board the plane.

After boarding the plane a voice came from the loudspeakers, "This is your flight attendant. This flight has been overbooked. Anyone willing to give up their seat to someone who was unable to board will receive a free round trip airfare ticket, valid for one year, for travel anywhere in the continental U.S. or Canada." Sounded good to me! I immediately deboarded.

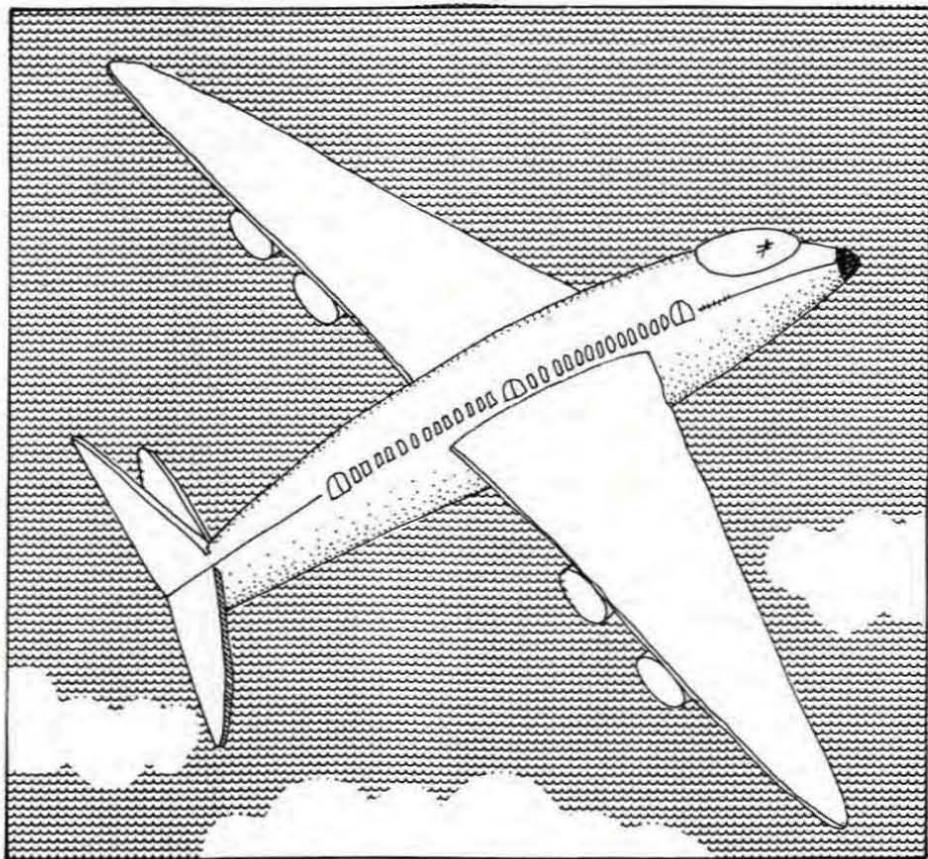
As a direct result, I flew out of Los Angeles an hour later; stretched out in *first class* with a "fly later, fly free" ticket in hand.

Are you ready for this? I arrived in D.C. with change from my original

\$40.00, as well as a souvenir for my son and—guess who—that's right: my mother! I'll never be the same. It was an experience in trusting God that I will never forget.

I need to call this experience up from memory every now and then, especially when the going gets rough and I become discouraged and/or ungrateful. During those times, when I pose questions like, "God, are you with me?" or "Wait? Must I?" I must remember Anaheim! Once again, God heard the desire of my heart, and provided a way out of no way.

S.G., Washington, D.C.



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## We are the world

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When I went to the Airtel in Van Nuys, it was not to attend the World Service Conference of N.A. My only concern that Sunday was staying

clean another day.

I was hurting, and I knew there were members present who would understand and walk me through the temporary insanity I was then experiencing. The mini-crisis passed, the self-obsession subsided a bit, and ultimately my fear was replaced by faith.

I stayed on as a somewhat interested observer, and a week later as the conference wound up I had come around 180 degrees, becoming an admirer of the men and women involved in world service.

As your basic, run-of-the-mill addict, I have now had a first hand look

at the inner workings of the service aspect of the recovery process. This has left me with a feeling of profound respect and gratitude for those men and women who assume the months of service to Narcotics Anonymous. I have observed addicts in service from regions as distant as Australia, as well as our own home-grown lot.

To a layman like myself, the parliamentary procedures used at the conference left me at times feeling weary, confused and addle-brained; yet I could see that without them, chaos would prevail and the closet anarchists would have a field day.

I speak only for me, but my experience has shown me that a great many addicts are detached from and disinterested in world-level service. In our ignorance of conference mechanics we make idle, uninformed value

### *Passions ran high, but it was 'principles before personalities'*

judgements of our trusted servants and peers.

"Our" conference is made up of addicts like myself. I could see that their titles didn't change that. Not once, to my recollection, did someone with a badge ask me, "What are you doing here?" Even though I didn't wear a badge stating my name or purpose, I clearly felt that I was welcome—our trusted servants have nothing to hide

from the rest of us.

During some discussions, passions ran high, but group conscience prevailed—principles before personalities was in action, and I was humbled by it. I could see that I'm still new enough in recovery to personalize things I didn't have to.

I observed members during committee meetings argue about issues they brought from their regions—issues they felt a certain passion for. I saw and felt humility in the actions of committee chairs, conference chairs and delegates alike.

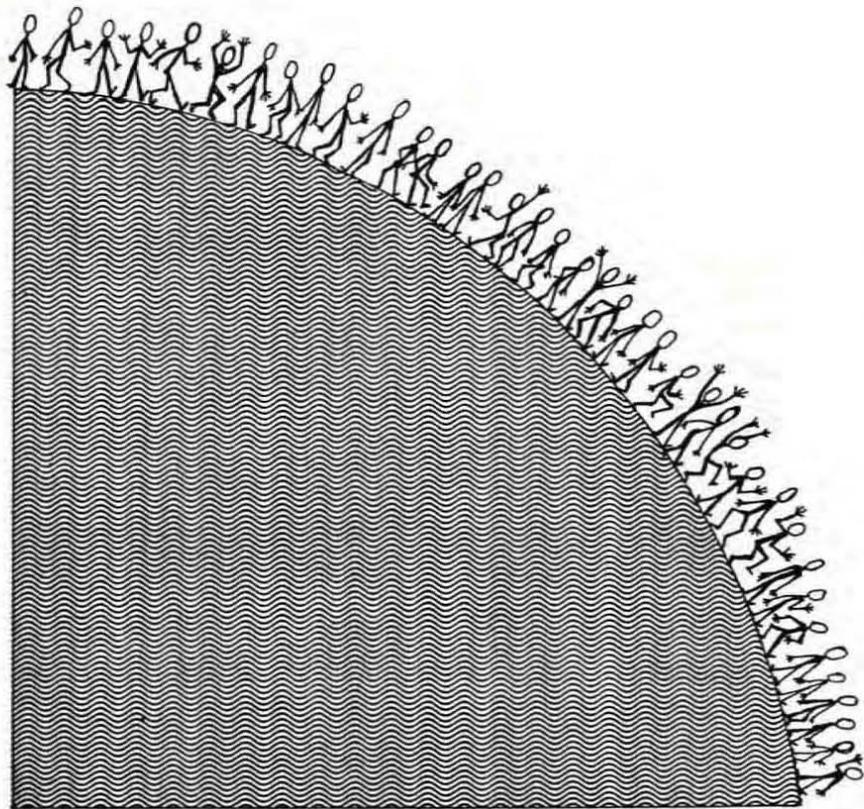
It was interesting to watch men and women step to the microphone, voices booming or cracking, to present motions that were resoundingly rejected by the conference body, only to accept this one and move on to another motion and repeat this humbling process.

Hear! hear! delegates.

One item that I forgot amid the profusion of parliamentary procedures was that most of the men and women present at this conference are addicts in the same recovery process as you and I, replete with all the defects and shortcomings that we non-conference-participants experience in our day-to-day recovery. When I internalized this fact, I saw the conference participants in a different light.

So I say this, N.A. member, whether you're from Australia, Quebec, or the continental United States: get to know your RSR, and occasionally attend a regional service committee meeting. Try what I've tried this week. See that "we" truly are the world of N.A.

*J.C., California*



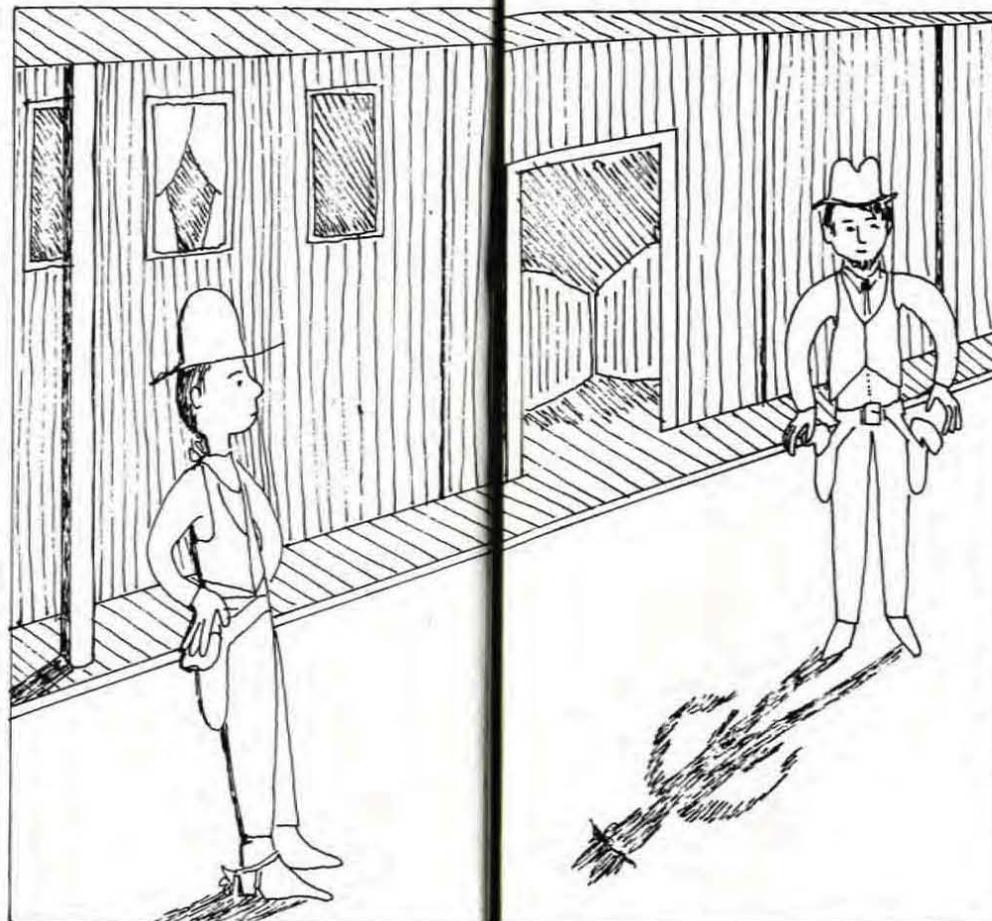
## Jimmy and the stranger

The dust had just begun to settle as he strode from the cantina into the street. His grimy, roughened fingers gripped the brim of his hat; he lifted it from his sweating brow, then wiped his forehead with the sleeve of his tattered shirt. He glared up into the sun, showing his disdain for that unearthly presence.

A mongrel dog ambled by. A tumbleweed rolled past, lifted gently on its journey by the cool northeasterly blowing in from the mountains. A door slammed in the distance, but the sound... it was strange... there's no door that big... and it hit him. Consciousness. Damn!

"Jimmy!" bayed Mrs. Wilson, sure her good for nothing son was dreaming his life away as usual. "How many times I gotta tell you? You ain't never gonna amount to nothing if you don't get up and get to school. Ever since you started going to these N.A. meetings you've been running late. What's with you son? Let's get a move on!" And with that the whirlwind of Ma Wilson receded back down the stairs.

Jimmy smiled to himself. It wasn't that he didn't like school. He did. As a matter of fact he hadn't realized how much he did like it until he had stopped getting high every day before



class. His mom couldn't seem to understand that he no longer needed to leave at 7:30 for school. Hell, classes didn't start until 8:30. He no longer needed to burn a few before home room or get a "boost" or two to help him through the morning classes.

It had been hard at first. Everyone seemed to have known that Jimmy had "gone somewhere to get straight," and although his old buddies wanted to pick things up where they'd left off, Jimmy had learned that was not part of his recovery. Those first few days had seemed impossible.

The only difference had been his

new friend, Rob. Rob had been the first person who had welcomed Jim back at school without offering him something to snort or smoke. They had never been friends before Jim's, ah, "vacation." They had never had much opportunity. Rob had run with a different group, and Jim's friends hadn't approved; as a matter of fact Jim had considered Rob to be a real nerd. He didn't quite know why, other than the fact that Rob and his friends didn't use.

It had seemed so peculiar to Jim that everyone didn't use *something*. That had been another fantasy blown

apart when Jim had attended his first N.A. meeting and had met over one-hundred recovering addicts. He had joined a few of them after the meeting at a small coffee shop and, although he had not had much to say, he had felt somehow that he was in the right place. Through some weird quirk of fate he had ended up right where he was supposed to be.

"Just a few more minutes of sleep," Jimmy thought, snuggling back into the warmth of his pillow. "No big rush..."

The wind whipped through the boardwalks of the store fronts. The dark stranger smiled as he tilted his head up, peering out from under the brim of his hat. It was as though he already knew what lay ahead, and the wind had only signaled to him the inevitable. Far off in the distance, set between the town and the near mountain back, rose a single silver

**Through some  
weird quirk of  
fate he was right  
where he was  
supposed to be.**

cloud. Through the heat waves, something shimmered near the Earth's surface.

The townspeople froze as a small lone horse and rider emerged from the horizon. Then, as if in concert, the crowd in the streets began to wither. Mothers ran out and fetched in their young. Storekeepers closed the wooden shutters over their sacred glass

fronts. Ranch hands gathered in groups outside the saloon, keeping close to the safety of the swinging doors a few feet away. Safety. That was it. Where were they going, and who were they hiding from?

The rider, now only a few hundred yards away, slowed to a canter. Finally

## Jimmy Wilson's bed creaked as the bullet slammed into the boy's chest

he stopped and stood his ground in the middle of the street. The sun shimmered directly behind the approaching rider. But something isn't right here. The rider: he's small. It's only a boy!

Now only fifty yards away, the boy reigned in his fiery mount and stepped off as though he had been born in the saddle. He walked slowly towards the stranger. Their eyes locked onto each others'. The stranger's fingers began to twitch near his holster as the boy strode to within twenty paces and turned square to face this dark menace.

"Seems you're the only thing standing in my way to Paradise Valley, old man, and I aim to go there with a little help from my friends here." As the boy spoke the stranger's hand hardly seemed to move, but there was no mistaking the flash of the Colt .45 that he now held tightly aimed at the heart of his young

adversary. With one swift motion he had gathered up that weapon and, squeezing the trigger, sent a messenger of death toward the boy's heart.

Jimmy Wilson's bed creaked as the bullet slammed into the boy's chest. And then a smile came to his lips. "Not today, pilgrim. You see, I've brought a little insurance with me." The stranger knew his shot had been true, but now, ground behind the vest where the bullet hole clearly splayed, came a hand gripping—a book. A Book! Ha! The boy had been saved by a book.

The monument at the boy's side caught the stranger by surprise and, as he began to bring up his pistol for another blast, he felt his own body shudder as he was flung to the ground by the blow. The boy stood fast and the smoke poured from his gun where moments before there had been none.

Jimmy walked to the side of the dying man who seemed now so small, and he bent down to place a note on the chest of the stranger. The townspeople would find his cold body there, his hand clenching the note which read, "Here lies Mr. Will Power, bury him deep. He has sent many of his friends to an early grave and has stalked me now for the last time. You can find me down the way. On recovery road. Signed JW."

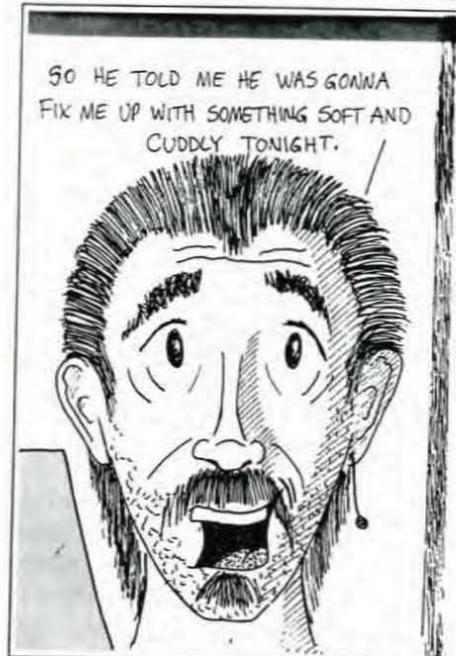
"Jimmy! Jimmy! Wake up or you're gonna be late!" As he hurried out the door Jimmy yelled back, "Thanks Mom. I love you. I'll be home right after school to help with the chores."

"Chores?" wondered Mrs. Wilson. "That boy's been watching too many westerns. Chores? Hmm..."

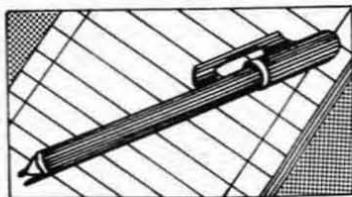
S.R., Florida

## Home Group

"Robert gets a date"



## Viewpoint



### Changes, they're a-comin'

Over the last eighteen months I have been observing all levels of service. I have also been reading many reports; all this input after it's been analyzed tells me that we in the service of N.A. are in for changes.

In one recent *Fellowship Report* there are a number of very important questions, such as the three the WSC chairperson asks. I feel that these questions can be asked by an N.A. service committee voting member before that person makes a vote. When you ask yourself these questions and answer them honestly, it seems to me that the vote couldn't help but reflect God's will.

Here are the questions:

1. Are we serving the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in the best way possible?
2. Are we offering the very best work we are capable of?

3. Are we utilizing our resources (both human and financial) wisely? The chairperson goes on and says that we must begin more effective long-range planning and resource utilization.

I believe the next eighteen months are going to be a challenging and growing period in N.A. service. As I sit and think about the future, I am also thinking about the past. In the last seven years I have watched N.A. grow in my region from two meetings a week to well over three hundred. Along with this growth I have seen the present service structure work, and then get too cumbersome to complete some simple tasks.

Some of our WSC committees adjust the existing guidelines to fit the needs of what is going on at the time. Then the next year the new committee needs to change the guidelines to fit the direction that *they* are taking. This is just one small example of a very large problem.

Just think about my home region. If in seven years we have grown by over three hundred meetings, then it could be possible that in seven more years we could have (given the same growth rate) around a thousand meetings. Now think about an area business meeting with a hundred GSRs trying to take care of the area's business! Well, I have thought about it and it

scares me enough to write this letter. I think that we had better start looking toward the future, and not just at today!

Change, I don't like. Most of the time when change is happening around me, first, I choose to ignore it rather than to risk anything. Then I fight the change with all of my best efforts. While fighting the change, I start using old behavior. This is when the pain starts. Now, I could stop here and not go through any more pain, but *noooooo!* Not me! I keep going on with the fight. The more I fight, the more pain I feel, and on and on. Well, you see the dilemma that I am in.

I'm not conceited enough to try to come up with a solution by myself, but I think that if I try to be the best person that I can be, trusting that God has a plan, and walking my talk, then I can come through the period of change that I know is coming—let's call it the renaissance of N.A. service.

A.A., Washington

listen to some members share their recovery. I've been told that if I come away from a meeting with at least one new tool for my recovery, then it was a good meeting. I did, and it was.

I also had the opportunity to practice the spiritual principle of surrender. Surrender works! I was able to stay and really listen, even when what was being shared was personal religious experiences and beliefs, not

*I believe the  
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spiritual principles as found in N.A. True, they all stated that Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual program, not a religious one. A great start. This is something all of N.A. can agree upon.

Unfortunately, a lot of what was said from that point on contradicted this statement. Panel members continued to describe God in the terms of their specific religion. They assured us that they were not attempting to shove that religion down our throats. I, however, did not feel reassured. If N.A. is not a religious program, then why did a panel of our members tell us specifically, by name, who God is?

One member confidently promised to offend us by his next statements, after which he told us about his religious beliefs. He was right; at least some of us were offended. Some addicts seeking recovery walked out.

### Spiritual, not religious

I just returned from a workshop about spirituality in Narcotics Anonymous. In some ways it was really good. There was a super turnout, and I did have the opportunity to

The workshop was peppered with quotes from the Bible. Sometimes these quotes were said to be from "another book"; other times we were told exactly where they came from. One panel member even compared our Basic Text to the Bible. According to this N.A. member, our Basic Text is lacking in spirituality.

Again, all of this was shared with a disclaimer that they were not speaking for N.A. Why, then, were they on this panel? They knew the topic was spirituality, not religion.

They were also aware that they were part of a panel of Narcotics Anonymous members, speaking at an N.A. workshop. It seems to me that the topic was spiritual principles in Narcotics Anonymous. I don't understand how they could have justified their disregard for our steps and traditions. Perhaps they simply weren't aware that talking about a specific religious figure, and describing God in terms of a specific religion, violates the spirit of our program. Narcotics Anonymous allows us complete freedom to choose the God of our own understanding.

It does say in our Basic Text that, "We must be honest about our beliefs if we are to grow spiritually," and "Honesty is the antidote to our diseased thinking." However, I do not believe that the time to share our religious viewpoints is when we are speaking from an N.A. podium. This workshop had clients from a treatment center attending. I wonder how they view N.A. as a spiritual, not religious program now.

When we are speaking at any N.A. event as members of the program, we

especially need to closely follow our traditions. No matter how many times we stress that what we are saying is a personal viewpoint and not representative of N.A. as a whole, people who are not intimately familiar with our program will still hear what we say as representing N.A.'s program.

According to our traditions, we have no opinion on outside issues. Specific religions and specific religious figures are outside issues. N.A. is not opposed to any religion, nor do we endorse any particular religion. When we carry a clear message of recovery, relying on terms and principles spelled out in our own Basic Text, we can be more assured that no addict anywhere need die from the horrors of addiction.

*Anonymous*

## Editorial replies

### On oldtimers

**From Texas:** In response to the article in the April 1989 issue by J.C., N.Y., called "Oldtimer's Disease," new evidence has been turned up as to one of the possible causes of the dreaded "oldtimer's disease." While there remains no cure for the illness,

researchers have found convincing evidence that the symptoms and duration may be less severe if caught and treated early.

While treatment can be effective at reducing symptoms, prevention in the early stages of "oldtimer's disease" can be accomplished only through application of principles.

For instance, by accepting the foundation of spiritual principles whereby people of any "age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion" are welcomed into our fellowship, we seem to be rejecting the need to categorize people by some particular characteristic other than addiction.

Experimental findings show that ninety-nine percent of previously categorized persons are openly welcomed into the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, while only ten percent do not become immediately re-categorized. As addicts, unity is our best defense against being re-categorized (oldtimers, newcomers, purists, non-purists, etc.).

Each day clean is a day won, and that means we are all *winners* from the first day we walk through the door to the trillionth day—*winners in any category!*

*M.G.*

**From California:** You stated on page thirty of the April 1989 issue of the N.A. *Way* that "everyone, especially our readers in hospitals and institutions, those who are newcomers, and those who are not members of N.A. will get maximum benefit from the N.A. *Way* if we present substantial N.A. recovery, month after month." In

every issue you also reprint our Twelve Traditions, the first one being, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity."

So perhaps you can explain to me how the article, "Oldtimer's Disease," is an example of "substantial N.A. recovery?" Or how it fosters unity?

I believe the editor of our recovery

*In my opinion,  
'Oldtimer's  
Disease' fans the  
flames of hurt  
and anger. Why  
was it printed?*

magazine should be sensitive, and has this responsibility, to issues affecting our unity. To include in our magazine an article that has an individual taking inventory of another individual or group, in my opinion, is inappropriate.

In the short while I've been around here, one of the blessings I've received is the notion of "live and let live." I've been taught that we get to N.A. seeking the solution to active addiction. We don't come here seeking sainthood. Some of the oldtimers have been willing to put themselves out there, warts and all, and show me that no matter what, you don't use. For that I'm grateful; if they don't live up to my expectations, whose problem is that?

I'm sorry, I'm getting away from the issue, that being that there are some members of our fellowship who think

that oldtimers are hurt, angry, resentful, etc. Probably, justifiably so. Again, another issue. What I'm attempting to do is point out that in my opinion, the article, "Oldtimer's Disease," fans the flames. I don't see how an article in our recovery magazine that sustains an atmosphere of hurt and anger could in any way be seen as an example of "substantial N.A. recovery."

In the spirit of unity, out of a love and mutual respect for all addicts, I've written you this letter. It was not my intention to rebut the author of that article. It was and is my intention to ask you why it was in our recovery magazine.

P.M.

### Editor's response

*We printed the article because we thought it might give some of us an opportunity to chuckle at ourselves. Though some on the editorial team, too, felt a little bite from the tone of the piece, on balance we felt the article was a humorous effort to get the reader to have a look at himself rather than a harsh criticism of any particular addicts.*

*Though that approach, if it were taken in every article we print, would certainly be a questionable vehicle for a "substantial message of recovery," we felt it added character and flavor to that month's overall delivery of the message. The article seemed to say that being willing to look critically at ourselves and laughing at ourselves are important to quality long-term recovery. That seemed to us to be legitimate subject matter for the magazine.*

### Gender specification

**From England:** This is a controversial issue I know, but one I feel very strongly about.

The issue is this: that the steps contain gender specification. Namely, Step Three and Step Eleven refer to "God, as we understood Him," and Step Seven says, "We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

At this point I can already hear the

**We can make  
the message  
of recovery  
more accessible  
without  
changing the  
content**

indignant cries from both the men and women in the fellowship saying, "So what? We all know what it means. Give us a break."

It is my belief that any gender specification in the steps is unnecessary. Imagine what the reaction would be if the steps referred to God "as we understood Her." Many people would agree that such specification was unnecessary, and in fact diluted the message contained in the steps.

Narcotics Anonymous has no religious affiliations; in my opinion, specifying God as "He" brings up connotations of a Christian, male God. Perhaps I am alone in this, but I doubt it. I remember when I first came around how much I needed to be reassured that N.A. was not based in

Christianity or any other sect, and that "God" was purely of my own understanding.

I feel that any way that we can help make the message of the steps and recovery more accessible without changing the inherent content is valuable and is in keeping with our primary purpose.

The most obvious way to take out gender specification is to simply replace the word "Him" with the word "God," so that steps Three and Eleven would say, "as we understood God," and Step Seven would say, "We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings." I really can't see how this would in any way damage the content of the steps.

I like to think that if the steps were being written today, gender specification would never have been used. Our literature used to talk about specific drug use, but we changed it to make it as clear and appropriate as possible. In just the same way, I feel that we should change gender specification in the N.A. steps.

I.B.

### Whose father?

**From Pennsylvania:** I'm sitting here writing (for the first time) to the N.A. Way because of some feelings I am presently going through. What I'm going through has to do with an old and controversial issue: the reciting of the Lord's Prayer at our meetings.

I am not writing out of anger or resentment. I'm writing because of something I felt this past weekend at a convention I attended. What I felt was that I wasn't sure I wanted to be a part of N.A. any longer. This feel-

ing came unexpectedly and without Warning. Up to that time, I was meeting people, listening, sharing, and feeling better than I had in quite some time.

This feeling came about when "we" closed the Saturday night speakers meeting. "We" had a moment of silence for the still-suffering addicts, and then "they" recited the Lord's Prayer. When I heard five hundred people say "Our Father," something hit me; the fellowship seemed different in my eyes than the one I've read about in our Basic Text and believed in for the past two years. The fellowship does not support any particular religions, and yet I felt there was a religious requirement for membership being implied.

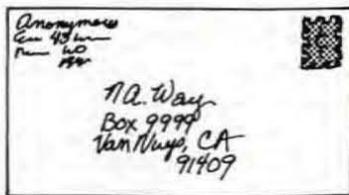
I'm not condemning anyone's belief, I just ask that "we" remember: what

**When I heard  
five hundred  
people say,  
'Our Father,'  
something  
hit me**

works for you may not work for the next person. So when "we" close our meetings, please let the choice remain with the individual, and let the newcomer know there is no requirement for membership other than the desire to stop using.

D.H.

# From our readers



## Accidental growth

I am a convict serving an eight-year sentence for a drug-related crime. But even more important is the fact that I am now a *recovering addict*. Five years ago when I first came into the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, I hadn't joined because I was looking for any spiritual awakening or even for a way to stop using. I came because I was looking for a way to offset a drug bust inside the prison. But what I found was a lot more than I had anticipated. I found a better way of life, even inside these walls.

I started using at twelve years old. I began by experimenting with available drugs, and went on to use anything and everything to distort reality for the next thirteen years. Even though I was still using while attending the first few meetings, I had a need for this program and I continued to show up.

While listening to the "civilians" and my fellow convict speakers, I began to hear my own past life in their stories: all the lies and schemes I had used to obtain whatever I needed to get that next drug. Knowing through personal experience what they had been like before, I could see the change in them. Hearing how they used the program to change their lives, the N.A. message slowly began to sink in. Maybe there was a chance that the program could work for me

if I would honestly try to accept it into my life. I gave it that chance and I am very glad that I did.

Somehow my higher power was already at work, leading me on my way. Mine is a very patient higher power, because in the adverse environment I live in, it took a long time for the change in me to be completed. The process was slow, but it was well worth the wait. Through all the adversity that this place has to offer, I daily admitted that I was powerless over my addiction (Step One) and continually used the program's steps to maintain recovery.

**E**motions and feelings that had been suppressed for years, even before my incarceration, have begun to resurface, giving me a greater understanding of the power of the program when it is openly and honestly used. I have found a wisdom in the program that gives me the security I need to stand firm on my recovery in the face of my difficult situation. When I look in the mirror each morning now I see a mature, caring, responsible person looking back at me instead of the uncaring, conning, flimflam artist of long ago.

*D.O., Connecticut*

## I like conventions

I remember my first FRCNA convention in Miami. Everyone was so

excited about it. Being fairly new to the N.A. Fellowship, I was feeling frightened by people and crowds. I was experiencing my powerlessness over people, places and things. Working through my fears, I hesitantly went to the hotel where the convention was being held. Thank God my sponsor was there, because I couldn't stop shaking.

Seeing recovering addicts smiling and hugging one another, sharing their joys and fears with one another, at first made me envious. Since then I have attended many conventions, and although I still experience some fears, I learned to participate and to get in touch with many good feelings.

My one and only world convention took place in New Orleans. It was a thrill to meet so many recovering addicts from all over the world. We literally took over the French Quarter, where we found a great time could be had by all without the need for mood or mind altering drugs. The most exciting part of that time was seeing so many of my close friends from Boston where I had recently spent a year. Now I am once again living in Florida and we are all excited that the world convention will take place in Orlando this year.

I pray to my HP to keep me clean one more day, to put more recovering addicts into my life, and also that I can help in some way to make this world convention the best ever.

*Anonymous*

## Never "too busy"

I am an addict like many others. No different than you and no better or worse. I paid for the right to be here, just like you did.

When I came into this fellowship, I had been accustomed to being alone and abused by people. Those I met here did not abuse me or use me. They loved me and showed me that I deserved love. I was never told that they were too busy. By their dedication to the newcomer, I was able to stay for the miracle of recovery. I was taken to meetings, conventions and conferences.

If I called on the phone, they always gave me the time they could. They also gave me no calendar to go by. They taught me that friends are not worked around a calendar, but a calendar around friends. They took time to show me how to do things and live life differently than what I had always seen.

They showed me the difference between abstinence and recovery. They

## Friends are not worked around a calendar

helped me to come to believe in a power greater than myself, and they did not try to be that Higher Power. They took the time to love me before I could love myself. They taught me that I am human, and it is okay to make mistakes. These things and more are what kept me coming back.

These things kept me with the experience, strength and hope that recovery could be mine too. Thank God for the ones who always found the time. I owe my life to these people and to my H.P.

*K.S., Illinois*

### "My gratitude speaks"

I have something to share that will not wait for a meeting. In the evening I usually finish off my day with a few remarks in a journal I keep. However, the situation I encountered this evening urges me to share this experience with others immediately.

I am an assistant resident at the university I attend. Some of the responsibilities of the job include breaking up parties, trying to keep the noise level down and acting as a liaison between students and the housing administration. It has certainly been a job that forces me to work my program daily.

Tonight, however, I encountered a new experience. A resident died. He was nineteen and diabetic. Apparently the student went into shock, and he passed on.

**M**y immediate reaction was sadness for the family and his close friends. However, it wasn't long before I applied the situation to my own life.

Please understand that sometimes I forget to be grateful. That is, sometimes it is not enough that I have stayed clean another day. I often find myself angry or punishing myself for things I didn't accomplish during the day.

Furthermore, I sometimes take for granted that my Higher Power will allow me to awaken each morning, keep me safe all day, and see that I make it to bed each night safely without having to use.

This particular incident with the diabetic student allowed me to fully understand how our two diseases paralleled one another; with both

diseases—diabetes and addiction—one must constantly keep close check on any unusual behavior.

Not sharing my gratitude today would definitely be an "unusual behavior." I am completely convinced that if I participate long enough in that kind of unusual behavior, I will die.

Therefore, I thank you for letting me share a part of my gratitude with the ones that made such gratefulness possible for me.

*P.L., Alabama*

### Only one choice left

I am writing in response to the article "The powerlessness of being powerless." [May, 1989, regarding the disease resurfacing again through an obsessive relationship.] I related so much to this person but, unlike him, I was so attached it led me back out again. I had hit such a low emotional bottom during that time, and I still suffer some of the pain. But I got so sick and tired of feeling that way that I called another addict. I never felt so much love and understanding.

I am now back in the fellowship. Thanks to God and the people of N.A., I am back home at last. I now know that I have two choices: recover or die. And as I see it today, that's really only one choice.

Thanks so much for being there.

*S.R., Florida*

### World Convention this month in Florida

Orlando's Orange County Convention Center will be the main site for N.A.'s 19th World Convention, August 31-September 3, including all workshops, main meetings, the merchandise store, the Saturday night comedy show, and registration. A brief pre-registration opportunity will be available Wednesday evening beginning at 6:00; regular registration opens Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m.

One of the highlights of the convention will undoubtedly be the Friday evening all-you-can-eat barbecue at Sea World. Tickets to Sea World can be purchased at group rates with the registration pak; for a slightly higher fee, members can purchase admission tickets plus the barbecue. Saturday night banquet reservations have been brisk; 90% of those pre-registering for the convention itself have also registered for the banquet. The comedy show scheduled Saturday to follow the banquet and main meeting is sure to be a hit. And, as usual, multiple entertainment events—yes, including dances—will be run simultaneously on Friday and Saturday evenings. N.A. meetings will also be conducted at those times for those who wish to attend.

The two main hotels—Stouffer's Orlando Resort and Sheraton World Orlando—are within two miles of the convention center. Marathon meetings will be conducted in these two hotels beginning Thursday at 1:00 p.m. and continuing through 10:00

a.m. Sunday. Both main hotels have extensive recreation facilities: jogging paths, tennis, pools, and playgrounds for kids. Supplementary child care services are also offered to guests in these hotels; other hotels maintain registers of state-certified babysitters in the area. It is expected that guest rooms in the WCNA hotels will be sold out by the time this is published. For alternate housing, call the Orlando Visitors Bureau at (407) 363-5800.

Transportation will be a primary concern for many convention-goers, especially with the distances between the main hotels and the Orange County Convention Center. Convention busses will be operated throughout all events, and bus passes are available for an additional fee from the registration center.

Many members are renting their own cars to provide themselves greater mobility. The convention site is about 20 minutes by car from the Disney World complex, and 1½ to 2 hours from both the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral and Busch Gardens. While Orlando has some of the lowest car rental rates in the U.S., members interested in renting vehicles should make arrangements in advance in order to get the best price.

A word to the wise regarding weather: A compact umbrella will come in handy, as Orlando is known to experience frequent afternoon showers during the summer months. Expect lots of humidity, with daytime temperatures around 92°F, dropping at night to 73°F.

# 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 phonenumber, 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  
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**ALABAMA:** Nov. 3-5, 1989; Surrender in the Mountains; Cheaha State Park, Lineville; rsvn.s (205) 488-5115; Surrender '89, P.O. Box 214, Decatur, AL 35602

**ALBERTA:** Nov. 3-5, 1989; 3rd Alsask Regional Convention; Polish Veterans Hall, 9203 144th Ave., Edmonton

**AUSTRALIA:** Sep. 29-Oct. 1, 1989; Sydney Combined Areas Convention; Hurstville Entertainment Centre, McMahon Street, Hurstville, Sydney; Fellowship Service Office (Surrey Hills, NSW) tel. 61-2-211-2445; CAC-89, P.O. Box 286, Double Bay 2028, NSW, Australia

**CALIFORNIA:** Sep. 8-10, 1989; 3rd Mountain High Campout; KOA Campground, S. Lake Tahoe; phonenumber (916) 541-4100; South Tahoe ASC, P.O. Box 6706, Stateline, NV 89449

2) Sep. 30, 1989; 3rd Annual East Bay Unity Day; Laney College, 900 Fallon Street, Oakland; phonenumber (415) 843-3701; East Bay ASC, P.O. Box 40079, Berkeley, CA 94704

3) Oct. 6-8, 1989; 10th So. Cal. Regional Convention; Anaheim Hilton & Towers, 777 Convention Way, Anaheim CA 92802-3497; rsvn.s (800) HILTONS; SCRC-10, P.O. Box 1674, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

**COLORADO:** Oct. 13-15, 1989; 3rd Colorado Regional Convention; Denver Airport Hilton Inn, 4411 Peoria (I-70 & Peoria), Denver CO 80239; rsvn.s (303) 373-5730; phonenumber (303) 832-DRUG; CRC-3, P.O. Box 18247-149, Denver, CO 80218

2) Nov. 3-5, 1989; Western States Public Information Learning Days; Radisson Hotel Denver South, 7007 S. Clinton (I-25 & Arapahoe), Englewood CO 80112; rsvn.s (303) 799-6200; phonenumber (303) 832-DRUG; Colorado P.I., P.O. Box 9524, Ft. Collins, CO 80524-9524

**FLORIDA:** Aug. 31-Sep. 3, 1989; 19th World Convention; Stouffer's Orlando Resort

**HAWAII:** Oct. 20-22, 1989; 2nd Maui Harvest of Recovery; Camp Maluhia, Maui; Roundup Committee, P.O. Box 978, Puunene, HI 96784

**IDAHO:** Aug. 4-6, 1989; 4th Oregon/Southern Idaho Convention; Red Lion Riverside Motel, Boise; rsvn.s (208) 343-1871; phonenumber (208) 343-0188; OSIC-4, P.O. Box 1234, Boise, ID 83701

2) Aug. 4-6, 1989; 3rd Snake River Area Campout; Thompson Flat Campground, Albion; MCGNA, P.O. Box 875, Burley, ID 83318  
**IRELAND:** Oct. 6-8, 1989; 5th Irish Regional Convention; Kiltiernan Hotel, Dublin; rsvn.s (Dublin) 01-955-559

**KANSAS:** Aug. 11-13, 1989; N.A. Campout; Thunderbird Marina, Rolling Hills area, Milford Lake, Junction City

**KENTUCKY:** Sep. 22-24, 1989; 2nd Annual W. Kentucky Area Campout; Energy Lake Campgrounds, Canton

2) Sep. 22-24, 1989; 9th Cincinnati Area Campout; Big Bone Lick State Park, Union; phonenumber (800) 451-3000; Greater Cincinnati ASC, P.O. Box 8257, Cincinnati, OH 45208

3) Apr. 13-15, 1990; 4th Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 1 Executive Blvd., Paducah KY 42001

**MAINE:** Sep. 8-10, 1989; 6th Southern Maine Area Convention; Notre Dame Spiritual Center, Alfred; phonenumber (207) 761-6695; Southern Maine ASC, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

**MICHIGAN:** Oct. 20-22, 1989; W. Michigan Area Retreat; WMA Retreat, P.O. Box 5, West Olive, MI 49460

**MISSISSIPPI:** Oct. 1, 1989; 8th Jackson Area Campout; Roosevelt State Park, Morton, MS; phonenumber (601) 949-7106

**MISSOURI:** Sep. 15-17, 1989; Show Me Regional Unity Campvention; Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, Jefferson City; Campvention, P.O. Box 7114, Jefferson City, MO 65109

**NEBRASKA:** Sep. 22-24, 1989; 6th Nebraska Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Interstate, Grand Island; rsvn.s (308) 384-7770; NRC-6, P.O. Box 1741, Grand Island, NE 68802

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:** Oct. 28, 1989; 3rd War is Over Group Anniversary Party; Arrowhead Ski Lodge, Claremont

**NEW YORK:** Aug. 4-6, 1989; 3rd Recovery in the Woods Campout; phonenumber (716) 878-2316; Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

**OHIO:** Oct. 13-15, 1989; 2nd Ohio Regional Twelve Step Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Laurellville; ORSNA, 1034 Dublin Rd., Columbus, OH 43215

**OREGON:** Sep. 29-Oct. 1, 1989; 12th Pacific Northwest Convention; Airport Holiday Inn, Portland; Portland Central Office, 1730 SE 12th, Portland, OR 97214

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Aug. 4-6, 1989; Riverfront Area Conference; Holiday Inn-Center City, 1800 Market Street, Philadelphia PA 19103; rsvn.s (215) 561-7500; Riverfront ASC, P.O. Box 4891, Philadelphia, PA 19124

2) Nov. 3-5, 1989; 7th Tri-State Regional Convention; Hyatt Hotel, Pittsburgh; rsvn.s (412) 471-1234; Tri-State RSO, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

**QUEBEC:** Oct. 6-8, 1989; 2nd Quebec Bilingual Convention; Sheraton Laval, 2440 Autoroute des Laurentides (Rte. 15), Laval; CRQNA-2, P.O. Box 313, Lachine, PQ H8S 4C1

**SASKATCHEWAN:** Aug. 18-20, 1989; 5th Regina Area Convention; Regina ASC, P.O. Box 3563, Regina, Sask., S4P 3L7

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Nov. 9-12; Serenity Festival; Best Western Landmark, Ocean Blvd., Myrtle Beach; rsvn.s (800) 845-0658; phonenumber (803) 449-6262; Serenity Festival, P.O. Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

**TENNESSEE:** Nov. 22-26, 1989; 7th Volunteer Regional Convention; Marriott Memphis; rsvn.s (800) 228-9290; phonenumber (901) 276-LIVE; VRC-7, P.O. Box 172102, Memphis, TN 38117

**UTAH:** Aug. 4-6, 1989; 6th Utah Campvention; Utah RSC, P.O. Box 6157, Salt Lake City, UT 84106-0157

**VIRGINIA:** Oct. 6-8, 1989; 3rd Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4-H Center, Front Royal, Virginia; phonenumber (800) 777-1515; Almost Heaven Convention, P.O. Box 448, Charles Town, WV 25414

**WEST VIRGINIA:** Oct. 27-29, 1989; True Colors 2; Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley WV 25271; rsvn.s (304) 372-7000; phonenumber (304) 344-4442; MRSCNA, P.O. Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

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9TEA

## The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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

## What Is Narcotics Anonymous?

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

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

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