

THE
NAAWay
MAGAZINE

October 1992

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ANNIVERSARY

issue

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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volume ten, number ten

meeting in print	
Recovery atmosphere	2
Discerning the muse	4
Winter city meeting	7
True or false	8
the broad perspective	
Fellowship news	12
home group	
Congrats!	14
feature	
Ten years, <i>The NA Way</i>	15
viewpoint	
On specialized groups	20
AIDS—An outside issue, or not?	22
More response to "Don't let me go."	23
Frankly, I give a damn	24
Available to us all	25
from our readers	
A selection of letters and short articles	26
comin' up	
A worldwide NA calendar	30

The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire NA Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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Recovery atmosphere

Hello recovering human beings. How ya doing and how ya doing it?

I've never wrote to you before. Hope I get published. I was just writing some on my step work. I got inspired to do so quite by accident, really, and this is what I wrote.

My recovery is a process, I cannot be at point "Z" before going through "A" to "Y". I have to be patient. I have to accept my mistakes of the past. They are gone. I have to accept that living in regrets will keep me thinking in the past. I have to put the past in perspective, change the traits of my personality which are harmful to others and myself today, and let the change happen. Slowly, it will happen. It has happened, it is happening. Where I get discouraged is when it isn't happening fast enough. Count your blessings, look where you were and look for the change. Just don't use, let the emotions and body restore themselves, do the steps.

Even through depression, fear, regret, loneliness, rage and wanting to use, just don't, bottom line, don't use. Even from hopelessness, a "what's the use, the world sucks" attitude, don't use.

To me these are real feelings, not

drug induced illusion-feelings. I don't like being phony anymore. Even when life sucks, I'm feeling stuck, and life seems pointless, a few sentences help keep me clean: "This too shall pass," "It will get better," "Think of the morning after," and "Practice spiritual principles."

I write this from personal experience. I've just come out of two months or so of not knowing how to communicate, unsure of what I was feeling and being away from all of my NA Fellowship friends. My mind was blank most of the time, and I wanted to use nearly every day. I got back to the fellowship and talked and babbled and babbled and babbled, etc. You see the message.

I'd been praying, I'd been writing my Step Four again, I'd communicated as best I could, with the folks around here, explaining what I was going through.

Nothing helped except a return trip to my home group, to the people that knew me when I walked in the first time. I felt comfortable as I was welcomed with, "Hi, good to see ya, welcome home" and lots of hugs at my first meeting back. What a feeling those shouts gave me, all I said was my name's T and I'm an addict.

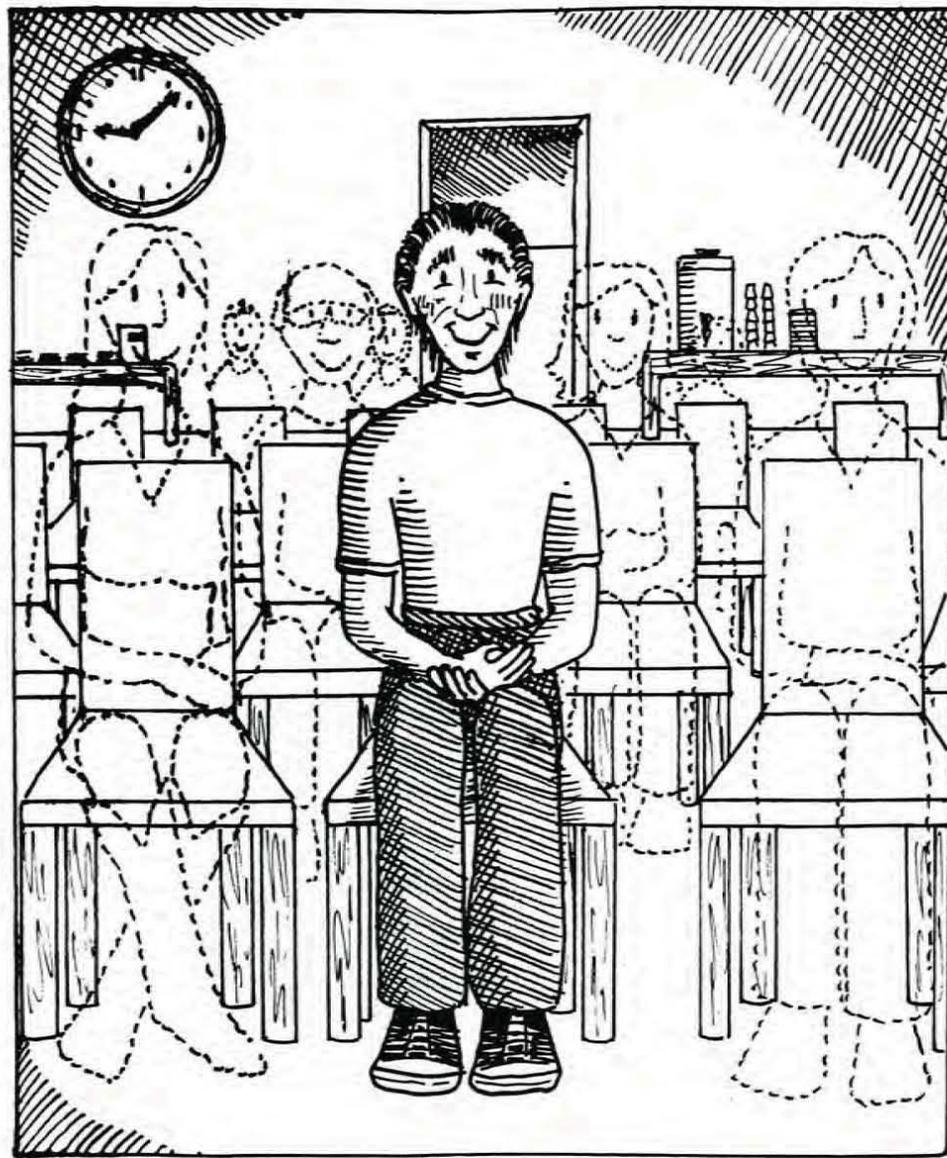
I'm still feeling content though I'm away from my friends again, reason being I'm back at meetings out here. I started a new group. That's where I'm writing this from. It seems like I've just had a meeting, reflecting on NA as I write, and remembering the love I was shown.

It's about 8:30 p.m. The meeting started at 7 p.m. No one showed up, yet "everyone" showed up. I have tears

gratitude and joy in my eyes and I am glad I came to this meeting. My Higher Power does indeed work in mysterious ways. From pain comes

gain. Love from a grateful recovering addict whose message to you is simple. Keep the faith.

T.P., Canada



Discerning the muse



I am a recovering addict with four-and-a-half years clean. I recently talked to my sponsor for the first time in a month. It had been even longer since I'd told her where I am at with myself. I had spent the last several months participating in life, and let my program slowly slip away. I reached a new point of despair clean and knew if I didn't call her there would only be more misery to come.

She suggested that I be gentle to myself, light a candle, and take a

bath. While soaking in the tub, I was to write, so I did just that, not for anyone but myself.

I've been unhappy for a long time now. Though I have been experiencing *some* happiness now and again, it hasn't been within myself. My happiness has been based on my accomplishments in school, and work, and how my son is behaving, how my car is working, and how my boyfriend and I are getting along. I have been very busy occupying my time with all of

the above. These things are important to me. Yet my inner happiness, which has been lacking, is also important. Basically, I've based my inside feelings on my outside stimuli. I've been isolating far too long inside my little world. It's been difficult to escape without that "nuclear disaster" such as a death, break-up, or relapse that somehow seems to occur, eventually.

Over a period of months of not working any steps, and going to very few meetings where I honestly shared, I have become complacent, unwilling, intolerable and intolerant, and have begun trying to manipulate and control the people and situations in my life. I've been blaming others and myself for my own misery instead of doing what is necessary to continue to recover and live happy, joyous and free. I have only been a part of the problem, rather than participating in the solutions.

I haven't wanted to tell anyone where my head has been, out of fear that, A. of my fear that they couldn't help me because I am a different kind of addict with a mental illness, or B. because I know everything I am supposed to do for myself and have been choosing not to do it . . . so I deserve all the misery I can take. It must be deeply rooted in me somewhere that I don't deserve any positive things in my life, because I keep attracting and accepting negative behavior, attention and destructiveness. I see my mother in me clearly today and that scares me because I know how unhappy she appeared, and how unhappy my sister and I were. I have the God-given tools, through NA, to change myself into whomever I want to be,

but I have continued to settle for less, and I don't know why. Out of fear of something. I have been asking my Higher Power for direction and guidance, and maybe this is my answer to my prayers. I pray that I remain willing to do what my sponsor suggests. I'm going to make a list of the things she told me to do throughout my day so I don't forget.

My sponsor also suggested to write out my First Step again, so I did.

"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."

We

The first word of this step tells me that I am not alone in my addiction, with my problems that are unique to me, or with working on solutions to living a healthier and happier life. I have been living in the *me* for a long time now, and I have made the decision to get out of the *me* and live in the *we* again. I can't, but we can.

Admitted

Another word that I have been doing the opposite of, which is denial. (the subtle and deadly spirit killer.) To me this word means I speak my feelings, thoughts, actions and beliefs out loud, first to myself, and then to another person in recovery or in my life. I have been holding on to all of these things and, therefore, have become sicker instead of better.



Powerless

That very long word that seems like such weakness, although it gives a great deal of freedom when practiced. Examples, not taking responsibility for people, places or things over which I have no true control. Control is that illusion or feeling that keeps me from being vulnerable or hurt, so I think, yet this practice causes the most confusion and pain in my life. We all have influences, but to try to instill my beliefs or actions on another person is wrong, allowing fear to control my life by not living in today and not thinking positive about myself and my life. By trying to manipulate others into guessing what I'm feeling rather than telling them. By being afraid to tell them, out of fear they will reject me or leave. By believing I can't help what I'm thinking or I am not responsible for my behavior. These are all ways I try to control. Trying to make someone understand rather than trying to understand for myself.

Addiction

The behaviors and actions I talked about above plus: wanting more, never being satisfied, being ungrateful, obsessing on thoughts, behaving irrationally, acting out on feelings, staying in denial of reality, feeling unique and alone. Everything I have been living in has been just that.

Unmanageable

A result of living in addiction and the illusion of control. For example, arguing and being disagreeable, holding resentments and anger, pointing it inward or being sarcastic, depressed, confused, alone, miserable, unlovable, ungrateful, rebellious, revengeful, distrusting and hateful. Being intolerant of others and myself. Not accepting of myself or anyone else, being negative rather than positive.

I have been blaming the five-year crazies, my relationship, and my financial status instead of looking at me for who I am and changing what I can about myself and practicing acceptance and gratitude, and the many other spiritual principles that have been lacking in my life.

The power of the pen and the wondrous spirit at work is still amazing to me, and for that I am truly grateful.

It's definitely an inside job!

S.B., Georgia

Winter city meeting

Friday afternoon. I feel the anticipation that arises when the weekend comes. What shall I do this evening?

After the sun goes down, I hop into my car and travel over the mountain and across the river, knowing everything will be okay soon.

I spot the bright lights of the metropolitan skyline that lures me to the weekly gathering of my special friends, and I excitedly weave my way through the hustle and bustle of the city streets.

I walk through a tunnel and into a courtyard. I glance in the windows, and there they are: men and women, some with children. The cherubic faces of young children whose parents are in recovery are so endearing to me.

The pre-convening chatter of addicts, their eyes twinkling and dancing; the colorful splash of people textured in their denims, woolens and leathers sprinkled with the musky scents of aftershaves and perfumes; the aroma of fresh coffee brewing—it is all so comforting and free.

There are so many hugs to give and receive.

I'm safe, I'm warm, all cozy inside.

Soon the pleasant, jazz-like cacophony settles down, and the meeting opens. I am so moved by the speakers when they tell their stories and share what it was like for them "back then," and how it is now. It is times like these when I truly believe that ties do bind us together, and I know all will be well.

You see, there is no place I'd rather be than with all of you on this winter's eve.

D.M., Massachusetts

True or false?

All she knew when she picked up the phone was that she had had enough. Enough of the lies, the pain the drugs, the insanity that had plagued her life for the last six years. The man's voice on the other end of the line said, "Narcotics Anonymous Hotline, how can I help you?" His voice was gentle, a note of hope colored his directions to the meeting. She hung up the phone feeling more alone than ever in her 23 years of life. A silent mantra ran through her mind, "Please, just no more, I can't do this anymore."

The face that stared back at her in the car rear-view mirror did not belong to her. It was not the face on the license issued by the DMV, not the girl of seven her parents had held so much hope for, not the woman she thought she was. The black holes of her eyes throbbed pain, desperation, and anger. "Who is this woman?" she thought. She simply did not know.

In front of the building the man had described, several cars were parked. A beat-up red pickup, an econo-compact, a blue "bug," and a white

van adorned the parking lot. "This can't be the place," she said under her breath, and drove slowly past the friendly glow coming from the building's windows. Some part of the woman's brain screamed, "Keep driving! Don't stop, damnit!" She hit the gas pedal ready to drive forever, when a



small, soft, reassuring thought whispered, "It's O.K., go back." Her foot tamped the brake. Shaking, she turned the car around.

When she got out of the car her hands were shaking so badly she dropped her car keys. "Damn," she sighed. Was she doing the right thing? Tears welled in her eyes blurring her vision. She took a deep breath of night air, steeled her remaining reserve, and walked toward the building.

Her scared eyes scanned the room, searching for an open chair close to the door. She sat quickly, clutching her purse tightly in her lap, hands fiddling nervously with her keys. The only view she took in was the pattern of the carpet at her feet.

"Hello and welcome to the regular



Tuesday night meeting of Narcotics Anonymous. My name is _____!". Her mind raced, "What the hell is going on?" The chairperson continued, "Could we please open this meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer?" She peered around, nervously. All the men and women in the room had lowered their heads. She was confused. "What?," she thought, "No one told me that I'd have to deal with religion again!" As the chairperson led the prayer she re-

mained silent, scared and angry. Several people read from sheets of colored paper; she tried to listen but the voices in her head wouldn't shut up long enough to let anything through. When the person leading the meeting asked about "newcomers, or anyone in their first 30 days" of recovery, she timidly raised her hand and barely squeaked, "My name is Jane." The people in the room smiled at her, a few shouted, "Hi Jane, welcome!" and "Glad to see you!" but she had bowed her head, unable to meet the eyes of those around her.

People raised their hands to speak, sharing things that Jane could not hear. All the words read, said or shared raced past her; the voices would not be quieted. Her hands worked furiously in her lap. Her bitten nails shook while one person after another kept talking. "Is this what I have to do? Sit here and listen to this crap? Where the hell do these people get off?" The angry words flashed through her mind. Time passed interminably. It sounded like so much noise, what these people were saying, ringing in her ears. After what seemed like days, the person in charge asked for something called "burning desires," a concept totally foreign to Jane.

One of the people held brightly colored bits of plastic and was muttering something about "30, 60, 90 days, 6 months. . ." Then something was said like, ". . . "24-hour reminder key tag" . . ." The heads in the room turned expectantly to Jane. She panicked. "Oh hell, these people want me to join something. They want something from me!"



Her leaden limbs could not walk up and get that key tag. Suddenly, everyone in the room jumped up and formed a circle of hugs. Her ears were not open to hear the closing prayer, but just after they repeated the words, their heads raised and in unison they said "Keep coming back! It Works!"

Ending A

The circle drifted apart and Jane stood utterly alone. The physical contact she craved broken, she hovered near the door. Groups of two and three people gathered, laughing, talking, and exchanging bits of paper with scribbled notes. Jane glanced around the room, some part of her desperately wishing that someone, anyone, would hug her, notice her. No one approached her. She left the room as quietly as she had entered it. Jane felt worse leaving the room than she had when she arrived.

Page 43, *The local Daily News*:

"Police found Jane Doe in her 1000 Nowhere Rd. residence at approximately 10:30 am Wednesday morning. A police spokesperson said a drug overdose is suspected as the cause of her death."

Ending B

The circle of people began to drift apart. Jane, scared, wondered what to do next. She withstood the anxiety and terrible urge to run. A hand touched her shoulder. She turned to

find a woman smiling at her. "Welcome home, Jane," the woman said gently, and gave her a warm hug. Immediately Jane felt relief. "Here, let me give you my phone number," she heard, as the woman wrote on the meeting list, and added, "You can call me anytime, Jane. And here's a list of meetings in the area." Jane looked up from the paper in her hands, and there were three other women waiting to give hugs, phone numbers and support. The last woman asked if Jane was busy after the meeting. Stammering, Jane replied, "Well, no, I guess not." "We're all going for coffee, would you like to join us?" Tears welling in her eyes, Jane slowly nodded her head "yes." Jane had come home, finally.

Author's note: I have seen men and women come into their first NA meetings, and I have seen things go both ways. This is the reality of the situation. When I had eighteen months clean, my significant other and I traveled to visit relatives. We went to a meeting (I hesitate to mention which meeting, I wish not to point fingers in blame) and were not made to feel welcome, not even asked for names— I thank my Higher Power that I was not a newcomer. I don't know if I would have kept coming back. I had enough time under my belt to know what to do, I called my sponsor. It pains me to see the newcomers and visitors of the world not reached-out to at our meetings. No one coming into our fellowship should be made to feel unwelcome, in my opinion.

F.A., *New Mexico*



The broad perspective

As you may have already noticed, this issue is four pages smaller than usual. During a recent staff meeting the suggestion was made, and accepted, to print at least one shorter issue in order to try to end the need of using everything available, especially of the "Meeting in Print" stories, to create each issue.

Because of networkers, who are people involved in the long term solution for this problem, we ended up with enough material after all. We went ahead with the planned smaller issue to dramatize the regular, ongoing need for good, recovery oriented stories. By printing it, even though the necessary quantity did come in, we hope to avoid complacently strolling into future periods of "story-famine."

Its our birthday!

As promised in this column last month, a feature story to mark the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of *The NA Way Magazine* starts on page 15. Our first cover date was September, 1982. It would have taken a book

to do justice to the already extensive history of articles, styles and philosophic tendencies dramatized in the 120 issues that have been printed. Though we'd certainly applaud the compilation of such a book, a decision had to be made to restrict the size and focus of the piece to something we could practically manage and offer.

By printing the comments of people who are now or were previously involved with the *NA Way*, a kind of real-time, real-event perspective is expressed. Hope you find it interesting and informing.

Storm effects

Hurricane Andrew brought NA meetings in the Homestead, Florida, area to a halt for almost two weeks. The storm, which blew in during the very early morning hours of August 24th, completely destroyed the one meeting place (used by the only two local NA groups) in the hurricane-ravaged communities of Leisure City, Homestead AFB, and the civilian Town of Homestead.

Alexis G, a member of the New Hope NA Group, said his group shared meeting space in a mobile-home unit (which was part of a church facility located at the corner of 19th and Krome Avenues, Leisure City) with the TNT NA Group. "When I went back there was nothing left but the steps," said Alex.

Another South Florida member said addicts examining the rubble left where the trailer had been "only found a laminated set of the Twelve Traditions, and a Basic Text, which was open to the Third Step."

Alexis, who road out the hurricane in his mother's six bedroom home,

said the 17 people who sought shelter there all survived with no injuries, but were in the last room with walls when Andrew left. Nine shelterless people were brought into the home from the street while the eye of the hurricane passed.

One member said of the "usually 15 to 20" participants in the New Hope Group "I've only seen five, though I have heard the rest are alive." He said he was aware of two relapses during time of no meetings. Asked if he thought those relapses stemmed from meeting disruptions he replied "Definitely."

The first local NA meeting conducted after the hurricane was Saturday, September 5th, in the main church building at 19th and Krome, which partially withstood the storm. Members from Miami, Palm Beach, Ft Lauderdale, and Boca Raton have been traveling through the lack of street-lights, stop-lights, and road signs; and the military checkpoints, to support the Homestead addicts with literature and their presence.

Alexis, who said he was only able to sleep in three-hour stretches, three weeks after Andrew, added he "still jerks when I hear sounds like car mufflers." "I'm relatively new to recovery, but the Third Step really got a grip on me that day."

Kauai

Regular communication is still not possible (September 16) with the Hawaiian Island of Kauai, struck by Hurricane Iniki, last Friday,

Rena R, an NA member who lives on the "Big Island" of Hawaii, reported she had heard from "Shelly," on

Kauai, that the NA community there suffered no injuries and were meeting nightly in the center of each main community. Rena said Shelly asked only "that people pray for them, that tempers don't get out of hand, that they stay centered."

Addicts on the main island and Oahu are putting together care-packages to send when travel is restored.

WCNA 22

Folks are back from "Imagine the Freedom," NA's world convention held in Toronto, Canada Labor Day weekend.

About 3,500 persons officially registered and the peak crowd at the main meeting was estimated at 4,500.

Chairperson Sean S said "It was the most thrilling experience of my life to face that crowd."

Of the whole event Sean said "It was an amazing, profound experience. It went without a hitch. Volunteers from everywhere helped with everything. At times I found myself just calmly walking through, looking for something to do."

Editor resigns

The current managing editor has resigned from his position with *The NA Way Magazine* effective December 1, 1992. An inability to adjust to living in California, along with badly missing his home state of North Carolina, were cited as the primary reasons for resigning.

"If the magazine were located almost anywhere but California, or Yugoslavia, I'd stay on," said Andy.

Home Group

Congrats!

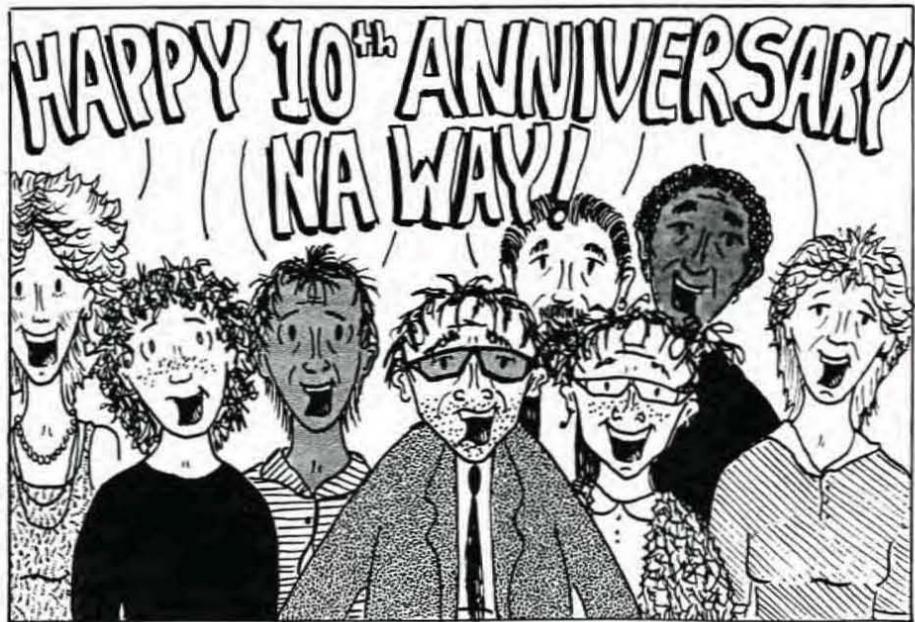
LOTS OF ADDICTS SAY THEY OWE THEIR LIVES TO NA...



BUT ONLY A CARTOON CHARACTER LIKE ME CAN SAY...



I OWE MY LIFE TO THE NA WAY MAGAZINE!!



Ten years, The NA Way

Several possibilities of style and content were considered for marking the completion of a decade of *NA Way Magazine* production. Volume One, Number One, carried a cover-date of September, 1982.

After months of fanciful musing on what to make of our basic ten ("Maybe we could put a dime on the cover!"), it was practically boiled down to the standard coin of the realm: addicts sharing their experiences, strengths and hopes relative to our magazine.

The perspectives of three of those addicts, each of whom has served as managing editors of the magazine, conclude this article. They share on four topics: the mission of the magazine, particular joys, heartaches, and the future.

A telephone poll was also conducted, asking ten widely scattered "Networkers" a series of fifteen magazine-related questions.

The poll-responses come from New Mexico, California, Washington, Georgia, Florida, Massachusetts, Virginia, Rhode Island, Wyoming and North Carolina.

Networkers are a team, (now numbering about 200 participants) who

serve as local NA community liaisons of *the NA Way*. Addicts join the network by self-selection, usually as a result of attending a magazine workshop in a convention setting. Many, however, simply write or call the staff after hearing about the project from an active participant. One of our veterans, Steve R of New York, amazed the staff in early September by sending in a list of over forty addicts, from a dozen states and several different countries, who had asked to be added to the network mailing list. Networkers receive the monthly newsletter "Network News," and sample copies of the magazine.

Surely some networkers get involved because they want to support something they like, and others do so as a way of contributing to what they see as needed change. The very process by which networkers are sought and encouraged to participate is designed to avoid the accumulation of a crowd that is biased in any one direction, except by its interest in the *NA Way*.

The poll

We asked "How did you first learn of the fellowship magazine?" One person said, "The first clean guy I met had one on his coffee table." Most said they heard about it or saw it at NA meetings. One saw it in a treatment center. One actually first learned of the magazine at a magazine workshop.

We asked "Do you read the magazine regularly?" All rather predictably responded "yes," except one fellow. Saying he was in the midst of a

"ten years clean, anniversary rage" he chuckled at the silence before adding, "Don't worry, I am still going to meetings and supporting the magazine." He said a lot of people he knows get the "ten year rage."

Your "favorite or most moving story?" got responses of:

"Oldtimers' disease," April 1989;

"Going on to say it," August 1990;

"Structured stepwork," December 1991;

"The whole *Graphics Classics* issue," March 1992

"Ramon," July 1992;

"Recognition," August 1992;

"One of the stories about the Third Step. I can't think of the title!" and "I like em all."

Asked if they had submitted stories or articles to the magazine, four said "yes," and two of those had been published. Of those who had not yet submitted stories, several said they had already written something and were just getting up their nerve to send it in or were "planning to write."

All those polled said they thought humor is appropriate in *The NA Way*. Slugg got several compliments. Two respondents qualified their approval, one saying, "as long as the jokes don't target anyone in particular" and another "Descriptions of our Trusted Servants" (September 1992) should have been more clearly labeled as a parody.

In responding to the humor question, one networker even demonstrated his willingness to share the lighter side of recovery by recalling an incident at an NA campout. His NA group was approached by a stranger who wanted to go swimming. The

stranger asked "Where do we change?" An addict replied, "In the steps."

We asked, "What should be the nature of news published in the magazine?" Our cross-section gave a variety of retorts. One very clearly responded, "None." Another said, "The news needs to be explained better. The WSC report was so complex, we needed more background." Almost all said they appreciated reports of conventions and the "Comin' up" section. One said, "It would be helpful to the fellowship to have a section devoted to that (news). It should say, 'this is what happened, period.'" Another "enjoyed reports of the WSC" and said "ya'll get out the news faster than the service office and their reports."

Still referring to the matter of news, a woman from New England said, "It's OK, it goes along with the history." She wanted more detailed news of matters within US regions and other countries' activities. At this question, one respondent said "We were too slanted in opposition" with news of the "illicit basic text" matter.

The question, "Do you recall an objectionable story?" got "news of the illicit text" from the same respondent mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Though no one mentioned by title an "objectionable" story, there were some themes noted. "I'm tired of the smoking issue," said one. Another said, "Things that put down God, and the steps." "Cheap emotional shots, no 'feel sorry for me' stuff," was one reply. One definitely did not like the March 1992 "Graphic Classics" issue, and took this opportunity to mention it. "We've got to watch

ourselves with purism, either way," said another New Englander.

The only unanimous response was to the question, "Should the magazine attempt to appeal to non-NA members?" These folks were not only opposed to the idea, the majority expressed fervently their opposition. "I don't think that's the purpose," said one. "Tell 'em (supporters of the notion) to get involved with PI!"

There was general agreement that the magazine is evidence to people, especially newcomers, that they are "not alone" and are part of something much larger than they might have first thought. Asked what is missing from the magazine that they'd like to see, most couldn't think of anything. Two did mention "more basics" and "more about working the steps."

One respondent said we should "avoid" fiction, but most were ok with it "if it is related to recovery."

Editors' responses

Perhaps a half-dozen elected people or special workers have served as interim or support editors to *The NA Way* during its existence, but there have been only three fully empowered managing editors. Jim M, of Ohio, was the first, and served from the magazine's birth until 1984. Jim was aided by two "co-chairs" of what was then the NA Way Committee of the World Service Conference.

Responsibility for management of the magazine, with the exception of final editorial decisions, was delegated to the World Service Office in 1984. In 1985, Ron H from North Dakota

was hired as managing editor. He served until 1989.

Upon Ron's resignation, a North Carolinian, Andy M, accepted the job.

These editors worked with the magazine in times of markedly different attitude and circumstance. As the NA fellowship's expressed and perceivable desires changed, its magazine's editors faced many grave decisions. Each expressed profound gratitude for the advice, and occasional direction, they received from succeeding committees, review panels, and editorial boards.

The second ten years now open with great opportunities for service, and likely will include some of those darned growth experiences. Here's hoping that what we share will help avoid the repeating of mistakes.

On the 'mission' of the magazine

Jim: "It was/is to come out monthly, to focus on recovery from addiction the NA way. It should include clear, simple, definitive essay/articles. We felt that they should be potential informational pamphlets, and, actually, two of them were. We were dedicated to the idea that the magazine be pure in concept and expression.

"Few people have a clear perception, even today, that the disease of addiction differs from substance abuse. This magazine brought such people together because they were concerned that it be a clear sharing."

Ron: "To carry the message in print to the addict who still suffers. More diversely, inside the fellowship, to provide a place for dialogue, for the fellowship to carry on a dialogue with itself;

"As external PI. Anytime something is printed and published it must be treated like public information, no matter what else is intended. When it's captured in print we have to recognize that this is a window through which the public views NA. . .

"Eyeball to eyeball is better (but) its that other purpose, the NA message gets developed. . . Early in recovery I would read it and really think about what defines NA. The magazine really stimulated that thought."

Andy: "To provide an avenue of communication about half-way between conference-approved literature and the carrying of the message in our meetings.

"Conference-approved literature is surely the best overall communication of hope, but it develops very slowly and must be stated in terms that are approved by the broadest possible audience. That makes it hard to keep the individual style, tone or word-use that so effectively aids identification and empathy when addicts share one-on-one.

"Talk, the kind that so often happens during and around NA meetings, does have that impactful individuality of expression, but it is temporary.

"The liability of verbal communication is that it is difficult to share broadly. The liability of conference-approved literature is that it must

'speak' as the least common denominator.

"The mission of the magazine is to help compensate for those liabilities. Its readers can find personalized sharing with which to identify, and it is in a form that can be shared again and again."

Special joys

Jim: "Helping people with substantial, heartfelt, meaningful stories who didn't think they could express themselves. . . who had been told they couldn't write, to help set them free from what they'd been told, that they couldn't communicate..

"We felt our effort was the establishment of a standard for written expression in service. It was a special time, it solidified a lot of what I believe in.

"Today, my primary joy is that the magazine still exists."

Ron: "It was a great joy to be the guy who got to see everything, to hear the voice of NA in its unedited form.

"Meeting people who felt they knew me, and I knew them, through the work. When I was hired there were only nine WSO employees. There was a lot of joy associated with that period of rapid growth, being able to see the office go from an idea on the drawing board to really grow up."

Andy: "I agree with Jim and Ron that a great joy happens with meeting people and helping get their ideas ex-

pressed. The growth of the NA Way networker system is what is bringing me the most joy overall."

Heartaches

Jim: "That we, voting participants, allowed the structure, the WSO, to take over the magazine from the fellowship, removing the committee as the administrator.

"By that, we inhibited the magazine. It became a vehicle of 'politically correct' expression. Whatever the climate of world services, the magazine began to mirror."

Ron: "I always wanted so much more than we seemed allowed or able to do. There's a tremendous potential to develop the NA message in real time, even the controversies.

"Two biggest obstacles are the unwillingness within the NA service structure to just lay it out there and publicly discuss some of the more painful controversies and what I perceived to be the fellowship's disinterest. At places like meetings of the Joint Administration Committee my jaw would drop when I heard 'If we only had a forum. . .'"

Andy: "Priorities. Perhaps because the magazine has been around so long and through so many ups and downs, the fellowship's leadership seems to take it too much for granted. I see lots of money and energy put into the development of other projects and

wonder why more attention isn't paid to the development of *The NA Way*."

The future

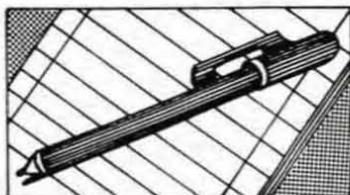
Jim: "It could break free from the shackles of 'propaganda-vehiclicism' and mediocrity to lead in purity of principle and clarity of expression, again, or continue along the path of meaninglessness."

Ron: "My thoughts about the future extend from what I mentioned earlier. The dream is that the fellowship accept the magazine, embrace it, subscribe to it and read it; for people to see it as a central part of the fellowship's effort to carry the message."

Andy: "By encouraging an equitable generation of material from diverse NA communities, networkers will effectively influence the message in *The NA Way*."

"I have great hope that the NA Fellowship will recognize the fact that the magazine really belongs to everyone. I hope the fellowship collectively accepts responsibility and authority for the magazine's content, through approved guidelines, the review panel, the network, and the editorial board. Business and spirit must co-exist for *The NA Way* to reach its potential. I think during the next few years we'll see supporters of these seemingly different agenda increasingly give each other a break."

Viewpoint



On specialized groups

One of the greatest gifts Narcotics Anonymous has given me is the removal of one of my biggest character defects and shortcomings—prejudice. NA is a place where we are all equal. Anonymity means “a state of bearing no name.” That means we are all the same. We are not judged for the color of our skin, how good looking we are, what our sexual orientation is, whether we’re male or female, how much money we have, what kind of drugs we used, what kind of education we have, how much clean time we have—the list goes on and on. We are all just simply addicts.

The fact that I have been able to meet and interact with addicts of many different cultures, beliefs and

lifestyles has allowed me to change the way I think and feel, not only toward addicts, but toward all people. I love and accept everyone for who and what they are and I view all human beings as my brothers and sisters.

However, we have a dilemma. In my small, rural area, it has been suggested that “there is a great need for a women’s group in NA.” I realize that this is not a new idea, that there are specialized NA meetings throughout the fellowship and that these meetings have been going on for a long time. I suggest that these special meetings rob me of a better understanding of my fellow addicts, and them a better understanding of me.

Because I don’t attend a specialized meeting, does that make me a “normal addict?” Or maybe I should form a specialized group for white, male, heterosexual addicts who have over five years clean time, are over 30-years-old, fat, and seek sexual self-gratification, by themselves, when the moon is full.

A majority of the specialized groups I have heard about are for males, females, gays and lesbians. A lot of them justify these meetings by noting that “any addicts are welcome.” If any addicts are welcome, why make the distinction? It is my belief that specialized groups promote problem discussion, something that should be

reserved for the addict and his/her sponsor. NA is a program of solutions. I would dearly like to know what issues of recovery can’t be discussed in an NA meeting. Is it Step One? Step Two? Step Three? What?

I think that specialized meetings violate several traditions, if not all of them. I don’t intend on devoting much time on why the traditions are being violated, because I believe it’s the very idea that there are differences in addiction that is at issue here.

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.” It doesn’t say “to the lesbian addict who still suffers,” “the gay addict who still suffers,” “the female addict who still suffers,” or “the male addict who still suffers.” The Fifth Tradition simply reads “. . .the addict who still suffers.”

Imagine, if you will, a newcomer to NA named Harry. Harry has only been clean for one week and he hasn’t found a sponsor yet. (I know, it’s hard to believe.) This particular day, Harry has been fired from his job and his girlfriend dumped him. He’s angry at the world and he has the urge to use badly. He desperately needs a meeting. Harry pulls a meeting list from his wallet and finds that the only meeting available that day is a women’s group. Even though the meeting has an open invitation to all addicts, I believe he won’t go because he has a penis, and because of his preconceived notion of what might go on at a women’s group. In fact, I believe it is very likely that Harry will go out and use.

“The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.” The last

sentence of the third paragraph of the Third Tradition also reads. “We are addicts, and our problem is addiction.” It doesn’t make a distinction of different types of addicts or addiction and neither should our meetings.

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.” The First Tradition also reads, “One of the most important things about our new way of life is being a part of a group of addicts seeking recovery.” Our common welfare means that we are simply addicts seeking recovery, not several groups of special addicts who are different than other addicts.

I could go on about other traditions that, in my opinion, I think are being violated by special groups, but I’ve got more important things to do, like eating twinkies and watching TV. But my basic premise is that specialized meetings contradict the NA message of freedom from addiction for all addicts.

I am not upset that these meetings exist and I will not get upset if a women’s group starts in my area, because it takes a great deal more to get me upset today, thanks to NA. I only wish the best for all addicts seeking recovery, even those who attend specialized meetings. Today, I live by “principles before personalities.”

In love and recovery,

Troy L., Wisconsin

AIDS— An outside issue, or not?

When will the controversy end? I have been to several meetings recently where more and more addicts are beginning to open up, and talk about this disease (AIDS) which is taking us (addicts) by the hundreds, maybe even thousands. And I have heard the cry for love and understanding. Why are they sometimes pushed aside and told that AIDS is an outside issue and shouldn't be talked about in meetings?

This really makes me angry when it happens—but many of the people saying such things have substantial amounts of clean time. So I tend to keep my mouth shut to keep controversy down.

But I sometimes wish I had the guts to say something. Now I am saying my piece in writing. Over the last three and a half years of clean time, I have seen six people buried due to this other disease, which seems to be taking us faster than active addiction. That's about one person every six months or so, average. And recently I have found out that three more

friends have tested positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. I have had HIV tests done and so far they all have come back negative, but I am not out of the water yet.

The only thing I have found out about what our traditions say is that outside issues shouldn't be brought into our meetings, to keep NA as a whole out of public controversy. So what is the public controversy when an addict needs to share what is going on with him/her when he/she is dying from this disease?

I saw my first sponsor keep her mouth shut and suffer because AIDS was not a discussable subject in her meetings. Those of us who were close to her knew what was going on, but a lot of people were afraid to even get near her due to their own ignorance. In the end, while she was still able to go to meetings, she finally opened up and some of the ignorance went away—but it doesn't have to come to that, or does it?

If I ever did test positive, I am sure that I could stay clean. But would I be shut up in meetings if I needed to share? Our Third Tradition states that "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using," and that tells me that if I have a desire to stop using then I can attend any meeting. I also have learned that I supposedly can share about any feelings I am going through at that time. So that brings me back to the original question: AIDS—an outside issue, or not? Well, I personally think that it is not an outside issue. In fact, I think it is a very real and scary issue for a lot of us addicts—whether we are HIV positive or not. I know that I will

keep on going, and believe you me, I will keep on fighting.

Anonymous, Texas

More response to "Don't let me go."

I hear you—now get off your pity pot!

I was clean five years before I got a car. I was told that if I found a way to get dope, I could find a way to get to a meeting. I spent twenty-four hours each day finding ways and means to use. I only need one hour for a meeting.

I'm big, I'm burly, I'm overweight. I'm a disabled vet. Big deal! I'm an addict—now that is a big deal. Find the similarities, I was told, not the differences and the "reservations." Where I got clean, there were hundreds of recovering addicts with BMWs and Rolexes: I couldn't afford a Timex. I was told that if I wanted what they had (in the way of recovery) I needed to make an effort to get it. After the meetings they'd form a circle and talk about where they wanted to go afterwards. I thought they made that circle to purposely keep me out. I'm not that important. I pushed my head in, listened, showed up where they went, sat at their table and got to know them until they were interested in knowing me.

I went to conventions with fifty cents in my pocket. I found a way to get there. I didn't have to buy a package or rent a room. Meetings of NA are open to all and still, today, I'll fight tooth and nail to make sure of that.

Maybe in the past you had to (graphic simile bleeped/censored/deleted) to get in a car, but sticking out your thumb to get to a meeting, convention or dance is hardly prostituting.

I smoked. I chewed tobacco. I quit, using the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. When I first got clean I needed to be able to sit and shake and puke and smoke in meetings, and be allowed to do that! I was loved and excused until I was healthy. Had you not let me puke and smoke and share, I may never have gotten or stayed clean.

When I was healthy enough and had a foundation strong enough, I quit. Have I become too overwhelmed with my "betterness" to deny someone else their unhealthy habits? To deny a newcomer the encouragement that was bestowed upon me as a newcomer? I don't like the smoke, but I love what was so freely given to me, and if I can allow someone to be wrong, and someone else to be an ass, I can allow another to smoke. One day they'll get better. I'll pray for them in the meantime. It's not where NA has gone or what it's become. It's an inside job, like everything else.

Call your sponsor, call me, go to a meeting, push your weight around, and follow along to wherever addicts go after meetings.

I moved about three years ago to a place where, sometimes, I still feel I'm an outsider in a very biased environment. Nobody is gonna push me out of an NA meeting. If anything, I'm gonna push them. I earned my seat, and no one denies me what I've earned.

So, work the steps.

B.B., North Carolina

Frankly, I give a damn

As I was typing this article, I started having reservations about sending it, feeling like maybe I'm being too judgmental or self-righteous. I am told that I am, sometimes, and I know that I can be that way. But I feel so strongly about this and see so much relapse around me that I'm sending it anyway, and leave the decision as to printing it to a group conscience.

I get asked to share at meetings all the time and thanked, more often than not, for being so frank. These are fine lines that we walk sometimes. I really try to speak from God's influence, yet realize that I am an addict, too, and will often slip in my own two cents' worth.

I am writing in response to an article I read, called "Don't let me go," in the May 92 issue. I could really feel the honesty and pain shared in that

story. I went through some feelings of my own in reading it; from empathy to anger.

I don't want to infer that I know what is best for anyone. By sharing my experience, strength and hope, sometimes others can relate. The author ended her article by saying, "Is there anyone who hears me?" The main thing I want to say is, yes—I hear you.

I hear you, and I hear your disease. I've realized that I have a disease that is always with me, waiting patiently to find any crack in my armor of recovery to begin its insidious work on me. Although our First Step is written in the past tense, I understand that I am always powerless over my addiction and continue to introduce myself as "I'm an addict, my name is L."

One of the major shortcomings that will take me down fast is self-pity. I have no peace or serenity when I am busy polishing my pity pot. And I, like everyone else in the program, can find plenty to feel sorry about when I look for it. I can moan and groan with the best of them.

Rationalizing my negative attitude also comes easily, as I've had years of practice. Like most addicts, I'm pretty good at sales and don't have much trouble getting sympathy and "poor yous" from others, which only helps to fuel my fearsome fires.

My disease loves my pity pot and delights in the high gloss I can give it. I have loaned it out on occasion and recently have thought that it was gone. But I was able to dig it out of the closet and though it was all dusty and crusty, I got busy cleaning it up.

Fortunately, I caught myself this time, shared openly in a few meetings and moved on to more enjoyable tasks.

I believe that self-centeredness is the core of my disease. As shown in the *IP Triangle of Self Obsession* "We never seem to find the self-sufficiency that others do. . . We become self-obsessed. . . our wants and needs become demands. . . fulfillment is impossible and we react with anger and fear as people, places and things cannot possibly fill us."

When I find myself in a "me, me, me" mode, I experience lack in my life. When I am living and giving, just for today, I receive everything that I need. Yes, I am special, as special as every grain of sand on the beach; equal to every human being, no more, no less. Humility is a blessing from working the steps.

One thing that I learned is that *my* recovery is *my* responsibility. It is not the place of my home group, my sponsor or my area to work my program. Instead, unconditional love lets each one learn his or her own lessons.

A few invaluable teachings I share are, "If your home group is not the best in the world, then do something to make it so or find a new one." "When all else fails, grab a newcomer." And one of my favorites, "Don't quit five minutes before the miracle."

Finally, I would like to say I, too, miss some of the old ways we had about us in the program. I remember when newcomers were asked to listen, when unhealthy behavior was confronted, and relapse was not ok. Today, sometimes, we are "loving" addicts right out of the rooms.

To pamper an ego, to offer "poor yous" to self-pity or to say "it's ok" to really unhealthy behavior is just feeding the disease. There is a difference between unconditional love and enabling. We owe it to ourselves and to the newcomers to bring back into vogue loving confrontation. It is what helped me to stay clean and to change. We need to change because "the same person will use again."

L.C., Virginia

Available to us all

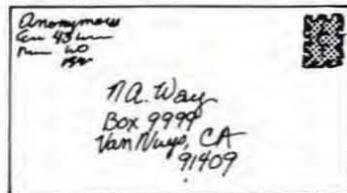
There are addicts in recovery who may need to take pain medicine. Also some addicts are dying because of actions taken in their addiction.

Personally, I'd much rather see them be allowed to share about it in the context of dealing with their reality in recovery and staying clean like they are doing than to die a using addict because they couldn't face it alone.

Even when dealing with other issues, my addiction is sure to come out. At that time another addict's support is without parallel. Let's keep the saying "that no addict seeking recovery need ever die". . . alive! Let's keep a pure message, but NA cannot afford to be too elite. Thanks.

M.K., Florida

From our readers



Working

Today I went to a meeting where a newcomer was talking about how life was going great and he was expecting the bottom to fall out. It took me back to all the times I set myself up to fail. And how failures brought me to the home of NA.

When I got here they shared, "Read the book" and "the answers are in there." I found the steps and looked at my disease. At first look I thought it was the drugs and that as soon as I worked through them the problem would be through.

Well, there goes that ideal of brain power out the window. It took me awhile to catch what Step One meant about addiction. My whole being is about addiction. Today, looking through my clean time, I see how when I work the steps, read the Basic Text and work with other recovering people, my life unfolds into a new being. When I hold on to the old ideal that I can do it on my own, I set up my disease to run rampant in my life.

Today I am living in a town that has only one meeting a week. All the time I have on my hands, I thought I could handle it. Then, during the meeting, I thought about "I," how that has set me up so many times to go on a run to self destruction. So I asked after the meeting who would be willing to

help start another meeting.

Today we are working on finding a place and we are back doing what keeps me clean. If I am working for the solution, it's hard to set myself up to fail. Our magazine has helped me stay here. The message of recovery has helped me during meetings and, today, gives me strength to keep on keeping on. Thank you.

S.W., Wyoming

Thanks

Hi, my name is Bob and I am an addict.

I have just finished reading a couple of back issues of *The NA Way Magazine* and felt compelled to write. I've been clean for over three years now, thanks to the Twelve Steps and fellowship of NA. For me it was a long road. It took nine years in and out to get my first year clean. I can't express the joy and love this fellowship has given to me.

On April 30, 1992, I picked up my three-year medallion in a room of over seventy recovering addicts who were standing up, clapping and saying they love me. I'm thirty-four years old and I have never experienced the feelings of love and joy from so many people I felt that night.

I just wanted to write so I could ex-

press my gratitude to the Straight Forward Group of Narcotics Anonymous, Fort Smith, Arkansas, for telling me to "keep coming back."

B.C., Arkansas

ASC not a "circus"

Last night, I attended an institutional NA meeting. During announcements, I announced vacant (or soon to be) positions at our ASC. I looked around and saw all these blank faces staring at me. It was like I was speaking a foreign language. I had to think fast to get the meaning and importance across. I explained what ASC was, what we do and how important it is to us! I finished by stating that my experience has been "NA can survive without me, I can't survive without NA." Funny thing happened. I noticed smiles and nods of agreement. I have been carrying this around with me like a monkey on my back.

My life, as it always is, is filled with commitments, responsibilities and endless changes. Too many to list in only one *NA Way Magazine*. I just celebrated three years clean and am (to the best of my ability) making a list of all persons I have harmed. I am not exempt from the ups and downs of life. I find myself still the suffering addict *we* have a moment of silence for.

Despite what goes on in my life, I can't forget what has so freely been given to me. It has played a big part of getting me where I am today. Therefore, I express my gratitude in action by giving it away, freely.

In my recovery, I have served in numerous positions. My term as secretary at ASC meeting will be over in July. I have taken time to reflect. It has been difficult serving in this position at ASC this year. No matter what was going on in my life, how I was feeling or how I acted, I showed up every month. Even the times I didn't want to, like last month when I was dealing with an emotional reality. Or the month I had a phone confrontation with another addict. Or the month I had to admit misusing the area's money. I did what was expected of me, most of the time, the best I could.

My experience with ASC has helped me in so many ways. Like admitting I am powerless when things aren't going my way. Trusting that there is a power greater than me that is (and should be) in control. I've learned to admit my wrongs and be accountable for my actions. I learned when I walked into these rooms with a desire to stop using, I became a member, I have a right to my seat—I've earned it. I also have an opinion—I've earned it. I've been given Twelve Steps to live my life by and Twelve Traditions to live with others. ASC is the best place I've found (yet) to put these principles to use for the good of our fellowship, as well as to help me grow in my recovery.

I've heard area service referred to as "area circus" countless times. This disturbs me. My recovery is not and has never been, isolated to a big-top arena. Just as my disease is patient and can run rampant, my recovery has to know no boundaries, always a

step ahead. As a member of NA, I take a seat at ASC every month and do my best to work in the solution.

For anyone reading this article who has never been involved with area service because of what you've heard or a bad experience, remember, NA is a *we* fellowship, *we* need support, experience, strength and hope at area service. Together we can. Gratefully giving back,

L.I., Virginia

I came to believe

When I first came to NA it was by courtesy of the courts. I came to meetings and would get high afterward. After listening to other people I came to believe that staying clean was possible.

I continued to go to meetings and I got a sponsor. I believed he was going to help me stay clean. We spent a lot of time together. We were best friends. He taught me the importance of meetings and fellowship. This helped me stay clean for a year. After that I got involved in service. This kept me busy and stopped me from thinking about me.

For the next two and a half years this kept me going. I could talk to you about NA related things, but not a lot about personal recovery. I went through times of unemployment and loneliness. During this time service work held me together.

At three-and-a-half years clean I attended a convention in Colorado and the theme was "We Came to Believe." Here I was thinking I had it all together and all I wanted to do was

use. Thankfully my HP was there. Instead of stuffing it all inside I talked to some friends. I wanted to use and wasn't sure why. I cried and they stood by. I wanted answers, answers to anything. They just were there for me.

It was then I realized there was more to this program than just staying clean. My friends believed in me and wanted to help me. Today I know my HP works through everybody. If I truly want to recover I need to work the steps. Some of my greatest strides in recovery involves learning from past mistakes.

Five years have past since that convention and I am clean and in recovery. I came to believe that if I want things bad enough I will work hard enough to achieve them. Today I don't think about using drugs a lot, but I do know that I am powerless over my addiction and it can get me if I let it.

As long as I believe in HP and NA I know I can recover today. NA has taught me how to live with others and, most importantly, how to live with me. NA Rocks!

D.T., South Dakota

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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, NA office or phoneline number, and a post office box. (Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

The **NA Way**
MAGAZINE

PO Box 9999
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(818) 780-3951.

ALABAMA: Oct. 16-18, 1992; Surrender in the Mountains IX; Mount Cheaha, Alabama; info (205) 922-0680; Surrender in the Mountains, PO Box 678, Huntsville, AL 35804

BAHAMAS: Nov. 6-8, 1992; 5th Bahamas Area Celebration; Wyndham Ambassador Beach Hotel; rsvn.s (809) 327-8231; info (809) 324-0287; Celebration V, PO Box CB-11647, Nassau, Bahamas

CALIFORNIA: Nov. 20-22, 1992; 6th Annual Western States Public Information Learning Days; "The Connecting Link"; info (714) 776-0996 or (714) 449-0950

2) Jan. 21-24, 1993; 1st Central California Regional Convention; Red Lion Inn, Santa Barbara; info (805) 487-1768 or (805) 486-1950; Convention, PO Box 1534, Ventura, CA 93002

CANADA—ALSASK: Nov. 6-8, 1992; 6th Annual Alsask Regional Convention; "Catch the Train"; Polish Veterans Hall, 9203—144th Avenue; Edmonton, Alberta; info (403) 421-4429; ARCNA VI, BSMT 10022-103rd Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0X2

COLORADO: Oct. 23-25, 1992; 6th Colorado Regional Convention; "Entirely Ready"; Estes Park, Colorado Holiday Inn; info (800) 465-4329; rsvn.s (303) 447-3078

FLORIDA: Oct. 16-18, 1992; South Dade Area Unity Weekend; Marco Polo Resort and Hotel, 192nd Street and Collins Avenue (Ocean Front), Sunny Isles, Florida; info (305) 221-1198; hotel (800) 327-6363; Unity Weekend, PO Box 141514, Coral Gables, FL 33114

2) Oct. 23-25, 1992; 5th Annual Florida Regional Hospitals and Institutions Awareness Weekend; Riverside Inn Resort, Homosassa, Florida; rsvn.s (800) 442-2040; info (813) 547-0444

3) Jan. 22-24, 1993; 4th Annual Palm Coast Spiritual Retreat; "The Spirit Soars"; Gold Coast Christian Camp, Palm Beach County, FL; info (407) 743-4579; Spiritual Retreat, 1605 US 1 Apt A-403, Jupiter, FL 33477

INDIANA: Nov. 14, 1992; Indiana Multi-Regional H&I Awareness Day; Donner Center, Donner Park, Columbus; phoneline (812) 331-3974

IRELAND: Nov. 6-8, 1992; 8th Irish Convention of NA; "It's Crystal Clear"; Jurys Hotel, Waterford; IRCNA, PO Box 1368, Sherriff St Dublin 1, Ireland

MAINE: Oct. 31, 1992; Northern Maine Area is sponsoring PI Learning Day and Halloween Dance; John Baptist High School, Bangor, ME 04401; info (207) 945-4311

MASSACHUSETTS: Jan. 8-10, 1993; 1st Boston Area Convention; Westin Hotel, Copley Place, Boston, MA; rsvn.s (800) 228-3000; info (617) 424-0958

MISSISSIPPI: Nov. 13-15, 1992; Surrender by the Seashore Gulfoast Area; Biloxu, MS; Speakers and Workshops interpreted in ASL.; info (601) 863-6285 or (601) 868-8595

NEW YORK: Nov. 7-8, 1992; 3rd Annual Multi-regional (Conn., GTR NY, NNJ, NJ, and GTR Philly) Learning Days. Day's Inn Hotel, 440 W. 57th St., NYC. Call hotel at (212) 581-8100. Info, (718) 891-5324

NEW ZEALAND: Oct. 24-26, 1992; 3rd Aotearoa Regional Convention; "Spring Clean"; Palmerston North College of Education, Centennial Drive, Palmerston North; info 64 4 3852276 or 61 2 5651875; Aotearoa NZRC III, PO Box 133, Palmerston North, New Zealand

OHIO: Dec. 31, 1992; New Year's Eve Dance; Ohio National Guard Armory, 2170 Howie Road, Columbus, OH; info (614) 252-1700

2) Jan. 1-3, 1993; Central Ohio Area Convention IV; "Point of Freedom-Living the Dream"; Radisson Hotel Columbus North, Columbus, OH; rsvn.s (800) 333-3333; info (614) 297-7472 or (614) 252-1700; COACNA IV, PO BOX 10323, Columbus, OH 43201-7323

OREGON: Nov. 13-15, 1992; 15th Pacific Northwest Convention; info (503) 344-6040; EASC, PO Box 262, Eugene, OR 97440

PENNSYLVANIA: Nov. 20-22, 1992; Tri-State Regional Convention; Pittsburgh Hilton; rsvn.s (800) Hiltons; info (412) 223-9489

SOUTH CAROLINA: Jan. 29-31, 1993; 13th Annual Area Convention; Holiday Inn, 4295 Augusta Road, Greenville, SC 29605

SWEDEN: Oct. 16-18, 1992; Sweden's 1st NA Service Conference; "Try Service-It Works"; Kirsebergs Fritidsgard, Dalhemsgatan 5, Malmo, Sweden

TENNESSEE: Nov. 25-29, 1992; Volunteer Regional Convention; Memphis Marriott Hotel, Memphis, TN; info (901) 323-7783; rsvn.s(800) 228-9290; VRCNA X, PO Box 11107, Memphis, TN 38111-0107

TEXAS: Oct. 23-25, 1992; 5th Annual Best Little Regional Convention; Abilene, Texas; need speaker tapes minimum five years clean, workshops three years

2) Apr. 9-11, 1993; LSRCNA VIII; Hyatt-Regency, Town Lake, Austin; if you wish to speak at meetings or workshops write by November 30, 1992; Two years clean time requirement for workshops, five years for main speakers; Programming LSRCNA VIII, PO Box 19444, Austin, TX 78760

VERMONT: Oct. 30—Nov 1, 1993; 3rd Champlain Valley Area Convention; Ramada Inn, South Burlington, VT; info (802) 229-4363; CVACC, PO Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406

VIRGINIA: Jan. 8-10, 1993; 11th AVCNA "The Journey Continues"; Hyatt Richmond, Richmond, VA; rsvn.s (804) 285-1234; info (804) 756-8303; XI AVCNA, PO Box 15664, Richmond, VA 23227-5664

WEST VIRGINIA: Oct. 30—Nov. 1, 1992; Mountaineer Regional Service Convention; "True Colors"; Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV; info (304) 343-8143; MRSCNA, PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

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home group

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.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA 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.