

THE
N.A. Way[®]
MAGAZINE

August 1991

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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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THE N.A. Way[®]

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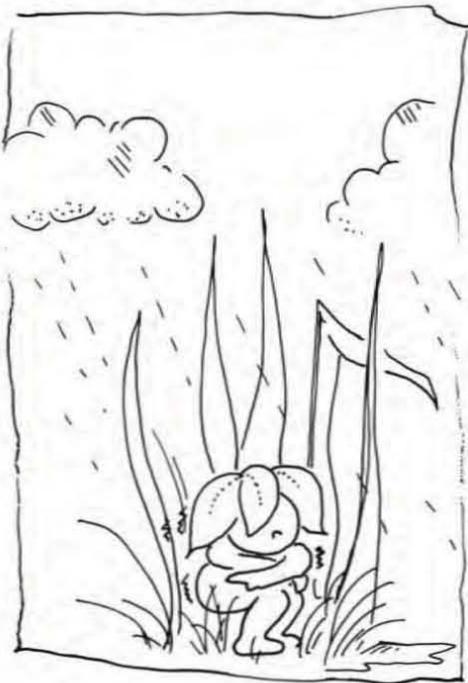
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The seasons' purpose

When I came to Narcotics Anonymous, my life was in the dead of winter. My heart and my emotions were cold and lifeless, like a plant in the winter. The leaves had fallen, there was nothing but bare branches. But just as that plant can come back to life, so can I. Did you ever see a plant start to bud after a few warm days in the middle of winter? That



plant started to grow because it caught a bit of sunshine and warmth in the cold lifeless desolation of winter. For me that glimpse of sunshine and warmth happened the day I walked into my first N.A. meeting. There was warmth and happiness, faces beaming with life. For me that warmth and sunshine was hope.

But the winter did not just disappear, it took time. Day by day, step by step, the sunshine and warmth

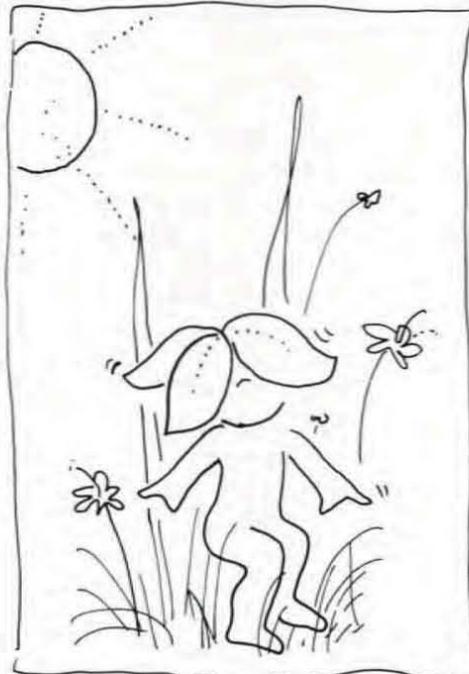


increased. The First Step was like the snows in February, to demonstrate how severe the winter can be. The snow, if severe enough, can control me and rule my life. The snows just fall and there is not a damn thing I can do about it, no matter how hard I try to fight it off, I just can't win. I must surrender.

What I need now is the thaw which

comes in the form of a little warmth. Maybe even some rain to wash away the ice and the grayness in my heart. Something to wash away the slush and grime that has covered up my life, my greenery. I need to be restored to where I was before the coldness and desolation set in. I need Step Two to kick in if I am to have a chance to bloom.

I need to make a decision. I can let the Gardener tend to me, as only He



knows how, or I can die. If I choose to let the Gardener do His thing, all I have to do is have faith in Him and He will do what He does best.

Then comes spring and spring cleaning and along with this comes weeding out my garden. I look in my garden and find the things that will harm me. The weeds that will steal my nourishment and starve me. The



thorns and brambles that will strangle and suffocate me. I need roots which are dug deep into the soil. I must keep my strength and hope. And I must come out of the spring with faith.

Then comes the height of spring and I must blossom and flower. This is where I admit to the Gardener just what kind of flower I am and what I need. He still loves me even if I do not bloom, or if I am not like the other flowers.

I think N.A. has to be one of God's gardens. Just look at what He's done. He has nurtured me and shown me how to grow. It seems He put us all in one place so that He could watch over us and that our roots would hold together the soil and keep us from being swept away by the wind and the rain.

F.P., New Jersey

Winding trail, to New Jersey

During my active addiction when all my time was spent getting high or looking for drugs, I drove many miles but never went anywhere. Sometimes I would drive hundreds of miles and never leave the neighborhood. Just going around and around the same block for an eternity. When I heard other people talk about vacations or of traveling, I was always envious, wishing I could partake of such luxuries. Since being in N.A. and working the steps and repairing the many damages that I came in the program with, like major debts, restitution to the courts, and being unemployable, I have paid my bills, and become responsible. When I was in early recovery and didn't have a job, I dreamed of traveling the country and seeing new places, going to N.A. conventions and N.A. meetings all across the country. I just could not imagine that it could happen to me. I want to share an experience that happened a couple of years ago.

I was on a regional ad hoc committee, studying the formation of new

regions. Since I was also area policy chairperson, I was real interested in the work that the WSC Policy Committee was doing on that topic. I was very fortunate that the WSC had a workshop in Dallas. I had just gotten back from the Best Little Region's first convention, and I was still on a pink cloud.

I was in awe of all the clean time of all the trusted servants. I only knew a couple of people and I was frightened. I was invited out to dinner and was introduced to this lady from New Jersey. She had several more years clean than me, but she was real friendly. Our upbringing was the same and it helped me ease into a conversation. After dinner we decided to go to a midnight meeting in town. We caught a ride from a couple of newcomers that were there for the dance. They had about thirty days clean. After the meeting we stayed up talking in the lobby for hours. The next day she let me follow her around like a loyal puppy. She introduced me to everyone and told me where they were



from and what kind of service work they did. It surprised me that they were just average addicts like myself and that they spent time to talk to me. When the weekend was over I told my friend how grateful I was that she took the time to make me feel comfortable and for being a friend. We traded phone numbers and addresses, saying we were going to stay in touch. She invited me to New Jersey and I invited her to come back to Texas.

Well, I never could imagine that I would have the time or the resources to visit. We stayed in contact by mail and whenever we would call each other on the phone it was like some big time reunion and we would stay on the phone for hours talking, feeling, laughing and just enjoying our friendship. A few months later my best friend got accepted to school in New York and he wanted to drive up early so he could check out N.A. there before he enrolled in school. I told him I had a friend in New Jersey and that I would hook them up. Well, my best friend asked me if I would drive with

him to New York. Because of the commitments I have made in this program to the steps, to my sponsor, to the service bodies that elected me I have been employed with the same company for over a year, and I had two weeks paid vacation coming. I called my friend in New Jersey and told her what we were planning. She seemed more excited than we were. She insisted that we both stay with her and that she would take us to meetings and drive us to New York. Everything was just falling into place. We decided to go the day after the Fourth Lone Star N.A. convention in San Antonio. We both had a little money, we bought a phoneline directory from the WSO, bought a couple of N.A. speaker tapes and off we went. The convention was really great and I was riding a pink cloud.

We drove all day and when it started to get close to eight o'clock we pulled over close to New Orleans and called the helpline and got a recording. It was real funny cause it was long distance and whenever the guy

got to the end of the message and they gave the location of the meeting we laughed cause, being Texans, we could not understand the Cajun accent of the recording. We finally picked a meeting that we could spell and off we went driving in some neighborhoods that looked like where I used to score dope. We were scared. We prayed, and lo and behold, we found the meeting. Since it was my third-year-clean birthday and my best friend's one-year birthday, they made us get key tags and celebrate. It was great. I even sponsor a guy now that was at that meeting that night.

We took off the next day and drove through Mississippi and Alabama and then Tennessee. I had never before seen mountains so beautiful. I was so amazed that everything in nature was so gorgeous. I really felt close to my God.

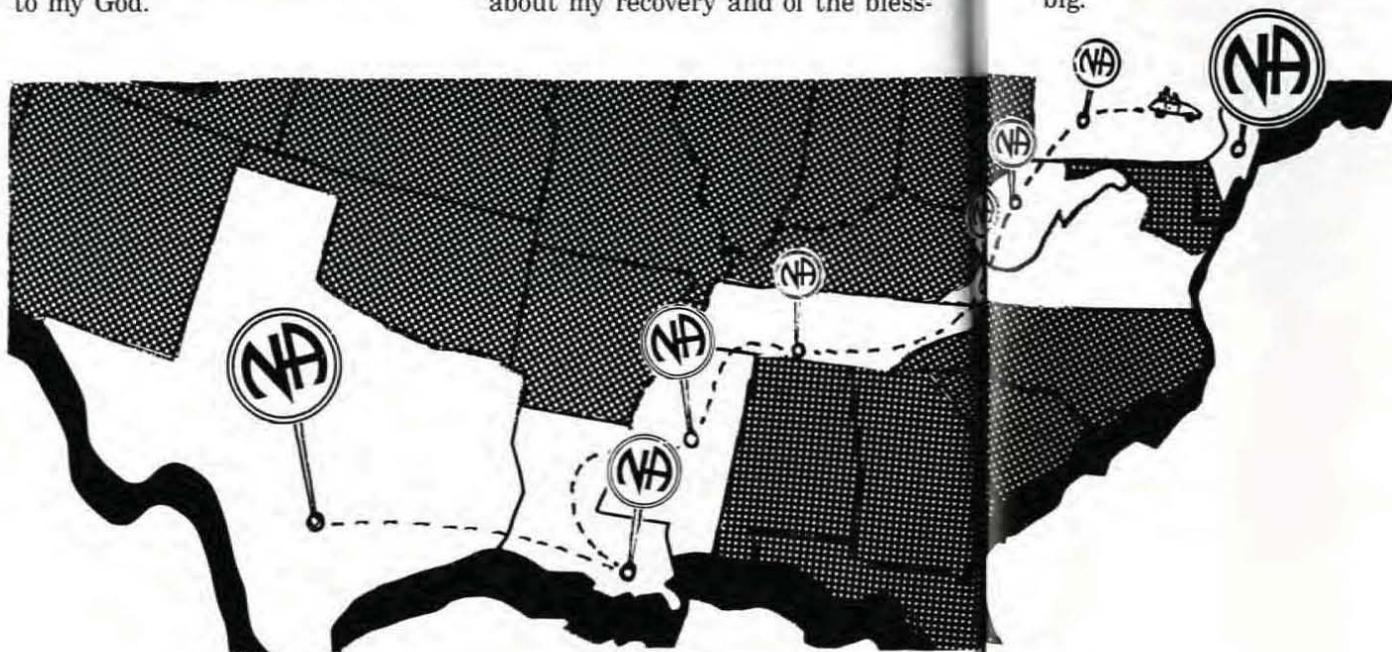
We pulled into Chattanooga and again called the helpline and found a meeting. There were a lot of newcomers and I could tell they were real excited about sharing our miracles about being on vacation and traveling up the coast. We drove through Tennessee and into Virginia and West Virginia and again I was wide eyed with all the beauty in the mountain side and of all the different colors I could see in the trees and foliage.

Things were a little different when I got to the hotel and called the helpline. The towns were all so close together and I could see all the old buildings and found myself imagining about all the early frontiersmen. All my senses were coming alive.

My friend was feeling ill so I went to this meeting by myself. While driving there I couldn't help thinking about my recovery and of the bless-

ings I have received. Here I had a best friend that would let me drive his car and trust me with all his belongings in it. Looking around me at a part of the country hundreds of miles away from home, I noticed that the fog had become real thick. I panicked and my gas gauge was low and I realized that I was alone in a foreign place. I turned to my loving God. Then, lo and behold, I pull up to the building where the meeting was, just like the helpline volunteer had told me.

This was a small place and everyone shared from the heart and then I felt this sensation come over me. I was still hundreds of miles away from home but as I sat at that meeting I felt secure and comfortable and like I never left home. My N.A. home is big.



The final day of our journey went through Pennsylvania, and into New Jersey. I even got pulled over by a state policeman, and couldn't understand what he was saying, either. Since I was clean I had nothing to fear and he was friendly to us and gave us our final directions. We pulled into the ocean town and up to my New Jersey friend's driveway. Wrapped from one side of her house to the other was a banner saying "Welcome Home Texans." We both felt really touched. After all the hugs and introductions we felt like we belonged. Personally, I felt like I was some kind of celebrity. We went to meetings every night. When we went into the meetings everyone was anxious to meet us. It seemed like my friend in New Jersey had told everyone in the whole state that we were coming.

I never felt so welcome anywhere. The vacation ended too soon and while my Texas friend and I said goodbye to each other, I felt very sad. I also felt sad saying goodbye to my new friends in New Jersey. After staying up all night going to meetings and fellowshiping in New York they took me to the airport and I boarded a plane back to Texas. As I was flying back I was really amazed at how large our fellowship had grown and how extensive its reach had spread.

And those two newcomers that took the New Jersey addict and I to a midnight meeting in Dallas? Well, while I was in Jackson, Mississippi, for a regional convention recently, they both stood up during the clean time countdown, with over two years clean!

S.D., Texas

That bracing embrace

When I first walked through the doors of Narcotics Anonymous, I did not come in a happy camper because the drugs had annihilated my disposition about life and kicked my butt.

I sat in the back of the room against the wall, like a frightened addict. I had this wild and crazy look in my eyes, which was part of my physical make-up and defense mechanism. I was like an ugly pit bull who didn't know how to smile. I thought a smile was a frown turned upside down.

I was incapable of reaching out and letting you people know that I was "hurting for certain," because I was frozen with fear, hating life, you people and myself. I didn't have any self-esteem in order to speak up. I felt hopeless, useless, worthless and like some strange alien. In short, I felt like a hollowed out addict, who was living on a prayer and borrowed time.

I carefully observed. Not a trick got by this recovering addict. I noticed there was an abundance of smiling and hugging going on. Men were hugging men and women were embracing each other and vice versa. My first thought was maybe this is a flip-flop, kinky cult of sorts. I came from a past lifestyle of institutions and hung

around dope fiends. We didn't dare hug each other. We either nodded our heads or shook hands because if you hugged someone of the same sex, you were instantly jacketed as being a homosexual. But you people had this magic about you and that sparkle and twinkle in your eyes; you had what I wanted!

In time, the addicts in the fellowship began to nurture me by lifting up my broken spirits, by loving me, till I was capable of loving myself. They gave me friendly hugs and unconditional love, by giving me hope, faith and a lot of N.A. wisdom. They showed me that a new way of life was possible—a life without the use of addictive drugs, one day at a time.

To me there's nothing more soothing and comforting than a good hug. Not only does it feel good, but a hug can be an emotional aid and moral support, especially when I've had one of those rough and tough days of dealing with life on life's terms.

Being hugged is one of the extra added benefits I look forward to, especially before the meetings and after the meetings. There is a harmony and bonding process involved that helps form a natural camaraderie.

The hugs and the unconditional love generated here in the fellowship of recovering addicts is a special gift. Don't abuse these precious commodities. H.U.G.—to me means: "Healing Under Grace," and unconditional love is the mechanics of giving and expecting nothing in return, with no conditions whatsoever

D.D., Nevada



Of signs and significance

I've just returned from a particularly pleasant vacation in Mexico and want to share something with you. I knew before I left that I was going deep into that country (in the jungle on the pacific side) and that I would be away from Narcotics Anonymous meetings for eight days. I brought some literature with me, and of course had my meditations and serenity prayer in their well worn holsters in my memory banks. Still, I was a little uneasy at the prospect of being away from a meeting for that long.

Before now (I'll be celebrating my fourth year clean September 1), I would not have considered going on a vacation where Narcotics Anonymous was not already established.

I gave it some thought and felt ok about going, even though I knew I wouldn't be getting to a meeting in over a week. I think I've been working a pretty good program. My Ninth Step work is coming along. My 'present' is in pretty good shape; that is, I'm not incurring any big debts, I try not to be dishonest, I go to a lot of meetings, I'm in touch with my sponsor, when I do mess up I try to promptly set things straight, I meditate, I believe in the restoration to sanity, I work hard, etc., etc.

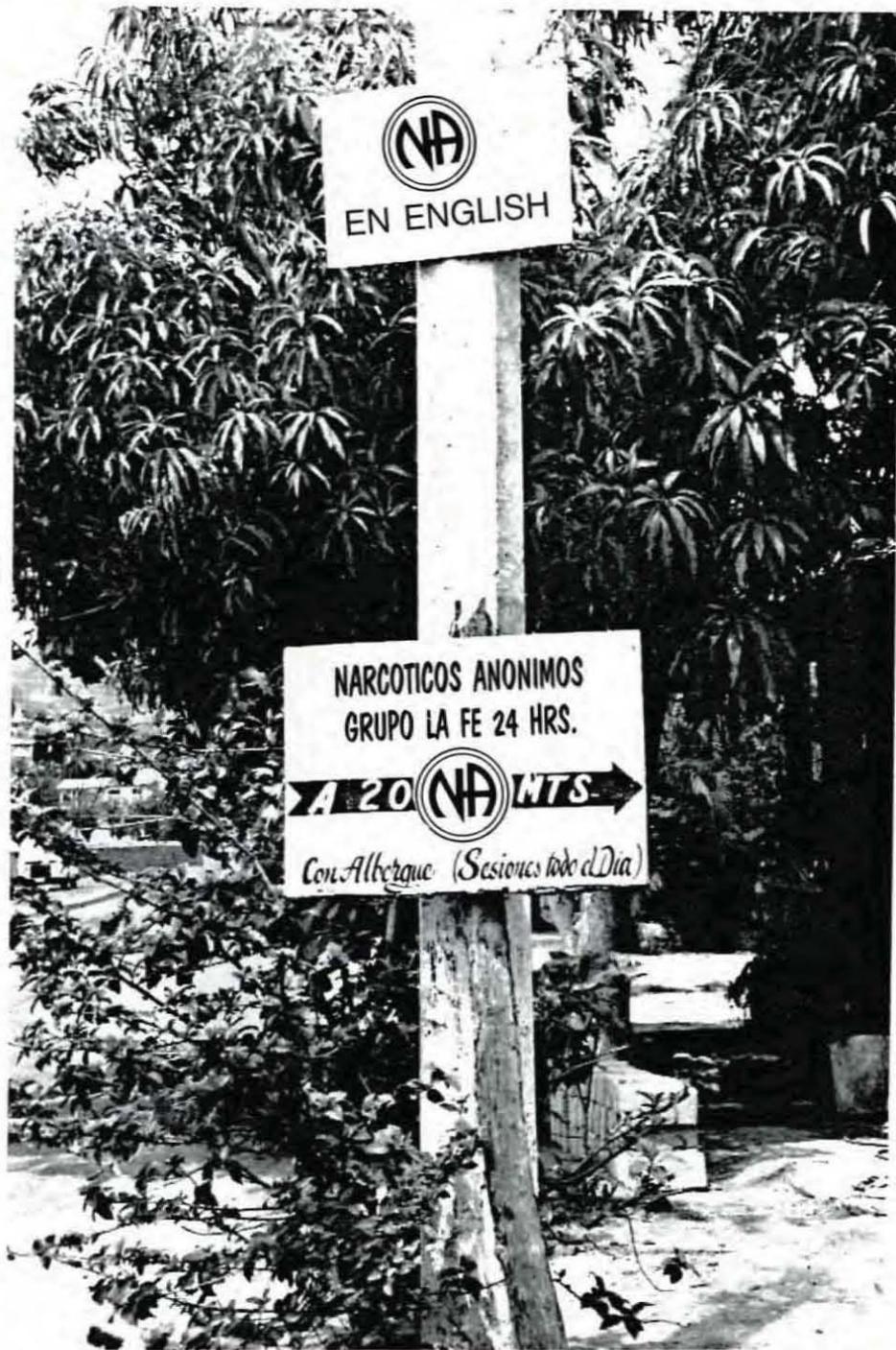
After a good night's sleep listening to the surf, comfortably ensconced in my bungalow right in the sand on

Playa de la Ropa, I went out for my morning run. I had already gone a few miles, up over a mountain and down into town when I saw a sight that made me laugh, and also made me reflect on just what a wonderful thing recovery is. Up ahead of me on my right was a small telephone pole in the ground with a sign on it proclaiming the existence (and location) of our mentor fellowship. It turned out that in that town they had a twenty-four hour clubhouse with meetings happening around the clock. The sign also stated "In English—" and then gave a local phone number.

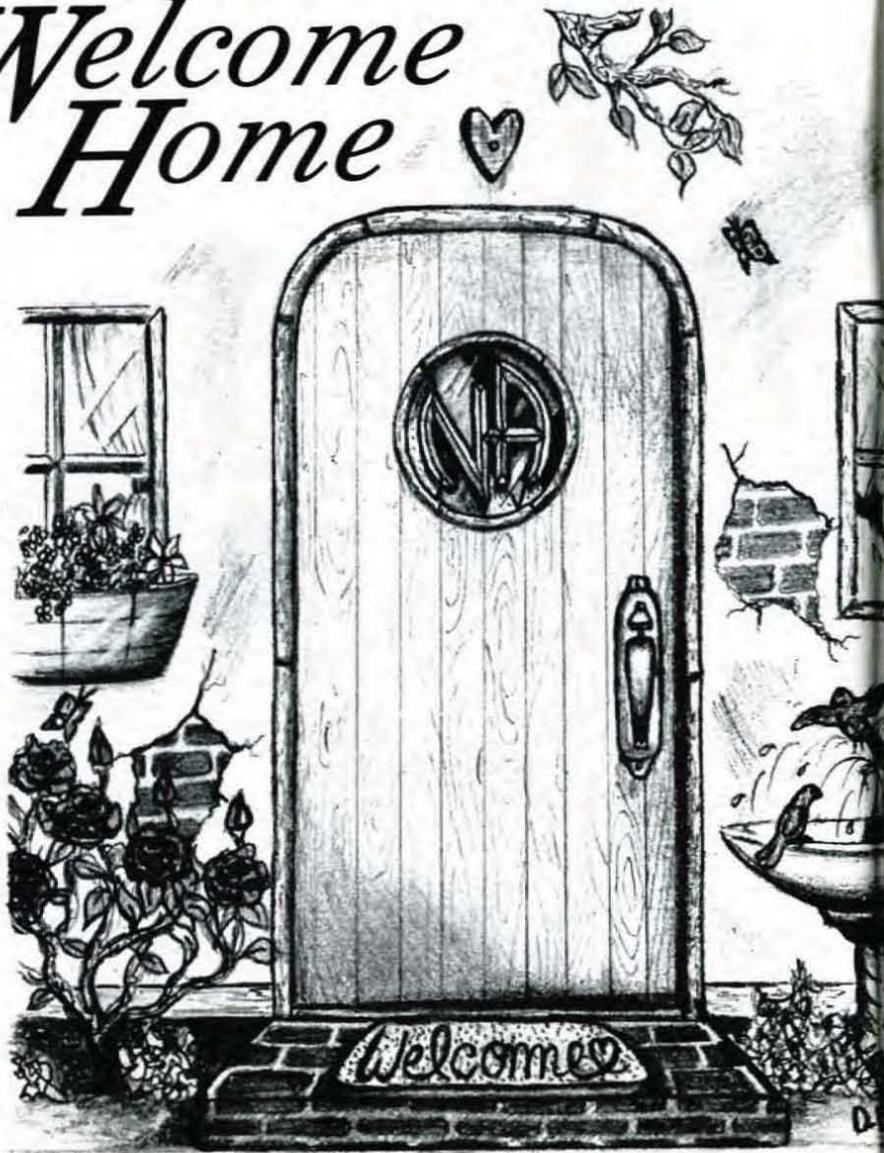
Well, my friends, I never had to go to a meeting there, and I never had to call that phone number. I had a wonderful vacation fishing, horseback riding, para-sailing, swimming, etc. I also ran every day I was in Mexico, and passed that sign every day. I also got to say the Serenity Prayer and think of our Twelve Steps every day when I passed that spot. And do you know something? I'm very grateful that other fellowship was there. It gave me a secure feeling, that if I did start feeling weird, just in case something did set me off.

My personal prayer, and vision, for Narcotics Anonymous, is that we will continue to grow and prosper, and spread the word that recovery from the disease of addiction is possible, that we will spread that word all over this country, and all over the world. So that maybe ten years from now if my son is running on that road in the jungle, deep in Mexico, he might look up and see "Narcotics Anonimos aqui 24 horas el dia."

J.G., California



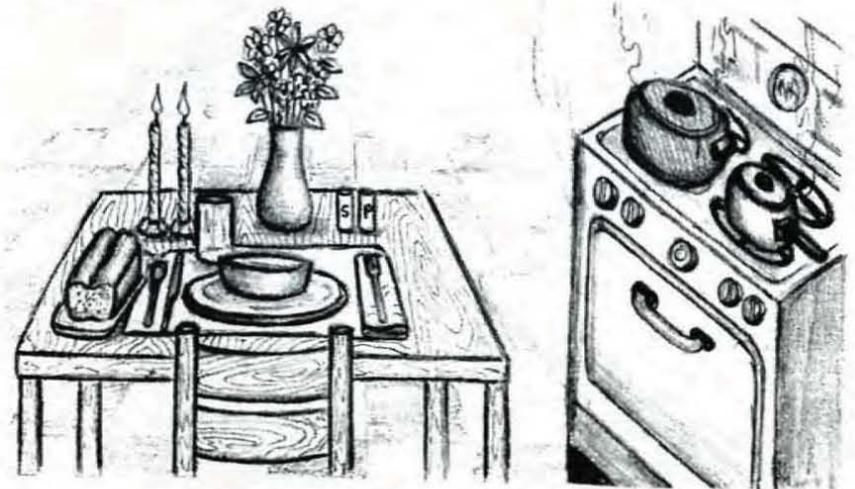
Welcome Home



I am panicking because I just can't remember where I put the key! It seems so long ago that I left. Crying, I finally give-up the search, and in desperation I climb the One Step to the door. Amazingly, I realize for the first time, that it has already been unlocked for me.

The door opens slowly. A thin shaft of light spreads across the wooden floor. A small ray of hope. I come to believe, "I remember this place," and a soft smile of relief crosses my face. A little silver-grey dust covers the floor—no one has lived here for quite some time. I take a Second Step, following me through the door is a puff of fresh air. It seems to chase out some musty regrets I had for my leaving, and fans the pages of an abandoned book that seem to whisper, "we missed you. . . we missed you."

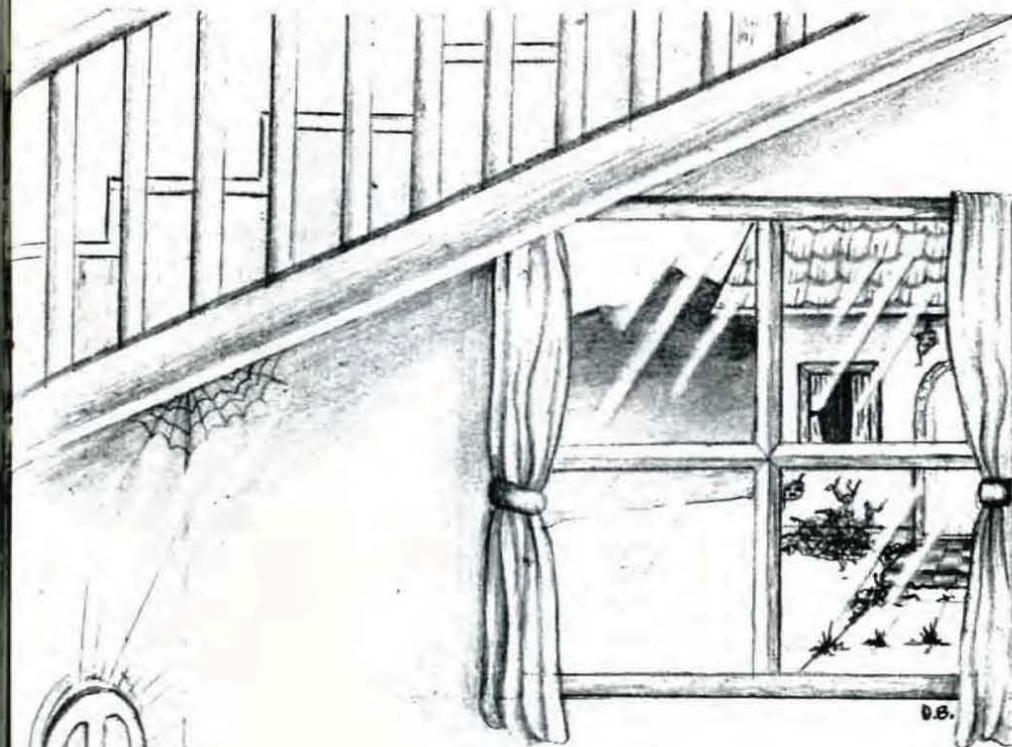
I smell something cooking, something really delicious. I decided to take a Third Step into the kitchen and slowly realize that supper was left on for me a long, long time ago. Surely. . . no . . . it couldn't possibly be. But it's not spoiled, it's not burnt, it's just precisely ready. My place at the table has been set and I suddenly discover my hunger; long lost before now. In fact, I'm famished. But when I have devoured what was prepared, I have the strangest sense of complete satisfaction—as if I finally understand what "enough" is all about.



I take a Fourth Step to the bed I made. And now I must lie in it. . . fearless, no matter how hard it may be. Surprisingly, I lay down in the soft grace of surrendering my darkest secrets.

I kick down the covers with a firm Fifth Step and by the Sixth Step I realize that I no longer need them to hide myself beneath. Humbly, upon Step Seven, I ask that they be removed.

Rising now, I take an Eighth Step to the closet. I'm not surprised by what is in my old closet. . . in fact, I know each skeleton by name. One by one I face them in a Ninth Step, make amends to them, and let them go free. When my closet is clean, I make a test-run and find it is exactly Ten Steps from my front door to my closet. With the Tenth Step, my closet can be cleaned-out every day.



I have lived here quite some time now, but I have never really noticed that little door; there, under the stairway. Now that I am looking, I notice it's a crawlspace. I open the door and go in on my knees. . . and inside, I discover the Eleventh Step.

*Crawling out from under the stairs, I feel I have just awakened. Bright sunlight is coming in through the window, and outside, across the yard, I can see my neighbor's house. It's been vacant for quite awhile, I guess, because the lawn is overgrown with weeds and it looks dark inside. It is only Twelve Steps to my neighbor's porch. I unlock the door for him. . . just in case by the time he gets here he can't remember where he put the key. **Welcome Home***

G.G., Tennessee

Bottom line

I started using in high school. I was drinking and smoking pot by the time I was in the ninth grade. By the end of the year I had dropped out of school. During that time I was feeling free. I didn't know the hell that was just beginning for me.

For about a year after dropping out of school I got high every day. I decided to get away, so I joined the Job Corps, but even there I drank like a fish. I don't know how I got a skill, but I did. I came home and some of my friends were still getting high, but now it was cocaine. This time I jumped right in with them. If I only knew then what I know now, that coke can kill in so many ways. After being home for about two or three weeks I found a good job and worked about four years. All the time I was doing drugs, even on the job. It didn't seem like a problem to me.

As time passed there were ladies in and out of my life, but never just one, because of my drugs. It was hard. But one day I found this nice lovely young lady who liked to drink and smoke pot like me.

So that young lady became my wife. As the years passed my need for drugs got worse. Sometimes I would get paid and come home broke, no money. My wife just sat there and looked at me.

I knew that I had to do something, so I would just lie my way out of it.

The cocaine had me at that point I felt I was just living to use and using to live. I lost my job and, with that, my wife. At that point it was over for me. The only thing I had was just the drugs and some lonely nights of crying about the pain in my heart. It got so bad that I tried to kill myself. After I saw that my life was just about to the end, for the first time I went and got help, but it was not for me, it was for the family.

I came home and everyone was happy for me. They forgave me for the pain and the things I took from them. We lived nice for a time. I would try to get my wife to meetings but the answer to that was "you are the one with the problem, not me," standing there with a beer in her hand. Within two weeks I was back on it again and it didn't get better, just worse.

Sometimes I would sit and look out my window and cry because there was nowhere to go for me. I was in a cage. The walls were cold and hard. My feeling was dark and lonely. All of my loved ones had no faith in me. They didn't know me, just like I didn't know myself. But I found out that in order to get faith back in your family, you have to get it back in you, and this is what I did. I went to my God and asked for help and He gave me N.A., and just for today I'm clean. You see, I take, one at a time, whatever comes up. I try to take it as it is because I know what I am and that is an addict. My wife is somewhere out there using. In the long run you can't win using. Stop now and get some help.

L.H., Georgia

Home Group

Think, think, think



The broad perspective

Dog days

Its the hush of summer, in most parts of the Narcotics Anonymous world. Not the kind of severe halt of a February, but a kind of pause, nonetheless. Spring is long gone, the hubbub of summer "par-tee!" is grinding down, but there's no frost on the pumpkin or cause to glory in harvest.

Dog Days!

Back home it was said they were called that because it was a time of year when the dogs just laid in the shade, no energy to do much else. Here on the west coast of the USA, the acme of summer is a stillness, too, one quickly and strangely broken by the eerie Santa Ana winds.

The star Sirius, and the constellation depicted by the cover of this issue, are the historical origin of the "dog days" legends for many cultures. The Dog Star, (also labeled "Canus Major" by observers of the constellations), is now the brightest of all stars. Best observed in the wee hours of the morning, perhaps the enigmatic and obscure mythology that surrounds it comes from reports by stargazers who

just found it too hot to sleep.

The main tale has it that the star represents a dog of the celestial hunter, Orion. Its sighting mainly portends, said the Greeks (and the Egyptians before them) the coming of storms. Rain might be nice, with just enough lightning to caution elevated designs.

Tulsa WSC workshop

WSC committees and the World Services Board of Trustees of Narcotics Anonymous will meet for a workshop in the Sheraton Kensington Hotel, 1902 East 71st St., Tulsa, Oklahoma the weekend of August 16-18. The trustees will begin their regular meeting on Thursday, the 15th, and plan a full-day open session Friday or Saturday.

Among committee concerns will be the World Literature Committee's tally and evaluation of fellowship responses regarding the content of *An Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous*. Production of the "...low cost inventory item..." directed toward newcomers, was approved by the 1991 WSC.

Cutoff for responses to a contents' survey were due August 1st. As of this printing responses were almost unanimously in support of the inclusion of IP #7, *Am I an Addict*; IP #22, *Welcome to N.A.*; IP #16, *For the Newcomer*; IP #5, *Another Look*; IP #19, *Self Acceptance*; IP #11, *Sponsorship*; and *How It Works*, from the Basic Text. A few stories from the back of the Basic Text, *Just For Today*, and a couple of blank, lined pages for phone numbers will also be part of the *Introductory Guide*. It is expected to be

available as an inventory item from the WSO by November.

The literature committee will also use time during the Tulsa workshop to examine and collate responses to another survey begun a little over a year ago.

Respondents were asked to evaluate current N.A. IPs in terms of "choppiness," complication, tone, and appropriateness to the fellowship, among many other criteria.

A regular meeting of the WSC H&I Committee will take place in Tulsa, and the whole day Saturday will be devoted to individual sessions on the part of seven subgroups or ad hoc H&I subcommittees.

The smaller groups are: *external ad hoc*, concerned with relations with professionals; *multi-national*, examining H&I challenges and performance in the various national cultures; *guidelines; handbook*, going over input received from the fellowship for possible future revisions; *panel tape*, concerned with the longstanding effort to produce a tape of a mock H&I meeting that might be provided along with the *H&I Handbook; learning days*, mostly concerned with the development of an evaluation process and a form to record both a host committee's, and world H&I representative's, critique of Learning Day events; and, the *Reaching Out* newsletter ad hoc.

The P.I. committee meeting in Tulsa will include an open forum, but specific times for the forum had not been allocated when this was written.

Among items likely to be part of the P.I. committee agenda will be a report on the progress toward development

of a P.I. video. A six member working group, comprised of two members from P.I., two from the BOT and two from the WSO board have reviewed several proposals from would-be producers of the film, but any real progress will be delayed by the general budget crunch.

N.A., A Resource In Your Community, which is a publication produced by the P.I. committee, has been printed and is an inventory item now available. Another publication produced by P.I. and approved during the last WSC, *P.I. and the N.A. Member*, will likely be in the WSO inventory by the time you read this.

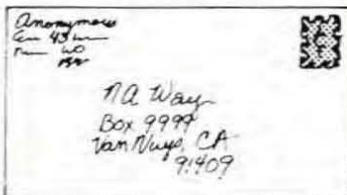
Twelve Concepts

Deadline for input on the *Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service* is September 1. A survey form with an outline of the essays slated to be appended to the concepts was sent to all regions in early July. Respondents are asked to examine the ideas and return the forms with comments for use in further developing the essays. An "approval form" of the concepts and essays will be made available to the fellowship in January, and WSC 1992 will likely consider them for adoption or rejection.

N.A. Way news

Excellent participation of article-writers is happening, so space devoted to news and staff generated material is at a minimum this month. Here's hoping you don't miss a feature too much, and gratitude for the wealth of material submitted from readers. Next month, watch for the annual newsletter issue!

From our readers



Winter soldier

What if you had a meeting and nobody came? It has happened in the past and it's happening to me right now!

I've recently relocated to this city of over a half a million people and was surprised and dismayed to find only a dozen or so meetings. Not surprisingly there were hundreds of the other fellowship's gatherings, plus four related clubhouses. Having gotten clean in small but industrious groups of N.A. back east, I thought my new area could use some of my wisdom. Therefore, I (with the encouragement of several others) proceeded to start a closed traditions meeting. The group has been meeting for nine weeks and attendance has varied from one to five addicts. Today, it's an addict alone with his H.P.

I've been told to give it time, let God take care of it; don't take it personally! Sometimes it hurts, but I see that this is a character building experience and someday I'll be able to look back and understand the lesson God is trying to teach me.

I cannot help but wonder, can apathy be so powerful as to affect an entire area? Region? Or fellowship, as a whole? Early in recovery, I was told either I'm part of the problem or I'm

part of the solution. Our readings tell us we keep what we have only with vigilance. What happens when many are at standing room only "good" meetings and only a few at the new or "still suffering" meetings?

Is it possible for an entire area to compromise its integrity or otherwise undermine the principles it was built upon? What kind of message does the area give when its trusted servants directly or indirectly endorse the other fellowship? What happens to N.A.'s identity when its service meetings are held in another fellowship's club house? What happens to the newcomer when he sees group and area trusted servants wearing symbols representing groups other than N.A.?

In our Basic Text, it says we have seen members drive hundreds of miles to support a meeting. This is hard to imagine—when today it seems an effort to get people to come from across town. It appears to me that with our growing size, we have gotten soft.

The book reminds us that the basics are always important to us. All too often, I think, we focus on aesthetics and our message of recovery is buried. Shouldn't we as groups look at the principles that made our recovery pos-

sible? And yes, that includes the traditions!

I've been told that God has plans for me here, and as long as I keep doing the next right thing more will unfold for me each day.

Well, the meeting's about over. I guess we'll close in a moment of silent prayer and then that affirmation that says:

"Keep coming back, it works if you live it!"

T.P., Texas



Keep coming back?

After moving to a new area just following my second N.A. anniversary, I was surprised and disappointed that there seemed to be so few members with close to or more than my length of clean time. This new area was much smaller, with very few meetings, but, it wasn't long before I realized that it wasn't that the "old-timers" didn't exist. It was that they either attended only their home group, they didn't attend meetings anymore at all or they had stopped coming to N.A. in favor of going to another fellowship. At the time, I would hear a lot about this latter reason, citing "more clean-time" in this other fellowship.

As time has gone by, I have stuck to going to N.A., never finding it necessary to attend meetings in any other fellowship. I am happy to say that my new home area has grown significantly, now with at least one N.A. meeting each night, some nights having several meetings to choose from and three daytime meetings each week. Unfortunately, the trend I had previously noticed in members with an excess of two years clean-time has continued. I find this puzzling because I always thought our main concern was to keep newcomers coming back! I didn't think we should worry about keeping old-timers coming back. I mean, it's not like these folks have gone back out—they're just not coming to meetings, participating in service work, etc. It seems I only see them when it's time for them to come around to pick up another medallion.

I have started to see a few possible

reasons why so many people with clean time seem to stop coming to meetings or leave N.A. for other fellowships.

I know that the newcomer is supposed to be the most important person at a meeting. We learn to unconditionally love and tolerate new members. I remember how wonderful everyone in N.A. was to me when I first came around, how it never seemed to matter what I said or did. I was loved and supported through it all. It seems different now that I have some years of clean time behind me. It's as if I am not allowed to be human and make mistakes or say the wrong thing, or have a bad day. If I try to participate in service work, I'm accused of trying to control things. While I may not be perfect in this way, I still feel I should get positive reinforcement for staying involved, instead of constant criticism. When I was just starting out in service work, I could mess something up incredibly and be told that it was okay. Now, with years of experience, I can't do anything right. I am rarely asked to help with an H&I meeting or share at a step meeting. Yet, I will try to listen with tolerance when a speaker starts out with, "even though I haven't formally worked this step, I'll try to share my experience, strength and hope." I don't usually get asked to go for coffee after a meeting when a group of folks are going. I long ago learned to just go anyway or to ask people to go with me, but it would be nice sometimes to actually be invited along, like I used to be.

I have never expected to get any kind of recognition for length of clean

time or time and energy spent doing service work. I have only been grateful to be clean and be given the opportunity to serve. However, I didn't think that I'd be treated like an old has-been either. One thing that hurts is that I can really identify with folks with a year or two who are doing a lot of service work. I remember the pain of trying so hard to control everyone and everything. I hope I didn't show disrespect to anyone with more experience than me.

I had many mentors in service work and greatly benefited from their insight, experience and serenity. I also feel hurt when the newer people, who stuck to me and some of the other old-timers like glue when they first came around, hardly even say hello anymore. It seems like now that they have their lives together a little bit, they no longer have time for the friends that were there for them through the worst part of their early recovery.

I am grateful for my sponsor and the other recovering addicts in my small support system. I am grateful that my recovery is based on my Higher Power and N.A. principles, rather than personalities. I used to feel resentful towards the old-timers who didn't come around and could not understand why they didn't want to give away what they had. Today, I understand the frustration of struggling to be human in N.A.

M.S., Virginia

One unlimited promise

Just over two years ago I found myself in a navy brig after two years of

slipping in and out of the program. I had stayed clean for my first year in here, but I was miserable. I hadn't worked any steps and I didn't have a sponsor. I just came to meetings and stayed away from drugs.

After that first year I couldn't take anymore. I quit going to meetings and started using much worse than before. It didn't take long for my using to get beyond my financial means, being a junior enlisted man in the U.S. Navy. So, I got involved in some illegal activities to support my habits. Needless to say, I got caught.

I woke up in the brig with enough charges to put me away for longer than anyone could possibly imagine. I was strung out and weighed 102 pounds. I went through some pretty bad days and nights at first. I remember praying that God would just let me die. Even through the pain of those first few days, I could still feel something happening to me. On the ninth day, I was sitting in that little four-by-eight cell and I realized that I had to do something. Something had to change.

I could remember the first three steps. So, I got a pencil and some paper from one of the guards and started to write. I had never worked a step, so I just put the pencil on the paper and let it all flow out.

That was over two years ago. I am still in prison and I am still clean. I am going to be here for several more years but, just for today, I have a program. I now know the importance of working the program. I proved to myself that being clean meant more than just not using. That was only half of the battle. Without the steps, my

sponsor and the service work that I am able to do, I might as well be using.

I am really grateful for the program today. You may think that this sounds kind of strange, but I am even grateful for prison today. This is what it took to get my attention. Even here, behind these walls and bars, I have more freedom than I've ever had.

D.K., South Carolina

Remembering what has been granted

I'm just another addict. I want to share my experience on "Taking things for granted." Such as being clean, friendship and love. I have almost five years clean, this time. While in a relapse I got into a relationship which has survived now for over six years. I've had an obsession of moving out and becoming independent for six years. It was like a cycle, every three months, and one day after work I just packed my shit and left impulsively.

I didn't really want to leave, but I didn't want things to continue as they were. I stopped communicating with my boyfriend and stuffed a lot of feelings. I experienced a lot of pain and realized a lot of things. I took him for granted as he did me. We quit talking. I do love him. I can do anything I want if I put forth the effort and continue building. It's easy to give up. But today I'm not gonna quit.

I'm willing to put forth the extra effort, on being clean. I take this for granted. I've been clean so long that it just seems normal not to use. I know this disease is patient and can get me

one way or another.

Last week an addict died. He was eighteen. He had a few months clean and quit coming to meetings. He died huffing butane. I really didn't know him that well, but I knew his family. It really made me think about a lot of things. I take being clean for granted. I take friendship for granted. I take love for granted. I know now that even though in the past I've been hurt by relationships of all kinds, it's worth the risk to be the best friend I can be. To listen and understand and be there, even if it's for a short time. I'd rather have real and short true friendship than have none because of my fears and insecurities. Life is too damn short. I don't know if I'll be here tomorrow. So I'll make the best with what I do have, just for this day.

T.L., Georgia

On practicing Tradition Seven

Self support was not one of my strong points. I was always looking to get someone to take care of my wants and needs. It seemed only smart. My self concept was one of a hustler. My days and nights were spent finding new ways to scam. It was shared with me once that if I were to apply the time and effort it took to "beat" people to positive pursuits, I would probably become a valuable asset to my family, community, etc. I couldn't listen. I had to continue on in a futile attempt to maintain my addiction.

Entering N.A. I had no idea how I would pay my bills if I didn't continue to play the game. In fact, I fully intended to keep hustling; "become a better thief" as the saying goes.

I asked, "What would I say to the bill collectors?"—after all, I had used all the excuses. It was shared that I could just tell the truth. That I intended to pay, but could not until such and such a date, and then live up to my agreement. I decided to try and that was a beginning from which I started to see the value of being responsible. People who I dealt with believed me because I was living up to my commitments. I was feeling worthwhile. I stopped looking for ways to get over, looking instead to get busy working a program that would improve myself and my life.

The principle of self support has freed me from unhealthy dependence on others and helped me to find the *inter-dependence* that lives in the "We" of Narcotics Anonymous.

Financial self-support means that I give according to the value of what I receive, tempered by what I can afford. This means that, for me, one dollar in the basket is not enough. Everything I have came as a result of practicing what I learned in Narcotics Anonymous. What is my fair share in repaying that? I can never give enough. What I can do is to make myself available to the newcomer, give service to my group and area, and support the financial needs of the fellowship to the best of my ability. By doing these things I become "a part of." I no longer have to be alone.

Thank you N.A. for showing me that these responsibilities are really privileges.

G.W., Illinois

It's gonna happen

As WCNA 21, "The Gift," quickly approaches, I've got just a few feelings and thoughts I'd like to share with the beautiful people I've found with the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

This year will be the first world convention since 1982, in Milwaukee, WI that I will not be able to be a part of. This takes a lot of work on my part to be all right with this. I already know—it will be my loss.

Very simply, the week of the world convention is always—no doubt about it—the high point of the year for this addict.

I'm really gonna miss those fellow brothers and sisters who I'm only able to cross paths with at a world convention.

To all of you who can make it to Sydney, this year—there are a lot of us who will be with you in spirit. I love N.A. and I love you. God willing, we will see you in Toronto.

J.B., Wisconsin

On through the fear

I am an addict and my name is _____. I have been clean now for nine-and-a-half years and I have never needed to use any form of prescribed medication, that could alter my mood, until last Wednesday.

During the last two-and-a-half years I have undergone extensive orthodontic treatment which I knew would culminate in having my jaw surgically broken in three pieces which, would require me to have my jaw wired shut for three weeks. Everyone, including my sponsor, said this would probably

require me to take prescribed pain medication.

In the weeks leading up to the date of surgery I did all of the things that the fellowship had taught me to do, including being honest about my addiction with my doctor, sharing my fears with my support network and being honest about the fact that part of me (my addiction) looked forward to being under the influence of anesthesia and pain medication. My greatest fear was that I would have to take medication that would trigger the obsession and would lead to my disease becoming active again.

The day of my surgery I was accompanied to the hospital by my fiancée, who is also a recovering addict. I was honestly terrified. She reassured me of the support of my Higher Power and encouraged me to walk through my fear, remembering that I am an addict and that I have a program and a fellowship that loves me. They took me into the pre-op room and began to prepare me for surgery. The anesthesiologist came out and talked to me about what he was going to do. He examined me and in the process listened to my heart. He told me that he could hear a murmur in my heart that was most likely a result of damage caused by my active addiction. During my recovery I have been through many physical examinations and no doctor had ever told me that. It really scared me and turned out to be a miraculous reminder of my disease and how precious my recovery is. They took me into the O.R. after starting an I.V. The anesthesiologist told me he was going to start to put me under and he injected the first drugs into

my I.V. line. As I began to feel the effects of the drug the first thought that came to me was that my Third Step was as real now as ever. I began to say to myself "God take my will and my life, guide me in my recovery and show me how to live." As I began to slip out of consciousness it was strange, but along with the euphoria of the drug there was also a strange pain that came with being drug affected for the first time in my recovery. I woke in what seemed to be minutes later, and the first sense that I had was that I was in hardly any pain at all, and I even wondered if they had actually done the surgery. The fact that my jaw was wired shut indicated that they had. The orderlies rolled me to my room where my fiancée and her daughter and my sponsor were waiting. I was so happy to tell them that I was feeling almost no pain. We all thought that this was residual anesthesia from my surgery. As it turns out I haven't felt any real pain beyond simply discomfort. I consider this to be a miracle. Throughout the night that I spent in the hospital the nurses would come in every four hours to give me antibiotics and would always offer me pain medication in my I.V. I was able to be honest about my lack of pain and to decline any medication. Another twist in the story that turned out to be miraculous was my roommate.

Although I probably should've been less judgmental, I assumed he was an active addict based on my assessment of his behavior. Watching him made me feel grateful and reminded me of how fortunate I was to be clean. When he reminded the nurse five times to

not forget his methadone, I was filled with gratitude for my recovery.

At the first meeting I went to after my surgery I found out that a good friend of mine had gone back out after five years clean. I felt a great amount of sadness hearing this news. Once again I reflected on the fact that I have been spared from active addiction, one day at a time, and that my recovery is precious. I can never afford, whatever the circumstance, even when I have to take medication, to forget that I have a disease.

It has been a week since my surgery and I am recuperating. The most discomfort I have felt has come from my jaw being wired shut. And by the grace of God, I have not had to take any medication that is mind altering. Thank you, N.A. Thank you, God.

J.S., California

A homecoming

If God is willing and I continue to work the steps, I will celebrate my seventh N.A. birthday in September. The changes in my life are unbelievable, I thank God for the miracle of recovery.

In my addiction I moved several times and ended up in Alabama. That's when I found N.A. At the same time my marriage of sixteen years ended and I decided to stay here. I was thirty-seven years old, going on thirteen and I figured this would be a good place for my children and I to grow up. I never dreamed I would be away from my family for ten years.

About a year ago two of my children moved away. I started getting extremely homesick. I never told my

parents of this homesickness, although, I prayed about it a number of times. My prayers were answered when my parents flew me to California. What a wonderful trip.

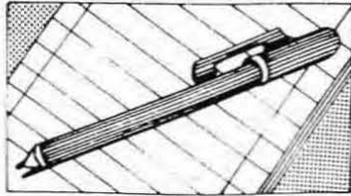
It was the first time I did not lie to my parents about what I was doing or who I was seeing. I made amends to family and friends. I had made amends to them before, but not face to face. They could see the sincerity in my eyes, feel it in my hugs and hear it in my voice, that these amends came from my heart. Friends and family could see the changes in me and their response was the most wonderful part of this trip. I was no longer the sick, angry, frightened, drugging woman-child that left California.

I was able to go to only one N.A. meeting while there. The young woman who spoke touched my soul and we went for coffee after the meeting. I loved this N.A. group. They made me feel welcome. I thought I would be able to go to more meetings, but I ran out of time. I never had a chance to say good-bye or thank you. Maybe we will run into each other again. Anything is possible in N.A.

I cannot believe how beautiful that part of California was. This was the first time I've been there since I've been clean. Because of N.A., when it came time to return to Alabama, I was excited to get back to my children and my N.A. family and another homecoming.

L.S., Alabama

Viewpoint



Symmetry from chaos

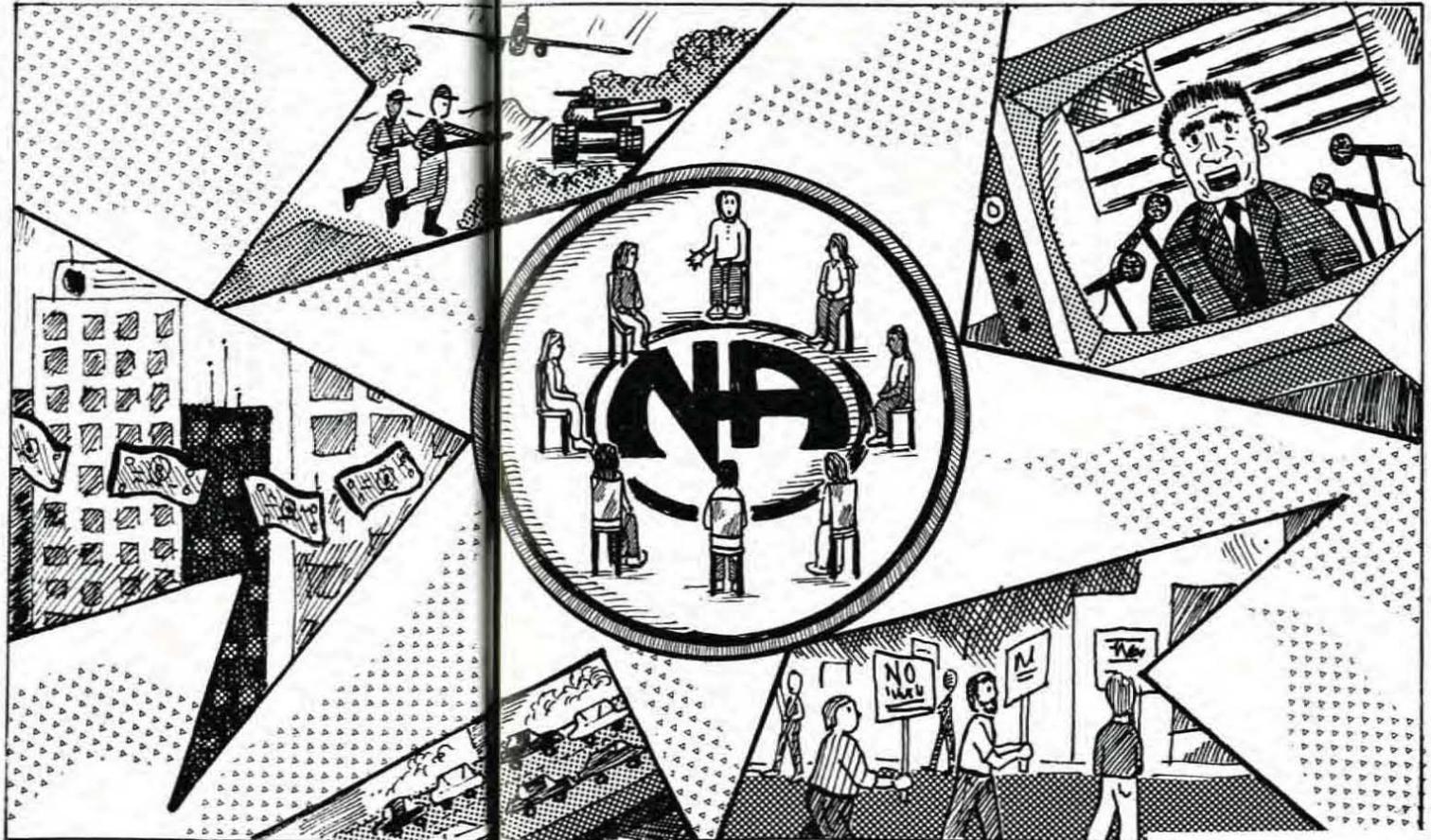
Chaos, confusion and controversy seem to be ingrained in our service structure. After a couple of years in area service, I've arrived at this conclusion: God's will ultimately prevails, in spite of self will and what we seem to think is best.

I often find it difficult to accept group conscience because I usually have a better way! What I'm seeing happen, though, is very reassuring. After tempers fly and personalities prevail (temporarily) and a couple of hours, days, weeks, or months pass, I find that not only was my way not the best, but it was quite harmful to our local N.A. community. Although I do have good suggestions and ideas, my way is not the only way, nor quite the best! As our Second Tradition says we are mismanagers all, and not one of us is capable of making consistently good decisions.

From my own experience, I'm finding that chaos, confusion and controversy can be *some* of the ingredients that produce active change,

growth and very often, unity. *Unity through disunity*, what a concept!

This letter really doesn't have a point, other than to say "things aren't always what they seem." Direction comes to us through some of the only means addicts can understand. Usually these means are quite forceful and aggressive.



I think a good example of this is our reaction to that infamous piece of literature we have almost all heard of! Through all of the chaos, confusion and controversy, look at what is happening—addicts finding common ground.

Collectively, as addicts, I feel we have tried to assume control of a power greater than ourselves—*Narcotics Anonymous*. The results have been disastrous, or have they? It seems to me a paradox is happening right now. In spite of controversy and self will, our rooms still grow. How incredible to be a part of this metamorphosis!

R.C., Alabama

Thoughts on service

I have often thought that the development of our service structure was inevitably bound to follow the same course of a sister fellowship, A.A., in some respects. We would become too big to continue to practice service as we know and have known

it. Eventually, groups would become largely isolated and have little or no identification with area, regional, national and world services. Services outside the group would become largely irrelevant to the group. The trend toward delegation of authority and responsibility in service would continue due to the indifference of the average member and the sheer overwhelming number of members.

I am now beginning to think differently. My mind has been opened to the possibility that to continue to insist that our service structure remain vital and relevant to groups is an urgent and important goal, because it fights two dangerous enemies on both a personal and group level: isolation and ignorance.

I believe a significant number of members share a vision of N.A. service. They continue to ask "Why not?" and "Why should we be limited by the experiences of the past?" and "Why should we resign ourselves to the assumption that our principles are merely ideals, measuring sticks, which we will never actually attain?"

I guess my attitudes have been shaped by my experiences. I work in government and I so often see the difficulties of trying to put ideals into practice. I am keenly aware of the administrative challenges of serving the will of a constituent group. I have mostly thought that the demands of people who fall into this group in N.A. of which I am speaking have been unrealistic. Philosophically, I have come to believe that even with all of the various compromises, convolutions and logjams we face in government, somehow, in some weird, nebulous

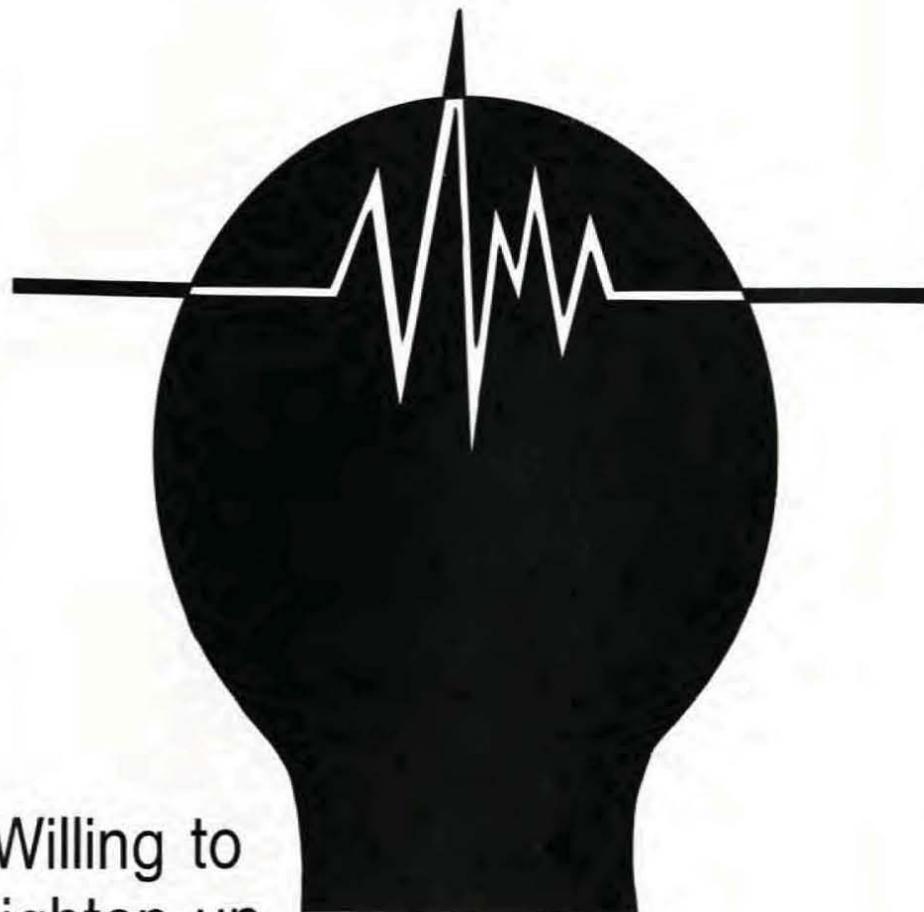
way, the will of the people has been served (or at least, they got what they deserved)!

But government is too harsh. That's not what we're talking about here in N.A. There are some parallels, but they only go so far. I don't find a lot of love in government, if you know what I mean. Laws and statutes, rules and regulations, they don't leave much room to be loving. In N.A., we have only one law, so to speak, and it is love, love for the still suffering addict, and each other.

Love is not an easy path. Maybe that's why service in N.A. has been so difficult. It keeps demanding more of us. It's not about being comfortable or convenient. And to trust the process, for me, is to believe that it will demand and eventually pull the best out of me. This can be painful to experience. Growing towards love is often this way. But I always reach that point where I have to ask myself, do I want the rewards of N.A. service or not? I know one thing, it has never been boring!

It preserves my recovery in a vital way. I feel alive and spontaneous and my imagination is fired. I often feel joyous, like I am in touch with my purpose in this life.

Anonymous



Willing to lighten up

When I first started coming to N.A. I was so grateful to hear the spiritual principles of the program. I didn't even know that was what I liked so much. I just knew no one told me I had to do anything. Going so far as to tell me *not* to put money in the basket. It didn't sound like anyone was trying to sell me or convert me. *That* was attractive to me! Without the freedom to get loaded I never would have stayed clean. I usually

turn left when told to go right. I've always been very rebellious.

When I saw that three spiritual principles were indispensable I clung to them. I really wanted this thing and it seemed like I couldn't stay clean without them.

I got as honest as I was capable of. I became willing to work on me and I opened my mind to the program. This kept me clean for three years.

Then I became miserable and felt

just as suicidal as I did when I first got clean. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. I had forgotten the last line of the steps—to practice these principles in *all* our affairs.

I was being honest, as willing as ever, but open-mindedness had gone out the window. I couldn't tolerate any other opinion about the program than my own. I had been sharing the "proper" message for the newcomer.

Forgetting this one simple principle almost killed me. I was so closed-minded I was strangling myself (not to mention my sponsees).

I started praying for open-mindedness again. I remembered a sponsor's job is to share experience, strength and hope. . . period! I had to stop sharing the "perfect" message for the newcomer. Oh, I still share to spread the message, but it's a message of who I am and what I've learned, not what I think *they* need to hear. I need to keep me alive first.

I got a fresh perspective on things. Then I had a *really* honest talk with my sponsor, telling her things I *knew* she wouldn't like and would hate me for. To my surprise she feels the same way I do about a lot of things. I've been feeling really good about myself, but I miss the spiritual principles that attracted me in the first place. (Not to mention my friends.)

With the help of my Higher Power I'll learn to be open-minded in all my affairs and willing enough to share honestly, not just what I think you need to hear.

J.G., Nevada

Zero

I've heard the words "Thirteenth Stepping" since I first got clean. It's used to describe what happens when a member takes advantage of a newcomer's fog.

Why is this called "Thirteenth Stepping?"

Why not call it like it is, like I've heard it called by three or four members, "Zero Stepping!"

My program has twelve steps, not thirteen. Seducing a newcomer should not be ranked above having a spiritual awakening. It should be ranked below being powerless.

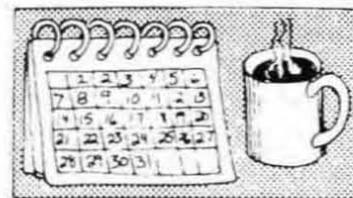
"Zero Stepping" more closely explains what happens when one person, who is not working a good program, in my opinion, takes advantage of an unsuspecting, clouded newer member, who knows no better, and also hasn't got a program to work yet, either. Between both these people there are zero steps.

"Zero Stepping!"

Personally, it's hard for me to dignify this behavior with any number, besides zero, especially a number higher than those used in the program that saved my life. It's a shame such actions are dignified with so much as a letter of this length, but since it does happen, let's call a spade a spade!

B.B., North Carolina

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
Van Nuys, CA 91409.
(818) 780-3951.

ALABAMA: Aug. 16-18, 1991; Multi-area celebration of N.A. history; State House Inn, 924 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104; rsvn.s (800) 552-7099; information (205) 265-0831; N.A. History Committee, PO Box 11563, Montgomery, AL 36111

2) Sep. 20-22, 1991; Surrender in the Mountain Spiritual Retreat; Mount Cheaha State Park, Delta, AL.; information (205) 933-8331; Spiritual Retreat, PO Box 190203, Birmingham, AL 35219

CALIFORNIA: Aug. 16-18, 1991; 2nd Annual "Set Em Free" Campout; Oakwood Lake Resort, Manteca, CA; information (408) 438-3420 or (408) 688-5817; Set Em Free, PO Box 1837, Soquel, CA 95073

2) Aug. 16-19, 1991; 2nd Annual One Step at a Time Summer Retreat; Greenhorn Mountain Park Camp, Yenis Hente (by Lake Isabella), Kern County; information (714) 949-6212; IE-WAACNA, PO Box 9413, Ontario, CA 91762

CANADA—SASKATCHEWAN: Aug. 23-25, 1991; Additional Needs Workshop; Core Richey Neighborhood Center, 445 14th Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan; info (306) 522-8361

ENGLAND: Sep. 6-8, 1991; 5th Annual United Kingdom Convention; Parkers Hotel, 109-111 Corporation Street, Manchester, M4 4DX; information 061 953 9550; UKCNA5, PO Box 704, London, SW10 0RP, ENGLAND

FLORIDA: Aug. 23-25, 1991; Florida Regional Public Information Helpline Learning Weekend; Deland Hilton, 350 International Speedway, Deland, Florida 32724; rsvn.s (800) 826-3233; information (407) 969-7070; PI/Helpline Learning, c/o RSO, 1110 Northeast 34th Court, Oakland Park, FL 33334

HAWAII: Sep. 20-22, 1991; Maui Gathering; "Walking in the Light"; Camp Maluhia; information (808) 877-4158; Maui Gathering, PO Box 6213, Kahului, HI 96732

INDIANA: Sep. 6, 1991; 12th Aquarians Group Anniversary Dance; Wicker Park Pavillion, Highland, Indiana; information (219) 836-8240

KANSAS: Aug. 23-25, 1991; 2nd Annual New Life Ladies Group Free Campout; Lucas Park, Wilson Lake; Info, PO Box 544, McPherson, KS 67460

2) Oct. 18-20, 1991; 2nd Annual Dodge City Roundup; VFW Hall, Dodge City, KS 67801; Info (316) 227-2211; Roundup Committee, 2009 Thompson, Dodge City, KS 67801

MINNESOTA: Sep. 28, 1991; 8th Annual Twin Cities N.A. Banquet; Saint Mark's School, 1983 Dayton Avenue, Saint Paul, MN; Info 789-4253 or 722-5735; Banquet, 316 Oak Grove -305, Minneapolis, MN 55403

MISSOURI: Aug. 30—Sep. 2, 1991; Show-Me Region Unity Camp/Venture; Lake of the Ozarks State Park; information (314) 878-4193; Activities Committee, PO Box 105065, Jefferson City, MO 65110

NEBRASKA: Aug. 31—Sep. 2, 1991; 3rd Annual Last Minute Campout; Crystal Lake, Ayr, NE; Central Nebraska Area, PO Box 723, Grand Island, NE 68802

2) Sep. 6-8, 1991; 8th Nebraska Regional Convention; Ramada Inn, I-80 and 2nd Avenue, Kearney, NE 68848; information (800) 248-4460 or (308) 237-5971; NRCNA VIII, PO Box 1332, Kearney, NE 68848

NEVADA: Aug. 16-18, 1991; Fifth Annual "Mountain High Campout"; Camp Richardson, South Lake Tahoe; information (916) 577-1042; Campout, PO Box 6706, State Line, NV 89449

2) Aug. 23-25, 1991; 5th Southern Nevada Convention; Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas, NV; information (702) 453-3713; SNCC, 4928 E Tropicana Avenue, Suite 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

NEW JERSEY: Aug. 16-18, 1991; 1st Annual Northern New Jersey Regional Service Convention; "A New Beginning"; Loews Glenpointe Hotel, 100 Frank W Burr Boulevard, Teaneck, NJ; information/rsvn.s (201) 614-9260; NNJRSC, PO Box 5064, South Hackensack, NJ 07606

2) Sep. 13-14, 1991; Multi-Regional Learning Weekend; hosted by Northern New Jersey; info (302)427-0587; M.R.L.C.N.A., c/o N.N.J.R.S.C., PO Box 3365, East Orange, NJ 07019

NEW YORK: Aug. 30—Sep. 2, 1991; Recovery In The Woods 5; Camplakeland Conference Center, Franklinville, NY; info, (716) 878-2316; ASC, PO Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

OHIO: Aug. 30—Sep. 2, 1991; Serenity in the Woods V; Camp Cambell Gard, Hamilton, OH; information (513) 820-2725; Activities Subcommittee, Hamilton/Middletown ASC, PO Box 18430, Fairfield, OH 45018

2) Sep. 14-16, 1991, "Literature Awareness '91; Literature—It's Basic," Holidome, Springfield, Ohio. Contact (614) 236-8787 for info.

3) Sep. 20-22, 1991; 11th Annual Campout; Big Bone State Park, Union, Kentucky; G.C.A.S.C.N.A., PO Box 8257, Cincinnati, OH 45208

3) Sep. 27-29, 1991; Recovery in the Foothills II; Old Town Camp, Pt. Pleasant, WV; information (304) 675-5132; A.F.A.S.C.N.A., PO Box 107, Gallipolis, OH 45631

OREGON: Aug. 10, 1991; Phoneline Learning Days; Eagle's Lodge, 835 Walnut Avenue, Klamath Falls, OR 97601; PO Box 749, Chiloquin, OR 97624

PARIS: Sep. 13-15, 1991; Deuxieme Convention Bilingue N.A. Parisienne; Second Paris N.A. Bilingual Convention; "Ensemble Pour Aujourd'Hui"; CPBNA2, Narcotiques Anonymes, BP 630-04, 75160 Paris Cedex, FRANCE

SOUTH CAROLINA: Aug. 16-18, 1991; Carolina Regional H&I Awareness Weekend; Hyatt Regency Hotel, Greenville, SC; rsvn.s (800) 228-9000; information (704) 394-5532

TENNESSEE: Sep. 27-29, 1991; Surrender Under the Stars V; Spiritual Retreat/Campout; Harrison Bay State Park, Chattanooga, TN; Hosted by Chattanooga and Middle Tennessee Areas; information (615) 269-6865; PO Box 111345, Nashville, TN 37222

WASHINGTON: Aug. 30—Sep. 1, 1991; 3rd Annual Blue Mountain Retreat; Field Springs State Park, Anatone, WA., Big Lodge 20 miles South of Clarkston; information (509) 758-3994; Recovery Connection, PO Box 151, Clarkston, WA 99403

2) Sep. 20-22, 1991; Northern Puget Sound Area Spiritual Connection VIII; Deception Pass State Park, Cornet Bay Environmental Learning Center, Whidbey Island; information (206) 424-1330; Registration, 100 S LaVenture -36, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

WISCONSIN: Oct. 11-13, 1991; 8th Annual Wisconsin State Convention; Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, WI; rsvn.s (800) 242-3499; WSNAC VIII, PO Box 1902, Appleton, WI 54913

WCNA TWENTY-ONE SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

WCNA-21 is set to take place in the Darling Harbour Convention Centre in the Kings Cross area of Sydney. Arrangements have been made with two hotels, the Novatel, (02) 934-0000; and the Gazebo, (02) 358-1999 (dial the country code 61 first). Rooms should be reserved early.

Except for residents of countries with waiver agreements, all visitors need valid passports and visas to enter Australia. A packet describing the event, including hotel and convention registration forms, may be obtained by calling (818) 780-3951, or writing

"WCNA-21"

c/o WSO

P.O. Box 9999

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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.

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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! Write us at:

The N.A. Way Magazine

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3TEA

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a non-profit 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. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break.

Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.