

*“What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.”*

Basic Text, page 65

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# Hope and Freedom

## Carrying our message

“Carrying the message” has to be one of our most sacred phrases in Narcotics Anonymous. We pepper our conversations, from casual and informal to heartfelt sharing in an NA meeting, with references to how we base our many actions on this spiritual ideal—whether those actions are service-related, addict-to-addict, or the daily grind of living life on life’s terms. Those three words sum up pretty much why we do what we do in NA and how vital it is to the continuance of our fellowship.

Our literature cautions that “When we, as a group, waiver from our primary purpose, addicts who might have found recovery die.” (Basic Text, page 67) The images that are brought to light by that simple and dramatic statement are chilling. Our message of freedom from active addiction is at the core of the service work we do, and it not only carries hope to the still-suffering addict, but it also reflects to the public the person each one of us has become. We are no longer the “devious, frightened loners” whom society once shunned. We have become, for the most part, “responsible and productive members of that society.” We strive to incorporate into our lives all that this gentle program has taught us, but we usually fall short—not because we are addicts, but simply because we are human beings. Today we can no longer use our disease as an excuse to act out; instead, we must hold fast to our message of recovery and choose to live in the solution.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue, where you will be introduced to members sharing about our message—hearing it, carrying it, and sometimes missing it—but ultimately getting it and embracing the miracle of recovery. ❖



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## Our readers write...

### Shouting louder: getting our message out there!

Dear Members,

I want to express my gratitude to the members at the World Service Office and the world over for constantly keeping me informed about our fellowship's activities through *The NA Way Magazine* and *Meeting by Mail*. \*

I just received both journals and was going through *The NA Way* January 2001 issue. I was really touched by this particular issue. I'm talking about the feature article on the 28<sup>th</sup> World Convention in Cartagena, "Our Gratitude Shouts," as well as "Message Carried, Message Received" and "A Bright Promise." While reading these articles, I became so emotional that tears started rolling down from my eyes. I was thinking back to the 1999 World Service Conference when I was given the opportunity to represent our small and immature region, NERF. In fact, that was the first time we were represented, and we got seated as a region. During the conference, the 28<sup>th</sup> World Convention in Cartagena was also announced, and convention fliers were distributed. One female member from Colombia came up to me and gave me fliers to take back to our region. I obliged and promised her that they would be distributed. But, at that moment, my honest feeling was that it was no use for us, since it is simply impossible for anyone in my region to go spending a huge amount of money. However, while reading the above-mentioned articles, I started imagining that I, myself, had been in Cartagena (though I've never been). I saw myself among those kids who piled into a bus and drove 29 hours from Cali, Colombia; I saw Mike P tirelessly busy, making sure that everything went well (as he did at the WSC'99); I could identify the feeling and emotion you all had when you saw Jorge M, from Medellín, Colombia, with his head in his hands, crying; I could see myself sharing and identifying in meetings; I could also see myself trying to escape in a corner while everyone was on the dance floor (because I'm not used to a dance floor); and much, much more. I'm already in Cartagena, and it's a great feeling!

My almost ten years of life in NA is simply wonderful. I'm connected with the whole world mentally, emotionally, and spiritually (though not physically). My thanks go to Ron H of New Mexico, Michael McD of California, and the feature "Our Gratitude Shouts," along with the fellowship of Colombia for the sharing—and for taking me to Cartagena!

*Cñ.Anand S, India*

\* For a more in-depth look at the *Meeting by Mail* periodical, please go to page 13.

*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 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."



# Got recovery?

## Giving to get

I believe that carrying the message of Narcotics Anonymous is the most important job we have as recovering addicts. In fact, it's our groups' primary one, as stated in the Fifth Tradition. Also, carrying the message is one of the primary aims of each of our service entities, with its fulfillment at the core of the efforts and work of the World Board and the World Service Conference—both seemingly far removed from “the addict who still suffers.”

These may appear to be the most obvious ways of carrying the message, but there are others. In fact, there are myriad, personal interactions that a recovering addict may encounter where our message gets carried—purposefully or unknowingly, positively or negatively—but carried nonetheless. The following is the story of how the message of recovery was carried to me, and how I've learned to carry it to others.

I'd heard of NA from people I used with who'd been arrested and court-ordered to attend meetings. Once, they even invited me along to attend a meeting. I said thanks, but no. They always said there were *nice* folks at these meetings who told *interesting* stories. This was the first message I got, really. “Nice” and “interesting” stayed with me for a while.

I actually attended my first NA meeting in December 1992 in Salt Lake City, Utah. A girl I used with in my hometown in Northern California had been arrested and court-ordered to meetings. She had moved to Salt Lake City and called me to ask if I'd take her to meetings. Though not on any winning streak myself, my thought was, “She's really screwed up; I'd better help her out.” I agreed to take her.

At my very first NA meeting, I was nervous and a little suspicious. But I noticed the friendliness those members had toward each other. They had a rapport that I found attractive. Someone gave me a hug. After the readings, which I found “interesting,” they asked for newcomers. I didn't hesitate to raise my hand and state the magic words of membership: My name, and the admission that “I'm an addict.” I was so bowled over by the clapping, attention, and feeling of inclusion that I wanted to go back. And I did... for a while.

In the two months or so during which I attended meetings in Salt Lake City, there was a man who would talk with me about the steps, sponsorship, getting involved, and the importance of making new friends. He planted the seed in my very fertile soil. Even though the seed he planted took some time to germinate, the plant continues to grow to this day.

I left Salt Lake City and went back to my hometown, picking up where I left off. That particular run lasted about six months. I had no contact with NA in that time, and I found myself unemployed, suicidal, and strung out. Even though the camaraderie and friendliness of the NA members attracted me, I still continued to use.

Over the next year and a half, I would put together a few months, use, put together a few more, and use again. I would attend meetings in between runs, and I always received warm welcomes, thus increasing my pain.

In my diseased thinking, rejection was expected, since I rejected and loathed myself. When I was shown love and acceptance in the face of my self-hatred, it only made it worse.

The members never shamed me, thank God! I felt it enough on my own. I simply refused to quit acting out on some particularly unsavory behavior, and consequently chose to use again.

When I wasn't around for a few days, people would call and leave messages on my answering machine. They would say things like “I hope you're OK,” “We miss you,” and “Will we see you tonight?” The message of love got carried even farther.

At the beginning of July 1994, one of those staunch supporters asked me to go with her and a few other members to a Fourth of July (US Independence Day) picnic held by an adjoining NA community. She said she didn't care if I had any money or not, or whether I was clean or not, just that she wanted me to be with her and the fellowship that day. I agreed.

I woke up that morning, 4 July 1994, and didn't take anything. I met her and the other members at the designated spot and went to the event.

I had such a good time that day. People were laughing and celebrating their recovery, and I was part of it. I played games and was in water fights and had the best day.

When the main meeting took place, there was a clean-time countdown, and I was the addict with one day clean. I stood up, and it felt like pandemonium broke loose. I was awash with the love of the fellowship.

The fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous loved me clean. I wasn't forced, shamed, manipulated, made to feel guilty, or even coerced to get clean. I was simply loved clean. I know that sounds rather hokey, but it's true—and it's been enough for almost seven years now.

When I had about two weeks clean, I was at a meeting where this guy was speaking. I'd been on the lookout for a sponsor and had some idea about whom I'd ask. However, this particular guy was *not* on the list.

He started to share about his childhood and the pain and other consequences of sexual abuse and perpetration. Sharing at that level of honesty mortified me! The fact that he would share such things in public was unfathomable, and yet there was a part of me that was filled with hope. I realized that someone could actually find healing and peace from such abuse by being in recovery. In essence, he told part of my story, and I was altered from that point on. He became my first sponsor and helped me through a lot of my early struggles. The power of the message of recovery gave me the courage to take action.

Another thing happened in that time period that will always stay with me. There was a man who befriended me when I started going to a certain group. He included me in business meetings, always wanting to know what I thought. I felt such "a part of." When I had about 60 days

clean, this man passed away, leaving behind his wife and children. It was a sad time for the fellowship, not to mention his family.

The members of the area decided to put together a fund-raiser for his family. To witness and be a part of this loving tribute was very powerful. The coming together and ultimate success of this event carried the message to this newcomer that these people really loved and cared for each other. It ingrained in me a sense of community and love that I had not experienced before coming to NA, and I have witnessed and experienced this love in our fellowship many times since.

These have been examples of how the message was carried to me again and again. Not much has changed. The fellowship continues to provide the myriad ways I need to experience its message of hope. I have learned how to carry this message to others. I have learned the importance of giving away what was given to me.

You see, with staying clean and working the steps, I've realized that I *like* what I have and who I am, and I want to keep it.

How do I keep it? I have to give it away.

The most obvious way of carrying the message is in the group. I went through a period where I thought it was unspiritual or unattractive to share about problems and dilemmas I was experiencing in my early recovery. So I shared about the "sunshine" I was experiencing, all the good things NA was doing for my life. I didn't talk about the gut-wrenching insecurities I endured or the crushing loneliness that plagued me during those early days.

Somewhere along the way, I learned to share the truth of my life—the full message of recovery. I learned that sharing just the "Pollyanna" stuff was only half the story, verging on dishonesty. I learned that there is distinct value in sharing the pain of growing and changing. I recalled my first sponsor sharing the pain of his life and the recognition, relief, and hope I felt when he did. I recalled feeling not so alone.

When I had a little over two years, I found myself homeless. I ended up sleeping on the floor of my friend's home for a few months. I was embarrassed to share about it, but I did. I was suicidal and tormented by negative thinking, and I had to share it.

I was in an unsuccessful relationship, and I had to own my part. I sabotaged the

relationship with my best friend, ruining what we had. He's never contacted me again. I had to share it.

There were always people who came up to me to express some form of gratitude for my sharing of the real stuff. That was the evidence of the value in carrying the message this way, through triumph and through pain.

Sponsorship is a primary area of focus for me in carrying the message. As I stated earlier, I like what I have inside. Through working the steps over and over, I've discovered real value in who I am and who I am becoming, and I've discovered that I'm worth the maintenance. So, again, I have to give it away to maintain it and keep it.

Sponsorship is a two-way street. Therein lies the paradox of selfless service in NA: When we give, we get, and that prompts us to actively seek out opportunities to give of ourselves. Those of us who have accepted this seem to be most active in the fellowship. They are the people who are there, week in and week out, doing the service of the fellowship. For many, that involves sponsorship.

When a sponsee does the work and I get the opportunity to be of service, I give, and I grow, and I get to keep what I have.

But when I agree to sponsor, and the work doesn't get done, I'm not giving or keeping. I'm getting cheated. So I have no qualms about preserving my welfare in recovery by insisting sponsees work the steps. I have a stake in whether or not sponsees do the work, so I insist on any kind of forward momentum—not the cursed "timeline," just some type of forward momentum. Any excuse an addict can offer not to work the steps is an excuse to stay sick. I have learned and experienced this!

I am not sure where the hard line comes from. Perhaps from the sponsor who wouldn't let me claim "victimhood" and showed me how to take responsibility for my actions and myself. Or from the passing parades of addicts who don't stay because they have all the answers. Or maybe the hard line comes from watching my NA friends relapse because they forgot how to hear and carry the message that helped them initially.

Or maybe it's my own fear—fear because of the knowledge that I am all too eligible for relapse, and because I want to

stay clean more than anything in my life am an addict, after all—I am not exempt from the inclination to relapse.

Either way, I've learned to take care of myself in NA, and I've learned that it is my responsibility to do so.

I've come to accept that I am really here in Narcotics Anonymous for me. I am not here for anyone else...not for you, for my work, for my family, or for any other outside entity.

This sentiment is not very popular, but it's my reality. I believe its unpopularity stems from sounding completely self-centered. It's not, though. It actually has to do with self-preservation and spiritual awakening, in that I've awakened to believe that I am important enough in my own life to continue to show up for it—and when I show up for my own recovery in the realm of selfless service, I show up for others.

When I serve, I am served. When I sponsor, I convey to another addict that what I have is important enough to keep. Ultimately, when I give, I get.

*Anonymous, California*



## You don't *have* to go back

It was less than ten years ago when I wrote my first article for *The NA Way Magazine*. It was titled "For Those Behind the Walls." I wanted to let the inmates know that there are those of us out here staying out of jails and institutions and avoiding death. I felt it was my duty to share with the convict who didn't believe that he or she could lead a new life without drugs that it just wasn't true—that they *could* live clean.

I settled in the region of the Dakotas from Southern California due to my last incarceration. I found a great place to raise my children, and there were good employment opportunities—not to mention that I was scared about going back to the "old playgrounds."

It has been quite a journey since I last was in touch with *The NA Way*. I have had such a rewarding experience in this new environment. I have been promoted to supervisor at the computer-based company where I am employed. I oversee between 30 and 50 employees. This job pays me enough so that I can go "play" in my service work.

I am also a pastor in a treatment center, and I hear Fifth Steps on a weekly basis. I serve as an associate pastor at a church in our region.

Here is the kicker: I have been asked to come on staff at the penitentiary that at one time, over ten years ago, locked up this drug-dealing outlaw!

I truly believe that my journey with faith and in helping others began the first time an H&I team showed up at the last facility I was in and shared the message of recovery through the NA program. I wanted to be like one of those guys. I wanted to get clean and learn more about recovery so that I could come back one day and help others.

My Higher Power has rewarded me tenfold. I'm a regular speaker in the prison school, I'm a chaplain, and I'm a speaker for schools, churches, and civic functions.

The theme of this issue, "Carrying the Message," is my theme for the rest of my life. My goal is to be used in such a way that not one addict suffers anymore with the lie, "once a junkie, always a junkie."

If you haven't used the speaking experience yet, then try it. I believe it is the most rewarding experience you can ever have in your lifetime.

Thank you, NA, for sending speakers into my prison. If it wasn't for those faithful men carrying the message of hope, I wouldn't be doing the work I do today: carrying the message in the Midwest!

*Chaplain Al P, South Dakota*

# Don't leave before the miracle happens

Greetings, my fellow members! I would be very happy to know that my story could help and contribute to another addict's recovery, as well as helping addicts who are suffering from the disease of addiction and are still using. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you do for NA in Venezuela and around the world.

My name is Freddy, and I'm an addict in recovery by the grace of a Power greater than myself.

I first came into contact with alcohol over 39 years ago. I became very drunk, which started me on the road of extreme unmanageability in my life.

I spent time in a juvenile detention center, where I had problems with the other inmates, mostly due to my violent behavior. When I was released, I went to buy drugs; seeing other youngsters using in the detention center had sparked my curiosity.

I started using pills, then smoking pot. My behavior became totally antisocial, and I began trying other drugs. All of these substances helped me become a juvenile delinquent-in-training. From that point on, all of my efforts, desires, and feelings were geared toward getting and using drugs, and nothing else was important.

I never worried about having a girlfriend or a job or about going to school or about my family. All I wanted to do was to use. From the time I was twelve until I was 20 years old, my life went on in that drug scene, which included numerous stays at juvenile detention centers and lots of other negative things that prevented me from living my life the same way as a normal, healthy teenager.

I committed robberies in my own home, taking everything from my house (silverware, TVs, radios, stereos, jewelry, etc.). Because of these things, I was kicked out of my house for good when I was 13 years old. Then I started to walk the streets, sleeping in a graveyard located near the

neighborhood where I lived, as well as sleeping on the beach.

When I was 20 years old I was sent to an adult prison, then to a penitentiary, and then to El Dorado Jail, where I've been incarcerated twice. This jail in El Dorado had a center where the officials would supposedly "reeducate" the inmates through hard labor. It's located near the border of Brazil, and some of the worst delinquents in Venezuela are kept there.

I was there for two years, and when I was released I became a mugger. However, this new job didn't last long because I got shot twice in the left foot during a mugging attempt.

Later, even though I needed crutches to move around, I began to sell drugs, and eventually I ended up in jail again. That place (thankfully) doesn't exist any longer. It was known as Las Flores de Catia, one of the worst places on the planet! I was there on three different occasions, and I was even shown on TV and radio as a drug dealer.

Finally, the time came to begin my recovery. It happened during the wake of a friend who had died of a drug overdose. That night I was high on a lot of drugs, and I started to hear voices. I felt like I was being chased by those voices and by monsters that didn't exist. I finally lost all contact with reality. I didn't realize who I was, where I was, or what I was doing.

Again, I began to walk the streets—not just in a state of physical and spiritual indigence, but totally crazy and insane, walking and sleeping in the streets and squares of Caracas, and finally arriving at the banks of the Guaviare River, into which drain all the sewers of Caracas. It was here that a group of firefighters rescued me, put me in a straitjacket, and sedated me with a shot (injection).

I felt very troubled and was in a lot of pain, almost to the point that I thought I would die. Later that day, I thought I saw myself in a living graveyard with dead bodies rising up from their graves and trying to devour me. I felt horrible, and I experienced two more similar situations.

I was taken to the Caracas Psychiatric Hospital, where I stayed for a month and a half. When I was released, a woman I had not met before, gave me the message of recovery from Alcoholics Anonymous. I went to a few AA meetings, where they

suggested that I go to NA to receive help for my addiction problem.

I have been clean now for four years and three months thanks to the NA program. It was in NA where I came to know and recognize that I was powerless over any mind- and/or mood-altering substance. I also realized that I could not manage my own life, and that I needed help from other people whom I identified with in NA meetings. These fellow members help me on a daily basis to face my problems, my difficulties, and my defects of character. They value me, and they help me to improve the positive things in my life.

Today, the emptiness that was inside me has disappeared; it has been replaced with the power of NA. NA has taken me out of my isolation and has relieved my ignorance about my problem. By staying in NA, attending meetings, sharing my experiences with fellow members, reading NA recovery literature, working the steps and traditions, working in service, and always being ready to lend a helping hand to anyone who has an addiction problem or who needs or wants my help, I have returned to real life again.

I am very happy. After being spiritually dead for so long, I know that through NA all my internal being is being healed. Thanks, Higher Power. Narcotics Anonymous works! We can stay clean 24 hours a time, just for today!

Freddy G, Venezuela

*"Sharing with others  
keeps us from feeling  
isolated and alone."*

*Basic Text, page 81*

# The desire to live free

My name is Sean. I am a recovering addict. Through the help of NA, I am clean six years. Today I have achieved a personal freedom I never knew before, by working and living in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Today, I also have a close and vital relationship with my sponsor. I have the freedom to get to know me and my feelings. I have the freedom to change with the help of my loving Higher Power. I am alive and healthy. I am clean, and I have learned a profession, something I didn't have when I got clean. I am also a student.

These are all gifts that I have received through NA because I possess the only requirement for membership: the desire to be and stay clean.

Today I also have a strong desire for sanity and for recovery from my defects of character. Steps Two and Seven are my motivation to keep coming back and to join NA through service.

What I have been writing about regarding my personal recovery in NA is a prerequisite of sorts for creating an atmosphere of recovery. I know that NA keeps me clean, not my will power. I have gratitude today. I attend my home group on a regular basis, and I do service there. By actively working the Twelve Steps to the best of my ability, I have acquired the willingness to become a better person, the desire to let God change me, and the wish to carry the message to the still-suffering addict. Today I can practice goodwill toward my fellow addicts.

When I come to NA with this type of attitude, I am working on the process of creating an atmosphere of recovery. I know it takes even more—like respect for others, no matter what their religion, sexual identity, or political opinion is, as our Basic Text tells us—or just simple respect for the person as a human being. In NA, it doesn't matter who we are or where we come from; the only requirement for NA membership is the desire to stop using. It is written in our literature, and this is not an unreachable ideal; it is a very important reality.

I believe it is possible to create an atmosphere of recovery. NA lives through

the diversity of its members. And because NA is alive, I am alive. For seven years I have been a part of NA, and NA has been a part of my life. I have been clean for six years and, according to God's will, I hope to stay clean for many more years. Today I often say, as a joke, that I don't have time to take drugs anymore because getting rid of my character defects is a full-time job!

It is me who has to change, not the world. Of course there are many circumstances in this world that should and could be better, but to live in this world, I have to change. When I find myself in the trap of wanting to change everything around me,

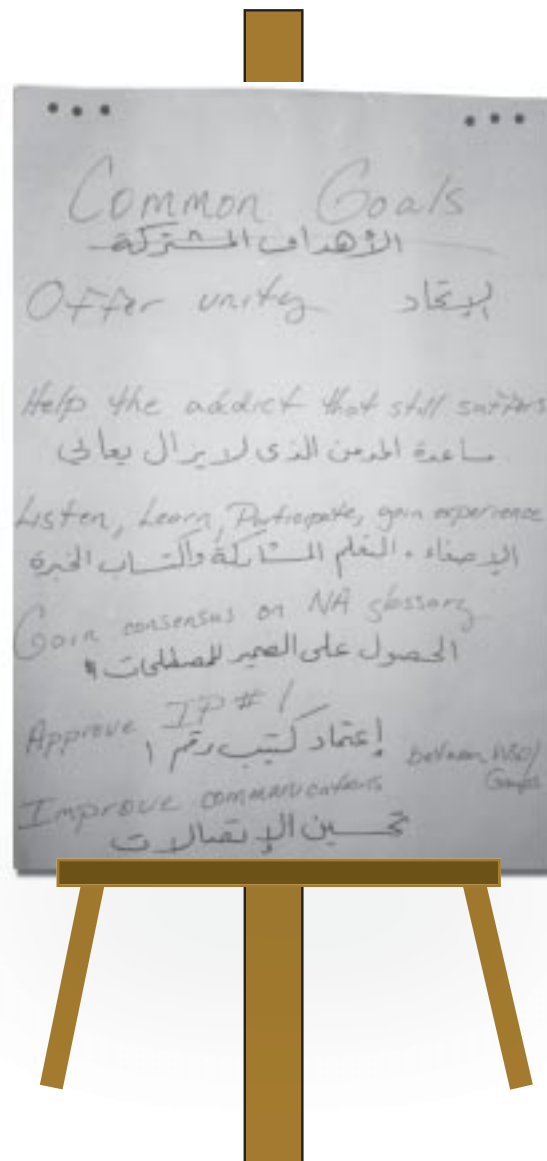
including NA and the world as such, then it is time to take a deep, insightful look into my own life. Somehow, solving the world's political problems seems to be a lot easier for me than doing my own laundry!

NA is good, just as it is! I believe it is God's merciful gift to every addict who has known the hell of active addiction. I accept this gift of recovery with gratitude, and I am willing to give it to the addict who is willing to receive it.

I will keep coming back, and I hope that you, too, will also keep coming back.

In love for the NA Fellowship,

Sean Z, Germany



## Recovery spoken here!

A chart highlights key points that were addressed at a translation meeting between Arabic NA communities and NA World Services. The meeting was held in Bahrain during the ICAA (International Council on Alcohol and Addictions) conference in September 2000.

## Click here for recovery

Hi, my name is Alejandra. I'm an addict, and I'm grateful to be clean today! I wanted to share with you, my family, how I received the message of recovery and how the miracle happened in my life.

After trying everything and not being able to stop using, I separated from my mate and returned to Miami, where I previously had lived for twenty years. I even used right before I boarded the plane. When I arrived in Miami, I was totally destroyed, alone, empty inside, and scared to death. I brought my third child with me, a one-year-old baby who was born miraculously while I was still in my active addiction. I didn't really know my baby, and I was petrified to go to a detox center because I didn't want to lose him since I already had lost my two oldest daughters.

A woman I knew let me stay at her house. I didn't know whether to steal something from her so I could go use or to ask for help. I decided to ask for help. Several times I would call the NA help line there and hang up. I even got addresses for meetings, but I would never go. I became more afraid with each passing day.

My friend had a computer. I noticed how she used it, and one day, when I was alone, I sent an email to a site for Spanish-speaking NA members. I don't remember exactly how it happened, but I received a phone call from a member living in Guatemala. The first thing he told me was, "Let me love you until you can love yourself."

What?

He talked about the program: one addict helping another, just for today. During those brief moments I didn't have to use, but I still didn't understand anything.

I started to accumulate a few days, not using and staying clean. This fellow member called me 30 days in a row. I still didn't attend my first meeting, and I resisted the idea of going to a meeting. He talked about the "white chip," and he continued communicating with me through the phone or the computer. He put me in touch with other addicts from other countries, and he gave me the names of other addicts who lived in the Miami area. They all wrote to me and shared their experience, strength, and hope.

At this time, I almost had 30 days clean!

My friend from Guatemala told me that he couldn't continue calling me, and that if I didn't want to go to my first meeting, then there was nothing more he could do. I felt a lot of fear. I didn't want to be alone again, and I didn't want any of these people to stop writing, so I ran to my first meeting.

Today I have been clean for 14 months. Thanks to my Higher Power, I was able to attend the Cartageña World Convention, and I met my friend from Guatemala face to face for the first time. I also met many of the fellow members who had written and emailed me. It was the most beautiful experience of my life. I gave my friend my white chip, which was my most precious treasure.

I believe my Higher Power appeared in that computer in the form of my friend, who carried the message of recovery. He taught me a lot about service work, conventions, steps, and traditions. I asked him questions that I wouldn't dare ask in a meeting. Through an NA Internet group, I met my present sponsor, who also lives in Miami. She's also originally from the same country I am!

This is a miracle. My recovery began with two days of clean time, using a computer! That's how my Higher Power and NA manifested themselves in my life.

Thanks, NA, and to those trusted servants who were there to carry the message to me.

*Alejandra A, Florida*

## A message of hope

The first time I received the message of recovery was during my second round of treatment in a therapeutic community. Up until that time, I had never heard about a fellowship where recovery was possible on a "just for today" basis.

I was able to borrow a Basic Text from one of the other patients, and after six months I started to understand my addictive nature, and that my problem wasn't about any specific drug but was a deadly disease.

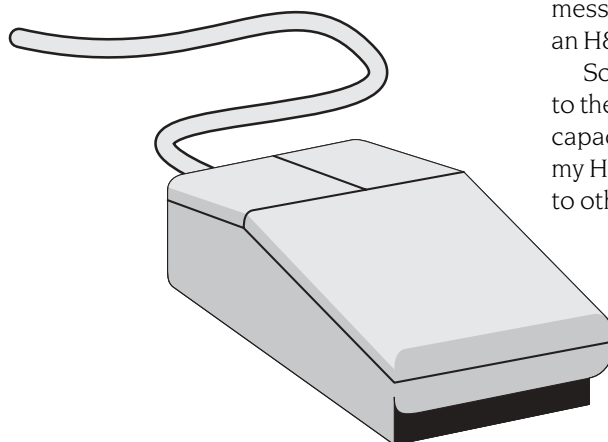
When I left the therapeutic community and joined NA, I felt the joy of recovery for the first time in my life. I used a few more times, but I returned to the program after each relapse because I learned through our NA literature that I couldn't save face and expect to save my life at the same time.

With NA's message of recovery, a hug from a couple of fellow members, help from a Power greater than myself, and a little self-love and acceptance, I was finally able to tear down the denial barrier that I had built during 15 bitter years of active addiction. Listening to other members share the message of recovery in our meetings helps me get back a little bit of my sanity each day.

I read my inventory to my sponsor so he could help me learn to accept my limits and become humble, while helping me to let my selfishness go. Having made the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, I was able to carry the message of faith, strength, and hope on an H&I panel in an institution.

So my recovery, which I live every day to the best of my ability, has given me the capacity to be used as an instrument by my Higher Power—showing the NA path to other addicts who are still suffering.

*Mario H, Brazil*





# Never alone... never again

Why are we here?

On the surface, this question is very general, for it can apply to any number of situations. But to those who look with a thoughtful eye, we know clearly the meaning of “why are we here?”

From my vantage point, active addiction was like a fairy tale, except only the nightmare parts came true. Nightmares such as degradation, homelessness, emotional bankruptcy, and mental anguish became my reality. In my active addiction I mistook violence for passion and indolence for leisure, and I thought recklessness was freedom. My drug use cut at the very essence of my self-esteem and ripped through any belief I had in myself—and then came prison.

After going through countless subterfuges to prove that I could handle my drug use this time, I was introduced to the twelve-step program of Narcotics Anonymous. Through this fellowship and the people in the fellowship who are just like me, I am continuously learning the importance of making meetings. Meetings make sense to the addict who slid down the chute to hell. I attend meetings to learn a new way of life without drugs and alcohol. Yes, alcohol is a drug!

I’ve attended NA meetings within the prison system since 1998. Many times, unfortunately, these meetings have turned into a mockery of debates mixed with prison therapists. I don’t mean to sound sanctimonious, for I, too, have fallen prey to this distraction. I know now just how cunning and baffling the disease of addiction can be. The primary purpose of all NA meetings is to carry the message—not to preach, teach, or glorify war stories.

To this recovering addict, there is no misunderstanding about the question “why are we here?” When I am in an NA meeting, I know I am not using or committing crimes. When I am in an NA meeting, I am learning to use the tools of recovery, like sponsorship and service work (the latter of which I have found quite rewarding). When I am in an NA meeting, recovery is then possible.

Why am I here? Because my life depends on it!

*Fletcher R, Michigan*

# Stop, look, and listen

When I had about three years clean, I developed degenerative arthritis in my right hip, and over the next three years it did just that: degenerate. My hip hurt all the time. I used to think I had a low tolerance for pain, but I found out that what I really have is a low tolerance for not getting my own way.

For three years I dealt with the pain until my Medicare benefits finally kicked in and I was scheduled for total hip replacement surgery. I was due to arrive at the hospital on 23 October 2000 by 6 am.

I woke up at 5 am on the day I was scheduled for surgery. I prayed and read the meditation out of *Just for Today*. Ironically, the meditation for that day was on surrender, but I didn’t have any yet. After taking a shower, I sat and waited for my ride to arrive. I kept thinking, “I don’t want to go. The pain isn’t *that* bad. I can just stay this way. I can still get around.” I had to get up and move around; too much was going on inside my head!

I stepped out on the porch. It was quiet and clear. A crescent moon shone brightly, and I saw the cat that lives in the alley, sitting on my steps. I named her Shadow, because that’s how much noise she makes! I had been feeding her for three months, and now she brought her kittens to see me off, I thought.

She still shied away from me, keeping her distance, and I thought, “She’s still afraid of me.”

I said, “Come on, Shadow, you don’t have to be afraid of me. I’m the guy who takes care of you.”

And then, it was as if God whispered in my heart, “Raymond, you don’t have to be afraid. I’m the guy who takes care of you.”

I stepped back inside and sat down on my bed. I prayed for the strength to endure my pain. I realized that the only thing between God and me was my reluctance to go there.

I went to the hospital. I told the surgeon and the anesthesiologist that my problem wasn’t so much my hip as it was my addiction, and the last thing we wanted to do was wake *that* up. So they gave me an epidural (local anesthesia given in the lower

spinal area), a new titanium hip joint, long-acting Novocain for the next two days, and then Tylenol.

I was out of bed the night of surgery and walked the next day. Seventy-six hours later, I left the hospital and went home. I was never alone, and I never felt more pain than I could bear. I know me, and that was *not* me!

I want to thank Narcotics Anonymous for not only carrying the message, but for reintroducing me to the God of my understanding.

*Raymond S, Florida*

# No matter what

It was a very bad day for me. My husband and I weren’t getting along, so I decided that I wanted him to leave. That same day I was terminated from my job due to my own actions. My head was in total chaos, and I only had 128 days clean. I realized how easy it would be for me to take the coward’s way out and start using again, but instead I thought about going to a meeting as an alternative.

I kept hearing “that no matter what, I don’t have to use,” and I knew that going to a meeting might help me get out of the space I was in, so I went. I was extremely anxious to share what I was feeling. I couldn’t sit still!

Finally, it was my turn to share. I felt so afraid of my feelings, and I didn’t really want to be honest, but somehow a power greater than myself allowed me to share honestly. By the goodness of the NA program, and by the grace of my Higher Power (God), I realized that if I didn’t use, just for today, all would be okay.

Faith and true surrender helped me through that day. I know this (as well as any) trial will soon pass if I just have faith. I believe it was (and is) a test for me to see if I had truly surrendered my will to my HP. By having faith, not only in this program and myself, but also in a power much greater than me, I was helped to make the right choice.

I know that relapse is a choice and, just for today, I don’t have to use. That particular choice makes for a truly blessed day.

*Gladys S B, Michigan*



## Reaching Out

Here is a graphic from a Turkish wallet card that is given to newcomers.

# 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.).



## "Simplicity is the key..."

*(Basic Text, page ix)*

A simple yet powerful message of hope and freedom is carried on a weekly basis within these walls.

*Grupo "Sitges," Barcelona, Spain*



## Grupo "Limpios en el Campus"

*Universidad de Costa Rica,  
Costa Rica, Central America*



# Reading our message: *Meeting by Mail* and *Reaching Out*

When was the last time you read through an issue of *Meeting by Mail* or *Reaching Out*? For most of you, the answer is never. The reason I am asking a rhetorical question to start this article is that I want to point out that most NA members do not read *Meeting by Mail* or *Reaching Out*. However, by the time you finish this article, we hope that you will know a bit of the history of these two Narcotics Anonymous World Services publications, and you will come to appreciate the important role they play in the lives of many of our members.

*Meeting by Mail* and *Reaching Out* are two of our fellowship's oldest and most storied publications. Both of these newsletters reach a wide and varied audience.

*Meeting by Mail* is published six times per year (December/January, February/March, April/May, June/July, August/September, October/November), and currently has a subscriber base of 650 addresses. This magazine is sent to 44 different countries, with the largest subscriber base being in the US with over 375 current subscriptions; following is India with 100-plus subscriptions, Canada with over 30, and Australia with 25.

To illustrate the geographic and cultural sweep of this publication, following is just a sampling of the more exotic destinations: Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Newfoundland, Tanzania, the Czech Republic, China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Kuwait, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Canary Islands, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. *Meeting by Mail* goes to countries where there are no Narcotics Anonymous groups or meetings other than *Meeting by Mail*.

However, MBM also plays a strong role in the countries where there is strong NA presence. There are places like Ozard, Alabama, and Iuka, Mississippi, where people can reap the benefits of some long-term recovery shared in MBM that they just might not have available in their local home group. I didn't mention the more obvious countries, but just so there's no doubt, MBM goes all over the US, Canada, UK, Germany, South and Central America, as well as Alaska, Puerto Rico, etc.

MBM began back in the mid-1980s, and the World Service Office has always compiled it. Letters pour in to Fellowship Services from "loner" NA members and form the basis for the contents of *Meeting by Mail*. After an issue is compiled, it is sent out for professional copy editing and then typeset in-house. After the edits are entered, it is proofread and signed off by Fellowship Services and is then printed in-house and mailed.

*Meeting by Mail* is fundamentally designed to serve those addicts who cannot attend regular NA meetings due to geographical isolation and/or those unable to attend meetings due to physical challenges.

It is true that other addicts besides those listed above benefit, and that is an extra bonus! Socially isolated NA members and those with physical limitations or challenges that can cause great reluctance to attend meetings frequently get a much-needed breath of recovery from the *Meeting by Mail*.

MBM is a thoroughly positive, recovery-enhancing tool of our fellowship. *Meeting by Mail* is a free publication.

*Reaching Out* is a conference-sanctioned periodical with a very impressive masthead and an equally impressive history.



There have been a number of changes implemented over the years. Here is a brief chronology:

*Reaching Out* was generated from the fellowship as far back as 1984. In 1985, guidelines were drawn up at a Kansas City workshop. An editorial committee was designated, consisting of the WSC H&I chairperson, the WSC H&I vice chairperson, the WSO H&I project coordinator, and a trustee assigned to the project. (These positions and committees were eliminated with the approval of the single-board process at WSC'98.) The World Board is reviewing the process currently in use, but the magazine will not miss a beat during this transition period.

*Reaching Out* has been a quarterly publication since July 1987 and has a current printing of approximately 17,500. The publication months are January, April, July, and October. Each issue is 16 pages long and is divided into two major sections—*From the Inside* and *From the Outside*. Letters are chosen from current inmates who are recovering behind the walls, as well as from members back in society who are involved in H&I work or who received the message of recovery while incarcerated.

It is clear that for many inmates, *Reaching Out* is their connection to Narcotics Anonymous until their release. Many inmates are sustained by the publication until they can begin to attend regular NA meetings upon their reintegration into the community.

A great many addicts who have stayed clean after release from incarceration have given no small credit to *Reaching Out* for helping them get the initial hope that recovery is possible.

*Reaching Out* is free to incarcerated individuals. In addition, every ASC is sent a number of copies of each issue to assist with their H&I efforts.

Much of the work that gets done at NAWS is a collaborative effort. These two newsletters, *Meeting by Mail* and *Reaching Out*, are a perfect example of this. It takes no fewer than eight staff members to receive input, read, proof, edit, enter, format, and print these two recovery journals, which then go to the four corners of the earth and into the daunting recesses of the world's penal institutions.

Jeff Gershoff, Supervisor  
Fellowship Services



## H&I Slim

For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting him, H&I Slim is "the ultimate H&I kinda guy." He hangs out in hospitals and jails all over the world. You might say he's always in the know and always on the go. Got a question about H&I? Need some help? Write H&I Slim in care of the WSO.

### Dear H&I Slim:

There are some members of our fellowship who have to take pain medication for various reasons. We suggest to those members who have taken "heavy" pain medication that day that it is probably not a good time for them to share at a panel presentation. They should wait for a more pain-free day to do their H&I work. Members who have been in accidents and are on muscle relaxants also have been asked to consider putting off their H&I work. What should our answer be?

W, New York

Dear W:

The use of medication in recovery is a sensitive topic, and there are probably an equal number of members who sit on each side of this issue. In the *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook* resource section, there are a number of sample guidelines that you can consider. The following is found in the general information section, item A: "*Being clean for purposes of this H&I subcommittee shall be defined as complete abstinence from all drugs.*" (The emphasis is mine.)

From my understanding (after many discussions with past WSC H&I committee members), abstinence from all drugs meant abstinence from any mind- or mood-altering chemicals. That statement covers a lot of territory, especially since it doesn't specify any particular drug as being okay. Many hard-line H&I committee members (if you will) and/or committees abide by that standard to the letter.

As our fellowship grew—and as it continues to grow—more and more members began to challenge that standard for a variety of reasons. However, the guidelines have remained intact. The *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook* has worked well since 1989, and it has been instrumental in the development of our H&I committees and our H&I practices (which ultimately means that the NA message of recovery is being carried to more suffering addicts in a hospital or institutional setting).

Narcotics Anonymous isn't the same as it was back in 1989. It is more diverse than ever, which brings me to my point: In the foreseeable future, the World Board Public Relations Committee will be reviewing the *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook*, as well as other service-related handbooks.

I believe it's safe to say that when the Public Relations Committee begins the reviewing process, they will, at some point, solicit fellowship input. If you and/or your H&I Subcommittee have a strong position on this, or on any other topic in the handbook, I might suggest that you review the *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook*, share your thoughts and feelings, and develop input for future consideration. H&I Slim is always looking for better ways and means of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers in an H&I setting.

In answer to your question, if the muscle relaxants are in any way mind- or mood-altering, I would say that your answer—putting off the H&I work—would be appropriate.

Thank you for all the H&I service you do.

In loving service,  
H&I Slim

# Something to talk about

Participants at WSC 2000 selected two topics for fellowship discussion. NA members, area committees, and regional committees can help regional delegates prepare for a discussion of these topics at WSC 2002 next April by hosting and participating in discussions in your area and/or your region. Along with each topic, we are including some questions that may help stimulate discussion. At the end of your discussion, note takers should get together and combine their observations, along with a list of the most important points made about the topic, to present to your region or regional delegate. This information can help your region to prepare an issue discussion paper for the *Conference Agenda Report*. (**Deadline for papers is 15 October 2001.**)

NA World Services is also interested in the results of your discussion. Please consider sending the same information to the World Board, c/o WSO. It will be a great help to the board in structuring the WSC issue discussions and finalizing results at the end of the WSC issue-discussion process. We hope these results can eventually be shared by the WSO in correspondence related to these topics.

Some helpful hints in preparing for these discussions include: keep the discussion simple and loosely structured; set aside 60 to 90 minutes for each topic; eliminate physical barriers between people, such as tables, etc.; break into small groups of 10 to 20 people; and ask one person to facilitate the discussion and one person to write down important notes. Try to give everyone fair opportunity to speak (three to five minutes per speaker), and prevent domination by one person. It is important that you set ground rules from the beginning of the discussion—e.g., give everyone respect, no cross talk, observe time limits, don't repeat what's been said, etc. If possible, include members with differing opinions and varying lengths of clean time in each small group. The goal is to share ideas and experience, not engage in debate or argument.

The following information has been condensed from the two most recent issues of *World Board News Flash*. You can read them in their entirety by visiting our website, [www.na.org](http://www.na.org).

## Building better communications

By the time you receive this issue of *The NA Way*, the first worldwide workshop will have taken place. We will present a more in-depth report in the next issue of the magazine, scheduled for October 2001. The workshop occurred in Burnaby, just outside of Vancouver, British Columbia, from 29 June to 1 July 2001. We partnered with the BC Region to transform a Multi-Regional Service Learning Days weekend into the first NAWS Worldwide Workshop.

This particular project plan budget allows for four to six workshops. We have currently decided to offer a total of five. The tentative schedule is: Europe (September/October 2001), Asia-Pacific (November/December 2001), and Latin America (January/February 2002), with the final workshop being held in the Midwestern United States. We hope to work in cooperation with the Midwest Zonal Forum. If they agree to host, we would plan the workshop for February/March 2002.

We welcome your input about how to make these successful! Remember, these events, as well as all the services we provide, are a team effort. We cannot do this alone, but together we can!

## WSC Issue Topic One

**“How can we continue to provide services to our fellowship and at the same time decrease our reliance on funds from events and conventions?”**

1. Are we having problems providing a stable and reliable flow of funds or other support for any crucial local services?
2. Locally, have there been problems, controversy, or disunity over events or fund-raising?
3. Are local services here overly dependent on funds raised from events?
4. How do we know what is the right amount of money for events and conventions to make? Is there such a thing as having too much extra money?
5. Is event income different from donation income? Why or why not?
6. Does our principle of self-support apply differently to conventions versus other services?
7. Is anything wrong with relying on conventions and events for funding services?

**Background:** Our experience discussing this topic has shown that raising awareness is often the first step to taking action to make changes to decrease the reliance on event funds. We have found it's easy to fall prey to the "What if the money isn't there?" kind of thinking. The fear of losing services, credibility, and the chance for addicts to find NA can be strong motivation for accumulating money at the group or committee level—just in case! When funds aren't passed along to other levels of service, we begin to look to other sources. Fund-raising is often a choice we make. The opportunity to make extra money at a convention or event can also be hard to pass up, because we can always find a use for the money. Our members and our literature describe the gratitude that results when NA members donate to their groups and to the service structure. Many oldtimers share about the values of commitment, faith, trust, integrity, and responsibility as important Seventh Tradition principles that help us overcome our fears about the lack of money and our fears of change.

Conventions and other events are part of NA. We've come to enjoy the unity and fun that go with them. These events are usually meant to be self-supporting. Sometimes they bring in more money than it costs to put them on. Our experience is that NA communities in the earlier stages of development tend to rely heavily on event fund-raising for providing services. Over time, as communities grow and stabilize, this sometimes causes problems or raises questions about how we provide and fund fellowship services.

Our First and Seventh Traditions give guidance about the importance of supporting our efforts to help addicts in keeping with our Fifth Tradition's primary purpose. We know that addicts must find NA recovery for our fellowship to grow and thrive. NA members around the world give their time and money to help build strong and successful groups and committees, and NA unity results—the NA unity spoken of in Tradition One. Our personal recovery depends on this unity.

The Basic Text also reminds us in Tradition One that "our traditions are the guidelines that protect us from ourselves." As recovering addicts striving to overcome our self-centered fears, we certainly know that matters of money, property, and prestige can cause much trouble in our personal lives—just as they can in our fellowship. So, too, we know that freedom comes for the individual from the Twelve Steps and for the groups from our Twelve Traditions and our Twelve Concepts for NA Service.

**"In the midst of life's storms,  
the following gear  
may just help you out:**

- **An umbrella.** (The presence of your loving God.)
- **A raincoat.** (Your faith.)
- **A pair of boots.** (Love and compassion.)"

*MaryLou D, Pennsylvania*

## WSC Issue Topic Two

**"How can we create a bridge that builds and maintains a connection to service for home group members?"**

1. What is your experience with the "bridge," or the connection, between recovery and service?
2. What can individuals do to help other members get involved in service?
3. How does your home group contribute to the unity with other groups and your area?
4. What is your favorite type of NA service? Why does it attract you?
5. If you could change anything about NA service, what would it be?

**Background:** Carrying the NA message is close to the heart of every NA member, because for each of us there is someone who took the time to help us in the same way. Someone welcomed us at our first NA meeting and asked how we were doing and what brought us in the door. Someone listened as we poured out our story. They heard our desperation, our loneliness, and our fear. It usually wasn't too long before someone asked us to help in some way, setting up chairs or cleaning up after the meeting. We began to feel like we belonged.

Service in NA happens when members and groups join together to carry our message and "give it away" in order to stay clean. So often, we hear someone share in a meeting how much involvement in service has added to their own recovery. Many begin their involvement right away, serving their group by cleaning up or doing some other type of useful chore for others. Some find their niche in personal service, helping addicts one-to-one. Others prefer serving on one of the many committees at the area or regional level. Many members choose to work on phonelines because that's where their own first contact with NA was. Others, who first heard the NA message in an institution through an H&I panel, are drawn to participate on a panel that carries the message.

Our steps and traditions tell us that it is necessary for us to carry our message individually and as groups, and that we can create boards and committees to help us do this. Our literature also describes what happens in different ways in our groups and committees and why. Tradition One tells us that our common welfare is essential, and that each of us is equally responsible for NA's well-being. The second part of Tradition One states that for each of us to continue our recovery, NA meetings and services need to keep on happening, other addicts have to be able to find NA, and we must always be willing to help each other.

No matter what one's personal experience or beliefs are about the exact nature of this relationship of recovery to service, it seems that individuals participate in service **because** they are

in recovery, their participation **adds** to their recovery, and service is **necessary** in order for addicts to find recovery. Service and recovery are definitely related. There are many aspects of this relationship, and it seems important that we be able to help members find a way to participate in some type of NA service whenever they are ready to do so.

For this to happen, a connecting pathway, or "bridge," from recovery to service must exist. We believe this connection is built in some way with people, information, and experience. Establishing this link depends on us as members asking, "What needs doing?" and "How can we provide that service?" In our service committees, we maintain the relationship to recovery by drawing on our guiding principles in our collective efforts to find out what information is needed, who needs it, and how to provide it.



## The therapeutic value

Sponsorship is not just for the newcomer. Addicts with substantial clean time also need a sponsor. Oldtimers often find that while many expectations are placed upon us, often our own needs are ignored and unfulfilled. Because recovery is an ongoing process, sponsorship also needs to remain an ongoing process.

Following is the experience of one addict who has almost 20 years clean. In my area, many oldtimers with 10, 15, or more years clean have never worked through the entire Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. For example, one addict with 15 years only completed Step Seven. Many addicts with substantial clean time who have never worked all Twelve Steps share the same story. Every time they got a new sponsor, the sponsor took them back to Step One.

When I was looking for a new sponsor, I told my potential sponsors what step I was working on at the time. Surprisingly enough, when I asked them what step they were on, none were working on any of the Twelve Steps of NA. Over half of them said that after 15 or more years clean, they had never completed work past Step Six or Seven. I was on my eleventh time working through *all* Twelve Steps, and had completed my written work on Step Eleven.

Every addict I spoke to would agree to sponsor me only if I started over at Step One. Why? Well, in my opinion, they did not have a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps of NA. They could not give away something they did not have. Those who had worked all twelve of the steps had done so once, many years ago. The most miserable human being on this planet is an addict who does not have any drugs and does not have any recovery, either. Even though they were experiencing great emotional pain and suffering, they saw no need to work the Twelve Steps again.

I believe that if you do not have a home group in NA, you are "homeless." Some of these homeless oldtimers would come to a meeting only once a year to pick up their medallion, showing us meeting-makers that NA works.

Finally, I spoke with an addict who had less clean time than I did. I explained that I was on Step Eleven and was willing to start all over again on Step One—after completing Step Eleven and Step Twelve. Wow! What a concept! After listening to what I needed for my recovery, she agreed to work with me. That was the closest I had to a "yes" answer, so I jumped at the opportunity. Today she is my sponsor and she is still working steps with me on a regular basis.

Although the custom has never been written in any NA literature, the unwritten rule etched in stone in my area seems to be, "Every time you get a new sponsor, no matter what step you are on, you must start over again on Step One." As a hard and fast rule, this may work for the newcomer, but in working with oldtimers I discovered that I had to meet them where they were in their personal recovery and do what would work best for them, rather than what was easier for me as a sponsor. If I had not kept the same sponsor for ten years before she stopped going to meetings, working on the steps with her sponsor, and finally relapsing on drugs, I might not have ever finished the Twelve Steps either. There, but for the grace of God, go I.

Continued sponsorship helps us to avoid the oldtimer's disease of "too many years, but not enough days." Complacency, which causes many addicts with ten or more years to relapse, is our number one killer. We only get a daily reprieve from this disease.

According to our Basic Text, "When we stop working and living these steps, the recovery process ceases." Once again, our feelings become overwhelming, and the pain of living without the use of drugs becomes unbearable. The pain, hopelessness, desperation, and despair return. Many of us relapse on the drugs; some experience mental or emotional breakdowns, and, sadly, some of us commit suicide.

From our experience, we have learned that "our disease resurfaced and continued to progress until in desperation we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous." This is as true for the oldtimer as it is for the newcomer struggling to stay clean.

The Basic Text warns us that "there is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles." Such an attitude attacks us oldtimers in a very subtle way, taking over our lives so gradually that it goes unnoticed. Before we know it, we no longer feel comfortable in the rooms of NA.

If we oldtimers no longer do the things we need to do for our recovery, such as helping newcomers and working steps with our sponsors, our complacency affects us so adversely that some of us just stop coming to meetings while others stay in the rooms but get sicker and sicker. Then, some significant "life on life's terms" event occurs, and we oldtimers find ourselves unconnected and unprotected because we feel the rooms are no longer a safe place for us.

Sponsorship helps oldtimers to safeguard our recovery with vigilance, lest we lose our spiritual soundness and attitude of tolerance for other addicts who have not yet learned how to practice spiritual principles in their new way of living without drugs.

Without a sponsor, many of us do not stay clean based on a spiritual awakening. Instead, we stay clean by chance, fear, self-will, stubbornness, or addictive rationalization. At some point, these non-spiritual methods no longer work.

We did not use accidentally, so why do many of us accidentally stay clean?

We must remember that "we suffer from a disease for which there is no known cure" but which can be arrested through the Twelve Steps of NA. Because this is truly a life-and-death issue, we suggest that we

continue to apply this proven program of recovery that has helped so many addicts who have gone before us. This can best be done with a sponsor.

Sponsorship is important for the newcomer as well as the oldtimer. Sponsoring newcomers, and working with a sponsor ourselves, will help us to remain open-minded and teachable. The longer we stay clean, the clearer our thinking becomes, but we still need support and direction. Not just anyone can best help us in our recovery, only another addict who knows us well enough to tell when we have slipped back into our disease.

It is important that addicts are willing to be active participants in their own rescue. Therefore we suggest that, as sponsors, oldtimers still go to meetings on a regular basis, have a working knowledge of all Twelve Steps, and still write on the steps as part of their personal recovery program. Likewise, we suggest that oldtimers get a sponsor who still goes to meetings on a regular basis, has a working knowledge of all Twelve Steps, and who still writes on the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous for their own personal recovery program.

If we do not continue to move forward, we are in danger of moving backward—or worse.

*Antoinette B, Virginia*

## Are we carrying the message, or the addict?

The other night I was in a meeting when something happened that continues to upset me, so I figured I should write about it. Shortly after the meeting started, I noticed someone passing around some phone books—you know, the ones we print up and give out at meetings with our white key tags, or which you see on the table next to the meeting lists? Well, I don't particularly care for this so-called "tradition."

I watched as this person hand-carried the phone books around the room. I guess it doesn't matter if the book is hand-carried or passed around from member to member, so long as it's only men or women who put their names and numbers in it, depending on who the book is intended for—a man or a woman. This is all done for the sake of getting phone numbers for our newer members. This custom was started a couple of years ago by someone from a different area because that's the way they did it there.

As the meeting went on, the books continued to get closer and closer to me. Instead of being confronted with this, I closed my eyes and ignored what was going on with the books. I figured that if I ignored them, they would ignore me. At least if the book is passed, you can get out gracefully and just pass it on.

As I sat there with my eyes closed, I started to get centered and was able to concentrate on the person who was sharing. I was in a half-meditative state when I was tapped on the shoulder. I then opened my eyes to these phone books stuffed under my nose.

I asked, "What's this for?"

The reply was, "It's for a couple of newcomers."

I said that I didn't do that, and if they wanted my number, they could ask for it.

This person said that they were sorry and thought that's what we did here.

My friend sitting next to me thought that this was all pretty amusing and said, "Put 911 on them."



There are a couple of things about all of this that are very upsetting to me. First of all, I don't know why this person felt that they had to hand-carry the books around the room.

Second was the statement after the apology that they thought that was what we do. The second statement was probably the more disheartening of the two.

I realized that this person was a relative newcomer, and I didn't mean to be brash, but I wonder what we are passing on to the newcomer by following this newfound "tradition." I think that instead of following and teaching new "traditions," maybe we should follow and teach the Twelve Traditions of NA.

I was always taught that we carried the message, not the addict. I was told that the group was there to help each of us grow in our recovery. What the traditions give us is unity of purpose. We are here to carry the message that you never have to use again, and if you want what we have, then you have to do what we do.

When I first came around, I was told:

- Don't pick up, no matter what.
- Go to meetings.
- Get and use a sponsor.
- Go to 90 meetings in 90 days.
- Get phone numbers and use them.
- Work the steps.
- Pray.
- etc., etc.

All of these things, and many more, are tools of the program. No one told me that they would do these things for me. They said that I had to do them, but that they would show me how because I couldn't do it alone.

Now, back to the phone number issue—I was told to get phone numbers and call them. It was suggested to me that if I heard someone share and I connected with something they had said, then I should ask him or her for their phone number.

When I first started going to meetings, it was suggested that I get at least two or three phone numbers at every meeting I attended. This was, and sometimes continues to be, a hard thing for me to do. I needed to practice some humility and reach out and ask someone for something. I did this enough times and gathered a little more ammunition for the fight against my disease.

The next part was that I had to use those numbers and call people. None of the numbers are any good if I don't use them. I needed to reach out to people and start using this new tool before I got myself in a bind and *had* to use it. Practice makes perfect, and the more I do something, the easier it is to do.

This has been a valuable tool for me in my recovery. When I have felt like isolating, people have called me. When I have been isolated for one reason or another, then I've been able to reach out and call others.

By passing around a phone book to collect numbers, are we helping another addict learn these wonderful tools, or are we enabling them to stay in isolation? By practicing this behavior, are we teaching others how to teach, or are we turning our backs on them? By putting our numbers in that book that's passed around, are we reaching out, or are we being impersonal, not wanting to really be known? Bottom line is, are we carrying the message, or are we carrying the addict?

I personally feel that this practice is enabling behavior. I don't feel that it strengthens Narcotics Anonymous, but rather dilutes and weakens it. Our message is strong. Let's not weaken it with the easy way out.

My hope is that this article facilitates discussion among addicts and groups. I hope it makes all of us think about what we are doing when we just jot down our number and pass the book on—maybe not even knowing or caring who it goes to.

Is that what we, as individuals, want to do? Is that the message we want our group to send? And what about the newest members? Is that what you want to be taught, or do you want to learn a new way to live?

In all the years that I've been in Narcotics Anonymous, I've amassed a lot of phone numbers. If I can't connect a face or story with a name, I'll never use that number. Out of all the ones I do connect with, I only use one out of ten at best.

I'll give my number to anyone who asks for it. It's only good if you use it. If they can't connect my face to my number, then what do I think the chance is that it will be used and I will have the opportunity to help them learn how to use a phone to stay alive, clean, and connected?

Rusty F, Maryland

*"Step Twelve has a paradoxical aspect in that the more we help others, the more we help ourselves. For instance, if we find ourselves troubled and our faith wavering, there are very few actions that have such an immediate uplifting effect on us as helping a newcomer. One small act of generosity can work wonders; our self-absorption diminishes and we end up with a better perspective on what previously seemed like overwhelming problems. Every time we tell someone else that Narcotics Anonymous works, we reinforce our belief in the program."*

*It Works: How and Why,*  
page 118

# The NA Way Magazine: Themes and Deadlines

October 2001 NA Way—

Theme: "Regardless of age..."

—Youth in Recovery

## Deadline (manuscripts in to WSO): 1 July 2001

- What is your/our experience with sponsoring young addicts? How have you/we confronted issues that may not be problems for older addicts (i.e., parental control, grounding, conflicts with teachers, parents, and peers, etc.)?
- Whom do you listen to when your sponsor and your parents are not in agreement?
- Do you need a sponsor who is older than you, younger, or does it matter?
- What do you, as a youth in recovery, bring to NA?
- What is your home group doing to welcome the youth into NA?
- In the past, youth in NA have sometimes faced prejudice from other members. How can "older" members welcome "younger" members to NA? As a youth, do you feel more qualified to be a member if you have been in jail, lived on the street, or have a family that you left behind?
- As a young person, how do you want to be treated? What do you want *your* Narcotics Anonymous to look like, sound like, feel like... what can NA do to make you feel welcomed?
- How young is "young" in NA?
- Does focusing on youth in recovery create separation?

January 2002 NA Way—

## Theme: Consensus and Group Conscience

### Deadline (manuscripts in to WSO): 1 October 2001

- Compromise; surrendering your opinion for the good of the group.
- How does the fact that you might be right prevent you from compromise and/or interfere with group conscience?
- How does your group work with strong opinions in reaching consensus and group conscience?
- How does your group allow a Higher Power into its processes?
- With the exchange of ideas between opposing sides, how can you/do you stay spiritually centered?
- What is your understanding of consensus? Uniformity, unanimity, etc.? Give some examples.
- Do you think group conscience helps to build the foundation for unity? Your experiences with consensus building.

April 2002 NA Way—

Theme: You and Your Home Group

## Deadline (manuscripts in to WSO): 1 January 2002

- What does your home group mean to you? Can you have more than one home group? What are the benefits of having a home group?
- How do you get support if your home group really needs it?
- How do you get members to fill positions at a group and/or area level? How does your home group contribute to the unity with other groups or the area?
- How does group autonomy apply to your home group?
- What do you consider your home group's primary purpose? Is there a secondary purpose?
- How does your home group deal with disruptive/violent members? What are some of the things your home group does to contribute to an atmosphere of recovery?
- What about children at your home group?
- What format does your home group use, or what works for your home group?
- Does your home group participate in area and region? Do the members in your home group take interest in the World Service Conference and/or the *Conference Agenda Report*?

July 2002 NA Way—

## Theme: Uncovering the Nature of Anonymity

### Deadline (manuscripts in to WSO): 1 April 2002

- What is anonymous? Dictionary definition versus NA's definition. Does it mean we are a secret organization/society?
- Does it take away our individuality?
- Why is it stated that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions?
- Why is it so important to NA?
- Why is it important "at the level of press, radio, and films"?
- What does "principles before personalities" mean to you?
- Does anonymity apply to those members doing service?
- When do we have a choice to be anonymous? And is anonymity a requirement?
- When is anonymity "broken"?
- How can we carry the message, both as individuals and as a fellowship, and still maintain our anonymity?
- Why do you/we care so much about our identity now that we are in recovery, while when we were active there was no discretion with our using?



# CALENDAR

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](http://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 dates. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

## Australia

**Queensland:** 9-11 Nov; Queensland Area Annual Convention; Greenmount Beach Resort, Gold Coast; hotel rsvns: +61.7.55361222; event info: +04.0.2667120, +61.7.55611251; speaker tape submission deadline: 25 Oct 2001; write: Gold Coast Area Australia, 32 Alicia St. Southport, Queensland, Australia 4215; [qccac@hotmail.com](mailto:qccac@hotmail.com) (e-mail only)

## Bahamas

**Nassau:** 1-4 Nov; Nassau Area Celebration XIV; Nassau Marriott Resort Crystal Palace, Nassau; hotel rsvns: 242.327.6200; conv chair: 242.326.0224; event info: 242.327.5601; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Sep 2001

## Canada

**British Columbia:** 21-23 Sep; British Columbia Regional Convention; Keeping The Miracle Alive; James Bay Community Center, Victoria; event info: 250.385.1088, 250.382.0283

**Nova Scotia:** 17-22 Jul; Annapolis Valley Area; 12th Annual Pig Roast & Camp Out; Blomidon Provincial Park, Blomidon; event info: 902.582.7354, 902.678.7610, 902.670.2012; write: Annapolis Valley Area, Box 522, Kentville, Nova Scotia B4N 3X3 Canada; [avana\\_groups@mailcity.com](mailto:avana_groups@mailcity.com)

**2)** 24-26 Aug; North East Atlantic Region; We Love To Recover; Keddy's Motel, Halifax; hotel rsvns: 902.477.5611; speaker tape info: 902.443.2948; write: NEARCNA 2, Box 65 Central Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2L4; [www.nearna.com](http://www.nearna.com)

**Prince Edward Island:** 3-5 Aug; 11th Annual Prince Edward Island Area Campout; Serenity Under The Stars; Twin Shores Camp Grounds, North Darnley; event info: 902.368.1245, 902.628.2263; [rrarsenault@islandtelecom.com](mailto:rrarsenault@islandtelecom.com)

**Quebec:** 14-16 Sep; English Area Convention; Free 4 The Miracle; Holiday Inn Airport, Montreal; hotel rsvns: 800.361.5439; write: EANA Convention 2001, Box 453, Stn N, Montréal, Québec H4A 3P8 Canada

**2)** 5-7 Oct; Quebec Regional Convention XIV; Emotion Douce/Sweet Emotion; Auberge des Seigneurs, St. Hyacinthe; event info: 450.774.1408, 517.323.3877, 450.429.4220; write: CRQNA XIV, Comptoir Postal Robert, St Leonard, Quebec City H1R 3X2 Canada

## Greece

**Chalkidiki:** 28-30 Sep; 5th NA Panhellenic Convention-Conference; Athos Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki; event info: +30.945.337.525

## Ireland

**Kilkenny:** 12-14 Oct; 17th Ireland Regional Convention; New Park Hotel, Kilkenny; event info: +001.905.507.0101; write: IRSCNA, Box 1368, Cardiff Ln, Dublin 2, Ireland

## Mexico

**Baja California:** 19-21 Oct; Baja California Convention IX; Algo Mas Sera Revelado, More Will Be Revealed; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; hotel rsvns: 866.472.6385; event info: 858.277.6438, 626.331.2027, 526.680.0986; speaker tape submission deadline: 19 Aug 2001; write: CBCNA, PMB-80, Box 439056, San Diego, CA 92143-9056

## Norway

**Oslo:** 14-16 Sep; Norwegian Regional Summer Convention; Nordseter Skole, Oslo; event info: +47.23.03.04.91; write: [www.nanorge.org](http://www.nanorge.org)

**Vest-Agder:** 16-22 Jul; NA Omrade Sor Service Komitee; Braagdoya 2001; Bragdoya, outside Kristiansand, Kristiansand; hotel rsvns: +41209245; event info: +38032412, +38027262; write: NA OSSK, Aktivitetskomiteen, Box 58, 4661 Kristiansand, Norway

## Scotland

**Glasgow:** 13-15 Jul; Glasgow Area Convention III; Dreams Come True; Glasgow Quality Central Hotel, Glasgow; hotel rsvns: +141.221.9680; event info: +779.955.6493, +777.637.1609, +781.101.1396; write: NA Glasgow, Box 16177, Glasgow G13 2YT Scotland UK; [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

## Sweden

**Stockholm:** 3-5 Aug; NA Metrot Stor Stockholm's Summer Convention; Free to Choose; Lillsveds College, Stockholm; hotel rsvns: +46.8.51175797; [www.nasverige.a.se](http://www.nasverige.a.se)

## Uruguay

**Lavalleja:** 7-9 Sep; IV Convencion Regional Uruguay; Minas/Parque De Vacaciones UTE ANTEL, Minas; hotel rsvns: +598.99.64.44.33; event info: +598.22.08.79.91, +598.24.08.03.72; event registration: +598.27.09.86.91

## United States

**Alabama:** 9-11 Nov; Greater Birmingham Area Convention VIII; Making Space for Grace; Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham; hotel rsvns: 205.324.5000; write: Greater Birmingham Area, Box 321324, Birmingham, AL 35212

**California:** 6-8 Jul; California Inland Regional Convention IV; Trust & Believe...We Can; Riviera Resort Hotel, Palm Springs; hotel rsvns: 800.444.8311; event info: 760.324.5838, 760.342.3871, 760.361.1734; write: California Inland Region, Box 362, Cathedral City, CA 92235-0362; [www.cirma.org/convention](http://www.cirma.org/convention)

**2)** 19-21 Oct; San Francisco Area Rainbow Convention VI; A Beacon of Hope; Ramada Plaza Hotel International, San Francisco; hotel rsvns: 800.227.4747; event registration: 415.826.1006; speaker tape info: 415.586.8837; event info: 415.701.8882; write: San Francisco Area, 78 Gough St, San Francisco CA 94102; [www.sfna.org/rainbow/](http://www.sfna.org/rainbow/)

**3)** 9-11 Nov; California Midstate Region; Western Service Learning Days XV; Fresno Plaza Hotel, Fresno; hotel rsvns: 800.649.4955; event info: 559.651.8090, 559.251.6061; write: California Midstate Region, Western Service Learning Days XV, Box 26915, Fresno, CA 93729-6915

**Florida:** 31 Aug-3 Sep; South Florida Region Convention; You Are Not Alone; Sheraton Hotel Airport, Fort Lauderdale; hotel rsvns: 954.920.3500; event registration: 954.986.1920; event info: 305.651.5024

**2)** 31 Aug-2 Sep; First Coast Area Convention; Radisson Riverwalk Hotel, Jacksonville; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; event registration: 904.745.1758; speaker tape info: 904.374.2110; event info: 904.757.0724; write: First Coast Area, Box 8038, Jacksonville, FL 32239; [www.geocities.com/FCACNA](http://www.geocities.com/FCACNA)

**3)** 12-14 Oct; Mid-Coast Convention 2001; A Vision of Hope; Boca Raton Marriott, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 888.888.3780; event registration: 561.686.4572; event info: 561.686.4572; speaker tape info: 561.686.4572; write: Mid-Coast Area, Box 1791, Delray Beach, FL 33447-1791; [www.midcoastarea.org/mccna.htm](http://www.midcoastarea.org/mccna.htm)

**4)** 26-28 Oct; Uncoast Area Convention; Life is Good VII; Daytona Beach; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Aug 2001; write: Uncoast Area, Uncoast NA, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604; [www.gnv.fdt.net/~ncoastna/](http://www.gnv.fdt.net/~ncoastna/)

**5)** 2-4 Nov; New Path Group, I'm OK You're OK Group, Rainbow Group; Rainbow Weekend V; Embassy Suites of Boca Raton, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 800.EMBASSY; event info: 954.961.2876, 954.938.8478, 954.927.5837; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Aug 2001; write: Rainbow Weekend, Box 2152, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33303; [www.rainbowweekend.org](http://www.rainbowweekend.org)

**6)** 22-25 Nov; Palm Coast Area Convention; Serenity In The Sun XX; Crowne Plaza Hotel, West Palm Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.227.6963; 561.689.6400; event info: 561.848.8262; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Sep 2001; write: Palm Coast Area, Recovery Weekend, Palm Coast ASC, Box 20984, West Palm Beach, FL 33416; [www.palmcoastna.com](http://www.palmcoastna.com)

**Georgia:** 2-5 Aug; Midtown Area Convention; Atlanta Hilton & Towers Downtown, Atlanta; hotel rsvns: 800.445.8667; event info: 404.288.2334; event registration: 404.992.3945

**2)** 31-2 Aug; Georgia Regional Convention; Serenity In The Sand V; Villas by the Sea Hotel, Jekyll Island; hotel rsvns: 800.841.6262; conv chair: 770.884.05587; event info: 770.471.5847; write: GRCNA, Box 246, Molena, GA 30258; [www.GRCNA.org](http://www.GRCNA.org)

**3)** 7-9 Sep; CSRANA Convention; Peace In Recovery XIII; Ramada Plaza Hotel, Augusta; hotel rsvns: 706.722.5541; event info: 706.592.9422, 803.279.3617, 706.772.9222; write: CSRANA, Peace In Recovery XIII, Program Committee, Box 10004, Augusta, GA 30901

**Hawaii:** 14-16 Sep; Maui Area; 14th Annual Maui Area Gathering 2001; Camp Maluhia, Kahakuloa; event info: 808. 572.3833, 808.573.6366; event registration: 808. 879.1758; write: Maui Area Service, Box 6160, Kahului, HI 96733-6160; [www.mauina.org/gathering.html](http://www.mauina.org/gathering.html)

**Idaho:** 6-8 Jul; Serenity in the Wilderness XIV; Chemeketan Campground, Stanley; event info: 208.463.8938, 208.467.1403; write: Southern Idaho Region, Box 3609, Hailey, ID 83333; [www.sirna.org/serenity\\_in\\_the\\_wilderness\\_xi](http://www.sirna.org/serenity_in_the_wilderness_xi)

**Illinois:** 24-26 Aug; Living the Dream Area Convention I; Renaissance Hotel, Springfield; hotel rsvns: 217.544.8800; event registration: 800.468.3571

**2)** 16-18 Nov; Greater Illinois Regional Convention V; Bountiful Harvest of Recovery; Holiday Inn Select, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 217.428.3588

**Iowa:** 6-8 Jul; Iowa Regional Convention XVIII; Best Western Crossroads of the Bluffs, Council Bluffs; hotel rsvns: 712.322.3150; event info: 712.323.9498, 712.325.9161, 641.743.8376; write: Iowa Region, Box 327, Greenfield, IA 50849

**Kentucky:** 14-16 Sep; Western Kentucky Area; Freedom Between the Lakes XIV; Energy Lake Campground, Land Between the Lakes; write: WKANA, Box 2866, Paducah, KY 42002-2866

**Louisiana:** 30 Aug-2 Sep; New Orleans Area Convention VII; Radisson Hotel, New Orleans; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; event registration: 504.436.2759; speaker tape info: 504.866.3034

**Maryland:** 27-29 Jul; 4th Baltimore Area Convention; Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore; hotel rsvns: 410.576.1000; event info: 410.566.4022; write: BACNA, Inc, Box 13473, Baltimore, MD 21203

**Massachusetts:** 20-22 Jul; Western Massachusetts Area Convention; Spiritually Growing in Recovery; Sheraton Hotel, Springfield; hotel rsvns: 800.426.9004; event info: 413.781.1010, 413.543.4440; event registration: 413.737.7702; write: WMACNA VIII, Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101

**Michigan:** 13-15 Jul; Michigan Region Freedom XVII; Simplicity Is The Key; Holiday Inn South, Lansing; hotel rsvns: 800.333.8123; conv chair: 810.694.3546; event info: 517.699.4662, 517.485.9635; write: Michigan Region, 220 W Nine Mile Rd, Ferndale, MI 48220-1794; [www.MRCNA.org](http://www.MRCNA.org)

**2)** 10-12 Aug; Metro Detroit Regional Convention III; Through Change Comes Freedom; Novi Hilton, Novi; hotel rsvns: 248.349.4000; event registration: 313.255.6339; event info: 313.896.1255; speaker tape info: 734.481.2258; write: Metro Detroit Region, 220 W Nine Mile Rd, Ferndale, MI 48220

**3)** 12-14 Oct; An Open Door To Recovery; Van Dyke Park Suite Hotel, Warren; hotel rsvns: 810.939.2860; event info: 248.334.9957, 248.332.8381, 248.322.8730; write: Movin' On Up; Box 85, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

**4)** 19-21 Oct; Western Wayne County Area Convention II; Doubletree Hotel at Metro Airport, Romulus; hotel rsvns: 800.222.8733; conv chair: 734.422.8944

**Minnesota:** 20-22 Jul; Annual Pig Roast; Country Camping, Isanti; event info: 651.702.9426, 651.451.8893; [www.naminnnesota.org/mnevents.html](http://www.naminnnesota.org/mnevents.html)

**Nebraska:** 5-7 Oct; Nebraska Regional Convention 18; Interstate Holiday Inn, Grand Island; event info: 308.381.8265; write: NRCNA 18, Box 2191, Hastings, NE 68901

**Nevada:** 27-29 Jul; Sierra Sage Region; Western States Forum; Peppermill Hotel and Casino, Reno; hotel rsvns: 800.648.6992; [www.sierrasagena.org](http://www.sierrasagena.org)

**2)** 5-7 Oct; Sierra Sage Regional Convention VIII; Reno Sparks Convention Center, Reno; hotel rsvns: 800.797.7366; event registration: 775.348.6523; event info: 775.323.0223; speaker tape info: 775.771.8084; write: Sierra Sage RSC, Box 11913, Reno, NV Reno, NV 89510; [www.sierrasagena.org](http://www.sierrasagena.org)

**New Jersey:** 17-19 Aug; United Area Convention; The Monkey Ain't No Joke 5; Recover To Survive; Hasbrouck Heights Hilton, Hasbrouck Heights; hotel rsvns: 201.288.6100; event info: 973.754.0881, 973.903.7343, 973.279.4723; write: United Area, 655 McBride Ave, West Paterson, NJ 07424

**2)** 12-14 Oct; Capital Area Convention; Road To Recovery VI; When At The End Of The Road, We Choose To Live; Ramada Inn, East Brunswick; hotel rsvns: 609.448.7000; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Aug 2001; write: Capital Area, Box 2464, Trenton, NJ 08607

**3)** 2-4 Nov; Northeast Area of New Jersey; In The Spirit of Unity—Communication, Participation, Commitment, & Practice; Sheraton Hotel Newark Airport, Newark; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 908.245.1567; event registration: 908.352.7320; speaker tape info: 908.241.8560; write: NENJAC, Box 409, Roselle, NJ

**New York:** 27-29 Jul; Suffolk Area Convention; Lighting The Way III; Long Island Shining In Recovery; Sheraton Long Island Hotel, Hauppauge; hotel rsvns: 631.231.1100; event registration: 631.584.2187; event info: 631.665.1338, 631.580.3827; write: Suffolk Area, PMB 158, 26 Railroad Ave, Babylon, NY 11702; [www.sasna.org](http://www.sasna.org)

**2)** 19-21 Oct; 1st ABCD Regional Convention; As The Path Continues, More Will Be Revealed; Ramada Inn Convention Center, Schenectady; hotel rsvns: 518.370.7151; hotel fax: 518.372.3000; event registration: 518.435.2491, 518.370.2640; write: ABCDRCNA, Box 66059, Albany, NY 12206

**North Carolina:** 7-9 Sep; Carolina Regional Convention X; More Powerful Than Words; Holiday Inn Express, Salisbury; hotel rsvns: 704.639.3100; conv chair: 704.633.7520; event info: 704.633.8679, 704.788.4653; write: CPANA, Convention Planning Committee, Box 5293, Concord, NC

**Oregon:** 18-22 Jul; Survivor's Group; 7th Annual River Recovery Campout; Tillamook; event info: 503.842.2946

**2)** 3-5 Aug; Newport NA 9th Annual Campout & Fish-Fry; Canal Creek Campground, Newport; hotel rsvns: 541.336.1834; event info: 541.265.5942, 541.574.6350; event registration: 541.928.5714; write: Newport NA Campout & Fish-Fry, Box 101, Toledo, OR

**3)** 5-7 Oct; Pacific North West Convention 24; The Healing Starts Here; DoubleTree Hotel, Portland; hotel rsvns: 800.222.TREE; event registration: 503.284.5714; write: Pacific North West, Box 3036, Wilsonville, OR 97070-3036

**Pennsylvania:** 20-22 Jul; Day By Day & Just For Today Groups of NA Spiritual Retreat; Chapman Dam State Park, Clarendon; conv chair: 814.968.3722; event registration: 814.723.7443; event info: 814.728.5881; write: Day By Day/Just For Today Group of NA, 105 Tionesta St, Clarendon, PA 16365; www.angelfire.com/pa4/haven/retreat/retreat

**2)** 24-26 Aug; Laurel Mountain Highlands Area; The Journey Continues V Unity Retreat; Camp Harmony, Hooversville; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 Jul 2001; write: Laurel Mountain Highlands Area, Box 52, Ebensburg, PA 15931; www.lmhana.com

**3)** 31 Aug-2 Sep; South Philadelphia Area Convention; Dare to Dream VI; Holiday Inn Philadelphia Stadium, Philadelphia; hotel rsvns: 215.755.9500; event info: 215.492.9987, 215.439.2623, 215.439.2514

**4)** 1-3 Nov; 2nd Inner City Area Convention; Philadelphia; conv chair: 215.218.9171; event info: 215.225.3884, 215.232.4062; write: Inner City Area, Box 50374, Philadelphia, PA 19132

**5)** 16-18 Nov; Tri-State Regional Convention; Start To Live XIX; Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion; hotel rsvns: 800.452.2223; event info: 412.231.1650; speaker tape info: 412.884.4182; event registration: 412.363.4407; write: TriState Region, Box 337, Homestead, PA 15120

**South Carolina:** 24-26 Aug; Central Carolina Area; Welcome Home Convention VI; Adams Mark Hotel, Columbia; hotel rsvns: 800.444.2326; event info: 803.799.4836, 803.429.1297; write: Welcome Home Convention Committee, Box 418, 709 Woodrow St, Columbia, SC 29205

**South Dakota:** 6-11 Aug; South Dakota Region; 7th Annual Sheridan Lake Campout; Ranger Rick Group Campsite, Sheridan Lake, Sheridan Lake; event info: 605.332.5271, 605.534.3144; write: South Dakota Region, Box 788, Sioux Falls, SD 57101; www.southdakotana.org

**2)** 14-16 Sep; South Dakota Regional Convention 4; Hooked On Recovery, Beyond Your Wildest Dreams; Cedar Shores Resort, Chamberlain; hotel rsvns: 888.697.6363; event registration: 605.332.5271; speaker tape info: 605.988.9657; write: South Dakota Region, Box 788, Sioux Falls, SD 57101; www.southdakotana.org

**Tennessee:** 17-19 Aug; Middle Tennessee Area Unity Convention IV; Airport Marriott Hotel, Nashville; hotel rsvns: 800.770.0555; event info: 615.568.2337; event registration: 615.313.0049; speaker tape info: 615.242.6374; write: Middle Tennessee Area, Box 100535, Nashville TN 37224

**2)** 21-25 Nov; Volunteer Region Convention XIX; Vision of Hope; Adam's Mark Hotel, Memphis; hotel rsvns: 800.444.ADAM; event info: 901.761.0049, 870.702.6480, 901.458.2456; write: Volunteer Region, Box 11126, Memphis, TN 38111; www.geocities.com/VRCXIX

**Texas:** 27-29 Jul; Coastal Bend Area Convention; Recovery By The Sea XVII; Corpus Christi; event info: 361.225.1277

**2)** 17-18 Aug; 72nd Texas Unity Convention; Redwood Lodge, Lake Whitney; hotel rsvns: 254.694.3412; event info: 972.254.4115, 915.388.2389, 512.657.5357; write: Texas Unity Convention; Box 550157, Dallas, TX

**3)** 14-16 Sep; Rio Grande Valley Area; Serenity in the Sand 2001; Bahia Mar Resort Hotel, South Padre Island; hotel rsvns: 800.997.2373; speaker tape submission deadline: 10 Aug 2001; write: Rio Grande Valley Area, Box 4573, Edinburg, TX 78540

**4)** 9-11 Nov; Best Little Region Convention XIV; Tap The Limitless Resource; Holiday Inn Civic Center, Lubbock; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 806.792.2690, 806.785.4861, 806.745.1790; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Sep 2001; write: Best Little Region, 4002 Ave A, Lubbock, TX 79404

**5)** 16-18 Nov; 73rd Texas Unity Convention; Redwood Lodge, Whitney Lake; hotel rsvns: 877.694.3422; event info: 972.254.4115, 915.388.2389, 512.657.5357

**Vermont:** 9-11 Nov; Champlain Valley Area Convention XII; Freedom Today, Hope for Tomorrow; Radisson Hotel, Burlington; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; event info: 518.594.7268; conv chair: 802.660.3609; write: Champlain Valley Area, Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406; www.together.net/~cvana/cvana.htm

**Virginia:** 3-5 Aug; Almost Heaven Area Convention 15; Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Front Royal; event info: 304.263.2757, 304.728.2274; write: Almost Heaven Area, Convention Celebration Corp, Box 1761, Martinsburg, WV 25402

**2)** 31 Aug-1 Sep; NA World Services Meeting/World Unity Day 2001; Sheraton Premiere at Tysons Corner, Vienna; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 818.773.9999; write: NA World Services; 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311; www.na.org

**3)** 14-16 Sep; Outer Limits Area; Unityfest IX: Positive Attitude Brings About Gratitude; Double Tree Hotel, Virginia Beach; hotel rsvns: 757.422.8900; event info: 757.934.1849, 757.562.1327, 757.569.1115; write: Outer Limits Area, Box 1063, Franklin, VA 23851

**4)** 9-11 Nov; Tidewater Area Convention II; Still We Rise Through Our Diversity; Ramada Plaza Resort, Virginia Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.685.5150; event registration: 757.484.9542; event info: 757.484.3575; speaker tape info: 757.523.6612; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Aug 2001; write: Tidewater Area, Box 5151, Portsmouth, VA 23703-5151

**Wisconsin:** 26-28 Oct; Wisconsin State Convention XVIII; Four Points Sheridan Hotel, Milwaukee; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 262.268.2027; event registration: 414.481.4245; www.wsnac.org

## NA World Services Still Looking...

As of 15 May 2001, the **Project Coordinator/Writer/Editor** position is still available. Some of the qualifications include: experience in the publishing field; ability to write and edit; project management; strong computer skills in word processing and desktop publishing; prior experience working with NA volunteer committees or direct experience as a regional or world service trusted servant; and ability to work under pressure and effectively perform multiple tasks simultaneously.

There are other employment opportunities also available. We are accepting resumes (as of 15 May), so please send in yours if you are interested in becoming a special worker.



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