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ANNUAL NEWSLETTER ISSUE

How eccentric are you?

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Relating to Ennay

It was at my home group of Narcotics Anonymous where I first met Ennay (his real name has been changed for the sake of anonymity). After entering the room, he slowly meandered his way toward the coffee pot, tilting his head in the direction of his meander. It was this walk that had made it quite clear to me that he was a typical airhead.

The back of Ennay's button-down shirt needed the heavy touch of a steam iron, his pants gave him the image of Mr. Greenjeans, and his hair could have won a Pee Wee Herman look-alike contest. In general, Ennay was not my kind of man.

I definitely had Ennay pegged as a loser when he shared with long pauses between every few words from that rasping voice. Since I had been told to stick with the winners, I knew what I had to do. I had to keep my distance from this guy in the hopes that no one would see me with him.

A few weeks later I had a devastating emotional experience that tore at my serenity. I had to make the choice that day not to pick up a drug, and to use the tools of my recovery instead. I tried to call everyone I knew in the program that might have been home.

I had no luck at all and was soon desperate. It was this urgency that prompted me to find the crumpled note with an unknown telephone number that I had put in my desk drawer several weeks before.

Keeping this nameless phone number must surely have been the workings of my Higher Power. The voice on the line was a guy with an excellent recovery. Even though his voice was slow and rasping, I was focused on his grasp of the program. This guy was my kind of person. I could relate to him almost like he was my twin. With all my shining impulsiveness, I told him I wanted to meet with him, and quickly set up a time and place at that night's meeting.

Had this day worked out well or what? I had established a tie with a super recovering addict. I could see

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the smoke coming from my head already, as is common when I become obsessive or impulsive.

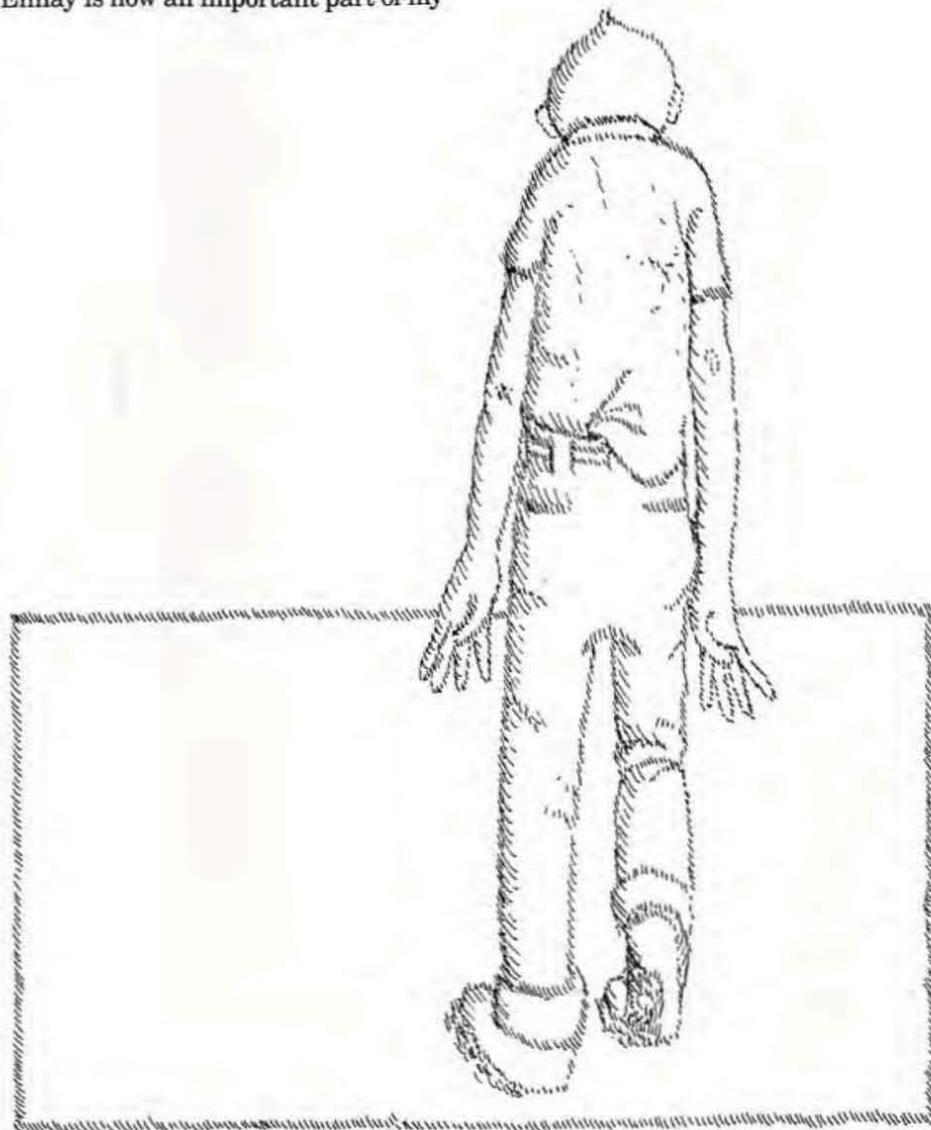
On taking my pre-arranged seat in the meeting room, I searched hard for this super hero, but found him nowhere. Then, to further my disappointment, good old Ennay took the seat alongside of me, right where my super hero was to sit. Ennay greeted me with a big hug and a smile to let me know he cared. When he asked if

I was in a better space than I was in earlier that day, it hit me like a cold towel in the face. This was my N.A. hero, Ennay himself.

After processing my confusion and guilt, I realized that H.P. had given me a multi-lesson in comparing, prejudice, humility, and acceptance. Ennay is now an important part of my

support group, and I love him dearly. Today I have gratitude for Narcotics Anonymous and its program of recovery. I am three years clean now, and I thank God for all these gifts and choices I have in my new life.

*D.B., Florida
from January 1989 issue,
Lifeline (Palm Coast, Florida)*



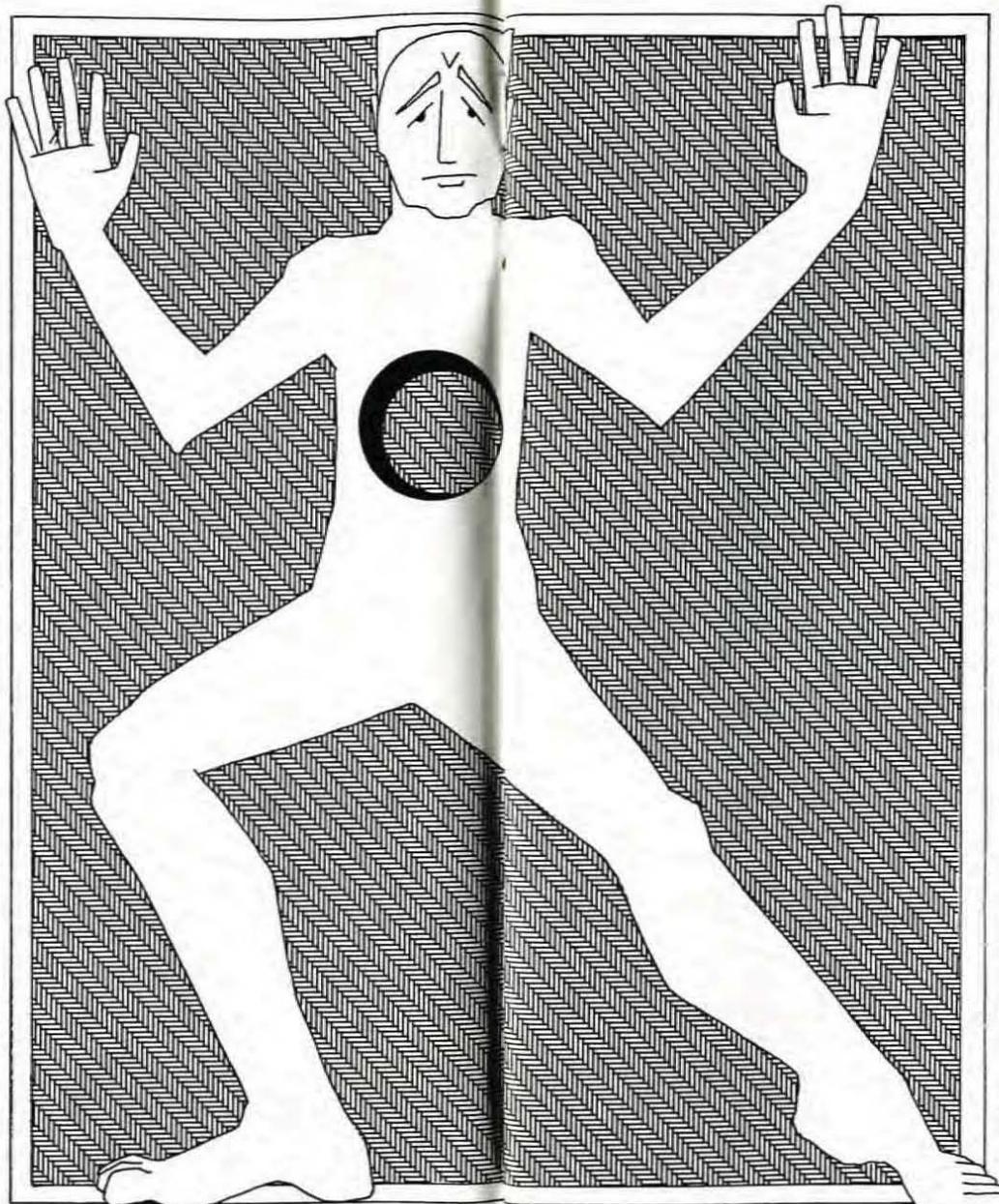
Filling the hole

Hi folks. I'm Hole. At least that's how Tony thinks of me—the hole in his guts. So who's Tony? *Arrrgh*, he's nobody, just some jerk whose life I've run for as long as either of us can remember. Anyway, what I mean is, none of you have ever seen me, but most of you've got some idea of what I'm like—you've got holes of your own!

So, like, Tony and me, we go back a long ways. Why, I remember when he was just a little tyke; oh boy, could we throw a good tantrum—jump up and down, froth at the mouth, hold our breath until we turned blue. Boy, that's the way; more attention, more love—whatever it takes—you need more of it. Twice as much, a zillion times as much; you *want* it, you *need* it, you *demand* it; don't they understand? It's essential to your *survival*.

Yep, Tony may have only been a wee fella, and me, why I was probably just a tiny little dent, no bigger than a grape pit, but already I was there, tucked in under his belly button, gnawing away. Little rodent's teeth nibbling at the inside of his tiny tummy...

Well, Tony and I kind of grew up



together. Remember all that trouble about the money he took out of the collection plate at church? And out of his mother's purse? And remember the shoplifting? So, you don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure out that

it was me in the cockpit. . . "Come on, Tony, you need the money. Why? Well, I mean it's obvious, thicko; you get money and you can buy things; things will make you feel better, things will make you feel better about

yourself; look, I promise you, if you get enough things, I'll stop chewing away at your insides, how does that sound?"

I tell you, he was so gullible, such a mug, it was laughable. I mean, he was getting on into his teens, supposed to be getting a few brains, a bit of experience, maybe growing up; and me, why I guess I was only about cricket ball size, but could I ever make the poor sap jump! "Come on, Tony, do well at school. Be an achiever! Everyone likes winners. So, do well at sports; I mean, the important thing is that *they* like you, then maybe *you'll* like you; then I promise I'll go away, I'll leave you alone."

When I think about it, you've gotta feel sorry for the poor drongo; I mean, I spent his whole lifetime promising

***Already I was
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under his belly
button, gnawing
away.***

him the earth, yet I never kept a single promise, and he never woke up to it. I mean, here's this bloke, supposedly a bit intelligent, and yet over and over again he falls for this line about something *outside* of himself being able to fill up something *inside* of himself.

I must admit, though, for a short while there he had me worried—when he first discovered drugs. Now here were things he could actually put inside of himself, things that shut me down, stopped me nagging and gnaw-

ing and chittering and chattering away in his guts. But I hadn't gotten to be the size of a basketball by letting anybody push me around—no siree. It didn't take me long to discover that I could turn these drugs into Tony's major control button. I mean, the way it worked out, they were a hole's dream—the ultimate “I want... I need... more, more... take, take...” Really, you've got to laugh, he was just so pathetically predictable. Like, he could be sitting there with a pile of assorted dope a kangaroo couldn't jump over, and I'd only have to give a tiny whisper: “But what about when it all runs out?” and the poor whacko would be off, all the fear and despair bubbling to the surface. See, when it comes to us holes, there's just never enough—of anything.

Yep, I knew Tony far better than he knew himself; I knew all the buttons: a woman, a job, a drink, a fix, some place else, more, better. The poor guy was just spinning around in circles, didn't know crap from custard; he'd try to cover up in one spot, and I'd ooze in on ten other fronts. If he gave me an inch, within thirty seconds I'd insinuate all of me inside—and let me tell you, without boasting, by this stage I was the size of your average lunar crater. I mean, I sometimes wonder how I ever fit inside; he was always such a weed anyway. It must have been some magic crowbar stunt, like the inside of that Dr. Who's spaceship, you know.

But do you know what happened? Just when I thought I'd filled him out entirely, from the top of his pointy little head to the nether recesses of his big flat number tens, the swine went

and did the dirty on me—*me*, the only friend he'd ever had, the only one who'd always stuck by him. He did something totally unexpected, totally out of character—he got serious about this N.A. lark. And, let me tell you, as a hole, I don't like it—I don't like it one little bit.

For starters, I turned around one day and discovered I was sharing my

Yep, so the way I figure it is this: N.A. is unfair to us holes.

home with this nosy bunch of spiritual principles. “Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness”—I mean, you've got to be kidding. At first I thought it was some firm of shonky lawyers, or maybe a Motown group, but these guys don't know a three-part harmony from a 556A.

And the next thing you know they've got a whole swag of their goody goody mates coming to stay every now and then. Geez, what a crew of nerds—Gratitude, and Caring, and Self-Esteem, and the like. You know, it's getting so crowded in here, and they're such a bunch of creeps and wankers. I mean how would you like it if you kind of accidentally gave this geezer a forearm smash across the bridge of the nose, only to discover it's Faith saying, “Never mind, it gets better,” or you get jostled in the dark and

there's Love saying, “Oh, I'm so sorry.” And that's another thing: they're always leaving the lights on, and I like it dark and gloomy in here.

What it's like is, they just hang around, and I never get a chance to take Tony for a good run anymore. Things aren't like they used to be. I mean, I'll say to him, “So, okay, you bought ten records last week and that didn't make you feel good, but if you buy fifteen this week I reckon...” and immediately some cheery little voice will pipe up: “Oh, come on, Tony, that trick never works; let's go to a meeting instead.”

Yep, so the way I figure it is this: N.A. is unfair to us holes. So what we've got to do is, we've got to organize. I reckon inside every recovering addict out there reading this there's a hole that's under threat, just like me. So come on holes! If we don't do something quick, we're likely to just wink right out of existence. What I had in mind was a sort of Organization for the Re-Growth of Holes (ORGH). Naturally, I'll be the leader, and I've got a few ideas for a nice little paramilitary set-up and the Twelve Rules of re-Growth (TROG). For example, Rule One: “I reasserted power over my addict and made his life hell again.”

Sounds good, huh? Now, if someone will just turn out that bloody light so I can finish the manifesto in peace...!!

*Anonymous
from February 1989 issue,
N.A. Today (Australia)*

We need stories!

Remember, this section of the *N.A. Way* is *your* meeting in print. Like any other meeting you're a part of, you'll get the most out of this one by participating.

Who writes stories?

You do!

The stories you see in this magazine are written by N.A. members—like you! You don't need to be a “great writer.” All you need is your personal experience in recovery, and the willingness to share it. Without it, we don't have a message to carry. In every sense, that's the *N.A. Way*.

What do I write?

Share as you would at any other meeting. Is there a topic you've enjoyed hearing or sharing about at a recent meeting? Are you on a particular step, and having some eye-opening experiences? Has there been a recent turning point in your personal recovery? Share it with your fellow *N.A. Way* readers. We'd love to hear from you!

Why? It's my life!

I was asked the other day why I continue to stay involved in the service of N.A. Well, my first reaction was, to stay clean. The only way I have to continue to grow is by keeping active in my recovery, and I have been involved since the beginning of it.

My first commitment was making coffee and setting up for the meeting. I have always had a home group to keep active in, and by making it my home, have felt responsible for it, whether I was one of the trusted servants or not. I share the responsibilities of making sure a member feels welcome, and of helping clean up without waiting to be asked. That's what being active means to me: taking the initiative and doing something to make that group my own. In return, I feel more at home.

Service has been equally important in other areas. I learned so much about myself and about communication by being a GSR. There were many times I felt powerless over situations at the area meetings, but all those experiences have helped me in my day-to-day living. So, I continue to stay active at the group level as well as at the sub-committee level. In the last year alone I have been active in

my home group as well as taking on commitments such as those with hospitals and institutions.

Another area opened up by having a sponsor and keeping in contact with her. It is a big responsibility since I have always found it difficult to take care of myself first. I work the steps with her, and we share an understanding with each other. Because of that I have come to feel I, too, have something to offer and am now sponsoring a few women. This is giving me more than I imagined was possible. I am getting better at communicating my feelings and thoughts, which, in turn, increases my self-confidence and awareness of other feelings.



Staying active in recovery has kept my life interesting and challenging. It hasn't left much room for complacency. Complacency is the most dangerous thing that can happen in my recovery. When I'm feeling like I don't need meetings anymore, I know it's time to get active. This doesn't

Staying active in recovery hasn't left much room for complacency.

mean joining every committee or group available. It means getting involved at a level I can handle, which then allows me to maintain balance in my life. I have to be careful not to overcommit myself, because I would end up feeling I'd failed at something. It's better to do one commitment regularly and do it well.

There is so much more to say on service, but I've heard it summed up quite simply. When asked how best to learn something—whether to sit and watch or get in and do it—I always say get in and do it. Live it.

*Anonymous
from April 1989 issue,
New Life Messenger, Ottawa, Canada*

My path of recovery

I just got back from our regional convention and am inspired to write. This year's convention was a growing experience for me; it made me sit down and re-evaluate my recovery. In the past, I was one of those addicts who did everything to disqualify myself as an addict. I was in such denial, even though I'd been to therapists, doctors, psychiatrists, and other twelve step programs.

I've seen many other addicts get recovery. I myself was one who relapsed frequently: one week, two months, eight months, three months... I always ended up going back out. At first, I thought I "had to" get clean. This led to "should," and back to "had to" (after a relapse), growing to "need to" and now, today, I "want to" be clean.

I began chasing after those addicts who were staying clean. How did they do it? My new friends in N.A. were accumulating years clean and I wanted what they had. Using never gave me what I thought I wanted; drugs always let me down. Why go back again?

I started listening—truly listening—at meetings. I saw that a Higher Power carried me again and again back to N.A. I was alive, and finally open to hearing about gratitude.

As I listened, I heard that drugs were killing me. I felt for the first time that the so-called "fun" I thought I was having was actually a living death. I never saw myself dying; inside I really didn't want to die.

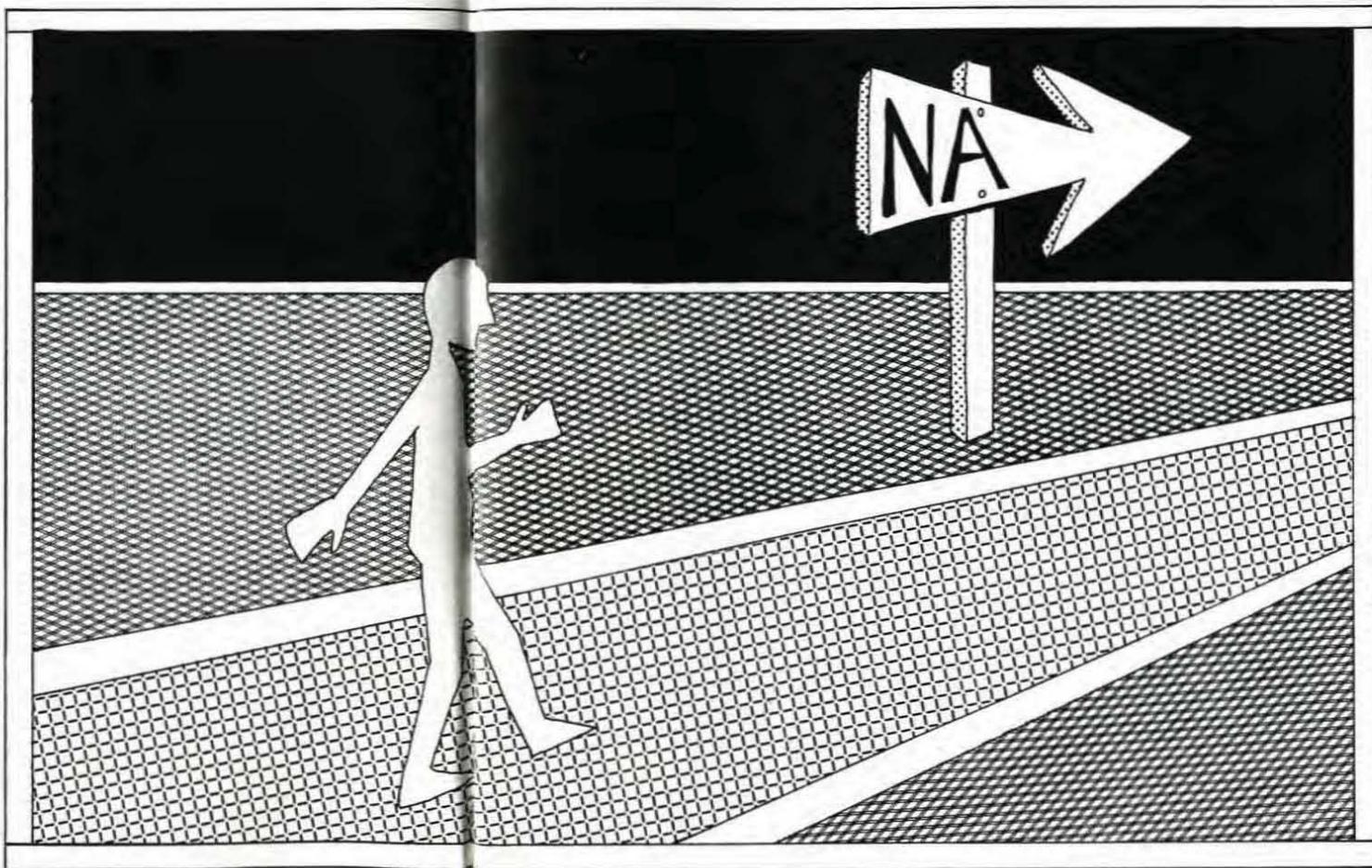
My using friends began to die—others just disappeared. Through N.A., I began to take a total look at my life. Drugs had ravaged my life.

What's fun about losing everything meaningful to me? About ruining countless jobs? About all the isolation? I blamed everything and everyone. But with N.A. I saw there was no person or thing to blame other than my own using.

I heard these things called "suggestions" mentioned at every meeting I had ever gone to. I thought these were for someone else, not me. Wanting what I saw in others who were recovering, I asked my friend, "How do you stay clean?" He told me to get

involved. Later I was told "to be part of." Before, I had always felt like I was in the back row. "Nobody liked me, nobody would hug me." How could they? I usually came late and left early. How could they? I never reached out.

My friend told me to get involved in service. "Help set up or clean up after a meeting, make coffee," he said. That's what I did. I was afraid, but I started with those simple things. I began to feel "a part of." People started asking me out to coffee after meetings. They started to remember my



name! This gave me even more strength to sit at a business meeting and volunteer to make coffee.

What a great feeling it was to have this small and yet important responsibility. I had to be at the meeting early and I ended up staying late. I loved it. There were times I didn't want to go to that meeting, but I had to in order to fulfill my new responsibility. It was at these times I got the most out of the meeting. I saw the program working for me. I made coffee for four months, and I didn't want to give it up.

Around this time I took another suggestion: "Work the helpline." With four months clean, I didn't think I had anything to share with that suffering addict on the phone. What a surprise!

I must keep my personal recovery first, service work, though valuable, does not replace the steps.

I learned what it meant to keep what you've got by giving it away. I started by sharing the suggestions, some I hadn't even done yet. As I heard myself saying these, I thought, "Wow, I should try that!" And I did.

The helpline became a vital part of my recovery. Some days I'd be down, and then I'd get a call from an addict who shared all the pain of addiction.

It really kept me in touch with where I came from. The helpline saved me from myself many times; I couldn't let this go. I worked the helpline for a year.

I hit that milestone: one year clean. When another addict shared with me that the first year is a gift, I got real angry. I had worked damned hard for that year! He said, "Yea, all an addict has to really work on that first year is staying clean. Now it's time to work on yourself." I thought about that a lot. Many of my behaviors were still the same. Staying clean wasn't enough anymore. I wanted to grow. I took on another service position.

At our convention this year, I realized I had immersed myself in everything *but* myself. I had to let go of something to grow further. Today I am reevaluating my approach to recovery. I must always remember to keep my personal recovery first. The service work, though very valuable, does not replace the steps.

I'm beginning to deal with parts of my life I did not want to face. I heard at our convention that FEAR no longer meant F— Everything And Run. Today it means Face Everything And Recover! I'm putting the Twelve Steps of N.A. back into my life where they belong, and have made a decision to face myself and grow. Thank you, N.A., for the suggestions. For me, these suggestions are requirements if I want to live. Today I want recovery and all that goes with it.

"Courage is not the lack of fear, it's the taking of action in spite of fear."

*D.D., Michigan
from Sep./Oct. 1988 issue,
Motor City Message (Detroit)*

Worry

The one constant in my life lately has been worry. No matter what happens or does not happen, there always seems to be something to worry about. And when the moment of truth comes, it turns out I have been wasting my time and sacrificing my peace of mind over nothing.

I feel like I am rolling past the events in my life, and as I pass I choose one issue or another to worry about. First I worry about my apartment, then my car, then my job, then my service positions, then my car again. Nothing terrible has happened to any of these, and yet I continue to worry. As I was driving yesterday, and worrying about my car, I realized that this could go on forever. I will always be able to find something about my car to worry about. The possibilities will never end.

When I first bought the car I could worry about whether I had made the right choice. Once I had it I could have worried about whether the guys at the factory had assembled it correctly. As I drove the car I could worry about whether or not I might get into an accident. I could worry about whether I had leaks, whether the heat or the air conditioning would work. I could worry about whether

someone might steal it. I could worry about the insurance. Was there enough? Would I be able to afford it? I could worry about the car payments. Four years? Just for today?

I could worry about the warranty. Would it cover whatever happened to the car? If I took the car in for repairs would they fix it properly? Would they screw me because I didn't know anything about cars? What if the car broke down in the middle of nowhere? Would I be stranded? Would I be able to get a decent price for the car when I decided to sell it? Will I spill a soda on the upholstery? The list is endless. I have worried about some of these things, and not one of them has come to pass.

The list above seems like a lot of

As I roll past the events in my life, I choose one issue or another to worry about.

things to worry about—and it is. But the list is all related to just one topic—the car. The list of topics is endless, each with its own endless list of worries.

I am not very good at projecting what is going to happen very accurately. Nothing ever seems to fall the way I thought it would. If I worry about the car, the real trouble rises up at work. If I worry about the job, the transmission starts to leak. I just don't have the ability to see into the future. The future is always a surprise.

Based on my recent experience, it is beginning to look like the only benefit that worry is bringing me is a near guarantee that whatever I am worrying about is not going to happen.

In our Basic Text we find the line, "Worry is the practice of a lack of faith." I have been practicing up a storm lately. This has not been fun. It has been maddening, and yet I have not been able to stop. I talked to my

sponsor about it repeatedly, but I would not let go. I knew what I was doing, but could not stop.

As I was driving along yesterday, listening to the madness of my thinking, one fact jumped out. I have not been going to many meetings lately. Somehow I have been rationalizing not going, and slowly descending into my own nonsense. I knew there was a meeting just a few miles up the

road, so I drove on. I got there late but felt grateful to be there. I grabbed a seat and opened my ears; I heard other addicts sharing about their worries.

One addict shared that he was afraid to return to work because of all the using going on there. Another shared about how she was afraid she might lose her license, car and job, and not be able to attend school, all because of one speeding ticket.

Another shared about how he worried about how his family members, all using one thing or another, were going to contribute to his relapse. One of the last addicts to share said he could see how his worries were madness, and after much pain he had recalled that he had a Higher Power, and he had turned them over. Just for today everything was fine. He was able to enjoy today because he was able to stay focused in today.

There is no substitute for meetings. What happens when we gather together just does not happen anywhere else. I didn't need to share my worries with one addict and listen for the response. I needed to hear addicts sharing about *their* recovery. They could not know my worries when they spoke. And yet they spoke to the issue I was drowning in. We were all experiencing the same thing. We could each choose to continue, or we could choose to share our fears and our solutions. We could demonstrate through our experiences that, for each of us, the problems and the solutions are the same.

If I were choosing a feeling that I would want to be a constant in my life, I would choose peace of mind, or perhaps happiness. I would not choose worry. And yet that is the choice I have been making. By not attending meetings, and by looking for substitutes for fellowship with you, I have been choosing worry. May I make better choices.

*Anonymous
from Aug./Sep. 1988 issue,
Daily Surrender (Michigan Region)*



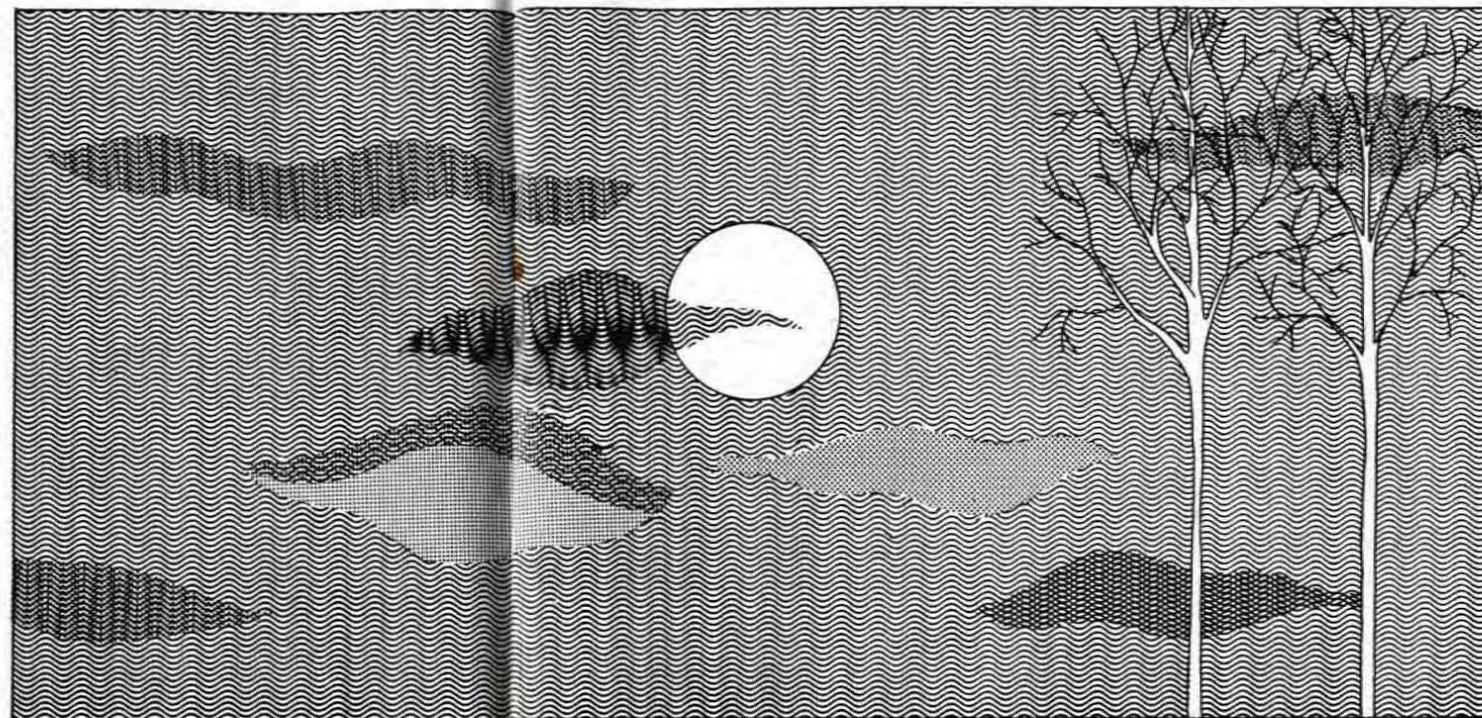
One member's definition of gratitude

A serene sunset, a golden aspen grove, the love of my family, friends who care, and friends I can care about are just a few of the things my Higher Power has opened my eyes to since I've been clean.

Before N.A. I couldn't appreciate life—not mine, not the life that flowed around me. Instead of seeing the wonders God put on this earth, I was totally consumed with obtaining my drugs.

As a newcomer to N.A. I experienced the almost overwhelming craving to use. It filled my mind and occupied my thoughts to the exclusion of all that was good. With N.A.'s help, its broad shoulders to cry on, its open ears ready to listen, and its unselfish sharing of the members' own experiences, those cravings eventually faded. I began to realize that my continuing addiction was not as simple as a "craving."

As N.A. taught me the nature of my disease, I began to see that my inability to stop using on my own was, in large part, due to my compulsive, obsessive nature. I had a compulsive obsession to *obtain* the drugs, and once



they were in my hands, using was a foregone conclusion.

I came to realize that toward the end of my active addiction I was not enjoying the feelings my drug had once produced. How could I? I was so obsessed with getting more, so terrified that I would run out, that my life was totally centered on supply. There was no time to enjoy the small pleasures a clean life can bring, no time to develop the friendships that are a vital part of a sane life. I had ceased to exist as a person; I was a machine whose sole purpose was getting and using drugs.

N.A. has let me be human with human emotions and reasonable desires. This transformation didn't take place all at once, but rather has been a process of growth. In the beginning,

all I could manage was not to use and to attend meetings. As I stayed clean longer, I began to see that to get what I wanted—the life I saw those around me enjoying,—I had to begin to work the program.

Because N.A. told me to get a sponsor, I began getting to know people,

There are many gifts my Higher Power has opened my eyes to.

something I wouldn't allow myself to do when I was using. My sponsor worked with me on the steps, sharing

a part of herself and guiding me as I began to figure out who I was.

I continued to do what the people in N.A. told me. I got involved with a home group. I went to meetings and listened and applied what I could to my life. I started to accept the concept of a Higher Power, and as my belief and faith in my Higher Power grew I began to enjoy a certain measure of serenity.

I still have a long way to go, but thanks to N.A. I don't have to go alone. N.A. has given me a meaningful life. The gratitude I feel for that is too great to stay hidden inside.

*Anonymous
from November 1988 issue,
Against All Odds (Daytona, Florida)*

Fourth Step:

“We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

There are few things in this world that have inspired more fear in the heart of a newcomer, or even an old-timer, than the idea of doing a Fourth Step. It seems to be all too much for us. Part of the problem, in this addict's opinion, is the fact that we all “ooh” and “ahh” when someone says that they are working on their Fourth Step. Although I have noticed that many of us seem to get in a bad space about the time we are working on this step, I do believe that part is optional.

If anyone reading this is about to do their first Fourth Step, you are probably as confused as I was. There are lots of guides and methods to choose from. You would think that would help. All it did was make me more confused.

First, I gathered up all this information and began reading it. Some guides told me not to read ahead in them, so I read those all the way

through and immediately eliminated them. Each one seemed to say something completely different from the one before. By the time I was halfway through this process, I was sure of only one thing: that I would never do a Fourth Step. So let me give you a few friendly suggestions.

Use your sponsor; isn't that what a sponsor is for, to help guide you through the steps? In any case, choose one method and stick to it. Perseverance is the virtue which will prove to be the most valuable at this point. It is also a good idea to develop discipline. Pick a time of the day that you are comfortable with and work on the step every day at that time. It has been written that you should do a Fourth Step with no thought of who you will do your Fifth Step with. This is a great idea, but hard to do. I think the point is that you don't need any distractions from the process. If you can do that, you should; if not, don't worry—you are not alone.

There is one important thing to keep in mind while working on this step: that it is there to help you. None of the steps are there to hurt us. When we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him, an important thing happened—what we decided

was to make our will and life—our thoughts and actions—more Godlike. That is, we decided to try our best to make the same decision that God would make, given our limited scope of options. The problem is that we have no knowledge of what God would

There are a few things in this world that have inspired more fear, than doing a Fourth Step.

choose. We need some direction in order to shape our will and life, and the only method that is available to us is the one which got us to that decision: the steps. So, in a manner of speaking, we decided to go on with the steps in Step Three and, very simply, four follows three. Keep that fact in mind if you find yourself having trouble. I believe the problem can be rectified by going back and re-examining your Third Step.

*Anonymous
from March/April 1989 issue,
The Bottom Line
(Gold Coast/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)*

Daily written inventory

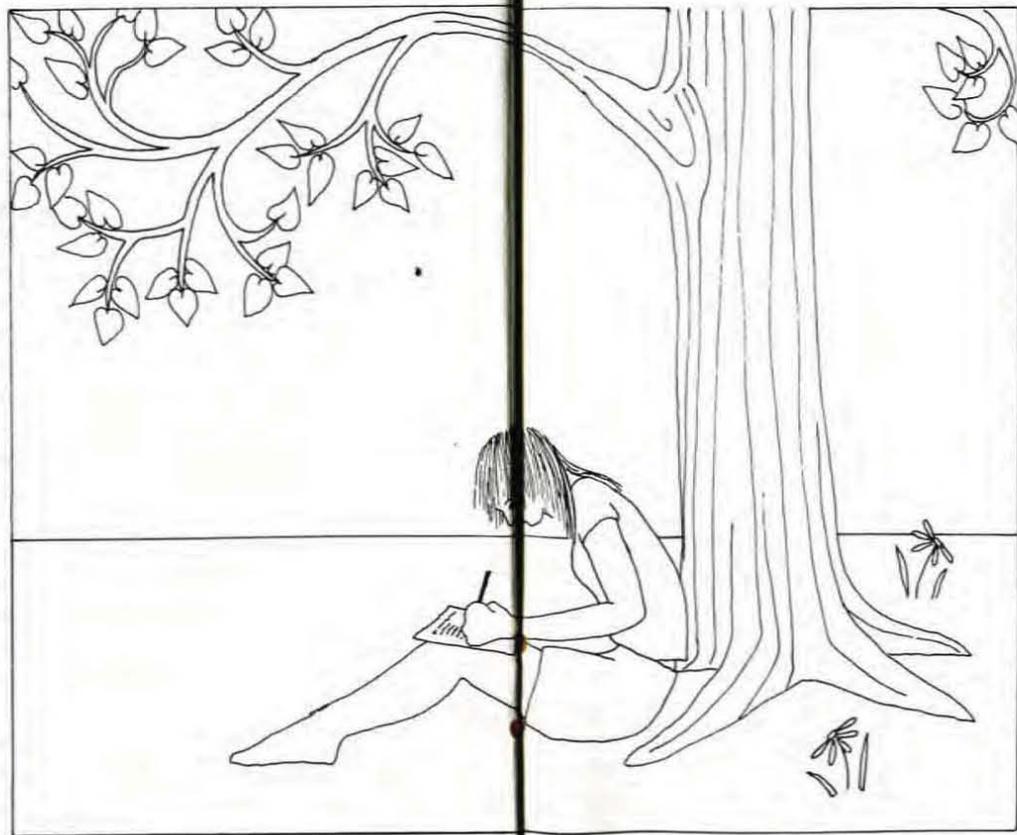
As important as meetings and service have been for me in staying clean, I have learned that nothing has replaced my working the steps. My experience has been that daily written inventories (writing Steps Four through Nine in a Tenth Step) have been critical. To me, working the program means that I must write my pain, resentments and fears of people, places, things and situations in a daily inventory and share it with my higher power and another human being (someone who also does a written inventory).

I was lucky to learn this tool of recovery from another woman with twenty-four plus years in the program. When I first learned how to do a written inventory, I thought it was a punishment—a way of beating myself up. But I have learned that putting my feelings down on paper is safe; it shows me what kind of person I am and what space I've been in. Also, after writing and reading the inventory, I can throw it away. Symbolically, I feel I have made a clean slate; and good feelings like peace, serenity, joy, and happiness start to come in.

Nearly eighteen months into recovery, I continue to write these inventories on a daily basis. Doing my

Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Steps for the first time with my sponsor did not make me perfect. It did not remove all my character defects. I still have many emotional amends to make for my past as well as for my present.

My spiritual program has been based on daily acceptance, written inventory, meditation, prayer, and carrying the message. My spiritual awakening is ongoing, and has come as the result of working the Twelve Steps, and not before. I am an agnostic. For me the higher power has always been "To Whom it May Concern," rather than some sectarian concept of God. Today, it is enough



for me to know that my Higher Power is not me.

I have learned that my spiritual program cannot be based on material things. Working the program does not guarantee me a right to a man in my life, a good job, a fancy house, an expensive car, or designer clothes. For me, the greatest gifts of recovery are that I can live clean one day at a time, be a responsible part of the human race, and love others by extending myself for another human being's spiritual growth.

The following is the format I use for my daily written inventory:

God (Higher Power), I pray for the strength to give up pain, resentment, and fear.

I resent: (people, places, things, situations—one at a time).

I fear: (all the fears connected with each resentment).

Then I write all resentments and fears until I cannot think of any more (this is the Fourth Step part).

I am ready now to have you remove these resentments and fears (Sixth Step).

Please remove these defects of character (Seventh Step).

I pray only for knowledge and experience of your will for me, and the power to carry it out (Eleventh Step).

Thank you.

When I first learned how to do a written inventory, I thought it was a punishment—a way of beating myself up.

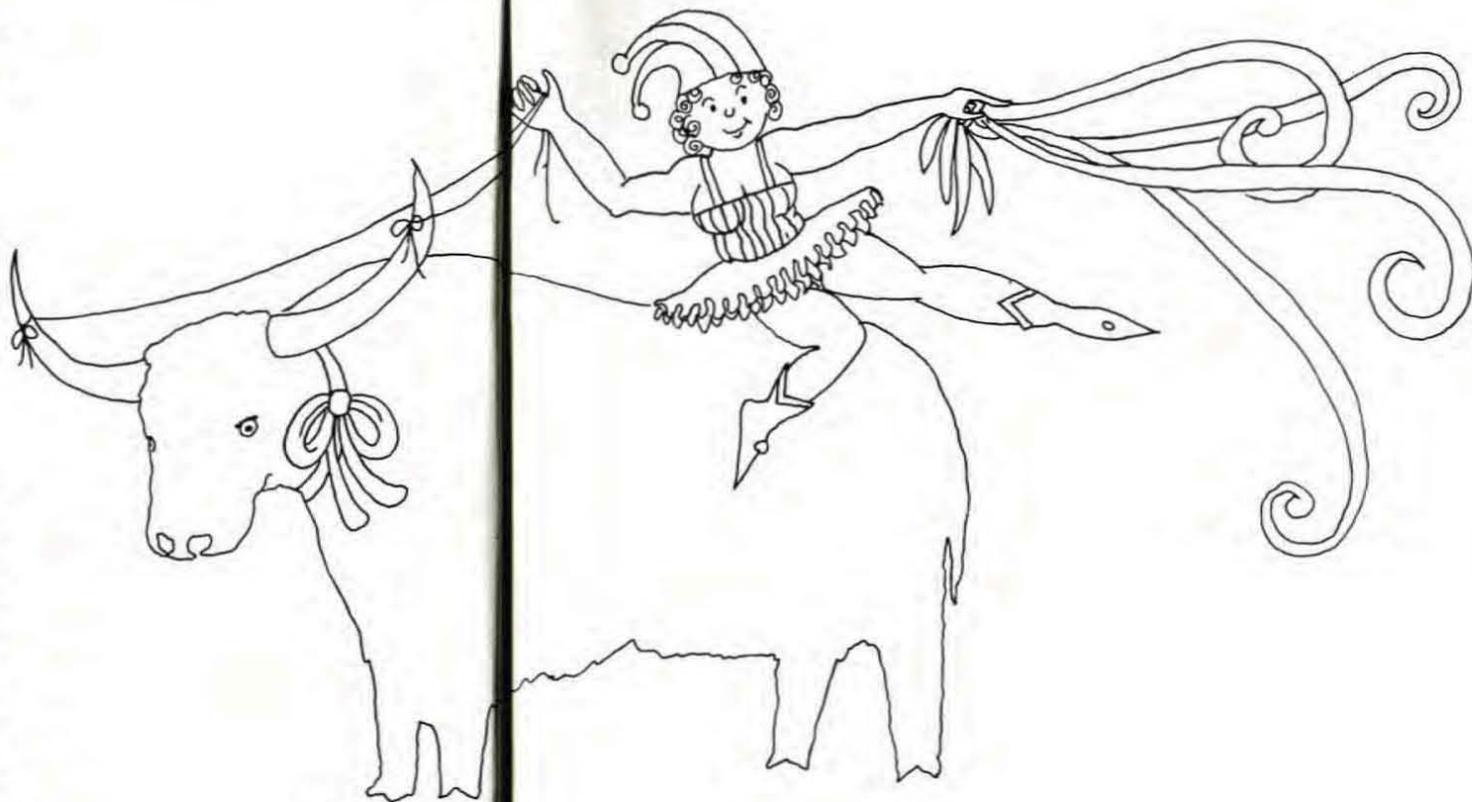
Each resentment belongs on my running Eighth Step list. As the resentments and fears are removed I cross them off my list. I read this inventory, as soon as possible after writing it, to someone who does inventories. Then I tear it up. Sometimes it takes time for the same resentments and fears to stop popping up, but eventually they are removed.

*M.P., California
from Summer 1988 issue,
Clean Times (San Francisco)*

How eccentric are you?

Eccentricity is a big worry for a lot of recovering addicts. While we were using we often justified wearing the most outrageous nonsense. We also assumed all kinds of fronts, some made out of polystyrene. One of my big worries about giving up using drugs was that I would lose my joy in eccentricity. For a while, at least, I did take everything about myself rather too seriously; but now things have changed. I compiled this little questionnaire to celebrate the fact, sitting inside a giant inflatable model of Keith Chegwin, the famous radio and television personality.

1. You are asked to dinner by someone you find very intimidating. Do you:
 - A. Let go of your anxiety and go along with no particular expectations?
 - B. Buy an expensive gift to give your host and hostess?
 - C. Arrive riding a giant mutant yak and wearing a salmon pink tutu?
2. You have to let go of a relationship which is becoming co-dependent.



Do you:

- A. Talk calmly to the person concerned about your feelings and explain the reason for your decision?
 - B. Scream and rant?
 - C. Send them an octagonal coffee table by express post?
3. You are being interviewed for an important job. It's the second interview and you know that the decision is to be made between you and one other applicant. Do you:
 - A. Pray for acceptance in the loo before you go in?
 - B. Telephone your sponsor?
 - C. Pretend throughout the interview that you are Hercule Poirot, the fictional Belgian detective?

4. You go to a meeting you have never been to before. The format of the meeting is different and unexpected. The person giving the share

One of my worries about giving up using was that I would lose my joy in eccentricity.

speaks about his experience of Gruyere cheese for half an hour. The secretary then indicates who should share from the floor by

changing a dead seagull around their neck. Do you:

- A. Get up and leave considerably upset?
 - B. Wait until the end of the meeting and then share your consternation?
 - C. Propose to the secretary that the dead seagull be replaced by a live armadillo?
5. You arrive back at your car just as a traffic warden is writing out a ticket. Do you:
 - A. Plead insanity?
 - B. Propose marriage?
 - C. Do an impersonation of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone?
 6. The rateable value of your house is unfairly increased by the local

authority. Do you:

- A. Complain in writing to your local councillor?
 - B. Cry, with your local counsellor?
 - C. This question does not apply as your home is a giant plastic banana in a layby on the M4.
7. You find yourself deeply attracted to someone, but you are too nervous to approach them. Do you:
- A. Pluck up your courage and risk it?
 - B. Tell someone who's a mutual acquaintance and who's bound to gossip?
 - C. Apply for a job as a dolphin at Marineworld?
8. Your preferred means of transport is:
- A. A bicycle.

- B. A car.
 - C. A carriage drawn by thousands of voles yoked together.
9. A friend is throwing an "Alice in Wonderland" costume tea party. Do you go dressed as:
- A. Alice?
 - B. The White Rabbit?
 - C. An Armenian civil aviation contractor?
10. You always go on holiday to:
- A. The seaside.
 - B. The Mediterranean.
 - C. A grocery shop in Dollis Hill.

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

	A.	B.	C.
1.2	1	18.5	
2.3	4	2	
3.1	7	2.1	

4.4	6	2.2
5.6	9	179
6.2	14	A fish
7.3	2	7
8.1	1	22
9.1	3	Ludwig*
102	1	2

*Wittgenstein

NOW...YOUR RESULT...
25-35

Not only are you not very eccentric, you're also hopelessly conventional. So conventional, in fact, that I dispute your very existence. I venture to suggest that you are a minor character in a badly written novel about English provincial life in the 1930s. Either the postmistress or the sub-librarian.

36-70

You're not very eccentric at all. You're the kind of person who relentlessly answers these questionnaires as if they're going to give you some insight into yourself. Well, there aren't any insights to be gained here chum. In case you didn't notice this questionnaire is utterly ridiculous. I suggest you stop taking yourself so seriously. Try eating a pair of white velour 22-inch bell bottom trousers.

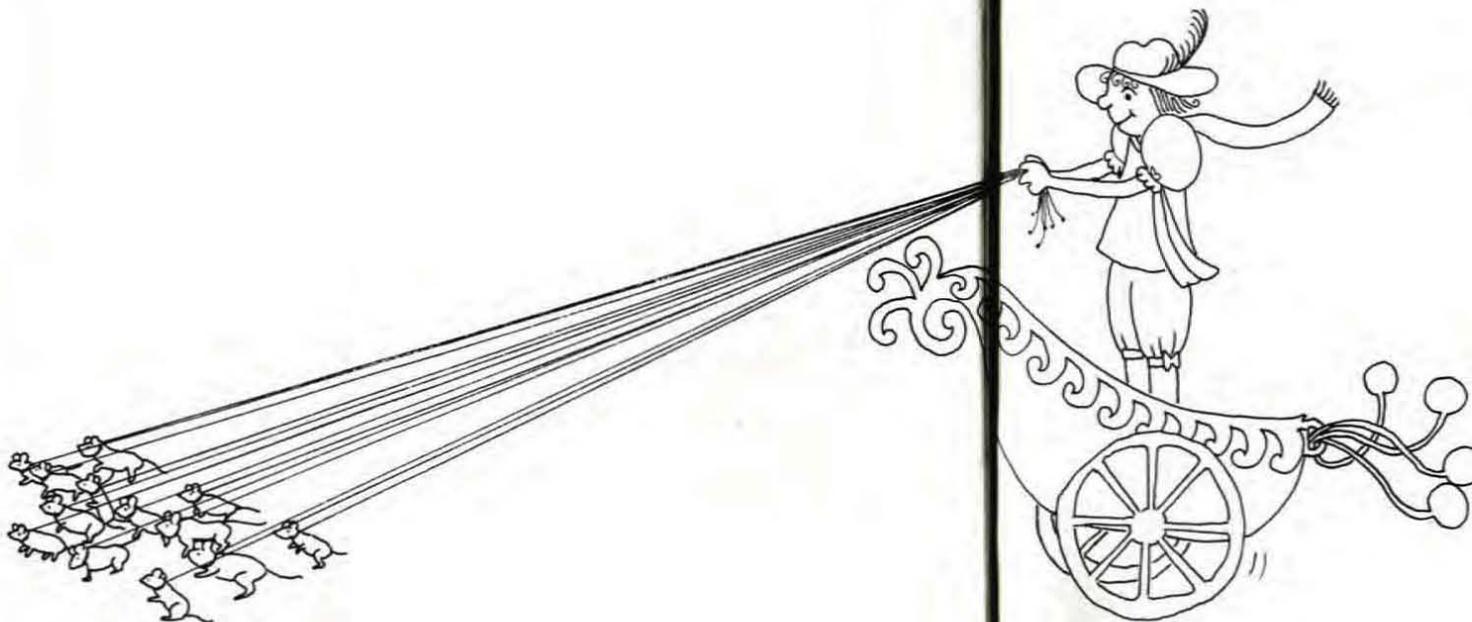
71-A. *Fishgenstein*

Either you're very eccentric or you're a prosperous market gardening business outside Peterborough. Actually, on reflection, I dispute the fact that you're eccentric. I think you answered the questions in such a way as to deliberately prove yourself

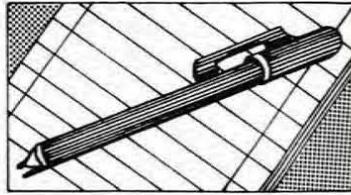
**Not only are
you not very
eccentric, you're
so conventional
that I dispute
your very
existence.**

eccentric. I don't think you're eccentric at all. I think you're very, very, very conventional; you've probably never worn antlers to work, or slept in a bathtub full of tarragon. I know I have.

*Anonymous
from May/June 1988 issue,
Clean Times (United Kingdom)*



Viewpoint



I'm on methadone— can I share?

I really believe in Narcotics Anonymous. It provides me with a great deal of hope and support. But I must be the longest-standing "newcomer" ever. I'm on methadone maintenance, fighting hard to taper off and be drug free. I have never even had twenty-four hours clean in a week.

I don't use illegal drugs anymore. I don't try to hide who I am or what I'm doing. I don't want to start any dishonest relationships. But I take methadone every day. My dose is lower, but I'm never clean. Think how you'd feel if you'd been going to meetings regularly, slipped and then returned to your meeting. That's how I feel when I attend "dirty."

No one had shown any disapproval about me attending meetings or the possibility of me sharing until recent-

ly. When it happened, I felt crushed. I had been through an awful week, and had gotten my courage up to talk about what was going on with me. But the secretary told me I couldn't speak! I started crying and had to leave.

I had come to feel N.A. was making a difference in my life. I had finally found a place I could feel safe and work out some of my problems. I felt accepted for who I was. Now everything I've gotten from N.A. has gone out the window. Sitting and listening is great, but it isn't enough. Even if I speak with people after the meeting, it does not let the group know where I stand and how I'm growing. Once again, I don't feel "a part of."

I'm not mad at the secretary for following the rules, but just what *are* the rules. Or are they suggestions? I don't think it should be left up to individual group secretaries to have to decide. I want to be clean. I feel it's good for me to speak and share as I taper off methadone. I don't think I hurt N.A. as a whole or individuals in it. But when he said "You're not clean, you can't speak," he said it with disgust. I was hurt. I felt alone again.

Do I stuff my feelings until I get to zero milligrams? I'm hurt and confused. What do I do?

*Anonymous
from Summer 1988 issue,
Clean Times (San Francisco)*

Editorial replies

Common needs

From Illinois: In your May '89 issue, an addict wrote that his group in Michigan had struggled long and thoughtfully with the issue of "women's tables" in their meeting. After both informal and formal discussions, the group voted to maintain the women's tables. This stirred up a lot of thoughts for me as I read it, especially when I found at the end of his letter that he was looking for feedback.

Although I'm a man, some of my closest, most loved friends and spiritual advisors are women. In recovery, I quickly came to believe that my higher power does not have a male body or any other characteristics that would cause me to refer to H.P. as "he."

One time in a meeting I was asked to read "How it Works." Resisting other people's concept of a higher power being imposed on me, in my reading aloud I changed every "He" and "Him" to "God" and every "His" to "God's," etc. A member with six years clean pointed out aloud to the group that no one member should change our literature, but should instead utilize it as it was written.

I tried later to speak one-to-one with her about it, and she informed me that what I think and my own ego

don't matter a whole lot to N.A. She said that the fellowship will go on just fine without me. My first order of business, she told me, should be the consideration of how I can change and what I can offer, not how N.A. has to be changed to accommodate me.

After about one week of resentment, I knew she was right. No, my God still isn't male; in fact, in a meditation, I envisioned my higher power saying that she really doesn't care what people call her, and that I shouldn't either. My intolerance of others' ideas drove me to relapse the first time around Narcotics Anonymous. Today, I am learning how to work *with*, rather than *despite*, ideas, concepts, and people in N.A. that I may not personally agree with.

I often relate well to women's recovery and what they share. Women have given me insights, guidance, friendship, love, and even an occasional kick in the butt. To this day, I dread walking into a meeting with few or no women. Don't get me wrong. I love a

**Women have
given me
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lot of addicts who are men, my sponsor being high on the list. I personally would feel disheartened if all or most of the women in my home group went off to share by themselves.

My sponsor has taught me a lot about the Fifth Tradition of carrying the message. I live this tradition not

only in what I do and how I comment on what I give away, but also in what I *don't* do. However hip and progressive I think I am, my background and upbringing have given me my share of sexism, racism and bigotry. I wish I didn't have to struggle with these things, but they're there. In meetings, I try not to use words that may be demeaning or offensive to women, just as much as I would refrain from smoking for an hour or two if an addict needed that so that he could participate in a group or service meeting, or refrain from using racist slurs.

Women have a right to recovery, and a right to hear the message of recovery without the verbal abuse of sexist terms, slights, or humiliations,

If the women isolated their recovery from me, I know my growth would be lessened.

even if they are unintentional. What I might say, do, or even think, may cause another addict to feel slightly alien, or like they're dealing with the same old crap that they dealt with on the streets.

If all the women in my life isolated their recovery from me, I know my growth would be lessened. If I had to deal with lousy, thoughtless comments from others, if I felt I had to protect myself from verbal abuse in my recovery meetings, if I felt that

other addicts didn't really try to understand or relate to me, my first impulse would be to back away and isolate. When I do this, however, I know I'm limiting my growth and risking my recovery.

I am grateful to the women in my group and glad for the recovery they share with me, and I tell them so. I believe my higher power doesn't care who I give this program away to, just as long as the gifts I give aren't given with strings attached, or wrapped in thoughtless, insensitive packages.

Anonymous: I would like to reply to the article you published in February entitled "To the Men of N.A." The person writing that article stated how she felt uneasy going to meetings where men talked about different acts they had committed in their addiction. The impression I got was that she thinks that certain topics shouldn't be talked about in N.A. meetings because they make her feel uncomfortable.

I know that I have taken topics that I needed to talk about to meetings, topics that I am sure made others uncomfortable. I've learned in recovery that what is comfortable isn't always what is healthy. I shared at a meeting once about the fact that I was sexually abused as a child. I shared the anger I felt about that, and some of my addictive behaviors that had resulted.

When I shared that in a meeting, with four months clean, it was a critical point in my recovery. By sharing what had happened and how I had carried feelings of guilt and shame for something that wasn't my fault, I got a little relief for that day.

It felt good to have quite a few people come up to me after the meeting and hug me and tell me that they loved me and respected me for getting real and honest with them. Nobody said, "We don't talk about that here; go talk to your sponsor." I got some relief, and was able to survive.

A few months later, I went to a meeting with a very similar topic and was very abruptly told, "We don't talk about that here; go talk to your sponsor." I went home from the meeting that evening feeling suicidal. I needed relief. I needed someone to love me and hug me and tell me it was going to be okay. I guess it's pretty obvious that I didn't commit suicide; I did call my sponsor and talk to him about it, and got the love and understanding I so desperately needed.

I believe very strongly in our traditions and steps. When someone comes to a meeting and needs to share something, and has the guts to get real in a room full of people, I don't think it is up to me or anyone else to censor what they say. I view everybody else in the world as free to live life as he or she sees fit, not as I see fit. I believe the more I stay locked in on what you are doing wrong, the more I am missing what I am doing wrong.

I think it is important to point out that many of us bring a whole lot of the street into N.A. with us at first. Once we get into recovery, hopefully we start shedding the old street behavior and language in time—though that's in God's time, not yours or mine.

Candlelight: an atmosphere of recovery?

A burning depression

The fragrance of scented candles and burning wax surrounds me. My eyes are bathed in soothing, warm light as flames flicker across the darkened room. People whisper in hushed tones as they await the start of the discussion in this sensitive environment.

Then, the whining begins.

"Sensitivity" meetings (candlelight, lamplight, and firelight meetings) too often end up like this. They start out in environments that promote the expression of genuine emotions and result in the sharing of depressing, negative messages. I believe there is a need for all human beings to "unload" the bad things that happen in their lives, to share the negative feelings that are a part of daily existence. And, for addicts, I believe sharing these loads with other addicts is very helpful. After all, "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel."

However, the still-suffering addict (whether a long-time N.A. member who is in pain or a newcomer who is fresh out of the misery of the disease) gets the most out of a meeting when the message is an upbeat, positive message of hope. The whiney, depressing messages that appear to me to dominate candlelight and other "sensitvity" meetings don't, in my opinion, communicate this hope.

A point can be made that reality shouldn't be sugar-coated, that life is "real real" when feelings are not medicated away with self-administered anesthetics. A point can be made that this "real real" message should be communicated to the still-suffering addict, along with the upbeat message of recovery. I agree with this, as long as there is a balance. If the message is as depressing as that which seems to dominate many candlelight meetings, then I believe it should be communicated individually with a sponsor, or it should be written about, but it shouldn't be laid on the entire group at an N.A. meeting.

I do believe that the environment in which an N.A. group chooses to conduct its meetings should remain entirely up to the group conscience, and should be determined at group business meetings. But, from my perspective, I don't believe that candlelight and other "sensitvity" meetings are conducive to the sharing of a positive message of recovery implied in the Fifth Tradition.

So, when I get depressed or feel like whining about my job or my relationship, I'll call my sponsor or write about it. And when I feel like sharing a positive message of hope—

a message that communicates the adversity of life tempered with a spiritual program—I'll go to a good, old-fashioned, conventional Narcotics Anonymous meeting.

P.R., California

Into the light

It was ten o'clock Friday night. I was at my first N.A. candlelight meeting. The meeting began in the usual manner. When the floor was open for discussion, the lights were turned off and candles were lit. Within seconds, the atmosphere of this meeting changed. Maybe it was the darkness or the candles. I don't know, but I felt totally different.

When the members started sharing, I was caught by every word they said, feeling and sharing each person's experience like I never had before. We spoke of character defects, and from this experience, I found out that my mind was not always open to others. You see, when I look at a person, if they do not look the part, I can not or will not believe them. I will judge my insides by the outside appearance of others, saying they don't look that dumb or smart.

But, to my dismay, this thing about sharing in the dark showed me a light about myself. It was as if my Higher Power, God, was speaking to me through these people, giving me answers of relief I didn't expect to be receiving.

Thank God and N.A. for the darkness it took to show me the light of belief and acceptance with an open mind. Having faith and being willing, I pray that this will continue, even in the light of Narcotics Anonymous.

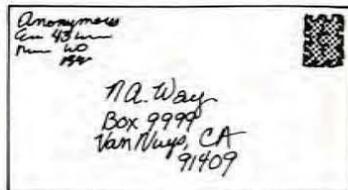
M.J.S., Louisiana.

Home Group

Marge's first ASC meeting



From our readers



“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.

My 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 sick and tired of feeling way that I called another addict. I never felt so much love and understanding.

I am now back in the fellowship

and, thanks to God and the people of N.A., I am back home at last. I know today 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

N.A. service

My N.A. service experience has been a slow evolution of internal and external changes. With each passing year of my journey through the steps and traditions, I become more “of service” to the fellowship, myself, and those around me. Simply by showing up, I began to learn about trust, self-worth, responsibility, faith, and most importantly, about acceptance—because you showed me first.

N.A. consisted of two meetings with a total population of six to eight folks in 1979 (so we all were in service!). The earliest memories I have are of warm hugs, gentle nudges and that sweet laughter. I remember the surprise of those first longings to belong to something that was healing and loving.

Service, for me, played an important role in that early healing. I heard about there being no dues or fees, yet I needed to give something. At first, I gave of my time (I had a great deal of that). Later I clearly remember putting that first dime and quarter in the basket and how good that felt.

Looking back I can see how my attitudes and motives have slowly changed as well. Today service and mini-inventories go hand in hand. Questions like, “Am I sharing my experience here, or is it just my opinion?” and “Will this help the newcomer, or my own reputation?”

are well-worn tools.

There is much more I can share, and mostly through the “school of hard knocks”! Overall N.A. service has taught me how to love and accept you and, in turn, to love and accept me.

C.S., Hawaii

Working with a sponsor

A sponsor is someone who can teach me how to live without using drugs, and how to live and cope with character defects that I cannot seem to accept. A sponsor teaches me to look at good things about myself, not just the bad. My sponsor is my friend. My sponsor is there is there to support me, but not to baby me when I make a mistake.

My sponsor teaches me in ways that I understand, whatever those ways may be. My sponsor is not my keeper or my mom. I need my sponsor to tell me when I'm off track or when I'm doing well. I may not get it the first time, but I will get it. It's not always rosy, but I learn through my mistakes. That's learning how to live.

Sponsorship is sometimes a love-hate relationship, like so many other relationships in my life. When I'm learning how to let go of control, I sometimes feel for a while like I hate the person who's helping me. My sponsor, through loving me unconditionally, helps me through that.

A sponsor is something I need.

J.B., New Mexico

Comin' up



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

The **N.A. Way**
MAGAZINE

P.O. Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409.

(818) 780-3951.

ALABAMA: 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 Alaskan 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

2) Nov. 11-12, 1989; 2nd S. Australian Area Convention; Brighton-Glenelg Community Centre, 20 Tarlton St., Somerton Park, S.A.; Area Convention Committee, P.O. Box 479, Norwood 5067, S.A., Australia

CALIFORNIA: Sep. 8-10, 1989; 3rd Mountain High Campout; KOA Campground, S. Lake Tahoe; phoneline (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; phoneline (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; phoneline (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; phoneline (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

INDIANA: Nov. 18, 1989; Multi-Regional H&I Awareness Day; Local #292 UAW Hall, 1201 Alto Rd. W., Kokomo; H&I Subcommittee, Indiana RSC, P.O. Box 871, Indianapolis, IN 46206

IRELAND: Oct. 6-8, 1989; 5th Irish Regional Convention; Kiltiernan Hotel, Dublin; rsvn.s (Dublin) 01-955-559; N.A., P.O. Box 1368, Sheriff St., Dublin, Ireland

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; phoneline (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; phoneline (207) 761-6695; Southern Maine ASC, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

MARYLAND: Mar. 23-25, 1990; 4th Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center; CPCC-4, P.O. Box 771, Ellicott City, MD 21043

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; phoneline (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

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

2) Dec. 29-31, 1989; 1st Central Ohio Area Convention; Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, I-670 and Cassidy Ave., Columbus; rsvn.s (614) 475-7551; phoneline (614) 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

3) Dec. 31, 1989; New Years Eve Celebration; Rhodes Center, Ohio State Fairgrounds, 17th Ave., Columbus; phoneline (614) 235-9662 or 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

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

PENNSYLVANIA: 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, Quebec H8S 4C1

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 9-12; Serenity Festival; Best Western Landmark, Ocean Blvd., Myrtle Beach; rsvn.s (800) 845-0658; phoneline (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; phoneline (901) 276-LIVE; VRC-7, P.O. Box 172102, Memphis, TN 38117

TEXAS: Mar. 23-25, 1990; 5th Lone Star Regional Convention; Hotel Galvez, Galveston; rsvn.s (800) 392-4285; Lone Star RSO, 10727 Plano Rd., Ste. 200, Dallas, TX 75230

VIRGINIA: Oct. 6-8, 1989; 3rd Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4-H Center, Front Royal, Virginia; 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; phoneline (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.

