

*My Gratitude Speaks...
When I Care
and When I Share
With Others
The NA Way*

THE **NA Way** MAGAZINE[®]

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit 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.

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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There are no big deals, only opportunities

My "big deal" began on a summer day at the beginning of June 1995 when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. At thirty-seven years of age, I equated this diagnosis with a death sentence. Fearful thoughts ran rampant in my head. The committee was in full force and wouldn't give me any peace. My mind would not stop racing, and my body felt as tight and ready to spring as a rubber band stretched to the max.

The doctor said I would need a mastectomy and probably chemotherapy afterwards. I listened in a daze while he related my prognosis to my family. All at once I decided I couldn't cope with this news. I needed chemical relief, fast! These circumstances justified the use of sedatives to calm me down, and I said as much to my mother. My mother tried to calm me down and talk me out of it. (Now, this is the same mother who seven years ago didn't think I

had a problem and did not like *her* daughter going to *those* meetings.)

By now I had rationalized that dealing with cancer was a "big deal" and that my addiction recovery was going to have to take a back seat while I dealt with my cancer recovery. I also said I was going to let go of all the women I was sponsoring so I could concentrate on myself.

A Higher Power must have been looking out for me that day. A short time later the phone rang and it was my sponsor. (It seems my mother was concerned, and called her). We talked and cried for a long time. She suggested I call her sponsor. It turns out that my sponsor's sponsor had had the same surgery and chemotherapy eleven years ago. She had six years in the program at the time. She suggested that I stay close to meetings, share about what was going on, and not let go of any of my sponsees, as they would turn out to be a blessing. She told me that as long as I stayed close to God, the fellowship, and the Twelve Steps, I would be just fine. She gave me hope, the same kind of hope you all gave me when I first tried to stop using. All of a sudden, I knew in my heart that I didn't have to do this alone and that there were others ahead of me to light the way, just like with my recovery.

It's been a year since my mastectomy. I was out of work for seven months while having numerous surgeries, reconstruction, and five months of chemotherapy. The fellowship, God, and the steps carried me the entire time. People brought meetings to my house or drove me to them when I was unable to drive. Because

of this, I was usually able to make a minimum of three meetings a week no matter how sick I was. Fellow addicts loved me even when all my hair fell out and my weight dropped drastically. Sponsees brought me groceries, made my bed, and held my hand. I've never felt so loved in all my life.

The God of my understanding was there during the darkest hours to give me courage and strength to go on

and saying, 'I'll get back to you.' He's really listening!"

Speaking of my husband, I met him at an NA dance in 1988. He asked me to dance and I said no. He asked God to put me in his life and we were married less than a year later, and we've been together ever since. I can't begin to thank Narcotics Anonymous enough for the gift of the man who is my husband today. You took a hope-

NA gave us the ability to ask, "What can I learn from this, and how can I use it to help someone else?"

when despair, self-pity, and fear threatened to do me in. I remember once after the surgery when the grief was so great and I felt no one else understood, I got down on my knees and asked for help. I prayed to God, "I know you are there, but I need to *know* it. Please give me a sign." I wasn't off my knees one minute before the phone rang and it was a woman who had heard me share two weeks before at a meeting. She also had cancer years ago and let me know it was all right to be scared or to cry. I broke down and let it all out. And it was okay. After the call I ran to my husband, telling him what happened. I said, "God isn't just sort of listening

to-die junkie, a convicted felon, who was homeless for seven years due to his addiction, and turned him into a responsible, loving person who could stand by his wife at a time like this. He was a runner and a taker all his life, but he was there to bathe me and dry my tears and tell me I was beautiful even when I was bald and had only one breast. Together we are facing life on life's terms and this experience has bonded us even closer together. NA gave us the ability to ask, "What can I learn from this, and how can I use it to help someone else?" Our hearts are filled with gratitude.

In Miami we're affectionately known as "The Recovery Team of

Gary and Debbie" because our relationship is secondary to our recovery. In fact, we don't work on our relationship, we work on ourselves, and that way we are always bringing a healthier person to that relationship and as we get better, it gets better. My husband likes to say, "We've had only two fights in the last eight years. My wife thinks we had more, but I only count the ones I've participated in." He does have a wonderful sense of humor. In fact, one of the things that helped me through last year the most was the ability to laugh. When I started losing all my hair due to chemotherapy, my husband shaved my head. While he lathered my head up, tears rolled down my face. And Gary in his infinite wisdom said, "You know, the couple that shaves together stays together." What a gift, to be able to find humor in any situation. Addiction is truly a disease of attitude, and NA has given me the ability to change my attitude and see things differently. Instead of getting high to avoid facing reality and asking "Why me?", I can practice acceptance and ask, "What am I going to do about it and who can help me?"

I can honestly say that not only am I grateful to be an addict, but I am grateful for having cancer. It really puts things into perspective and gets your priorities in order. When you get right down to it, none of us know how long we have. And because I really "get" that now, living fully and following my dreams have become very important. And many blessings have come my way as a result.

I was even asked to lead a step series and share my experience,

strength, and hope on the steps while I was on chemotherapy. This helped me to focus on the solution and get out of myself. Each week I would first share how I applied the steps to the disease of addiction and then relate the steps to what was going on in my life at the time. Having cancer brought a whole new meaning to the concepts of powerlessness, acceptance, and turning it over.

Instead of letting go of all of my sponsees, I actually started sponsoring two more women. It gave me great joy to know I could help and inspire others even during my own trying times. I desperately needed to get out of self and be of service when this was all going on. (Later, I did take some time off for myself for spiritual healing and renewal, to refill the well, so to speak.) But I've never been more grateful to be a recovering addict than I was last year, with steps, tools, a Higher Power, and a loving fellowship surrounding me and carrying me when all hope seemed lost.

Lastly, I am happy to report that my clean date remained the same. It turned out that I needed step relief, not chemical relief. I found even dealing with the big "C" was no excuse to use. I now know what they mean when they say, "There are no big deals, only opportunities." Thank you, NA.

DB, Florida

The loneliest road in America

I was living in Florida and got an opportunity to travel to Vancouver, British Columbia, just north of Seattle. I decided to ride out on my motorcycle, for the adventure and a chance to go to lots of meetings.

On the way out, after crossing the Rocky Mountains, I was advised to stay off Highway 50, a very lonely stretch of road. I was told that if anything happened I'd be without help. So I skipped Highway 50 and went on to Vancouver where I worked and joined the warm and loving NA Fellowship there.

On my return trip to Florida, I headed down through Washington, Oregon, and into Northern California, just taking it day by day.

Again I was told, "Stay off Highway 50—very lonely."

That was it! I asked, "Where is it?" and proceeded to cross Nevada on this road. To my surprise, there was a large road sign saying, "Highway



50—Loneliest Road in America." There were only a couple of little cowboy towns across the entire state. It was lonely.

Right in the middle of Nevada is the town of Austin with a billboard that reads, "Welcome to the loneliest town on the loneliest road in America." While inside a cafe there, I heard another bike pull up next to mine. In came its owner, a typical biker, leather jacket, chaps, boots, etc. He scanned the room for the other biker, me. Out of character, I waved him over and offered a cup of coffee.

He started telling me how great his bike was. I was barely listening when he said, "Yeah, it's great to have a windshield because me and my buddy have a commitment and we ride to the next city once a week." Commitment! I knew right away what that meant: H&I! I reached out my hand and said, "I'm in Narcotics Anonymous!" He

said, "Me too." Wow! There we were in the middle of nowhere. So right there we had a meeting (a couple of good addicts can pull this off and no one will even know). We named the meeting "The Loneliest Meeting in America."

God really shot holes through that lonely stuff. Yeah, God does have a sense of humor.

What a feeling. I mean, what are the chances? I was told it wasn't a coincidence. It was a God-incidence. Just for the record, between the two of us we had over twenty years clean. The experience equaled being at a convention. Two addicts were all we needed.

It is really amazing what our Higher Power has in store. There have been many miracles and God-incidences in my recovery. Being clean is the big one. The path we take is the Twelve Steps, giving freely back what we have received.

Staying clean is the most important thing. As long as we just hang in there, no matter what, good things happen. I never would have guessed that recovery would have taken me all over this world, but it has.

There have been the best of times and times not the best. But through it all we learn to live a really good life. We become aware of a loving God that is with us all the time.

Love, forgiveness, kindness, compassion, joy, strength, hope, courage, guidance, and humility are just some of the gifts we receive. Working the steps, going to meetings—the bottom line is, don't pick up that first one, no matter what.

TM, Florida

Lifelong process

Accepting that my recovery is a lifelong process has been an adventure. Thirteen years ago, when I walked into my last rehab, I was physically, mentally, and spiritually bankrupt. At six foot, three inches tall and 138 pounds, I was close to death. I spent nine months in that rehab. On Sunday mornings, people from NA brought in a meeting. I don't remember anything that was said, but I do remember seeing people just like me, except they were clean, laughing, smiling, giving hugs—a truly amazing sight.

The next event was going to the Fourth East Coast Convention of NA at Lehigh University. I was amazed to see bikers, punk rockers, hippies, and normal-looking people all in one place. How dare they! They were smiling, hugging, laughing, and having fun. I kept looking in the trash cans for liquor bottles and smelling the air. I saw no evidence of people using. How strange! There were no fights or police. I don't remember much, except some time during the day realizing that I wanted to be a part of NA more than anything in the world.

My first five years were an adventure. I didn't use. I did act out on every single character defect I have. I learned about prices to pay for certain behavior. I tried to develop an understanding of some sort of power greater than myself. Once I came to an understanding that worked for me, I felt I had "arrived." On my fifth NA anniversary, a friend told me that now I would begin to realize how sick I was. Well, of course I was offended. How dare he!

For the next few years I was heavily involved in service work. I got all my good feelings from it. But at some point I started to resent all the work I was doing. My sponsor and I came to the conclusion that maybe no one else wanted to get involved because we were busy doing all the work. (Another awakening!) Guess what? The meetings are still happening and doing just fine without all of my wonderful wisdom. That is the sickness, be-

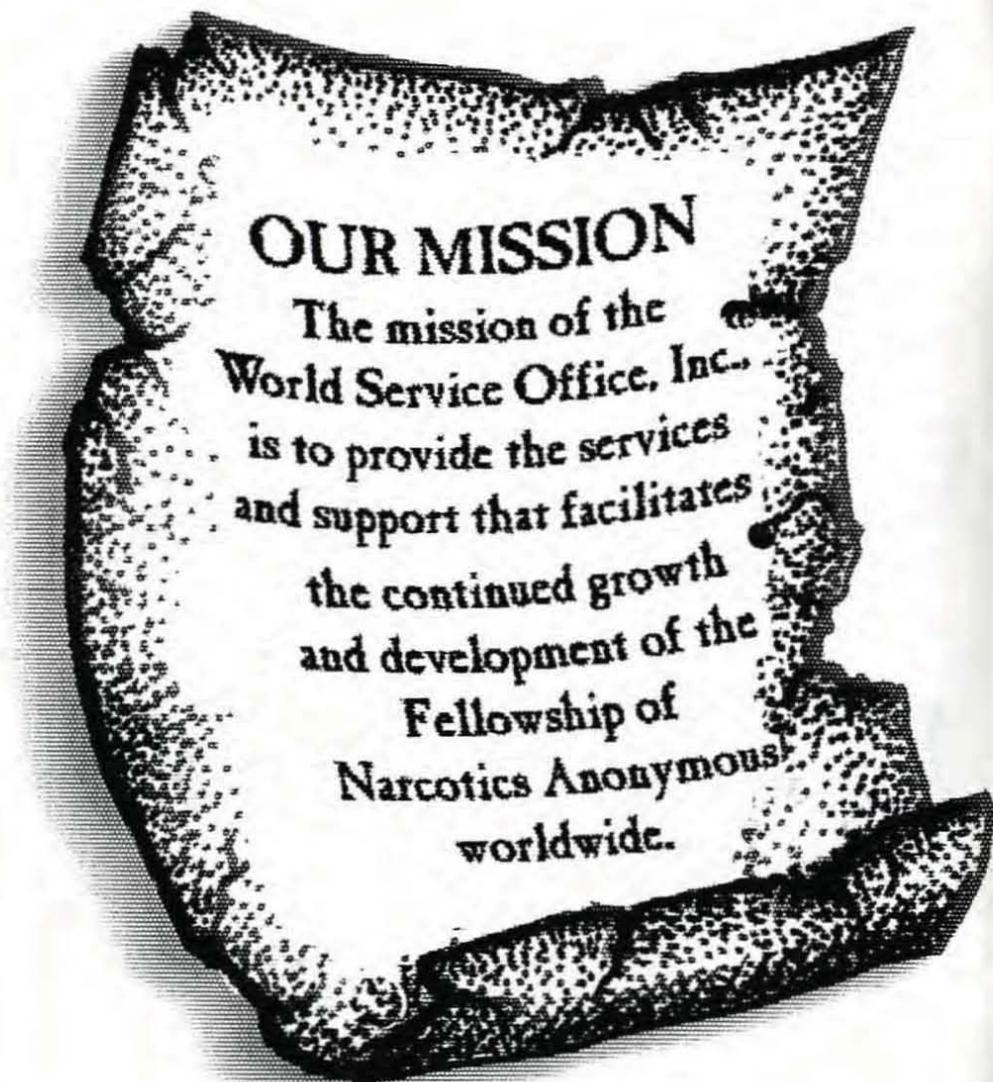
lieving that NA could never survive without my input. Well, just the opposite is true.

Keeping the inventory process alive is the only thing that will keep me clean and sane. The longer I stay clean, the more God reveals areas of my life that still need to be changed. My job is to be open to the fact that I'm still very sick. This is not an easy process. I must compare myself today with myself before, not myself with others. If I do that, I end up coming out ahead or behind, but it's never reality. I can stay excited about the recovery process when I see how far I've come. I love living my life according to spiritual principles.

Feeling connected to humanity, my ability to cry, my ability to laugh—these are the gifts that God has given me. My gift to God is to get out of His way so He can continue to work in my life. My life is none of my business. It's unfolding just as it's supposed to.

Anonymous





Viewpoint

As part of our public information efforts, Narcotics Anonymous participates in the International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations each year. We're pleased to present this report from the trusted servants who attended. -Ed.

Fulfilling our mission

In 1996 the World Service Conference adopted a vision statement, which, in part, states that one day:

NA communities worldwide and NA world services work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry the message of recovery;

Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

We at world services are taking steps to bring about this vision. We do this by participating at international conferences where we can carry the message of our fellowship to those professionals and non-government and government officials who can affect the lives of thousands of addicts.

The event we attended was the 16th International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations (IFNGO) Conference for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse. The dates of the conference were 1-6 December 1996. The theme for this conference was "Government Organizations and Non-Government Organizations Together Empowering Society for Drug-Free Human Resources."

We are striving to work with members of local NA communities to enhance our presence at these professional events. We ask these local NA members with public information experience to join our team of trusted servants to strengthen our expertise for the presentations.

This common experience helps the local fellowship gain important knowledge in participation at such events. It also allows us to find new human resources for NA in the future of world services.

Just this past December, Erik R, the WSC PI Committee's vice chairperson, and Garth P, a member of the World Service Board of Trustees, were assigned to make a presentation about NA at the IFNGO, which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Unique to this event was the selection of an additional trusted servant. Ramli S, chairperson of the Malaysian Public Information Committee, brought to the event previous PI experience and the background of a professional in the field of addiction treatment.

More than 600 participants came from thirty-two countries. The countries with the most participants were Indonesia (205), Malaysia (116), and Singapore (32). We were very lucky that we had Ramli as one of our presenters because he was able to speak the same language as 353 of the participants.

The first three days of the event consisted of opening ceremonies for the conference, host committee social events, and plenary sessions of the conference (a plenary session is one that has the attendance of all of the participants at the conference). One program event of note was the official opening of the conference by the President of the Republic of Indonesia on the first day of the conference at the Presidential Palace. What made this noteworthy for all of us attending was that we were allowed to greet and shake hands with the President, along with the chairman of the local Non-Government Organization that was hosting the IFNGO conference and the Minister of Social Affairs.

Unexpectedly on the same day, at a luncheon hosted by the Governor of the Special Territory of Jakarta, the IFNGO awarded Narcotics Anonymous a special medal to acknowledge NA's contribution as a worldwide organization to the IFNGO. Also awarded medals at this ceremony

were the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA). Garth accepted the award on behalf of world services. In our follow-up discussions, we came to understand that this was a very significant event, even allowing for the ceremonial circumstances of the award. This is the first time that our fellowship has been recognized at the IFNGO as a contributor. This recognition adds to our reputation, indicating to the attendees that NA is a beneficial "international institution," as we are identified in the program distributed at the conference.

The last three days of the conference were filled with workshops, field excursions to local institutions and hospitals, and the closing ceremonies on Friday, 6 December. There were many opportunities for us to network with other participants.

Both Garth and Ramli made presentations. Garth had put together the presentations utilizing papers from past professional events, the Institution Group Guide from WSC Hospitals & Institutions Committee, input from the Kuala Lumpur NA members (Malaysia), and trusted servant reports from past professional events. The External Affairs Committee of the WSB also contributed to the development of Garth's and Ramli's presentations.

Garth's presentation was titled "Narcotics Anonymous: Development of a Society of Recovering Drug Addicts in the Asia-Pacific." Ramli's was "Narcotics Anonymous in Your

Community: Getting It Started, Keeping It Going." Both were very well-received; the audience was interested throughout the presentations, in our opinion.

Networking is the name of the game at these events. Everyone does it—which makes it easier to get around and meet people. It was indeed fortunate that Ramli was with

field. He introduced Garth and Erik to many Malaysian participants, allowing us to invite them to our presentation. We believe that our introduction to and interaction with the Malaysian participants allowed for tacit recognition of NA in Malaysia as being part of a worldwide fellowship.

It seemed like all of our challenges were planned for by our Higher

*Learning how to be
"perfect strangers"
is often one of most challenging
tasks we face at these
types of events.*

us to facilitate conversation with Malaysian and Indonesian participants at the conference. Having a person with us who was familiar with the local culture was helpful in socializing and communicating with the Indonesians and Malaysians. We were taught some of their customs by Ramli: to use both hands when handshaking, and not to wear sunglasses when speaking to another person, or point with a single finger at other persons. Learning how to be "perfect strangers" is often one of most challenging tasks we face at these types of events.

Ramli is well-known in these circles for his previous work as a professional in the addiction treatment

Power because by the time we got the display table set up, the only space left in the exhibition area for us was directly in the pathway of the participants as they exited from the large hall used for the plenary sessions. Normally we would have been placed inside the exhibition area, which was located in a room off to the side. When the first session released for break, Erik was almost pushed right through a glass door by the rush of people to get to our table! He had to walk around the perimeter of the room just to get back to other side of the table. We must have had fifty people standing around our table. We lost a few Basic Texts before I was able to get them off the table! (We

could not bring very many Basic Texts due to the high cost of shipping to Indonesia, and we had intended to use them for display purposes only. Oh, well.)

We were really pleased by all the ruckus, not to mention attracting the conference media. Our display table got a lot of attention. We distributed a lot of literature, our presentation

We had many copies of both Ramli's and Garth's presentation papers. Ramli's had been translated into Bahasa Melayu by the Kuala Lumpur Local Translation Committee; it had to be reprinted several times due to popular demand. We gave away almost all the literature and presentation papers we brought. Several information pamphlets, a few Basic

...no matter where in the world we came from and where we sustained our recovery, the message of NA was universal.

papers, and our business cards. It reminded us of the merchandise room at the world convention.

We kept our display table stocked with NA literature and a translated presentation paper throughout the week. We used the pamphlets most suited for the public we expected to be at this event: "Am I an Addict?," "Who, What, How and Why" (also in Tagalog), "For the Newcomer," "For Those in Treatment," "The White Booklet," "Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous," and "NA: A Resource in Your Community." The one item we wanted to make sure got to all attendees was the Group Starter Kits. We also had the latest copy of *NA Update* (our newsletter for professionals).

Texts, a handful of Group Starter Kits, and the "Just for Today" video were all that remained. These leftover materials were given to Ramli to take back to the Malaysian NA Fellowship.

Although there were only three of us actually assigned to the event, there was another member in attendance who really added to our overall effectiveness. Tata M from the Philippines, a member of the World Services Translations Committee, happened to be in Jakarta on a business trip. He helped at the presentation by passing out literature, and, more importantly, participating in a role-play demonstration of how an NA meeting is conducted. We thought it went very

well, especially considering that it was so impromptu.

On Tuesday night, while we were rehearsing our presentations, we decided to have a role-play to demonstrate to the attendees what actually went on at an NA meeting. We went over the usual PI do's and don'ts in presentations. We reminded ourselves to focus our personal sharing on the importance of attending meetings to stay clean, working the program, and starting to live this new way of life within the fellowship.

We're sure that our "NA meeting" looked like any NA meeting to the observers. All four of us shared our experience, strength, and hope. We were very conscious of the fact that we needed to demonstrate the "international" nature of our fellowship. That the four of us were from Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the United States was perhaps the most convincing demonstration of that. What was very significant to us, and what we think came across to the participants, was that, no matter where in the world we came from and where we sustained our recovery, the message of NA was universal.

We had planned for Ramli to speak in Bahasa Melayu during our "NA meeting." At first he did. You could see the difference in how the audience responded to his sharing in Bahasa Melayu; they moved forward in their seats, stopped reading literature, and focused their attention on Ramli. Unfortunately, the workshop official hinted that the delivery of the paper should be in English, so Garth, noticing this situation, suggested to Ramli that he switch back into English,

which Ramli did. Too bad he couldn't continue speaking in Bahasa Melayu, at least for the Malaysians and the Indonesians.

The question and answer session was dominated by questions about NA. One man in the audience was very excited about NA and could not believe that we were "ex-addicts," meaning that he could not imagine any of us using drugs! The questions came from many angles; our answers emphasized meeting attendance as the core of our recovery, and we pointed out that an addict's success in recovery is largely dependent on his or her willingness to take responsibility for that recovery. In other words, no one can force an addict to work a program or even stay clean; it's totally up to the addict.

A wonderful opportunity came about as a result of this workshop. One of the attendants for our workshop just happened to be a local health services worker. She asked for help in starting an NA meeting there in Jakarta. We gave her several Group Starter Kits and a lot of advice. Over the rest of the conference we would often meet her in the hallways and engage her, asking and answering questions as best we could. Ramli offered his experience, strength, and hope to her for this endeavor, seeing as he understands the language and lives the closest to Jakarta.

We are all in agreement that we need to focus more attention on following up after these types of events. Fulfilling our mission won't be accomplished by making a good impression on a group of people once a year. We've asked the External Affairs

Committee of the WSB to continue exploring ways to increase our follow-up efforts.

One thing we will be doing to follow up grew out of our informal networking. We exchanged business cards with everyone we met, and the cards we collected were sent to the WSO for specific follow-up contact and so the names could be added to the mailing list for *NA Update*. The WSB EAC will also include these contacts in its public relations plan for the coming year.

Fulfilling our vision and mission aligns us with our primary purpose. We sometimes get perplexed about how we can best do this. But when we attended the sessions at this conference and listened to the participants, we wholeheartedly believed that world services participation in events of this scope is critical to NA's future. We were able to present our program of recovery to an international audience who can affect the lives of thousands, no, millions of addicts who suffer from the horrors of addiction.

Receiving a medal from the IFNGO may seem strange, frivolous, or even inappropriate to some. However, what this kind of recognition can do for us is to open doors. Our dream is that addicts in any land, who are looking to get NA started, will be met with encouragement from the professional community. We can imagine an addict arriving at an institution to carry the message, and finding a professional who says, "Narcotics Anonymous, oh yes, I've heard good things about it; I was at the IFNGO in Jakarta last year. Please come in." So it's more than a hunk of

metal; it's a physical representation of the possible—that Narcotics Anonymous will have universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

*Erik R (Hawaii),
Event Coordinator,
WSC PI Committee Vice Chair*

*Ramli S (Malaysia),
Presenter, Kuala Lumpur NA PI
Committee Chairperson*

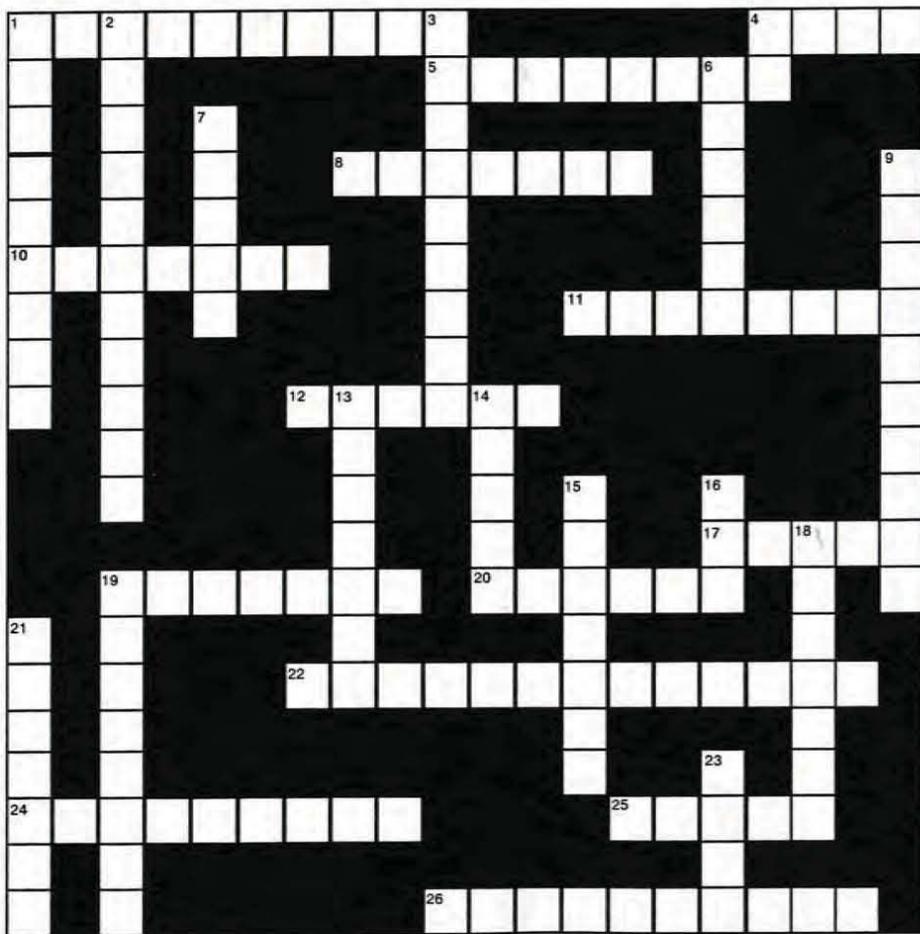
*Garth P (Australia),
Presenter, member of WSB, World
Service Translation Committee*



Home Group



**C R O S S W O R D
P U Z Z L E
T R A D I T I O N A L**



Many of the answers are from the Basic Text. Whenever a quote from the Basic Text is used, the page number appears.

Across

- 1) Each group should be _____ when dealing with itself.
- 4) Our traditions _____ only through understanding and application.
- 5) We learn to _____ these principles in all our affairs.
- 8) Carrying the message is our primary _____.
- 10) "Each group should be autonomous, except in _____, affecting other groups. . . ." (page 57)
- 11) "We need always _____ personal anonymity. . . ." (page 58)
- 12) How many we have of steps, traditions, and concepts
- 17) Personal anonymity is necessary at this level.
- 19) _____ workers.
- 20) The only requirement for membership.
- 22) These should be considered after principles.
- 24) "We keep what we have only with _____." (page 57)
- 25) _____, radio, and films.
- 26) When we apply them, some pitfalls are avoided.

Down

- 1) Our spiritual foundation is based on it.
- 2) "... freedom for the group springs from our _____." (page 57)
- 3) We learn to live by _____ principles.
- 4) It's a _____ program.
- 6) "Our _____ welfare should come first." (page 57)
- 7) _____, property, or prestige
- 9) Anonymity is our spiritual _____.
- 13) Our common _____.
- 14) "... our own experience has shown that these principles are just as _____ today . . ." (page 58)
- 15) Doing service is one way to carry it.
- 16) "They _____ the guidelines that keep our fellowship alive and free." (page 58)
- 18) "Personal recovery _____ on NA unity." (page 57)
- 19) "As long as the ties that bind us together are _____..." (page 57)
- 21) "Narcotics Anonymous should remain _____ nonprofessional. . . ." (page 57)
- 23) With vigilance, we can _____ what we have.

Submitted by DF, Mississippi



Newsletters

The Lego lesson

From *The Recoverer*, the Washington/Northern Idaho regional newsletter

I have been blessed in recovery with a solid marriage to a kind and loving man. One of the most fulfilling results of our union is our four-year-old son, Travis. He is a passionate, affectionate, and lively youngster, and I delight in looking at the world through his innocent eyes.

Not long ago, my husband and my son were sprawled out the floor playing with Travis's Legos. I took a moment away from my dinner preparations to watch their interaction, soaking in the gratitude of the moment. My husband operates heavy equipment for a living, and loves to build things. It's important to him that Travis learn how to "properly" build a bridge, a tower, or a house, making sure that everything is "structurally sound."

Each time my husband built a Lego masterpiece, he would say to Travis, "Look, son. See my bridge! See how you can drive under it and over it!" Travis, his face beaming with pure delight, would promptly reach over and smack the structure with his hand, destroying it, laughing out loud. Of course, this began to annoy my ever-so-proper husband, who would then scold Travis and begin to build his structure all over again. Travis had his own pile of Legos, and would build quickly, without much thought or reason. His structure, no matter what its shape, was always a castle, and as soon as all the Legos were in place, Travis would fight an imaginary battle between the good knights and the evil knights, reducing his castle to a pile of rubble in the process. He never seemed to mind that he had to build it all over again each time; in fact, he seemed to enjoy the process more each time he repeated it.

My husband, on the other hand, began to move away from Travis to protect his little stash of Legos, because, after all, he was grown up, and his priorities were different. He was trying to teach his young son something, and he wanted to build a structure that would impress Travis. He wanted to sit back and, with a flourish

of his arm, say, "There! See? Isn't it grand?"

I began to think. How much of our lives are like that? Don't I do that every day with the tasks I perform? When I clean the house, am I not thinking of the results that I can show off? I know I'm always a little bent out of shape if I do an extra special cleaning, and no one notices. Who am I cleaning for?

Or when I am able to go outside and ride my horse, am I enjoying the ride or thinking of the ribbons I may win in the show ring? Or what about my own wonderful son? Do I comb his hair just right and press his school clothes for him, or do I do it to impress other parents and his teachers?

Hmmmm. It was one of those moments in recovery that are so magical, a moment when the light goes on, a spiritual experience. For through the eyes of my child, I was growing, learning, and listening to the still small voice within.

Our grown-up, adult minds have a hard time of it sometimes. My husband's whole focus on the Legos was the result, the product. He was building not to build, but to finish. The small, wise child had a different focus. His delight was in the building, the time shared with his father, whom he adores, in the sheer joy of fitting one piece into another. Of course he knocked them all down; only then could he build some more! This young boy was just naturally living the principles of Narcotics Anonymous. He was truly living in the moment, unrestricted by a need to please, impress, or fix. The phrase "one day at a time" was the guiding force for my little boy,

and I wished for the thousandth time that I could let go that easily.

If I have learned nothing else in recovery, I have learned to listen and observe. When my days get especially harried, and I am caught up in damaging worries and stresses of living, I try to stop and remember the Lego lesson. It is the journey we are on, not the destination, that will sustain us. What does it matter if we build a golden castle to the sky, if along the way we are miserable? Please let me remember the Lego lesson and build my castle for the joy of building. If it reaches the stars, so much the better, but if not, I pray I may love each brick that I use to build my life.

JA, Washington

A World Service Conference experience

From *The Recoverer*, the Washington/Northern Idaho regional newsletter

We were seated toward the rear of the room. There were more than 300 people in attendance. The translation booth was positioned at the far right, against the wall in the center of

the room. The chair's podium was center front on risers, and the WSO employees were seated on the floor in front of the podium. Everyone was talking, excited to be there. There were hellos and hugs being exchanged. Many countries were represented, including almost every region in the United States. This was opening day at the World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous.

The first WSC I attended was in 1995. On the first day, a country asked to be seated on the conference floor so its representative could participate in discussions and voting. The representative shared what it took to get his country represented at the WSC, how his region had grown. By the time he was done sharing, I was overwhelmed and in tears. It was an awakening to the reality that, yes, we are a worldwide fellowship.

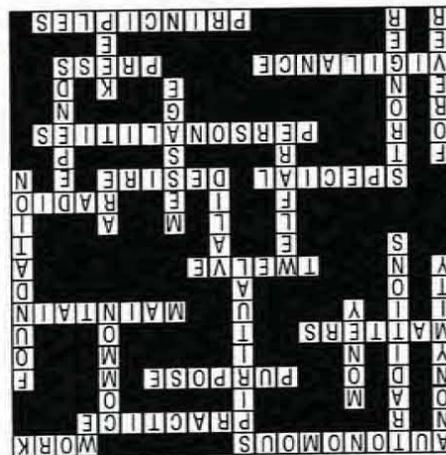
During the conference, there is a set agenda from the chair. The *Conference Agenda Report* is discussed, amended, and voted on. There's old business and new business. Reports are given. A budget is proposed and approved, usually with revisions. Positions are filled. The energy level stays charged throughout the entire conference. There are four microphones out on the floor for attendees to use. They are positioned in the middle of the conference floor. When I first got up to the microphone, I asked a question of the H&I committee during its report. While I stood at the mike, it felt like my heart was going to jump out of my chest because it was pounding so hard. Fortunately, the chair and vice chair answered my

question very graciously and I felt a little better.

Some people came to the mike with a lot of passion. The people from other countries sometimes came to the mike with an interpreter. Some people came to the mike and came to the mike! For these people there is a "Mike Hog Award" given at the end of the conference. The conference votes on who hogged the microphone the most and they are given a plaque with a hog and mike on it.

To sum up the World Service Conference, I would have to say that it is an event of blood, sweat, and tears. Isn't this a foundation, though, for growth in recovery? This is what happened for me. I grew by leaps and bounds in my personal recovery. I tried to carry our region's conscience, which helped me grow spiritually, and I met a wonderful group of recovering addicts who were trying to carry our NA message. For this I am grateful to have been of service in this position.

SE, Idaho



Viewpoint



Clean time: Who needs to know?

Telling people I have twelve years clean, or even that I have never had a slip, feels similar to telling people I am gay. Those of us who are gay or lesbian or bisexual or transsexual can't just come out once and get it over with. You know:

Dear Mom and Dad,
I'm gay.
cc: the world.

Unfortunately, it's not that easy. We will be coming out thousands of times over the course of our lifetime, as long as most people tend to believe virtually everyone else is heterosexual. The deal for me about coming out is that I always have to ask myself the question, "Is my sexual orientation germane in this situation? Do these people need to know?" A similar question applies to telling people about my clean time.

"Addict" is not a synonym for "stupid." If I tell people I have twelve years clean in order to lend authority to my proclamations, addicts sense immediately that they're being fed a bunch of bullshit. No matter how long I have in NA, if I'm talking shit and howling at the moon, I'm talking shit and howling at the moon.

For the most part, what I say and how I treat others is far more important to my fellow addicts than a specific number of days clean. I can be attractive at six months, just as I can be repellent at fifteen years. If my understanding of the word "anonymous" includes the idea of being without name, or being without title, then I am existing in a space without a hierarchy. We are, each and every one of us, equal at that moment.

Just as my being gay doesn't make me better than you or less than you, neither does my twelve years in NA. It is another neutral feature. Not an insignificant feature, but also not one which sets me above you in any hierarchy. Because your wisdom is not just a subset of my wisdom, there is never a point when you have nothing to offer me, no matter how much time you have and how much time I have.

If someone wishes to attach values to my homosexuality, or to my clean time, that's their privilege. It's about them. My recovery invites me to be

integrated and whole, owning all parts of me. It doesn't want me to be ashamed of my clean time and fearful of revealing it; my addiction does.

And so, just as there are those moments when my sexual orientation is germane, so too are there times when it is important to share my amount of clean time. I believe newcomers deserve to see real-life examples of "long-term" recovery. Sometimes only we can give them comfort when their peers go back to using. After all, we can tell them that most people who enter our doors go back to using. The ones who stay clean tend to be those who work the steps.

I neither deny my homosexuality nor do I wear my "My next husband will be normal" T-shirt to work. When we meet, I don't tell you the number of degrees I have or where I went to school. When I share, I don't begin or end with my clean date. I reveal all these things when it adds to understanding.

I don't ask the bus driver questions about my income tax, I don't ask heterosexuals how they came out to their parents, and I don't ask newcomers how they stay involved and avoid complacency. By knowing who is who, I can seek counsel in the appropriate places. This is simply a matter of respect.

When I read the passage "The newcomer is the most important person in any meeting..." I choose to understand that this means that everyone in the room is important, while recognizing that the newcomer brings us unique attributes and opportunities.

No one is dissed in this statement. It doesn't say, "The newcomer is the

only important person in the room." Woe be unto me if I resent the newcomer because he or she is probably the most fragile, confused, and needy among us.

But I could be wrong.

KE, Minnesota

Editorial reply

Regarding the "Meeting Etiquette" article in the September edition: I came to recovery by way of prison and hospitals. I first went to another twelve-step fellowship's meetings and found them very respectful and quiet. Hardly anyone went out for smoke breaks, and there was little to no talking other than by the recognized speaker. I was bored! You see, I am a hyper person who had used heroin and other drugs to face life on life's terms. I then went to an NA meeting and saw people laughing, talking out of turn, getting up and down, passing notes, and throwing things to and at one another. (Oh, did I mention the children making noise?) I loved it, and as a newcomer, made it my home group. That was 1986, and it's still my home group and I'm still clean.

To this addict, these ten steps of etiquette are self-righteous and self-serving.

The article ends with "Remember the Fifth Tradition!" I say, "Remember the Third Tradition!" There are

NA groups in my area that keep the etiquette rules. May HP bless and keep them, but don't "guru" me with etiquette. I follow the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of my ability. I don't need no stinking ten steps of etiquette.

KL, Oregon

In defense of newcomers

An old friend of mine killed herself three years ago. To protect her anonymity, I'll call her "J." J was in active addiction and had finally reached her bottom. Her only way out, she thought, was to throw herself in front of a train. A dramatic ending to what could have been a beautiful life.

I grieved over her death, felt sorry for her son, and with my sorrow came anger. What a senseless act! In my active addiction I had also contemplated suicide, but found my way into the rooms of recovery instead. Many of J's former using buddies were in the program, so why did she feel that death was her only way out? Why didn't she come in here to find hope and recovery, just for one more day, as I had?

One week ago, I found out that J had tried NA. Five days before her

death, J went to her first NA meeting. Alone. Think of the desperation, fear, and worthlessness you felt just before you went to your first meeting. J was reaching the end of her rope, and NA was her last hope. She came to the meeting early, as is suggested, but left before the meeting even started. What happened?

J was a very attractive woman, and as soon as she walked into the meeting, the NA Slime Patrol was out in full force. They attempted to share much more than recovery with her. Disgusted with their actions, she left. Even in her demented state, J knew a pack of hungry dogs when she saw them. She called a girlfriend after the incident and said if that was what NA was about, she didn't want to have any part of it. In her mind, J tried recovery, it didn't work, and death was her only option. How tragic! If she had been met by some warm and caring individuals, she probably would have stayed.

The people who've been around a while might chuckle when someone mentions "thirteenth stepping," but with the disease of addiction, this can be a fatal step. It can lead to misery, relapse, or, as in J's case, death. If you've been thirteenth stepped (on), you're lucky if you got away with learning a lesson, and a walking miracle if your clean time remains intact.

What exactly is the "thirteenth step"? As I understand it, it's when someone who's been around the rooms for a while initiates and engages in sexual activities with a newcomer. Call it attraction, lust, or love, it's all the same thing—having sex

with someone who's too new to recovery, someone who doesn't know there's any other way to live.

Under the attack of the thirteenth step, newcomers don't have much of a chance. They may also want to have sex, but have no idea they're cheating themselves out of recovery. They may confuse the other person's attention with sincere compassion and regard for their well-being. They may also think that since this person has some clean time, that he or she is also mentally healthy. Wrong! Sorry to say, but there are people in the program who only work the thirteenth step. Clean time does not equal recovery.

For the newcomer, I give a word of advice and warning: Don't get into a sexual relationship in your first year! Here are some reasons why this is a good suggestion to follow:

Getting involved with someone when you're new to recovery takes the focus off your recovery and prevents you from building a firm foundation. A firm foundation is necessary to cope with life's situations without using drugs. Life happens, and knowing how to deal with life's situations is half the battle.

People often get into relationships hoping that the relationship will "fix" things. Relationships, as a rule, complicate your life even more. Being new in recovery, you need to learn how to deal with your life as it is without making it more complicated. "Band-Aid" recovery doesn't work.

The people who thirteenth step you are not working a good program. If they've been around for a while, they know they should be considerate

of your recovery and leave you alone sexually. True love waits.

There are individuals in the rooms just waiting for the right person to use, abuse, and/or relapse with. Not everyone in the rooms of recovery is trying to recover. Learn to identify who the winners are and stick with them!

Please, dear newcomer, don't be scared away from the program by what I'm saying! There are more individuals in NA who are interested in your recovery than the warped few I'm referring to in this article. But the damage caused by these people could cost you your life. Should something bad happen to you as a result of the actions of another person in recovery, please don't give up as my friend J did. Try to learn something from that experience and, most importantly, no matter what happens, don't use. Keep coming back.

To those of us who have been around long enough to know, I give the plea: Leave the newcomer alone! You're not being fair to them. I've seen the "NA Slime Patrol" in action, and was even "slimed on"—only once, thank you. The motto "catch them while they're still sick" is a deadly philosophy to live by. Even if you're not one of the patrol, and you're attracted to someone, have consideration for that newcomer, and please give him or her a chance. Let our newcomers find out who they really are. Remember, the impressions we give about NA can either make or break a newcomer. NA is a matter of life or death!

In memory of J.

Anonymous

From our readers



Public information and the NA Way

Ever since I had thirty days clean, I've been involved with serving the fellowship through public information. My first service position was as a phoneline volunteer at our regional service office. I've served in other trusted servant positions at the group, area, and regional levels of service; however, I found PI to be the best place for me to fulfill my Twelfth Step work.

I have been fortunate to be mentored in PI service work by TM, who had been carrying the message of NA for over eighteen years when I first got involved. He took the time to teach me not only the basics, but also some of the spirit he learned in applying our traditions. I owe much that I know today to him. He gave me the tools I needed to learn about and apply principles.

My first experience with a PI display booth at a convention of professionals came when I was the regional PI chair in 1989. When we were getting the literature together for the display booth, one of the items selected by the PI committee to give our invited guests was the *NA Way Magazine*. I asked, "What's that?" I was told it was a magazine published by NA for NA members to share their experience, strength, and hope.

We stocked a lot of *NA Way Magazines*, making sure we had ample subscription forms, too. When people asked us about the magazine, we would explain what it was and how they could use it, suggesting that they take a complimentary copy. If they worked in treatment facilities or similar institutions, we would suggest that they purchase a subscription or multiple subscriptions and share them with their clients.

In fact, in past years we used to pay for subscriptions to the *NA Way* for different institutions around Honolulu. We probably stopped doing that when funds were low, and never revisited the topic. That happens when you don't pass experience on or keep good archives of past projects. I think I have something to bring up at our next PI committee meeting.

Over the years, I've suggested to others in PI that they use our magazine to supplement their information efforts. I've seen firsthand how well our written message gets used by those who are interested in what we offer.

When I've traveled to PI Learning Days or participated with other trusted servants in public information, I can't remember hearing of the *NA Way Magazine* being suggested for use in our efforts. It's not mentioned as a resource in "A Guide to

Public Information." Are we in Hawaii the only ones in NA using this tool for public information?

When I heard that the WSO Board of Directors was asking the fellowship about ending the NA Way, I was dismayed.* I know the value of the magazine as a tool for public information, and the value it has to the recovery process for the addicts reading it. I received e-mail from fellow addicts in Europe and Australia who told me that they used the magazine for personal recovery and guidance in living the NA way of life.

The NA Way has a real part to play in carrying the message to the addict who still suffers and as a tool for our public information efforts. I will do my part to share with others in PI service on how we can use the magazine. I'll also share about using the magazine in my personal recovery at the meetings I attend and with those I sponsor.

ER, Hawaii

**The issue now before the fellowship is whether the format and publication frequency of the NA Way should be changed. For more information, please contact the World Service Office.-Ed.*

We need stories!

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

Who writes stories?

You do!

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

What do I write?

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

The NA Way Magazine

PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Comin' up

Calendar						
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CANADA

Alberta: 2-4 May; Chinook Area Convention; Calgary; info: (403) 590-1550 or (403) 235-0990; CACNA, 2607 60th Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T1Y 2G6

British Columbia: 30 May - 1 June; H&I Awareness Weekend, Nanaimo; info: (250) 754-0156 or (250) 755-1195

2) 25-27 July; British Columbia Regional Convention; Campbell River's Sportsplex; info: (250) 923-0787; email: msol@oberon.ark.com; BCRCA, PO Box 912, Campbell River, BC, Canada V9W 6Y4

Manitoba: 13-15 June; Winnipeg Area Convention; Broadway Community Center; Winnipeg; info: (204) 774-2440 or (204) 775-9241; WACNA, PO Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2V 4C8

New Brunswick: 13-15 June; New Brunswick Area Convention; Keddy's Inn and Convention Centre, Fredericton; rsvns: (506) 454-4461 or (800) 561-7666; NBACC, PO Box 20064, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 6Y8

Ontario: 9-11 May; Ontario Regional Convention; Ramada Inn City Center, Sudbury; rsvns: (800) 2-RAMADA or (705) 675-1123; info: ORCNA, 1942 Regent St. South, PO Box 248, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada P3E 5V5

2) 29-31 Aug.; Canadian Convention of NA; Ottawa; info: (613) 829-3231 or (613) 526-5937; CCNA-7, PO Box 929, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5P9

Saskatchewan: 25-27 Apr.; Sutherland Memorial Hall, Saskatoon; info: (306) 955-5337 or (306) 241-4324

DENMARK

Copenhagen: 16-18 May; Copenhagen Area Convention; Vibenhuss Skole, Copenhagen East; info: 45/31858268 or 45/31917978; NA Kbh. Konvent, PO Box 3, DK-2000 F, Denmark

ISRAEL

Haifa: 4-7 Sept.; 14th European Convention and Conference; Exhibition Convention Center, Haifa; info: 972/3/5758669; fax: 972/3/7526888; Israel RSO, PO Box 21470, Tel Aviv, Israel

ITALY

Lombardy: 25-27 Apr.; 14th Italy Regional Convention; Hotel Splendid, Suisse Bellaria; rsvns: 39/541344314; info: 39/774920776

NORWAY

Buskerud: 8-10 Aug.; Area East Convention; info: 47/32751637; OØKNA-97, PO Box 2399, Strømsø 3003, Drammen, N-Norway

PORTUGAL

Algarve: 24-27 Apr.; Portuguese National Convention; Alvor; fax: 351/82491664

UNITED STATES

Alabama: 11-13 Apr.; Central Alabama Area Spring Fling; Wind Creek State Park; info: (334) 269-0361

2) 30 May - 1 June; Freedom on the Lake Campout; Gunter'sville State Park; info: (205) 582-7579; Freedom Group, PO Box 1794, Albertville, AL 35950

Arizona: 23-25 May; Arizona Regional Convention; Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, Tempe; rsvns: (602) 894-1400; info: (602) 985-4342 or (602) 433-7746; website: <http://tucson.com/seazna/arcnaxi.html>; ARCNA, PO Box 30655, Mesa, AZ 85213

Arkansas: 20-22 June; 13th Beaver Round-Up; Buffalo Point National Park, Yellville; info: (501) 925-1123 or (501) 587-9628

2) 4-6 July; Central Arkansas Area Convention; Riverfront Hilton Inn, North Little Rock; rsvns: (501) 371-9000; info: (501) 221-1909; Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72225

California: 3-6 Apr.; Northern California Regional Convention; Bill Graham Convention Center, San Francisco; Quality Hotel, rsvns: (415) 776-8200; Holiday Inn, rsvns: (415) 441-4000; info: (707) 453-0868

2) 26 Apr.; Day of the Dinosaurs; Norco Fairgrounds; info: (909) 737-2284 or (909) 734-0266

3) 10 May; Southern California Regional H&I Learning Day; Covina; info: (310) 324-1547

4) 30 May - 1 June; In Pursuit of Unity Campout; Marysville Riverfront Park, Marysville; info: (916) 742-5167; email: mleahay@syix.com

5) 13-15 June; San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego Concourse/Radisson Harbor View; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (619) 239-6800; info: (619) 465-7662 or (619) 696-9220; Box 16929, San Diego, CA 92176

6) 3-6 July; Western States Unity Convention; Riviera Resort, Palm Springs; info: (619) 320-4023 or (619) 367-5828; WSUC, PO Box 399, San Jacinto, CA 92581

Connecticut: 4-6 Apr.; United Shoreline Area Convention; Best Western, Mystic; rsvns: (800) 363-1622 or (860) 536-4281; info: (860) 886-7512 or (860) 437-7229

2) 17 May; Pigs in Space; Lake Quassy Amusement Park, Waterbury; info: (860) 342-2595 or (860) 298-8951

3) 26-28 Sep.; United Shoreline Area Spiritual Weekend; Enders Island, Mystic; info: (860) 767-3299; Spiritual Weekend, PO Box 354, Centerbrook, CT 06409

Delaware: 4-6 July; Small Wonder Area Convention; University of Delaware Clayton Hall; info: (302) 427-0151; SWACNA, PO Box 808, Wilmington, DE 19899

Florida: 25-27 Apr.; Conch Republic Area's Recovery in Paradise; Knight's Key, Marathon; Knights Key Inn; (800) 743-4786, Hidden Harbor; (305) 743-5376; info: (305) 294-3325; email: bearcave@juno.com

2) 25-27 Apr.; Tampa Funcoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Select, Tampa; rsvns: (813) 223-1351; info: (813) 277-0701 or (813) 975-0329; email: onetooth@gte.net

3) 15-18 May; Alabama/Northwest Florida Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, Ft. Walton Beach; rsvns: (800) 732-4853 or (904) 243-9181; info: (904) 478-8255; AL/NWFLRC-10, PO Box 10219, Pensacola, FL 32524

4) 23-26 May; Gold Coast Area Convention; Cypress Creek Marriott, Ft. Lauderdale; rsvns: (800) 343-2459; info: (954) 747-7387; Box 23325, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

5) 3-6 July; Florida Regional Convention; Grenelefe Resort, Grenelefe; rsvns: (941) 422-7511 or (800) 237-9549; info: (904) 428-2939 or (941) 701-9233; FRCNA-16, c/o RSO, 2940 W. Columbus Drive, Tampa, FL 33607

Georgia: 17-20 Apr.; Coastal Area Convention; Shoney's Inn, Vidalia; rsvns: (912) 537-1282

Hawaii: 4-6 Apr.; 13th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; Camp Makuleia, North Shore, Oahu; info: (808) 988-7194 or (808) 262-0848 or (808) 988-7194 or (808) 261-4272

2) 12-14 Sep.; Maui Area Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Keanae, Maui; info: (808) 879-6412; email: chas@t-link.net; Gathering, PO Box 3002, Kahului, HI 96732

Idaho: 25-27 July; High Desert Area's Serenity in the Wilderness; Sawtooth Mountain Wilderness, Chemeketan Group Site, 25 miles southeast of Stanley; email: branson@primenet.com

Illinois: 4-6 Apr.; Rock River Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Rock Falls; rsvns: (815) 626-5500; info: (815) 964-5467

2) 20-22 June; Joliet Area Convention; Holiday Inn Express, Joliet; info: (815) 774-0065 or (815) 729-0262; Box 336, Joliet, IL 60434

3) 28-31 Aug.; South City Area Convention; Holiday Inn-Mart Plaza, Chicago; rsvns: (312) 836-5000; info: (773) 651-6231 or (773) 821-5646; Box 166272, Chicago, IL 60616

Indiana: 23-25 May; North Central Indiana Area Convention; Camp Mack, Waubee Lake, Milford; info: (616) 663-0267; please send speaker tapes to: Convention Programming, PO Box 1052, Elkhart, IN 46515

Iowa: 4-6 July; Iowa Regional Convention; Best Western, Clearlake; rsvns: (515) 357-5253; info: (515) 424-5042 or (515) 423-6107; IRCNA, PO Box 53, Mason City, IA 50402

Kansas: 4-7 Apr.; Mid-America Regional Convention; Dodge House, Dodge City; rsvns: (316) 225-9900; info: (913) 825-8163 or (316) 662-7491 or (316) 623-2054

2) 18-20 Apr.; MoKan Area Convention; Mount Convention Center, Atchison; info: (913) 367-3610; email: Mhansen272@aol.com

Louisiana: 23-25 May; Louisiana Regional Convention; New Orleans Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9280 or (504) 581-1000; info: (504) 887-7658 or (504) 899-2091; LRCNA, PO Box 10068, New Orleans, LA 70181

2) 28-31 Aug.; New Orleans Area Convention; New Orleans Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (504) 889-1304; NOACNA, PO Box 51196, New Orleans, LA 70151

Maryland: 4-6 Apr.; Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; info: (202) 362-4525

Massachusetts: 18-20 July; 5th Western Massachusetts Area Convention; Springfield Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (413) 267-5099 or (413) 783-3644; email: Noonney@ix.netcom.com; WMACNA, PO Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101

Michigan: 3-6 July; Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Resort, Midland; rsvns: (800) 825-2700, mention Group #G5275; info: (517) 548-4043; MRCNA, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

Minnesota: 25-27 Apr.; Minnesota Regional Convention; Best Western Kelly Inn, St. Cloud; rsvns: (320) 253-0606; info: (320) 240-0487 or (612) 263-1595; website: <http://www.cyberx.com/mnevents.html>

2) 23-26 May; Upper Midwest Regional Convention; Fair Hills Resort, Pelican Lake; info: (701) 235-0918 or (701) 232-0794; website: <http://www.rrnet.com/~umrna>

3) 13-15 June; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; Ramada Inn, Owatonna; rsvns: (800) 272-6232 or (507) 455-0606; info: (507) 444-9852; email: dans@ll.net

Mississippi: 4-6 Apr.; Mississippi Regional Convention; Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville; rsvns: (601) 773-7853; info: (601) 680-4947 or (601) 423-1477; email: elwood@ebicom.net

Missouri: 6-8 June; 12th Show-Me Regional Convention; Hilton Airport Hotel, Kansas City; rsvns: (816) 891-8900; info: (913) 384-0772 or (816) 363-5368; email: woodyp@sound.net

Nebraska: 9-11 May; Close Encounters of the Clean Kind; Airport Ramada Inn, Omaha; rsvns: (800) 999-1240 or (402) 342-5100; info: (402) 344-2591 or (402) 553-0282 or (402) 551-3129; Box 3937, Omaha, NE 68103

Nevada: 31 July - 3 Aug.; 1st Las Vegas Convention; Bally's; rsvns: (800) 833-3308; info: (702) 896-0130 or (702) 263-0336 or (702) 453-3713; email: elvana@lvnexus.net; LVCNA, PO Box 12717, Las Vegas, NV 89112

New Hampshire: 20-23 June; 7th Fellowship in the Field; Apple Hill Campground, Bethlehem; info: (603) 645-4777; GSA of NA Campout, PO Box 84, Tyngsboro, MA 01879

New Jersey: 23-25 May; New Jersey Regional Convention; Cherry Hill Hilton; rsvns: (609) 665-6666; info: (908) 826-2148; NJRCNA, PO Box 605, Englishtown, NJ 07726

2) 13-15 June; United Area Convention; Governor Morris Hotel, Morristown; info: (201) 794-2364 or (201) 342-7084

3) 25-27 July; 7th Northern New Jersey Regional Convention; Doubletree Hotel, Somerset; rsvns: (800) 222-8733; info: (201) 676-4481 or (201) 509-2926; NNJRC, PO Box 10119, Maplewood, NJ 07040

New York: 1-3 Aug.; Northern New York Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, East Syracuse; rsvns: (315) 437-2761; info: (716) 266-0221 or (716) 288-7232; NNYRCNA, PO Box 1425, Rochester, NY 14603

2) 29-31 Aug.; ABCD Area Convention; Omni Hotel, Albany; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI; info: (518) 427-9568 or (518) 432-8721; ABCD-ACNA, PO Box 71, Albany, NY 12201

North Carolina: 18-20 July; New Hope Area Convention; Omni Durham Hotel & Convention Center; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI or (919) 683-6664; info: (919) 479-1225 or (919) 220-8080; NHACNA, PO Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

2) 5-7 Sep.; Central Piedmont Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Salisbury; info: (704) 638-9027 or (704) 637-0651; CPANA, PO Box 1294, Mooresville, NC 28115

Ohio: 23-25 May; Ohio Regional Convention; Ramada Plaza Hotel at Cascade Plaza, Akron; rsvns: (800) 2RAMADA or (330) 384-1500; info: (330) 863-2400 or (330) 869-0536; OCNA, PO Box 2628, Akron, OH 44309

2) 1-3 Aug.; Tri-Area Gateway to Freedom Convention; Sheraton City Center, Cleveland; rsvns: (216) 771-5129; info: (216) 663-2118 or (216) 295-2239; Tri-Area 3, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44122

Oklahoma: 17 May; New Hope Group 12th Birthday Celebration; Lake Carl Blackwell, Stillwater; info: (800) 982-0242

Oregon: 16-18 May; Pacific Cascade Regional Convention; Chinook Winds Convention Center, Lincoln City; info: (541) 752-3860 or (541) 917-3265; email: klupengc@ucs.orst.edu; PCRNA, PO Box 2392, Corvallis, OR 97339

Puerto Rico: 11-13 July; Unidos Podemos; Isla Verde; rsvns: (800) 544-3008; info: (787) 274-0488; Comite de Convenciones, Box 362313, San Juan, PR 00936

Utah: 6-8 June; 11th Annual Celebration of Recovery; American Legion Hall, Vernal; info: (801) 789-4836 or (801) 789-5504; HUASC, PO Box 1476, Vernal, UT 84078

2) 18-20 July; 14th Utah Regional Campout; Whittings Campground, Mapleton; info: (801) 476-7330 or (801) 491-9460; Box 994, Springville, UT 84663

Vermont: 15-17 Aug.; Back to Basics 13; Walling Pond Boys Camp, Wallingford; info: (802) 773-5575

Virginia: 13-15 June; Piedmont Area Campout; Shenandoah Acres Resort, Stuarts Draft; Campground (540) 337-1911; info: (804) 923-4544

Washington: 16-18 May; Washington Northern Idaho Regional Convention; Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, Everett; rsvns: (206) 339-3333 or (800) 446-4656; info: (206) 382-0534; WNIRCNA, 10115 Greenwood Ave. N., #M-187, Seattle, WA 98133

West Virginia: 9-11 May; Mountaineer Regional Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; rsvns: (304) 372-7860; info: (304) 562-5835; Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

Wisconsin: 11-13 July; Never Alone in the Woods Campout; Manitowoc; info: (414) 686-0263 or (414) 684-9233

2) 20-21 Sept.; Wisconsin Regional Service Conference; The Mead Inn, Wisconsin Rapids; rsvns: (800) 843-6323 or (715) 423-1500; info: (715) 424-3037 or (715) 421-4890

Wyoming: 26 Apr.; Serenity Seekers Spiritual Principles Workshop, Feast, and Dance; info: (307) 682-2969 or (307) 682-0088; email: biltrite@vcn.com

2) 26-28 Sept.; Convention of Unity of Narcotics Anonymous; Rawlins; info: (307) 362-9418; email: johnt@wyoming.com; CUNA-6, PO Box 445, Evanston, WY 82931

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA 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 NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA 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. NA, 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 NA 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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