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From the editor

Everything that occurs in the course of NA service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

Basic Text, p. xvi

My first memory of the Conference Agenda Report dates back to 1987. I think I had heard it mentioned before, but it was at that time that I remember actually looking at it and wondering what it had to do with NA and my recovery. After seeing the actual document, I was overwhelmed, a bit confused, and amazed that we had enough business to warrant an agenda that included so many motions! I have to admit, my understanding of the CAR and the World Service Conference was very fuzzy, but as time went by, I became more familiar with our service structure and the unique way in which we take care of the business of NA. I had never been part of an organization that was so fully focused on the essence of its mission and so thoroughly included its membership in its processes and decisions. As I came to understand NA service and the principles of our program, I learned that, as an individual NA member, I am as much a part of the WSC as the regional delegates who participate in the conference. In all that we do, and especially through service, it's all about carrying the message.

De J, Editor

The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in The NA Way, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First name and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

The NA Way Magazine, published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as providing current service and convention information. Foremost, the journal is dedicated to the celebration of our message of recovery—“that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.”
The message starts here

Our primary purpose is to stay clean and to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Basic Text, p. 10

Sometimes we think of only part of this statement—the part about staying clean—but our primary purpose is to carry to addicts a hopeful message that they can find freedom from active addiction. So, how do we carry that message? What are the ways we strive to fulfill our primary purpose—and who is responsible for carrying the NA message? We carry the message as individual members, but because this is a "we" program, it is also important that we work together in our groups and our service structure to carry out this essential responsibility.

Of course, we have to start with being clean to be able to carry a message about recovery. Working the steps constantly provides us with ways of carrying the message. When we apply the principles of our program in our daily lives, we exemplify recovery; we carry the message that NA recovery works in the lives of recovering addicts like us.

So, in what other ways can we carry the message? We share in meetings. We reach out to newcomers and other members. We are of service to others. We share because we know that "we keep what we have only by giving it away." An essential part of our program is telling fellow NA members about our recovery experiences. Talking about our recovery in meetings and one-on-one allows others to share in our struggles and triumphs. We recognize our common needs and experiences in one another. Whether we are newcomers, oldtimers, or somewhere in between, we know how important it is for us to feel "a part of." We want to identify with other members of our fellowship. This is a key factor that encourages us to continue going to meetings—at first, because we need to see our similarities; eventually, because we realize that our unity thrives on both our similarities and our differences. Through honest and open sharing, we contribute to an atmosphere of recovery that allows us to carry our message more effectively. We demonstrate that there are common needs and common hopes for all our members.

We also learn that one of the ways of carrying our message is through NA service. When we help set up a meeting or participate in our home group’s business meeting, we demonstrate something we have learned in recovery: to contribute to our group. Some members make an effort to include newcomers in group service tasks. This provides opportunities for the newcomer to learn about service from a more experienced member. Nurturing relationships with newer members helps them feel more at ease in this new environment, and it helps us in our own recovery. These efforts are another way of enhancing the atmosphere of recovery, an atmosphere that we hope will be
attractive both for those new to our fellowship and for members who have been here a while.

Perhaps we participate in an institutional meeting, serve on an area or regional service committee, or participate in a community PR presentation. The message is carried not only in the service we do, but also in the ways in which we interact with fellow members.

Drawing on our predecessors’ knowledge is another form of one addict helping another. We learn from one another by working side-by-side with fellow members on an area inventory. Whatever service we engage in, we can contribute to creating and presenting a positive public image for NA. This paves the way for us to more effectively carry the message.

“*The group is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying the message.*”

Basic Text, p. 54

It can be easy to forget that the very purpose of our meetings is to carry NA’s message. The Fifth Tradition reminds us that “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.” It is important for this to be a constant in our groups. We strive to make our meetings warm and welcoming. We work to help members feel safe in an NA meeting. We try to provide a clear NA message of recovery. And behind the scenes, our group’s trusted servants ensure that rent is paid, the doors are open, and literature is available.

Each group creates its own personality in the way its members carry NA’s message. Some groups take extra time to explain the meeting format, while others serve “the best coffee in NA.” Your group may provide plenty of time for fellowshipping before and after the meeting. Other groups are known for the quiet, respectful attention given to each member.

We carry the message personally by staying clean and living the principles of the program. Our groups provide meetings where we pursue our recovery and share the NA message with others. We must also carry that message to the public. Our Basic Text says, “If an addict has never heard of us, he cannot seek us out. If those who work with addicts are unaware of our existence, they cannot refer them to us. One of the most important things we can do to further our primary purpose is to let people know who, what and where we are. If we do this and keep our good reputation, we will surely grow.” (p. 71) Through our service structure, we carry the message by providing information to the general public. We reach out to those in institutions who cannot attend our meetings by taking meetings or literature to them. We present information about NA to professionals and practitioners who can help struggling addicts find their way to our program.

We strive to portray NA positively—and realistically—so that it is perceived as a viable recovery program. Embodying this perception starts at home in the meetings of our service boards and committees. A regional delegate recalls attending a neighboring area service committee meeting as part of a series of visits. Business was being conducted, motions and decisions made. He saw and felt a special warmth and respect in the committee’s discussions and actions. This ASC was led by a member who knew that the same safe and loving atmosphere we strive for in our recovery meetings enhances our service meetings, too. When we approach our service with this attitude, we are able to carry this spirit into our recovery meetings as well as our interactions with those outside of NA.

Are we carrying the NA recovery message? Is our message clear, empathetic, hopeful, and honest? Are we providing an atmosphere that attracts and retains NA members? Are we reaching all those in our communities who are in need of recovery? Do we present an honest and positive public image of our fellowship? What can we do as individuals, groups, and service committees to establish or reestablish an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings? Have we considered how we apply principles of recovery in our service?

Our primary purpose is to stay clean and carry the NA message—the message that any addict can find freedom from active addiction. In our personal recovery, we have learned the value of continually evaluating and adjusting our behavior. So, too, can we assess, improve, and broaden the ways in which we carry the message.
Our
readers write

Hearing the message of recovery

I am writing in response to an article in the "Opinion" section of the January 2006 NA Way Magazine about being a hearing-impaired NA member. I am also hearing-impaired and I want the writer to know I share his pain. I have a cochlear implant and have experienced the same struggles in my recovery. It's hard to get help in meetings, and sometimes when I do ask someone to help, I feel like I'm interfering with their recovery. I've even had people tell me to "turn it up." Sometimes they say it as a joke, but they don't realize how painful that feels. The comments and the sick jokes are hard to get used to, and I should not have to put up with that in meetings. Sometimes I feel like an outcast, like I'm in the wrong place.

I love NA, and I know this program works—even for a deaf guy like me. Sometimes, I feel like just staying home and reading my Basic Text, but I won't let this become an excuse for me to use. I go to meetings to carry the message of hope to the addict who still suffers, and there may be others with the same problems who can identify with the message I carry.

I just keep coming back, no matter what. I am hearing-impaired, but I can still speak clearly, and I do have a story to tell. NA has taught me that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel, so I must be in the right place—and so are you.

Irving L, Illinois, USA

Thanks for donation portal

I love having the donation portal [at www.na.org] available. It allows me to directly contribute to and support the work NAWS does for everyone throughout the fellowship. I don't think of it as a substitute for ordinary fund flow. Instead, it is an option I am free to exercise in addition to contributing at meetings. I am aware of the broad scope of services our special workers provide. I know they work diligently to serve individuals, groups, areas, regions, and zones, and to support project workgroups. I am also always impressed with the extent of our fellowship development commitment. In effect, I know how much service the office does for the fellowship and I appreciate the option of donating directly to NAWS this way. Making a personal donation to NAWS is just one way for me to express my gratitude for the honor of recovering in and serving the fellowship. The donation portal is a nice convenience. Thanks, guys, for setting it up.

Anonymous

Join the World Pool

Here’s your opportunity to give back what was so freely given to you!!!

- Send in your World Pool Information Form.
- Trusted servants for NA World Services projects and elections come from this pool.

Visit our website at www.na.org/HRP/hrp-wpif-pt1.asp to access and submit an interactive form.

You can also reach us by letter or phone at HRP
NAWS
Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
or 818.773.9999
or email us at HRP@na.org
Picture this

NA communities are invited to send photographs of their meeting places. We especially welcome photos that include meeting formats, recovery literature, posters, dirty coffee cups, and anything else that makes the meeting place look “lived in.” Sorry, we cannot use photos that identify NA members. Please tell us about your meeting, its name, the location and city, how long it has been in existence, and what your format consists of (speaker, participation, etc.).

World Service Conference poolside recovery meeting

From a birds-eye view, we join WSC participants at the poolside meeting, held at the conference hotel in Woodland Hills, California, USA. Before roll call, issue discussions, and old and new business, addicts gather to share their recovery beginning at 7:00 am each day. And when the business of the day ends, the circle forms again as participants come together to unwind and share their experience, strength, and hope.

From the delegate’s seat

In the ballroom of the conference hotel, delegates are seated at tables on risers that are arranged in a “U” shape. This photo is taken from one side of the “U.” Presenters and a presentation screen are at the open end of the “U” (left side of the photo). On the right side of the photo, in the middle of the top row of risers, is the sound booth where interpreters translate for conference participants who do not speak English. Behind the presentation screen (but not visible in this photo) is the “rounds” side of the room—where participants engage in small-group discussions at round tables that seat ten people.
Carrying the message in service and beyond

We buried a loving friend and a valuable asset to Narcotics Anonymous today. Our regional delegate passed away on 26 November 2005. His smile was magic. He performed the duties of his position with diligence and integrity. He had the ability to voice his opinion and let it go. I believe his ability came to him by living a program based in working the steps. There’s something about our friend’s spirit in life that touched everyone. There is also something about his spirit that touched people after his passing.

Our earthly paths come to a screeching halt upon hearing that a loved one has passed away. Time stands still. We are stripped of our mortal agendas such as occupations, places to be, and things to do. Yes, we need to have occupations and provide for the day, but when we buy into the lie that an occupation or financial status gives us greater importance than our fellows, we buy into spiritual death. We have the potential to pursue our occupations and titles while allowing the spirit of love to reach others.

This is the essence of service. Recovery, by way of the steps and service, affords us an opportunity to unlearn the lies that once worked. When we strip away all the misinformation and character defects, the spirit is the same in all of us. Without misleading language and self-centered motives, we can recognize the sameness about each other.

The people attending the funeral came from all walks of life—coworkers, family, friends, one of his college professors. Of course, the funeral was heavily seasoned with members of the fellowship. I was grateful to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous as I watched our fellowship wrap our friend’s parents in a warm blanket of comfort. It was overwhelming to watch the coming together of such diverse people because of this one person who existed in all these various circles. Those in attendance walked away changed. People outside of our fellowship realized that addicts do recover, and NA members walked away thinking non-addicts aren’t so different, either.

Let us now return to our regularly scheduled programs to carry the message that “no addict seeking recovery need die without a chance to find a better way of life.” (Basic Text, p. xiii) Thank you to our friend for his gift of bringing us together.

Greg B, California, USA
Responsible for my recovery

My name is Jose. I had been using for twelve years when my mother suffered a stroke and was taken to the hospital. I was using all kinds of substances and I knew I had a problem with drugs. A friend who had been clean eight months told me I thought I was an addict and that I needed help. He also told me about Narcotics Anonymous. I told him I wanted to attend the group because I needed help.

I attended a meeting and there were about twenty members there. I recall how different their faces seemed, and how they welcomed me. They applauded me for having the courage to come through that door. They told me I didn’t have to fight against this disease alone; that if I followed this path, I would very soon be part of the solution to my problems, which I had plenty of at that time.

Those first few days, I was so scared. I didn’t know what was going to happen to me and I didn’t have much hope of staying clean. Everyone told me to keep coming back, that I had to change my way of thinking and acting. I was willing to ask for and receive help. I was told that, in this program, the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using, and that the NA promise is that any addict who has the desire to stop using can achieve it.

I looked for a sponsor, I made friends, and I listened. They talked to me about how important it was for me to have a little faith so I could begin to believe. I got away from the places and the people who used drugs. The program was working for me. I was staying clean.

I found a sponsor in my group who taught me to learn to live as a human being and he helped me realize how much my life was changing. He told me I was not to blame for what had happened, but that I was responsible for my recovery. He asked me to smile and be grateful for my life. And then a miracle happened: I began to smile. The compulsion to use disappeared. I had very little faith, but it was enough. Each day I stayed clean, my faith got stronger.

After some months in recovery, my life began to change. I am a different person from the one I was before I attended meetings, all thanks to a higher power and the fact that I was not alone because I was with people like me who were also recovering.

I continue going to NA meetings regularly because the steps and what fellow recovering addicts shared helped me to have a happy life. Our literature helps me to be the way I am today: healthy and rebuilding my life. NA members have given me an understanding of recovery and suggestions that I can share with others. NA’s only promise has manifested itself in my life, but to be free from active addiction is only the beginning. All I have to do is go to meetings, read, stay clean, and believe—and everything else will come my way.

Jose P, Jalisco, Mexico

And then a miracle happened: I began to smile.

How do we show our message?

Do you have a home group? Do you welcome the newcomer? Or do you sex and romance them? Do you work the traditions? Do you have a sponsor? Do you work the steps? Do you have a relationship with a higher power? What do you do for the newcomer? Do you go to meetings late, leave early, or spend half the meeting outside?

We are all role models for newcomers. They watch us like we watched the members who were here when we first got clean. At one meeting I had this experience. A member with six years clean comes to meetings once in a while. He arrives late, disrupting the meeting. After being there for about ten minutes, he goes outside for a cigarette, again disrupting the meeting. He stays outside and comes back in—just in time for the Serenity Prayer.

What message does this give to the newcomer? Some might think, “That guy arrives late and leaves early, which seems to work for him, so I might try that.”

Recovery starts with us, as individuals and as home groups. As individual members and as NA groups, we need to welcome newcomers, meet and greet them, introduce them to other group members, and make them feel at home. Some groups offer newcomers help finding sponsorship. Some groups take turns ringing that person, picking them up, and taking them to meetings. Maybe the newcomer just needs a meeting list with some group members’ phone numbers.

It is important to me to make my recovery a priority and arrive at meetings on time or before they start. Sharing our experience, strength, and hope is a great way to encourage newcomers. We have to remember our primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Neil D, Sydney, Australia
The inside message

It’s Wednesday evening. The chairs are in a wide circle. It is 7:27 pm and I’m watching the clock as it moves toward 7:30. That is when our meeting starts. I have never before felt this kind of excitement about being at a meeting, and I’ve been coming around, off and on, since 1993.

The day will come when I am released from this place.

It’s 7:30, and the meeting of the Life or Death Group of Narcotics Anonymous has begun. The meeting is filled with hope for me. It strengthens my belief that there is a better way of life for me. Then a bell rings, signaling that I must return to my prison cell.

Many think, “NA in prison? I doubt the recovery is any good in there. ‘Real’ recovery starts when you make it back into society and live in the free world.” For me, that is far from the truth. There is great recovery in the institution I am temporarily visiting. For me, my recovery must start in here. I don’t want to be locked up with the mindset that other people and society-at-large are to blame for my circumstances, and that I don’t have any part in my disease. I have the disease of addiction. I am an addict. When I use drugs, I go to all extremes to use and I continue using with no thought of what any of the consequences may be.

My own attempts to stay clean never worked. My wife, my children, and my mother could not keep me clean. No human power can. The only way for me is by working this program, the way it has been worked by countless others before me. I have to want it—and I do. Surrender had to come first, and right now is the perfect opportunity for me to build on my program. I could sit back and just wait until I am released before starting my recovery, but chances are that I would not then find it. I would not have begun to reap the rewards of surrendering, of seeing my powerlessness and unmanageability, or having a belief in a Higher Power to whom I turn my will and life over every day. To me, these are rewards because doing these things is showing me a better way to live.

The recovery we have in here is a gift from the God of our understanding. There are many inmates interested in recovery who are practicing this program to the best of their ability. We have two NA members who faithfully show up here every Wednesday evening to bring a meeting in to us. That kind of service shows the real meaning of the saying, “You can only keep what you have by giving it away.” For that I am forever grateful.

I have a sponsor with whom I talk frequently and with whom I work the steps. This is the first time in my many recovery attempts that I am honestly and intensively working the steps. In the past, I would not work them because I always believed my way would keep me clean, but it does not. Working and practicing the steps daily has become a new way of life for me. Recovery has started and is in my life behind these walls. The day will come when I am released from this place. When that day comes and I go on my way, I will have NA walking right along with me.

Mark Q, Pennsylvania, USA
The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has come a long way since our early beginnings in 1953. We have grown from that first meeting held in Sun Valley, California, USA, to over 33,500 weekly meetings held in approximately 123 countries worldwide. Our history is rich with diversity, and we want to share the facts of that history with you, the little known as well as the well known. If you have an interesting and historic fact, send it to us at naway@na.org or NAWS, Attn: The NA Way Magazine, Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

Did you know Ventura, California, USA, was the site of the first World Service Conference in 1976? That meeting was held in conjunction with the Fifth World Convention. At that time, there was an estimated 200 meetings in the USA, Australia, Canada, and Germany.

Did you know there was not a quorum present for the second WSC, and that the third WSC was the first to be held separate from WCNA?

Did you know in 1982, the seventh WSC approved the First Edition of the Basic Text, which was distributed in hardcover at the eighth WSC in 1983?

Did you know a motion to hold the WSC outside of California resulted in the meeting being held in three US cities—Dallas, Texas; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Atlanta, Georgia—during the 1990s? The conference returned to California after a motion was made to hold the meeting within seventy-five miles of the World Service Office, primarily to contain costs.

Did you know there were sixty motions included in the 1987 Conference Agenda Report, fifty-two in the 1998 CAR, and ten in 2002? The CAR for WSC 28, to be held in April 2006, includes three motions.

Did you know the WSC opening roll call increased from seventy-seven participants—including fifty-nine regions—in 1991, to 112 participants and ninety-four regions in 2002?

Did you know the two-year conference cycle began at the end of the WSC held in 2000 as the result of a motion passed by the conference in 1998?

The coffee guy

We addicts all know who is important in our fellowship. At the CAR workshop for the South East Zone—held in Macon, Georgia, USA, last week—all the participants were asked their name, area, and service commitments. There were regional delegates, area and regional committee chairs, etc., but only one got the applause of all attending. Who was it? He was the coffee maker from a local group. There is hope for us yet!

Phil K, Florida, USA
Translating the message: What’s Bengali for “surrender”?

NA World Services held a translations workshop in Delhi, India, in April 2005. You might be thinking, “Oh, no, not another article about a workshop—how boring!”

Okay, this may be a boring article on a workshop—but at least it’s in English. Think of all the addicts in my region who don’t have the luxury of reading NA literature in its original language. Imagine scores of addicts sitting quietly through a meeting where the readings are in English—a language they do not understand. Though recovery is an experience beyond words, we still need to have our literature translated into local languages so that every addict can have a clear sense of the essential message of Narcotics Anonymous. For us, recovery is a matter of life or death. So if you are tired, sleepy, or bored, splash some water on your face, say a prayer, call your sponsor, take a bath, do anything—but please read this article. Translation can bring life to a still-suffering addict.

The workshop was attended by thirty-four representatives from ten areas in the Indian Region: Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Orissa, Darjeeling, Sikkim, and South Mumbai. The nine languages spoken among these representatives were Bengali, Hindi, Kanada, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu. More languages from a single region were simultaneously represented at this NAWS translation workshop than ever before in the history of Narcotic Anonymous.

Nine languages, ten areas, and thirty-four representatives! Could we possibly have clarity in such multiplicity? In spite of the great linguistic diversity of our region, we found that all faced the same essential problems and arrived at the same basic solutions while attempting to translate NA literature. For example, each language group agreed upon five steps that could not be avoided:

- Form a literature translation committee (LTC) with support from the service structure like the ASC.
- Contact NAWS to gather all required resources like translations information, glossaries, and other tools.
- Organize and prioritize translation work.
- Translate IP #1, with a glossary, with input from various members.
- Submit translated material to NAWS for evaluation and publication.
The main concern while translating from English is conceptual fidelity. Simple and obvious English words like “connection,” “addiction,” “using,” and “clean” are often difficult to translate into our regional languages. Conceptual fidelity implies the communication of a basic idea, not merely a literal rendering of the words of a sentence into a different language. The crux is to get the whole idea across clearly, rather than get stuck on those words that do not have precise equivalents.

While discussing conceptual fidelity in small groups of five to six members, we identified ways to deal with difficult words. We acknowledged that it is often preferable to transliterate (directly copy English words) that do not have direct equivalents in the target language. While translating into Hindi, for instance, it seemed practical to transliterate terms like “recovery,” “addiction,” and “addict” rather than use the suggested Hindi equivalents. The search for similar words and phrases that express the concept at hand is, of course, indispensable. The use of local idioms, colloquialisms, and traditional proverbs can often go a long way in helping to capture the spirit and essence of the NA message.

Interaction among LTCs is highly beneficial and mutually rewarding. It is useful to stay in touch with NAWS and profit from their experience.

My experience in translation service is that motivating LTC members can involve a considerable amount of creative effort. While discussing this issue as a group, we came up with some strategies to keep members involved. We agreed it is useful to regularly announce LTC meetings and hold meetings on weekends and holidays. We also thought it is essential to create awareness that translating NA literature can help us understand the information better for ourselves and keep us vitally in touch with the NA message. Involving both newcomers and experienced members in the translation process is a good idea. If we can, we want to cover the participants’ expenses, such as those for travel and food, whenever possible.

Finally, we all agreed it is really important to acknowledge and recognize the hard work done by LTC members and possibly thank them with a piece of free NA literature or merchandise upon completion of a term or a project.

Are all NA members really qualified to be LTC volunteers? Technically, yes. It is certainly against the NA spirit to discourage anyone from active service! However, translation is an activity that requires specific linguistic skills. Not all members possess such skills, and those who do are, in some cases, the most hesitant to volunteer. A crowded LTC committee can become chaotic and ineffective. Who should volunteer for an LTC? What are the basic tools for efficient and effective translation? Our group discussions led us to five important guidelines:

- LTCs should have at least two members who have the necessary linguistic skills to translate from English into the target language.
- LTCs should have at least two members who have a deep familiarity with the NA message.
- The use of several modern, comprehensive dictionaries is imperative. An English dictionary is a must in addition to bilingual versions.
- Reading the original text and receiving the message in its essential form is of prime importance. Numerous readings of a single sentence may be required before an acceptable equivalent is determined.
- Networking with neighboring LTCs and sharing experience can go a long way toward boosting enthusiasm, strength, and hope.

SIRSCONA
Society of Indian Regional Service Committee of NA
NERF
North East Regional Forum
It was amazing to be part of this mixed bunch of recovering addicts who had gathered to discuss translations challenges and solutions. The value of the small- and large-group discussion format was stressed and was very successful. This format emphasized the value of every participant and fostered group consensus. This is a beautifully simple discussion format for highly complex participants! Organizing nine languages, ten areas, and thirty-four participants proved enjoyable, interesting, and highly educational. Like most NA events, it was a lot of fun.

Participating in a workshop is interesting; writing about it is relatively easy; reading a long article on a workshop can, of course, be tediously boring and laborious—but here you are, at the end of the article. If and when you find yourself at a meeting where the language spoken is not one you understand, please remember this article, and use the experience as an opportunity to appreciate the value of translating NA literature to carry our message of recovery.

Ivan P, South Mumbai, India

Editor’s note: Excerpts of Ivan’s article also appeared in the November 2005 issue of NAWS News.

Primary purpose

“There are many ways of doing things in Narcotics Anonymous. And just as all of us have our own individual personalities, so will your group develop its own identity, its own way of doing things, and its own special knack for carrying the NA message. That’s the way it should be. In NA we encourage unity, not uniformity.”

The Group Booklet, p. 1

This is a column for you, about you, and by you. We invite you to share any challenges your group or NA community may have faced, how you reached a solution, or its “special knack” that keeps you coming back!

Neighbors helping neighbors

The history of Narcotics Anonymous is a story of friends helping friends and neighbors helping neighbors. We have a legacy of members, groups, and service committees helping one another. The section on Tradition One in our Basic Text says, “We have seen members drive hundreds of miles to help support a new group. These activities and many others are commonplace in our Fellowship. Without these actions, NA could not survive.” (p. 60) Sometimes we need to support those in need until they can support themselves. In April 1990, The NA Way Magazine published a feature article describing regional outreach work in Michigan. These multi-year efforts developed NA in Western and Northern Michigan. Outreach efforts have always existed in Narcotics Anonymous, though they may not have been called “outreach” by the members engaged in them. Outreach is simply a broad application of our Twelfth Step: one group, area, or region helping another group, area, or region. Over time, NA communities become better able to meet their own needs and eventually may become self-supporting. The development of a local NA community is a process that can occur over many years of assistance and ongoing interaction. Outreach efforts form as a result of neighbors helping neighbors.

A sampling of NA assistance efforts reveals a common theme of literature distribution and ongoing interaction. During 2004, NA World Services gave away approximately US $400,000 in literature. NAWS receives thousands of requests each month for literature, starter kits, and other support. The Greater New York Region has sent literature donations (and customs payments) to the Peru Region. Since 2000, the Chesapeake and Potomac Region has provided support to the Latin American Zonal Forum each year. The Southern California Regional Cruise brought $2,000 in literature on each of three visits to Ensenada in Baja California, Mexico. NA regions in the United States along the Mexican border have been providing ongoing support to NA groups in Northern Mexico. The Tejas-Bluebonnet Region supports groups in Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey, Mexico, with literature and visits. From El Paso, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Rio Grande Region has conducted outreach road trips to Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Casa Grande, and Mexicali, Mexico.

In August 2004, NA World Services presented a fellowship development workshop in Juárez, Mexico, and the NA groups in the state of Chihuahua have been a part of the El Paso (Texas) Area. Starting in 2002, the Arizona Region has had outreach “road trips” taking literature to Nogales, Agua Prieta, and San Luis Río Colorado, Mexico. Since 1994 the San Diego/Imperial Regional outreach subcommittee has conducted “Addicts on Asphalt” road trips to Baja California. These road trips deliver literature and include a bilingual meeting. Each year the Baja California convention in Tijuana and the Baja Cachanilla Area convention in Mexicali receive literature donated by attendees; later, they distribute these literature donations to other parts of Mexico. At the Latin American Zonal Forum in July 2005, the Baja-Son Region requested literature to support H&I work. Responding to this request, NAWS provided 22,000 information
pamphlets to the Baja-Son Region in August 2005.

In addition to group startup literature, provided virtually everywhere in NA, substantial quantities of literature have been given to NA communities in Russia, Ukraine, other parts of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and India. Some local NA communities will need assistance for the foreseeable future, while others—such as Iran—are becoming capable of meeting their own literature needs.

Sometimes disasters have devastated a geographical area, leaving NA communities in need of literature assistance to get back on their feet. This was true in the USA with Hurricane Andrew (Florida, 1992) and more recently Katrina and Rita. Both NAWS and the Louisiana Region suggested sending literature, not money.

The idea of addicts helping each other is one of the foundations of our program—indeed, we "keep what we have only by giving it away." While we do not accept donations from outside of NA, our Basic Text states: "Sometimes members who can afford it give a little extra to help." (p.57) These may be members of a group or a service committee reaching out to assist another part of NA. Whether the gift is given one time or on an ongoing basis, the intention is to benefit NA so "that no addict seeking recovery need ever die."

Most isolated or struggling NA communities do not have literature consistently available at an affordable price. Donations of literature foster NA survival, fellowship development, and recovery availability, and they are a demonstration of fellowship unity. Our efforts to help each other are inspired by our NA World Services Vision Statement, which says in part "that one day: NA communities worldwide and NA World Services work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery."

As neighbors helping neighbors, we have grown from one NA group in the San Fernando Valley of California, USA, to become a worldwide fellowship of recovering addicts. With each country and each community, there continues to be more addicts to reach and assist as they build and strengthen Narcotics Anonymous in their neighborhoods. As neighbors, we are inspired to realize our common vision together and to look forward to a time when "every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture."

Scott A, California, USA
The “right” drug?

I once received a call for help from an addict wishing to attend a meeting. She felt she didn’t “qualify” because she’d heard NA was about substances other than the one she was using.

I find it disheartening that NA members—especially those with experience in our program—continue to identify the specific substances they used. This emphasizes our differences, instead of highlighting our similarities. I know several members who, for this reason, found it very difficult to identify and find a sense of belonging in NA. In the chapter on the Third Tradition in *It Works: How and Why*, we read: “Because of the wording of this tradition, we are able to attract and welcome addicts who think they didn’t use the ‘right’ drugs to qualify for membership in NA.” (p. 147)

The most obvious symptom of addiction is our uncontrollable drug use, not the specific drug(s) we used. Our understanding of addiction broadens as we continue in recovery, but early on, differences can be the trigger that results in the newcomer leaving NA and not returning. The newcomer needs to hear a constant, clear message about recovery from addiction. It is inclusive and encompassing to use the word “drugs.”

I have a sponsor of seven years who has no idea what drugs I used. I never told him because he’s not interested. I also don’t find it necessary to reveal in our meetings what I used. If you ask me personally which drugs I used, I would decline to answer.

Addiction thrives on the division our differences can cause, but the disease is rendered powerless when we are unified by our similarities. We have a responsibility to NA and the newcomer to be all inclusive, regardless of creed, race, sexual identity…, and drugs used. The common denominators in NA are our recovery from the disease of addiction and our desire to stop using. And it doesn’t matter what we want to stop using.

Dale T, Gloucestershire, England

“We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were…but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.”

Basic Text, p. 9
We encourage you to publicize your event by having it published on our website and in The NA Way Magazine. You can inform the WSO about your event by fax, phone, or regular post, or through our website. We encourage using the website because you can check to see if we already have a listing on your convention, and, if not, you can enter your own convention information. It is then reviewed, formatted, and added to the online convention calendar on our website in approximately four days. Just go to www.na.org, click on “NA Events,” and follow the instructions.

Convention announcements entered through the website and those received by other means are also given to The NA Way. The NA Way is published four times a year in January, April, July, and October. Each issue goes into production long before its distribution date, so we need a minimum of three months’ notice to ensure your event will be published in the magazine—that’s three months before our publication date. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

**Brazil**

Maranho: 18-21 May; II Convenção CSA BELEM; Sesc Olho D’Agua, São Luis; event info: 91.96323163

**Canada**

Ontario: 19-21 May; Ontario Regional Convention XIX; Holiday Inn Select, Windsor; hotel rsvns: 519.966.1200; www.orscna.org

2) 30 Jun-2 Jul, Campvention II; Guelph Lake Conservation Area, Guelph; event info: 519.824.6117; www.gascn.ca.on.ca

Prince Edward Island: 23-25 Jun; Prince Edward Island Area Convention II; Loyalist Lakeview Resort, Summerside; hotel rsvns: 902.436.3333; event info: 902.436.2613; registration: 902.881.3319; themiraclecontinues2@hotmail.com

Quebec: 6-8 Apr; Quebec Regional Convention XIX; Sheraton Laval, Laval; hotel rsvns: 800.667.2440; event info: 514.355.4097, 514.523.5017; www.assoc.gq.org

2) 14-16 Apr; Nordet Regional Convention IX; Hotel Delta Quebec, Quebec; hotel rsvns: 418.647.1717; event info: 418.622.9424, 418.455.7576; write: Nordet Region, 137 Père Arnaud, Quebec, Canada G1N 3T7

3) 9-11 Jun; North Shore Local Area Center Convention IX; Hotel Le Chantecler, Ste-Adèle; hotel rsvns: 888.916.1616; event info: 514.577.1298

**Indonesia**

Bali: 2-4 Jun; Spirit Dancing; Dyanapura Hotel, Seminyak; www.na-bali.org

**Italy**

Rimini: 21-23 Apr; Italian Convention XXIII; Hotel Continental e dei Congressi, Rimini; hotel rsvns: 390541391300; www.assoc.italia.org

**Mexico**

Baja California: 7-9 Apr; Baja Cachanilla Area Convention III; Hotel Colonial, Mexicali; hotel rsvns: 800.437.2438; international: 800.026.5888; event info: Mexico: 686.122.0188; USA: 760.352.5891; write: Baja Cachanilla Area; Calle 4ta y Callejon Yucatan 1210 Altos Local 14, Colonia Esperanza Mexicali BC, Mexico

**Norway**

Drammen: 28-30 Apr; The Road to Life; St Hallvard Viddergaende Skole, Drammen; event info: 4793863624; write: Area East 2 SC; Box 99: 3300 Hokksund, Norway

**Panama**

Panama City: 25-28 May; First Panama Region Bilingual Convention; Hotel El Panamá, Panamá City; hotel rsvns: 507.215.9000; www.convencion.na-panama.org

**Peru**

Lima: 19-21 May; Peruvian Regional Convention.XII, Centro Recreacional, Lima; hotel rsvns: 511.9970.6609; speaker tape submission deadline: 19 April; www.groups.msn.com/m7o6n2qg00p944ekailnm08g01

**Poland**

Krakow: 28 Apr-1 May; Middle Eastern European Convention; Krakow; hotel rsvns: 48660543316; event info: 4850614275; www.anonimowinarkomani.org

**Spain**

Fuengirola: 26-28 May; Spain Regional Convention XXVI; Hotel Las Pirámides, Málaga; hotel rsvns: 34.952.470600; Spanish: 34.629.778789, 34.636.257088; English: 34.952.887550

**United Kingdom**

Dorset: 23-25 Jun; Back to Life; Bournemouth AFC Football Ground, Bournemouth; event info: 447886.391.603; www.danac.org

Greater London: 21-23 Apr; London Convention XV; Friends Meeting House, London; www.ukna.org

**United States**

Alabama: 19-21 May; Spring Fling; Wind Creek State Park, Alexander City; hotel rsvns: 800.252.7275; event info: 256.215.5828, 256.596.0678; write: East Alabama Area; c/o Cher C; Box 157; Alexander City, AL 35011

Arizona: 26-28 May; Arizona Regional Convention XX; Wyndham Phoenix Hotel, Phoenix; hotel rsvns: 800.359.7233; event info: 602.589.5158, 602.909.9511; registration: 602.564.2823; www.arizona-na.org

Arkansas: 2-4 Jun; SOS and HOW Float for Hope III; Caddo River Camping and Canoe Campsite, Hot Springs; rsvns: 501.318.9047; event info: 501.655.6815, 870.56.3336; write: SOS and HOW Groups; Box 427; Hot Springs Arkansas 71901

2) 9-11 Jun; Beaver Round Up; Beaver Lake Dam Site Park, Eureka Springs; rsvns: 501.318.9047; event info: 501.655.6815; www.norcalna.org

California: 13-16 Apr; Northern California Convention XVIII; San Jose McEnery Convention Center, San Jose; hotel rsvns: 408.792.4168; event info: 650.594.1448, 408.826.2333; www.norcalna.org

2) 14-16 Apr; Southern California Regional Spring Gathering; Sheraton Gateway LAX, Los Angeles; hotel rsvns: 800.325.5339; event info: 310.642.1111; write: SoCal Region; Box 762, Garden Grove, CA 92842

3) 26-28 May, Greater Los Angeles Area Convention IV; Wilshire Grand Hotel, Los Angeles; hotel rsvns: 888.773.2888; event info: 323.734.6422; registration: 323.295.3387; www.glaana.org

4) 9-11 Jun; California Mid-State Regional Convention IX; DoubleTree Modesto, Modesto; hotel rsvns: 209.526.6000; event info: 209.667.8530; write: California Mid-State Regional Convention; Box 323, Modesto, CA 95353-0232

Connecticut: 5-7 May; Women’s Sponsorship Weekend Retreat; Immaculata Retreat Center, Willimantic; registration: 203.630.9964; write: Central Connecticut Area; Straight from the Hip; Box 4033; Meriden, CT 06402

Florida: 13-16 Apr; North Dade Area Convention II; El Palacio Sports Hotel and Conference Center, Miami; hotel rsvns: 305.621.5801; event info: 305.758.9875
2) 14-16 Apr; First Coast Area Convention VI; Renaissance Resort at The World Golf Village, St Augustine; hotel rsvns: 888.740.7020; event info: 904.386.3728; registration: 904.744.3742; www.firstcoastna.org
3) 27-30 Apr; Fun in the Sun XVIII; Boardwalk Hotel and Resort, Panama City Beach; hotel rsvns: 850.230.4607; event info: 256.394.6592, 931.580.7637; registration: 256.797.1345
4) 28-30 Apr; Conch Republic Area Spiritual Retreat; Sugarloaf Key; hotel rsvns: 305.745.3549
5) 19-21 May; Daytona Area Convention; Plaza Ocean Club, Daytona Beach; hotel rsvns: 386.239.9800; registration: 386.212.6067; write: Daytona Area Convention, Box 247, Daytona Beach, FL 32112
6) 6-29 May; Gold Coast Convention XVI; Bahia Mar Beach Resort, Fort Lauderdale; hotel rsvns: 954.764.2233; registration: 561.302.9921; www.goldcoastna.org
7) 26-28 May; Celebration of Unity XXIV; Orlando Marriott Downtown, Orlando; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 407.301.1207; registration: 407.319.1607; www.orlandona.org
8) 29 Jun-2 Jul; Florida Regional Convention XXV; West Palm Beach Marriott, West Palm Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.376.2292; event info: 772.344.3216; www.floridarsco.org
Georgia: 28-30 Apr; Spirituality Is the Key VII; The Lodge at Unicoi, Helen; hotel rsvns: 800.573.9659; event info: 706.372.7389, 706.255.2048; registration: 770.639.2653
Hawaii: 21-23 Apr; Twenty-Second Annual Oahu Gathering; Camp Mokuleia, Waialua; event info: 808.261.4369, 808.391.6596; registration: 808.358.1891; www.hawaii-na.org
Illinois: 7-9 Apr; Rock River Area Convention XV; Ramada Inn South Beloit, South Beloit; hotel rsvns: 815.389.3481; event info: 815.494.9776; www.wisconsinna.org
Iowa: 7-9 Jul; Iowa Regional Convention XXIII; Wingate Inn, Carter Lake; hotel rsvns: 712.347.6595; event info: 712.325.2346, 402.981.5201; www.icrca.org
Kansas: 7-9 Apr; MidAmerica Regional Convention XXIII; Holiday Inn Hays, Hays; hotel rsvns: 785.625.7371; event info: 785.827.8635; 316.269.3275; registration: 785.493.5658; write: Mid America Region; MARCNA XXIII, Box 3672, Salina, KS 67401
Kentucky: 14-16 Apr; Kentucky Regional Convention XX; Executive Inn Riverfront, Paducah; hotel rsvns: 800.866.3636; event info: 270.565.4396, 270.365.7329; write: Kentuckiana; Box 467; Princeton, KY 42445
Louisiana: 26-28 May; Louisiana Regional Convention XXIV; Holiday Inn South, Baton Rouge; hotel rsvns: 888.814.9602; event info: 225.644.5858, 225.644.5858; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 Apr; write: Louisiana Region; LRCNA; Box 86323; Baton Rouge, LA 70879; www.larina.org
Maryland: 7-9 Apr; Chesapeake and Potomac Regional Convention XX; Roland E Powell Convention Center, Ocean City; event info: 410.904.2216; registration: 703.851.6572; www.cprcna.org/20
2) 26-28 May; Baltimore Area Convention; Baltimore Convention Center & Holiday Inn, Baltimore; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 410.562.0095, 410.562.0095; write: Greater Philadelphia Region; S MRCNA; Box 466; St Charles, MO 63303
Nebraska: 26-29 May; Run for Fun; Alexandria Lakes State Recreation Area, Alexandria; event info: 402.849.2456, 402.794.4876
New Jersey: 21-23 Apr; Ocean County Convention III; Quality Inn, Toms River; www.nanj.org
2) 9-11 Jun; New Jersey Regional Convention XXI; Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Cherry Hill, hotel rsvns: 856.428.2300; info: 856.280.7004, 732.264.0389; speaker tape submission deadline: 10 Apr; write: New Jersey Region; attn: NJRCNA-XXI chair; Box 134; Fords, NJ 08663; www.nanj.org
New Mexico: 23-25 Jun; Fellowship in the Field Campout XVI; Apple Hill Campground, Bethlehem; rsvns: 800.284.2238; event info: 603.645.4777; www.campout.gsana.org
New York: 26-28 May; Unity from the Heart III; Holiday Inn Electronics Parkway, Liverpool; hotel rsvns: 800.456.4329; event info: 315.254.5790, 315.876.2628; www.homyana.com
North Carolina: 2-4 Jun; Bound for Freedom Convention; Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte; hotel rsvns: 704.372.7550; event info: 704.536.0053, 704.493.4191; www.charlotte-na.org
2) 19-21 May; Down East, Inner-Coastal, and Crossroads Areas Convention I; City Hotel and Bistro, Greenville; hotel rsvns: 864.271.2616; event info: 252.236.4000; write: Down East, Inner-Coastal, and Crossroads Areas; Box 5458; Kinston, NC 28503-5458
3) 2-4 Jun; Looking Glass Bash Campout; Cove Creek Campground-Pisgah Forest, Asheville; www.crca.org
4) 9-11 Jun; North Carolina Capital Area Family Reunion XVII; Sheraton Raleigh, Raleigh; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 919.616.6408, 919.244.1683; write: Greater NC Capital Area; Box 10953; Raleigh, NC 27605
Ohio: 26-28 May; Ohio Convention XXIV; Holiday Inn, Mansfield; hotel rsvns: 419.525.0197; event info: 419.663.0505, 419.933.2151; write: OCNA XXIV; Box 1285; Mansfield, OH 44906
3) 30 Jun-2 Jul; Out of the Darkness, Into the Light; Dayton Mall Holiday Inn, Dayton; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; registration: 937.434.8030
Oregon: 12-14 May; Pacific Cascades Regional Convention XIII; Hilton Portland, Portland; hotel rsvns: 503.226.1611; event info: 503.720.6842; write: Portland Area; Box 3863; Tualatin, OR 97062
Pennsylvania: 14-16 Apr; Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention XXI; Valley Forge Radisson Hotel and Convention Center, King of Prussia; hotel rsvns: 610.337.2000; event info: 215.438.8122; registration: 215.519.9471; write: Greater Philadelphia Region; Box 33228; Philadelphia, PA 19142
South Carolina: 26-28 May; Greenwood Anderson Pickens Area Convention XIII; Ramada Inn, Clemson; hotel rsvns: 864.654.7501; event info: 864.859.0960; registration: 864.226.6696; speaker tape submission info: 864.506.4969; speaker tape submission deadline: 26 Apr; write: GAPANAC; Box 1184; Clemson, SC 29633
Tennessee: 5-7 May; KISS Kampout; Valley View Christian Camp, Nashville; event info: 615.593.1778; registration: 615.972.1385; write: Greater Nashville Area; 603 Chadwell Dr, Madison, TN 37115

Minnesot a: 7-9 Apr; Minnesota Convention; Holiday Inn, Mankato; hotel rsvns: 507.345.1234; www.naminnesota.org
Missouri: 9-11 Jun; Show-Me Regional Convention; Sheraton Chalet, St Louis; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 636.244.7035, 636.456.7611; write: Show-Me Region; SMRCNA; Box 466; St Charles, MO 63303

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Texas: 13-16 Apr; Lone Star Regional Convention XXI; hotel rsvns: 800.245.3105; event info: 800.747.8972; www.lsrna.com
2) 26-28 May; Texas State Convention IV; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fort Worth; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; registration: 817.714.0607; event info: 817.891.8215; www.tscna.org
3) 30 Jun-2 Jul; Houston Area Convention; Sheraton North Houston, Houston; hotel rsvns: 281.442.5100; event info: 713.569.8817, 832.715.6637; www.hascona.com

Utah: 2-4 Jun; Annual Celebration of Recovery XX; American Legion Hall, Vernal; event info: 435.790.0982; write: High Uinta Area; Box 1476, Vernal, UT 84078
2) 7-9 Jul; Utah Region Campvention; Lodgepole Campground, Heber; rsvns: ReserveUSA.com; event info: 801.360.3681; registration: 801.372.4396; www.utahna.info/pdf/Campvention06.pdf

Virginia: 26-29 May; Campout X; Hungry Mother State Park-Lutheran Retreat Center, Marion; event info: 276.628.1316
2) 2-4 Jun; I Can’t, We Campout II; Wildcat Mountain State Park, Ontario; event info: 608.633.0495, 608.315.0092; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 May; write: Big Rivers Area; Box 3765, LaCrosse, WI 54602

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

Basic Text Audio CD Set
the audiotapes of Book One converted to 4-CD set
Item No. EN-8811 Price US $9.70

Arabic
IP No. 22: Welcome to NA مرحباً في زمالة المدمنين المجاهلين
Item No. AR-3122 Price US $0.21

Bosnian
Keytags Welcome through Multiple Years
Item No. BS-4100-4108 Price US $0.37/each

Brazilian
IP No. 11: Sponsorship, Revised Apadrinhamento, Revisado
Item No. BR-3111 Price US $0.21

German
IP No. 11: Sponsorship, Revised Sponsorschaft, überarbeitete Ausgabe
Item No. GE-3111 Price US $0.21

Hungarian
IP No. 1: Who, What, How, and Why Ki, mi, hogyan és miért
Item No. HU-3101 Price US $0.21

Icelandic
IP No. 13: Youth and Recovery Unga fólkið og batinn
Item No. IS-3113 Price US $0.21

IP No. 14: One Addict’s Experience… Fíkill deilir reynslu sinni af samþykki, trú og skuldbindingu
Item No. IS-3114 Price US $0.21
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**Latvian**
IP No. 1: *Who, What, How, and Why*
*Kas, Ko, Kā un Kāpēc*
Item No. LV-3101  Price US $0.21

**Lithuanian**
IP No. 23: *Staying Clean on the Outside*
*Išlikti „švariam“ kitoje aplinkoje*
Item No. LT-3123  Price US $0.21

**Norwegian**
An Introductory Guide to NA, Revised
*An introduksjon til Anonyme Narkomane, Revidert*
Item No. NR-1200  Price US $1.70

**Tagalog**
Group Reading Card (seven-card set)
*Siapa, Apa, Bagaimana dan Mengapa*
Item No. TA-9130  Price US $2.50

**Japanese**
Basic Text
*ナルコティクス アノニマス*
Item No. JP-1101  Price US $5.50

**Urdu**
Keytags
*Welcome through Multiple Years*
Item No. UR-4100–4108  Price US $0.37/each
What’s new with the Basic Text project?

As you may know, we have passed the deadline for submissions to the Basic Text project. Between now and July 2006, we will be putting the text together and looking to fill gaps in what we have received. We are not turning away late submissions, but we can’t promise they’ll receive the same level of attention as those sent before the deadline. In September 2006, the review and input draft of the text will be mailed out, with input due back in March 2007. And then the approval form will be available in September 2007. The July NA Way will have information on signing up for review and input.