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Celebrating recovery around the world

We asked NA communities around the world how they acknowledged clean-time celebrations. Though these celebrations reflect their surrounding cultures, they all have one thing in common: A clean addict—whether for one day or many years—is an event worth celebrating.

Celebrating recovery around the world	1
From the Editor	2
Our gratitude shouts	5
Message carried, message received	7
A bright promise	8
“My gratitude speaks...”	9
The best birthday	10
Milestones	10
Picture this	11
Hot topics	12
H&I Slim	12
Birthday controversies take the cake	13
Convention challenges	14
For clarification	15
Calendar	16
NA Way Magazine themes and deadlines	18
From the World Service Office	19
WSO product update	19
Home Group	20

IN THIS ISSUE

Italy

With pleasure, I’ll tell you how we celebrate our recovery birthdays here in Italy.

The member decides at which meeting he wants to celebrate, then the meeting secretary buys a big cake and some special drinks—not with alcohol, of course! We write the member’s birthday on our meeting’s blackboard and spread the word in other groups.

On the day the member is celebrating, he chairs the meeting, unless he is really shy and doesn’t want to. He can share his story, how he found NA, how he’s working the steps, or anything about his recovery.

After the sharing, the rest of the members applaud warmly, and the meeting secretary or another member gives the birthday person a clean time medallion (here in Italy, we have only bronze) as a gift from the group.

Everybody at the meeting can just share, or they can say congratulations to the birthday person when they share. Sometimes they say, “I remember when you first came to NA,” or sometimes they look forward to the day when they’ll be celebrating the same clean time. People laugh and joke just like they do at any other meeting.

A half hour before we usually end the meeting, we close with the Serenity Prayer, and then we start the party. In general, most members bring a personal gift and card for the birthday person. On the cake, we have a candle for each year the person has clean. We switch off the electric lights and have the birthday person blow out the candles. Again, there’s applause and many hugs and kisses. Then the birthday person opens presents, and afterward we all go home. Sometimes we have a chance to be very grateful when there’s more than one person celebrating a birthday.

Chiara M, Florence



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OF
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From the Editor

A fond farewell

As any of you who have ever spoken to me on the phone know, I'm not generally given to sentiment. I'm deadline-bound, obsessed with rules of grammar, and usually don't want to delve too deeply into the murky area of feelings and spirituality.

I guess the circumstances call for an exception. This is the last issue of *The NA Way Magazine* for which I will serve as editor. I've worked for NA World Services for more than 13 years, and I've been the editor of the magazine since February 1993 when it was still a 5-by-8-inch monthly.

I've watched NA grow from a fellowship with 5,000 meetings, mostly in the United States and Canada, to a global fellowship with more than 25,000 meetings in 70 countries. We had literature only in English. *The NA Way* ran about 20 pages, the same as now, but it was all in English and all from the USA. If we happened to receive something from Australia or the United Kingdom, we did cartwheels outside our offices.

This brings up the one point I want to leave you with—a magazine, any magazine, is only as good as the people who write for it. That's you. Yes, you. The new editor, Nancy Schenck, will continue to depend on you as much as I, and all previous editors, did. We need you to write articles. We need you to tell us if we're off track so we can adjust, or, if you like what we're doing, so we can keep doing it. Most of all, we need you to participate in your fellowship's international journal of recovery. It's as simple—and dramatic—as that.

I leave the magazine in your hands—with Nancy's able assistance. Words can't express the good wishes I have for you all.

*In fellowship,
Cindy T, Editor*

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

The NA Way Magazine, published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as 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."

Israel

When you get clean in Israel, it's a good chance that your first meeting will be in a bomb shelter. Thanks to our higher power, peaceful times allow our bomb shelters to be used for community purposes, including NA activities. As they can be found all over the country, they come in handy to NA groups and are easily available at a modest rent.

The bomb shelter is supposed to protect you against outside attacks. In our case, it may be the way society protects itself against us—recovering addicts. Not that we're dangerous anymore, just incredibly noisy, especially when we're celebrating someone's recovery anniversary.

It goes from hand clapping to group singing to solo singing to drumming on the table, and it goes on for a long time. The happier we are, the higher the volume. You can sometimes guess at the amount of clean time being celebrated by the intensity of the singing, although there are no strict rules about it.

Our anniversary celebrations are usually announced a month in advance. The celebrating member is invited by his home group to be the main and only speaker at this specific meeting. Usually only one recovery birthday is celebrated at a meeting.

The birthday person usually invites his NA friends. Most meetings in Israel are closed meetings, so we don't have family members participating very often. The group gives the member a medallion and a card signed by all the members present at the meeting. A new member who announced a day clean at the beginning of the meeting will be asked to give away the white keytag for surrender. The birthday person's sponsor or another trusted member gives the medallion.

Then the sharing begins. The birthday person gets to share for as long as he or she wishes (within the meeting format). If there is leftover time, other members will dedicate their sharing to the birthday person, sometimes sharing embarrassing moments from the person's early recovery, but always with love and good humor.

Bosmat N, Tel Aviv

Mexico

The way we celebrate recovery anniversaries at my home group is probably a little different from the way other groups do it, but the same joy is shared.

At my group, we celebrate only on the last Thursday of the month. We realized that we could devote lots of time at every meeting to celebrating anniversaries and end up having very little time left over for much-needed recovery sharing, so we decided to limit the anniversary celebrations to once a month. Since we only do it once a month, we often end up having four or five, and sometimes seven or eight, members celebrating their anniversaries. Everybody is welcome to invite their families and friends to share their happiness in having another year clean, and most do.

Everybody, usually starting with the youngest in recovery, shares their experience, strength, and hope, why and how they got to NA, and how life is now. After everybody who is celebrating shares, the meeting is opened up to the rest of the group to say a few words. Each celebrating member chooses someone to give him or her a medallion and a hug. Everybody applauds and wipes away the inevitable tears that come with the joy of recovery.

After the meeting closes, there is usually a big cake, or several of them, depending on the number of people expected at the meeting. We sing the Mexican version of "Happy Birthday" ("Las Mañanitas"), blow out the candles, and eat a lot of cake. Unlike how things used to be, we somehow can never find a knife to cut the cake with.

Claudio L, Mexico City

Bahrain

The member who is celebrating buys his own medallion, a cake, and maybe some soft drinks. Sometimes, if the member can't afford this, some other members will pitch in and buy everything. Normally, the group will buy the member a birthday card. Then, each member of the group will write something and sign the card. Before the end of the meeting, we pass the medallion around to each member so they can share how they've seen the person change in a positive way.

Recovery anniversaries are very special to the person who's celebrating, as well as to all the group members. They show that NA works.

Ammar A, Manama



Egypt

In Cairo, we like to tell everybody ahead of time that someone's birthday is coming up. At some meetings, we have a board on the wall with group members' clean time listed. We all contribute to buying cakes and candles. We ask the birthday person to share at length; then other members share, most preferring to share in relation to the birthday person and to thank him or her for sharing recovery. After the meeting, we sing the "Happy Birthday" song in both English and Arabic, and the birthday person blows out the candles. Then we go out to a coffee shop to continue celebrating. When we're celebrating a birthday, we usually designate the meeting as "open" so nonaddict family members can share in the celebration.

Hamed G, Cairo

New Zealand

The way we celebrate clean-time birthdays in New Zealand is different from what I've experienced in meetings in the US. We don't have meetings that focus solely on celebrating anniversaries. One of the reasons for this is that we're a small NA community. The population in New Zealand is about 3½ million, and we have 79 meetings spread over both the North and South islands.

My home group is the Sunday Morning Wairua (spiritual) Meeting in Christchurch. We are part of the Southern Area. Our meeting has a birthday book, and members are encouraged to add their clean date to the list. Each Sunday, members who are celebrating a birthday in the month are acknowledged. We give cakes at the meeting following their clean date. Members are encouraged to buy and bring their own cakes. Sometimes the person's sponsor or friends will bake a homemade cake. We do not use Seventh Tradition funds to purchase cakes. The birthday person is asked to share at some point in the meeting, and we sing a vigorous version of "Happy Birthday."

In Christchurch, our NA community is small enough (eight meetings a week) that most of us know one another. We



make a big fuss over people who are celebrating clean time, and we ask them to share at most of the meetings they attend during their birthday week.

We do not give medallions during the meeting. A growing number of people, usually the person's sponsor, will buy the member a medallion and give it to the birthday boy or girl, but this is usually done in private.

Although NA has been active in New Zealand for many years, we're still a young fellowship in terms of clean time. Most of our members have less than five years clean. The way we celebrate clean time is still evolving. Some groups do a clean-time countdown every week; others do a round-the-room introduction during which everybody is invited to say how long they've been clean. Still others ask everybody who's celebrating 30, 60, 90 days, etc., and years, to be recognized. Birthday celebrations are a wonderful way to acknowledge the huge achievement of staying clean, and I wish us all many more.

Lib E, Christchurch

Colombia

Every recovery anniversary in Colombia is cause for celebration. We call it the "celebration of the spirit." When there's an anniversary being celebrated, the meeting opens its doors early, and the meeting room is prepared to receive more members and guests.

Members who are celebrating clean time buy their own cake and refreshments for the meeting. Generally, they invite their friends and relatives to the meeting to share in the celebration. All

of our birthday meetings are open meetings. In this way, people who are visiting us get to see firsthand how NA works, and can help us carry the message that NA works.

The person who's celebrating can choose who he or she wants to chair the meeting that night. Almost always, it's the person's sponsor or some other member who has been influential in the person's recovery. They also choose the topic of the meeting that night.

The meeting is opened like any other. The sharing emphasizes the birthday celebration and includes memories from people who are close to the birthday person. Although the true homage is to the NA program, the member celebrating clean time becomes a living example of NA recovery.

For the person who's celebrating clean time, these anniversary meetings become a telling of what it used to be like, how he or she got to NA, and what it's like now. The meeting is dedicated to telling how NA changes lives. The message shared during these meetings is very moving and inspires gratitude. Everybody forgets their personal problems, and we concentrate on sharing the gifts we have received in recovery.

Anniversary meetings are very popular. Everybody wants to share, and there's always more on the list than we have time for in the meeting. Anniversaries are cause for joy and hope. I don't know how it happens, but in my area there always seems to be a newcomer at anniversary meetings. There are times when I look across the room at the newcomer, see the hope, and just know he's thinking: If NA works for that person, why not for me, too?

Giovanna G, Cartagena

Our gratitude shouts

The 28th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous inspires a world of recovery

“What we are experiencing is an awakening of the spirit—no less dramatic than it sounds.”

*It Works: How and Why
page 72*

If you were in Cartagena for WCNA-28, held 31 August to 3 September 2000, you couldn't have been more awake—even if you hadn't been drinking any of the Colombian coffee. As the theme, “Our Hope is Life—Nuestra Esperanza de Vida,” so simply but powerfully expressed it, no one could ignore the hundreds of joyful recovering addicts walking the streets of Cartagena—each one a living example, a living strength, a living hope.

As Michael L of Southern California put it, “In nearly 20 years in NA, never before have I seen so much spirit in one place, at one time, expressed so openly and abundantly. NA members in Latin America wear their gratitude on their sleeves.” Or, as one veteran world convention-goer quipped, “Hey, man, our gratitude shouts!”

The convention opened on Thursday afternoon with several world service forums on some of the traditions. Tom M of Hawaii and Giovanna G of Colombia, both elected to the World Board at WSC 2000, spoke on “A Foundation of Humility.” At the same time, Habib S of Costa Rica and Vickie L from Wyoming were speaking at the “Welcome to NA” meeting. The opening speaker meeting on Thursday night had speakers from Colombia and the US, as did many of the meetings throughout the convention. Entertainment on Thursday evening included a dance and a “fogata,” which is basically a festive meal.

Tony G, who was one of the NA World Services staff members sent to work at the convention, described the dance. “You heard songs like you'd hear at dances in the States—Mambo Number Five, Ricky Martin, salsa—the difference being that in between every dance, the floor would clear. When a new song started, everybody would come back out to dance, but everybody had a dance partner. There wasn't any group dancing like there is in the States. Also, there was no sexual content to the pairings—it was just people getting out on the floor. They partner-danced. Here in the States, we just mix one song into the other. In Colombia, they stop between songs to let people choose a new dance partner and get out on the floor.

“What I noticed at this convention was that the people who were attending seemed more interested in sampling the local culture than I've seen in the past.” Many convention attendees went to some of the local nightclubs. “There were badges everywhere you looked,” said Tony. “Their alcohol sales must have been nonexistent that night.”



Nuestra Esperanza de Vida

Between sampling the local nightlife and meeting new people, sleep wasn't high on anybody's priority list. "If staying out till five in the morning got one person to stay clean, it was worth it. There was time enough for sleep when I got home," said Tony.

As has been done at the past several world conventions, NAWS set up an on-site office to provide services such as literature sales, information, and a DSL line so people could log onto the NAWS website and update group registrations. There were also archives from Latin America on display, such as early translations of NA literature in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, as well as information about Toxicómanos Anónimos (as part of the NA Fellowship in Brazil called itself when it first started).

Shane C, who ran the on-site office, spoke about his experience working at the convention. "The South American NA members are a wonderfully warm and endearing people. They take care of each other in a way that I've found to be rare in most places I've been. Some of the stories I heard about the lengths people went to in order to attend the convention were incredibly moving."

Attending the convention wasn't easy or inexpensive for everyone. In one community, the more well-off members pooled their money so people who couldn't afford it otherwise could come.

Mike P, the world convention manager, related one story among many. "There were 60 people who came from Ecuador who found a travel agency that was willing to give them credit so they could go to the convention, and they're going to make small payments for the next two years."

Tony G shared another story. "There was a group of kids who piled into a bus and drove 29 hours from Cali, Colombia."

As always, when a group of NA members from around the world gets together, there were both culture clashes and demonstrations of the fact that the NA message of recovery transcends both language and culture.

"I met people who felt the same way I did. They had my same disease and they were all trying to live a better life and change into better human beings. I had the best days in my whole life," said Juliana L of Bogotá, Colombia.

Mike P added, "The fact that we could have a world convention in a place like Cartagena, that so many members view as like going to the 'drug trough,' was very powerful. I've never seen the emotion we had at this convention at any other world convention. I was impressed by the sensitivity that members had toward members from other cultures. This is the first time we've ever held a world convention in a place where there were cultural obstacles for everyone, no matter where you were from.

"We got the numbers of people from Latin America that we expected to get. The people who came from elsewhere found a really beautiful city, found a people who were extremely hospitable, and found a place that was way safer than they ever thought.

"The convention met and exceeded all of our goals. It was the hardest one I've ever done because I had to learn another language to manage it. I couldn't carry a translator with me every moment.

"The only thing I wish I could have done was to inspire more Americans to go."

The only major complication during the convention was the coincidental visit by United States President Bill Clinton.

Mike explained how the visit affected the convention more than originally expected. "I had spent weeks on the phone with the White House and the State Department. They had originally planned to close the Cartagena airport down during the president's visit, and we had all those planes coming in and out of there during that time.

"Finally, this plan got worked out that the airport would be closed for two hours before and two hours after the president's arrival, and it wasn't supposed to affect any of our flights.

"Well, of course, the president ran two hours behind schedule, plus the Colombian president added two hours to the actual visit, so what should have gone smoothly—didn't.

"So I get this phone call that they're going to re-route one of the planes from Miami and bring people by bus through the countryside. This is exactly what people didn't want to happen.

"So I called my contact at the White House, and got connected to all these different offices, and finally got connected by cellular phone to someone in the president's motorcade. I told them the situation, and we got approval to let the plane from Miami, which was full of our members, circle overhead until the president left town."

The spirit of selfless service was much in evidence. The host committee worked hard before, during, and after the convention. Local members welcomed out-of-towners as they arrived at the airport, and even showed up as people were leaving to wish them a safe journey home and express their gratitude that people came from all over to carry the message.

"This guy and his sister were waiting at the airport to say good-bye. We were all trying not to cry. It brought home to me why we needed to do this convention in Colombia," said Tony.

Many members got their "batteries recharged" at the convention and left newly inspired to carry the message in their local communities.

Juliana L shared her experience. "I came back to Bogotá to communicate the message" that was expressed in Cartagena. "I'm now part of some area committees that are making a big effort, with a lot of gratitude, to tell more and more addicts that this fellowship exists. The fellowship in Bogotá is growing very fast, and members seem to be carrying the positive energy from all the people who attended the convention."

Most important of all, one could look at the NA Fellowship as it celebrated recovery in Cartagena and see the future. "I got to meet some of the people that, hopefully, will be in service ten years from now," said Tony.

"I thought to myself, there's someone out of all these people who will be showing up to represent a region at the World Service Conference in ten years. I know it." ☺



Message carried, message received

Something tells me that the world convention in Cartagena is going to be the stuff of legends and stories that will be around for a while.

It was really something!

With the US State Department warnings, and the understandable reluctance on the part of some to go, it was probably the smallest world convention we will see from this point forward.

That had its downside—mostly financial, I suppose—but it certainly had its up side as well. Everything was quite manageable, from the size and intimacy of the marathon meetings to the average wait-time in lines.

Even when the lines were pretty long, such as when registration and merchandising first opened, there was more a feeling of fun than of tedium among those waiting in line.

Seriously.

I went out and wandered up and down the lines, talking to people in English and Spanish, and the spirit in the lines was outstanding. Those of us who speak broken Spanish, rather than getting laughed at or passed by for someone who spoke better, were embraced and coaxed and patiently guided through conversations by hundreds of hungry-for-recovery addicts who just wanted to have as much interaction with us as they could.

It just isn't possible to put into words the spirit of the NA Fellowship in Latin America. That spirit pervaded everything about the convention, and some of it was even evident outside the convention—talking to taxi drivers on rides to and from the convention center, to waiters in local restaurants, to the hotel staff, and to just about everyone we met.

Colombia is an amazing place, and Cartagena is a safe and peaceful oasis in it, despite the country's troubles with the guerrillas and the civil war. Several taxi drivers and local members told me, "muy segura, muy tranquila, muy bonita," and I couldn't agree more. Cartagena was indeed a very safe, very peaceful, very beautiful city.

In addition to the convention meetings and workshops, I went to local meetings and marathon meetings in both English and Spanish. At all the local meetings, someone would be designated as the translator, and the sharing would take off.

The locals found every way they could, both in these settings and in the convention events themselves, to tell us out-of-towners how grateful they were for our willingness to come make this big splash in Latin America, where our message of hope is so desperately needed. They loved us almost to pieces.

I was really struck by the irony of it. Many of us North Americans went there to carry a message to the addicts in Colombia, and we encountered such an unbridled, loving heart that cared with such a passion about the still-suffering addict that we were the ones who wound up getting the message.

A bright promise

None of us will ever be the same. You can't come face to face with that kind of love and enthusiasm for the simple message of hope and promise of freedom and not wind up a little warmer and a little more alive for it.

I'll share a couple of personally powerful moments for me and then, as we say at meetings, I'll shut up.

One was when George Hollahan, one of the executive codirectors of the World Service Office, came on the mike during the first live feed. I didn't know that was going to happen, and I immediately burst into tears. I looked up at the table in front and Jorge M, from Medellín, Colombia, had his head in his hands and was in tears as well.

It brought me back about 15 years, to when I was working at the WSO and we received our first letter from Colombia. It was from Jorge and some others who were members of a group calling itself "Drogadictos Anónimos." They were trying to stay clean using AA literature with a few words changed here and there, but they had heard about Narcotics Anonymous from somewhere and decided to get in touch with us.

Their letter (which I saw again this weekend) was full of excitement at hearing that there were other addicts finding recovery, that they were not alone, and that there was already a fellowship with its own literature and a growing presence around the world.

After some negotiation about their name, which they were initially reluctant to give up, they finally decided to become members of the "Narcóticos Anónimos" family.

Soon after that first letter was received, George Hollahan traveled to Colombia to meet with the members there and help them integrate into NA. He came back on fire, saying he would never have believed the spirit of the members in Latin America if he hadn't seen it himself, and that they were going to be a great gift to our fellowship. Over the years, George has made a number of trips there, cultivating a real love affair with the NA community in Colombia.

As many of you know, George had a stroke in February of this year and was not yet well enough to make it to this convention. You can bet that was pain-

ful for him, and his absence was equally painful for a number of us who had watched him pour so much love and service into the fellowship in Latin America. Several of the oldtimers from that region mentioned during the convention how much they missed George's presence, yet how much they felt his spirit.

In addition to the mugs and T-shirts I came home with, I have one very special memento. It's a drawing scrawled on a yellow Post-it note. As the convention was winding down I had a conversation with Gabriel, a member of the host committee, about the impact of this convention on the local NA community. I likened the convention to a stone dropped in a lake. It made quite a splash immediately, but the lasting value will be in the ripples and waves of energy and enthusiasm that will now roll out into the fellowship as we all head for home.

Considering the language difficulties, I wasn't sure that Gabriel understood my metaphor. After the convention, I went up to my room exhausted, sad that it was over but looking forward to my own NA community, my own family, my own bed. As I opened the hotel door, I saw the note stuck to it. On it was drawn a series of circles within circles and a pebble landing in the center. No communication problem there.

The shockwave that was the 28th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous in Cartagena, Colombia, will be felt for some time to come.

God bless Cartagena and all those who are working so hard to carry the message in that part of the world.

Ron H, New Mexico

I've been back from Cartagena for a few days, and I don't think the passage of time will ever diminish the sense of gratitude I have for having been there to catch a glimpse of the fellowship in Latin America as it is now.

It's hard to put words to what I'm feeling, but I guess the most important thing to say is that the future of Narcotics Anonymous is brighter and more secure than even the most visionary among us may have dreamed.

The cross-section of Latin American NA communities I saw at the convention was vibrant, warm, dynamic, and committed to NA's steps, traditions, and concepts. On a foundation of love and gratitude for freedom from active addiction, the rapid growth of NA in Latin America will surely continue to change NA as a whole for the better.

There is new blood in NA. Our efforts to carry the message to the addict who still suffers are bearing fruit. Our transformation is on the horizon. Another page has been turned in the history of NA. Words cannot express the celebration, the rejoicing, the heartfelt tears, and the triumph. Change is good.

Cartagena is a magnificent city, more beautiful and historic than I ever could have imagined from anything I had seen, heard, or read. I never expected such spectacular beauty. The people of Cartagena, both in and out of NA, are warm and kind and friendly and proud.

Few things are more heart-warming or inspiring than a burning desire to stop using drugs and the willingness to go to any lengths to find recovery. In nearly 20 years in NA, never before have I seen so much of this spirit in one place, at one time, expressed so openly and abundantly.

NA members in Latin America wear their gratitude on their sleeves. I will always be grateful to have seen a flash of the bright promise and hope these members shined on me as I experienced their efforts to carry and embrace the message of Narcotics Anonymous.

There is a tendency in NA to view addiction in personal, individualistic, psychological terms. My experiences in Cartagena jarred my own cultural bias, slapping me in the face with the social dimensions of addiction. It is so easy to forget or ignore the larger social forces that combine with individual or family dynamics to contribute to addiction. The idea that addiction is a family disease has made greater inroads into NA's spoken tradition. Yet our sense of personal responsibility for our own disease and recovery seems to weigh heavily against us placing any emphasis on the social factors that contribute to addiction.

In Colombia, a society so strikingly different from North American and European communities, the balance between social and individual factors that contribute to addiction is so lopsided that it brings this issue into the foreground.

I heard a number of good speakers, and I experienced the exhilaration of connecting one-on-one with many Spanish-speaking addicts whose English was as limited as my Spanish. Nevertheless, we did connect. The excitement of sharing through the language of the heart brought me a moment of gratitude.

Looking back, I think it's a few things that happened outside of the convention itself that I'll remember most.

The beauty of Cartagena and the poverty of so many people stand out as two general things.

Another was the sight of thousands of military and paramilitary soldiers in the city a few days before President Clinton was due to arrive, bracketed by the few who remained after his departure.

Then there was my personal encounter with one of the soldiers, who charged me and confiscated my camera after I snapped a picture of Clinton's motorcade on the morning of his arrival.

But what I'm sure I'll remember most of all was the interest and curiosity expressed by ordinary people on the streets about the Narcotics Anonymous world convention.

I met a tour guide in a local church who told me of his father's recovery in NA ten years before, how he had died clean after three years of recovery from complications of his addiction.

Another night during the convention, I wandered into an expensive shop that sold antique furniture, and found the owner and four of his friends sitting around a table, drinking. When they saw my convention badge, they asked me questions for about 20 minutes about the convention and my own experience in NA. They all described themselves as alcoholics and addicts and talked about the extent of the growing addiction problem in their country.

Quite startled by their openness, warmth, and friendliness, I left the shop and walked out onto the Plaza Santa Domingo. Three men selling souvenir trinkets of various kinds approached me, and again when they saw my badge they

asked me questions about the convention and how I stayed clean.

These were street addicts; two had used something that day, and one had the desire to stop using. I gave that one my Spanish Little White Booklet. They all wanted to know if they could attend the convention and when it started the next day.

I didn't see any of them there the next morning or at any local meetings afterward, but both encounters with these self-described addicts only strengthened my conviction that the effects of this convention would be felt far outside the convention center—in the streets of Cartagena, and throughout Latin America.

Michael L, California

“My gratitude speaks...”

“...when I care and when I share with others the NA way.”

So what am I grateful for? How much time do you have?

I don't know about you, but when I was using, I rarely took time to count my blessings—yes, even then I had a multitude of things for which to be grateful.

I was able to see, but rarely looked. I was able to reason, but seldom bothered. I was able to walk, but only wanted to ride. I had two perfectly good ears, but never listened. I had people with whom to share my love, but I never dared to trust. I always managed to get the things I needed, but I only complained.

Even now, in the midst of the most astounding transformation of my body, mind, and spirit in recovery, I rarely take a moment to reflect on the blessings afforded me.

It's time to take a moment right now and, as is suggested around NA, I'll share my blessings with you.

First of all, I don't have to use dope.

I can think clearly if I take a moment to meditate.

I can share myself with others and not fear rejection.

I can be of service to society, rather than a liability.

I can make better use of my abilities.

I don't have to fear the law, unless I am breaking it (if I could just learn to drive more slowly...)

I could go on and on, but I'd never finish. Instead, I'll just share one last thought.

Participating in our fellowship's unity is where I have found hope, my greatest source of strength. For that, I thank you all.

Joel L, Iowa

The best birthday

My favorite birthday celebration was when I turned ten. The way it started, I felt completely bereft of recovery. I was out of town, away from my usual haunts, feeling disconnected from the fellowship, and ashamed of how active my disease was in my life. I was ruled by work, obsessed with a relationship, and financially insecure. A woman who had consistently been showing up in my life for ten years when I was feeling like I was hitting rock bottom showed up again, and she took me to a meeting. She bought a doughnut from a 24-hour convenience mart, stuck a candle in it, and helped me celebrate my life, my recovery, and myself. It felt like my recovery started all over again. I understood once again that my NA birthday celebrations are not just about me, but about moving out of isolation, sharing myself with others, and celebrating our relationships with others in NA.

Andrea W, Australia

“NA is an invitation to the celebration of life.”

Anonymous, India

Milestones

My milestone birthdays all stand out in my memory—one year, five years, ten years. They were all very memorable, and they always seemed to coincide with important changes in my life. I have now had so many birthdays that I can no longer remember every detail of every one, but my first-year birthday stands out far beyond the rest.

I remember standing in front of my fellow home-group members and trying to articulate my feelings about having a year clean. I just stood there; no words came out. I was in shock. I had actually been drug-free for a year, a whole year! I eventually blurted out something about gratitude, and sat down feeling inadequate and foolish for being unable to express my feelings.

Still, even in this large meeting, in the midst of my self-consciousness, I noticed a couple of my fellow members grinning from ear to ear and wiping tears from their eyes. That night, I felt an outpouring of warmth and love like I had never felt before. I belonged, and I knew it. I felt safe and secure, and I could begin to let people see glimpses of the real me.

Ron B, Australia



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, etc.—anything 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.).

This is where the Cali, Colombia, Area Service Committee meets every Thursday, from 7:00 to 9:30 pm.



This is the Canoga Park, California, meeting place of the “Recovery 2000” group.

Hot topics

For the past several years, conference participants have selected two topics for the fellowship as a whole to discuss during the following conference cycle. Conference participants chose the topics based on what they believed the fellowship was most interested in discussing and what seemed to be the most pressing issues.

In the past, participation in the discussion wasn't as widespread as conference participants had hoped. At WSC 2000, regional delegates let the World Board know that they wanted something tangible to result from these discussions—like a new piece of literature, a bulletin, or something that would capture the experience, strength, and hope generated by the discussion and help the fellowship deal with the issue in the future.

Besides inviting you to use the other available avenues for participating in the discussion (see the October 2000 *NA Way* for more information on this), the World Board is hoping that you'll feel free to write your thoughts down and send them in to *The NA Way Magazine*.

The current issue-discussion topics are:

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

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



Dear H&I Slim,

My name is Juan Carlos, and I'm an addict. I first heard the message of NA in a detox in Baja California. I go to the meetings, accompanied by other addicts. The center has copies of the *H&I Handbook*, a Basic Text, and some other NA literature.

Actually, I am now a member of the Baja-Costa Area H&I Subcommittee. I go to two weekly meetings in an institution and serve as treasurer. Thanks to my Higher Power, I have been clean for eight years.

During this time, the H&I subcommittee hasn't grown. We have an average of six members. We've tried to get the groups to choose representatives to serve on the subcommittee. Is this okay to do? Some people say we are burning ourselves out. If we do have designated representatives from the groups, where do they fit in the service structure? Also, are there service guides about H&I in Spanish?

I want to congratulate NA on all that it gives us, and I want to say thank you for publishing *The NA Way Magazine* in Spanish. It gives us so much information about how to stay clean and about the spiritual base of our program.

Here's a hug to you and to all addicts all over the world. May God bless you in your recovery.

Juan Carlos T.
Baja California Norte

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 Juan Carlos,

To begin with, I want to thank you for your dedication in carrying the NA message of recovery to addicts who have limited or no access to our regularly scheduled meetings.

You and the other member of the area H&I subcommittee seem to be experiencing the same frustration that, for the most part, other areas and regions face due to a lack of participation. It's not only H&I that goes through this, but other area subcommittees as well.

H&I, like other area subcommittees, is an extension of an area service committee, which has been formed to execute a specific task. During GSR reports at NA recovery meetings, you will often hear that certain subcommittees need support. Many groups have chosen to send or elect a member of the home group to be the representative to or serve on a subcommittee. There doesn't need to be any special designation in the service structure for this.

Whether you are burning yourself out or not is something only you, coupled with guidance from your sponsor and your Higher Power, can determine. If you are only participating in H&I meetings, or if being of service is affecting other aspects of your life, then you may want to take a look at what you're doing.

There are drafts of the *H&I Handbook* in the Spanish language. I will see to it that you are provided with copies of this material.

*In service to the fellowship,
H&I Slim*

Birthday controversies take the cake

NA recovery anniversaries are wonderful events. They generate a lot of creative energy and gratitude that helps show how welcoming and loving our fellowship is. However, it's a rare group of addicts who can pass up the opportunity to create controversy out of even the most lovely and loving thing.

In Australia, recovery anniversaries are called birthdays and they are celebrated much like we celebrate our natal birthdays. The guest of honor shares, which is followed by the parading of a birthday cake with the requisite number of candles, a most unharmonious rendition of the "Happy Birthday" song, and the ritual of blowing out the candles. The celebration usually takes place at the meeting of the member's home group that happens closest to his or her birthday.

Three controversies have arisen out of this.

Controversy Number One: Is it okay to celebrate your recovery anniversary before the actual day of it?

Some people are horrified if anybody does this. Others are more relaxed about it, especially if the person is celebrating more than five years. Everyone agrees that this shouldn't be done for a first-year anniversary.

Controversy Number Two: How many cakes are too many?

Some people take cakes at places other than their home group, especially if they attend another meeting on their anniversary date and their friends bring along a cake. Some people are horrified by this, thinking it's all ego and therefore unspiritual. Others think there's no such thing as too much celebration of recovery.

Controversy Number Three: This is the biggest of them all. Should Seventh Tradition funds be used to buy the birthday cake?

When I got clean there was a saying that the first birthday belonged to you, and the rest belonged to the fellowship. It meant that you could feel unique and fabulous and get lots of extra love and attention for the first birthday, but after that, recovery was supposed to be its own reward. This was translated into a financial custom that had the home group buying first-birthday cakes, and the birthday person or some other individual buying subsequent cakes.

I was happy about this custom because it meant that after your first anniversary, you could buy yourself elaborate, expensive cakes without feeling that you were being irresponsible with NA's money. This also meant that Seventh Tradition money wasn't being spent willy-nilly on endless cakes.

When I moved to another area, I found out that the local community didn't have the same custom. In fact, each group decided whether or not it would pay for birthday

cakes. I was very uncomfortable with this, because I saw groups buying cakes, week after week, with money that addicts (like me, for example) had put in the basket to help carry the message of recovery. Although I understand that birthday celebrations are attractive to newcomers and are a way to show that NA works, I felt very uncomfortable seeing NA's money spent this way. We're not talking small amounts here. Some cakes cost more than the group pays for rent, and some weeks these groups could barely collect enough to pay the rent.

When I spoke to other members, I found that some people didn't care. Those who did care felt one of two ways:

a) that buying cakes was a reasonable expense for a group;

b) that buying cakes was a significant expense, the money could be better spent on other things, and this problem affected NA as a whole.

The latter group thought that new members who saw money being spent like that would be less likely to understand why the service structure is forever asking for more money.

My personal solution has been to put less money into the basket at meetings that spend money on cakes and more money into the basket at meetings that pass funds on to the service structure.

You can see by this that how we celebrate recovery anniversaries can generate some pretty heated debate, but at least we confine it to the coffee shop after the meeting. Can you imagine if we didn't? People shouting over the birthday song: "That's the *third* cake you've had this week! Give it back!" Or "I know you aren't really 5 until tomorrow at 2 am Greenwich Mean Time. I can't allow this charade to continue. I challenge the chair's decision to allow the singing and giving of a cake to this person." Or "I don't want *my* Seventh Tradition money spent on that cake. Give my portion to the RSC."

Let the celebrations continue, and let our common sense, our group conscience, and our mutual respect for one another be our guides.

Anonymous

Convention challenges

The legal issues associated with conventions can be some of the most confusing things we have to face when planning one. And when the confusion and controversy carry over into recovery meetings, it can be very confusing to newcomers.

Convention committees often make binding agreements without the consent of the members they serve. At times, the whole NA community can be paralyzed by reams of rhetoric and jungles of jargon that would require a roomful of lawyers, three judges, and a junkie to figure out.

Conventions are a wonderful experience organized by dedicated members for a variety of reasons. However, they do reflect upon NA as a whole, so legal protection, along with full compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations is an absolute necessity. Seeking out reliable assistance may have a cost, but the alternative is like going to a discount bodyguard service. Some things are just too important to cut corners. And there's always a price to pay, though it's not always financial.

Members who serve on convention committees often are criticized and humiliated over mistakes made simply because they lacked information. We've lost members with time and willingness to serve because we set them up to fail.

Another price we've paid as a fellowship is a loss of people to do area and regional H&I, PI, and phonenumber service because they're all being siphoned off into the convention committee. In one extreme case, an area hosting a state convention had groups discussing the possibility of merging with another area to get those kinds of services until after the convention. There was a motion brought forward to dissolve the ASC. Most groups just ignored it, but this does affect our newer members, making them feel like they're staking their recovery on something that's falling apart.

Our legal obligations can drain away the best of intentions. I happened to

serve on an oversight committee that was put in place during the third year of an annual convention.

Three areas in a metropolitan city hosted this convention. We knew we had to learn about and be in compliance with all our legal and contractual obligations. Everyone knew we had to do something, so we selected people from each of the three areas to serve on the oversight committee. Our duties included finding out about incorporation, conducting convention committee elections, and finding a site for the third convention.

All of these duties were either accomplished or in progress; however, we kept receiving directives from the areas to perform other tasks. Among those were writing guidelines for the convention, writing bylaws for a corporate charter, and handling preregistration for the convention. We wound up doing the preregistration, yet we had no concrete plan for protecting the areas by incorporating the convention.

Then, in typical runaway train fashion, the area dissolved the oversight committee. The convention committee carried on, but held on to the proceeds from the previous convention for the purpose of settling any lingering or pending legal problems. The money was set aside with the knowledge that the situation would worsen over time.

In the meantime, the convention committee decided to hold a fundraiser that was instigated by the hotel manager. He claimed the hotel would guarantee attendance by their guests. He later pushed the committee into making a premature decision by issuing an ultimatum, claiming that another group was interested and he needed a decision immediately. The committee called an emergency meeting and decided to go ahead with the fundraiser.

This decision created a storm of controversy in the area. Strong opposition was voiced, based on everything from newcomers not being able to afford it to whether the promised hotel guests would have a full-service bar in the room.

One area discussed disassociating itself from the convention while at the same time it badgered the convention committee with motions demanding a

free open room at the same function.

Individuals from all three areas vowed not to support the fundraiser or the convention. Finally, a disc jockey promised that a certain number of his following would show up, but nothing was put in writing.

The event flopped! This left the committee liable for the hotel bill, which the hotel demanded be paid prior to the convention. What to do? If they cancelled the convention at such a late date, the penalties would amount to just about what it would cost to put on the convention anyway. So we had to go ahead with the convention, and we had to pay the bill first. An emergency meeting was called for the three areas. They took the reserved tax and liability money from the previous convention and bailed out the fundraiser (irony of ironies). The convention itself went on, and the message was carried.

So by now we should be wary of conventions, but no sooner did one area pull out of the annual convention than they hosted the state convention. Go figure.

Our state has two regions, and they share an annual convention. They take turns, and the areas bid on hosting the convention.

The larger region of the two was very conscientious in making sure all legal matters had been attended to. It also took out an insurance policy when it hosted the convention.

I'm a member of the shared services committee that serves both regions, so I attend both regional meetings.

Last year, the larger region incorporated, and in doing so named the state convention in its corporate charter. The region had every right to protect itself when it hosted the convention, and this was in no way a hostile maneuver.

However, some of the language in the charter stipulates that only members of the region can serve on the board of directors, though how someone gains the legal status of a member of a region can't be determined.

The glitch is in the requirement of a board member's signature on all contracts. At present, the shared services committee is looking for members to serve on a state convention corporation

board of directors. This would include members from both regions and protect each region, as well as ensure a continuation of responsible practices. Wish us luck.

So if you think I'm burned out on conventions, think again. I'm currently serving as program chair for our next state convention.

There's a lot of controversy, dissension, disagreement, and upheaval involved in putting on a convention. I still appreciate the opportunity to serve.

Tony S, Ohio

with help from Diane G, Ohio

For clarification

In the April 2000 *NA Way Magazine*, an article describing NAWS' relationship with the United Nations seems to have created confusion among some of our members. We neglected to mention that, even though the UN develops public policy, Narcotics Anonymous does not and will not participate in any discussions that are considered outside issues according to our Twelve Traditions. Our consultative status was obtained for the purpose of registering as an international organization and providing information about Narcotics Anonymous to other nongovernmental organizations. ❖

NAWS NEEDS YOU!



Here's your opportunity to give back what was so freely given to you! Help build the World Pool by sending in your service resume. Trusted servants for world service projects and elections will come from this pool. You can reach us by letter, phone, or email, or visit our website at www.na.org to request your resume form.



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, 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

New South Wales: 26-28 Jan.; Far North Coast Area Byron Bay Convention 2001; Byron Bay Beach Club Resort; Byron Bay; + 61.2.66858000

CANADA

British Columbia: 2-4 Mar.; British Columbia Region hosts the 4th Circle of Sisters NA Women's Convention; Coast Plaza Suite Hotel at Stanley Park; Vancouver; hotel: 800.663.1144; event info: 604.254.1962; write: PO Box 1695, Station A, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6C 2P7

2) 29 June - 1 July; British Columbia Region hosts Multiregional Service Learning Days; Bonsor Community Center; Vancouver; event info: 604.439.9392 or 604.439.9392; registration: 604.540-5110

Ontario: 26-28 Jan.; 2nd Toronto Area Convention; Westin Harbour Castle Hotel; Toronto; 800.WESTIN1; event info: 416.236.8956

2) 18-20 May; Ontario Regional Conference XIV; Ottawa Congress Centre; Ottawa: 613.230.3033; Congrès d'Ottawa Univ. Dorms: 613.562.5771; event info: 819.827.5761; registration: 613.744.5402; speaker tape deadline is 1 Mar.

Québec: 29 June - 1 July; European Conference and Convention; St-Hyacinthe Convention Center; hotel: 888.910.1111; event info: 450.443.0275; speaker tape information: 514.919.6146

COSTA RICA

San Jose: 24-27 May; V Latin America Convention; San Jose; event info: + 506.256.8140

GUATEMALA

Antigua: 19-21 Oct.; 1st Guatemala Regional Convention; Antigua; save the dates, more will be revealed

INDIA

Manipur: 23-25 Feb.; Imphal Area Convention; The Masks Have To Go; State Youth Centre; Imphal; event info: + 385.320367 or + 385.410851 or + 385.220450(R) or + 385.230028(O)

PORTUGAL

Lisboa: 2-4 Feb.; 4th Convenção de N.A. da área de Lisboa; Forum Lisboa; Lisbon; event info: + 351.96.6729294 or + 351.96.2784661; registration: + 351.91.7361684

SPAIN

Malaga Province: 11-13 May; Spain Regional Convention; Hotel Don Miguel Golf and Sports; Marbella; Spanish-speaking: + 902114147; English-speaking: + 600746278

SWEDEN

Linköping: 20-22 Apr.; 10th Swedish Regional Service Conference; Sankt Larsgården; Linköping; event info: + 46.13.212789; registration: + 46.13.311303

UNITED KINGDOM

England: 6-8 Apr.; 12th London Convention; Holland Park School; London; UKSO: + 44.20.7251.4007; UKSO fax: + 44.20.7251.4006; conv. chair: + 44.20.7490.3665; UK Region: LCNA, c/o UKSO, 202 City Road, London, EC1V 2PH, England

UNITED STATES

Alabama: 12-14 Jan.; Central Alabama Area Convention; Free at Last IV; Madison Holiday Inn; Montgomery

2) 9-11 Feb.; 5th North Alabama Area Convention; Out of the Darkness, into the Light; Holiday Inn; Decatur; event info: 256.355.3150 or 256.383.3512 or 256.464.9595 or 256.880.9219; North Alabama Area: Box 592, Decatur, AL 35601; write: NAACC, Box 3432, Florence, AL 35630

3) 23-25 Mar.; Greater Mobile Area Convention; The Message Is Hope; Adam's Mark Riverview Plaza Hotel; Mobile; hotel: 800.444.2326; event info: 334.476.8386 or 334.479.6852; write: Greater Mobile Area, Box 9622, Mobile, AL 36691-9622; www.alnwflrscna.org

Arizona: 25-27 May; 15th Arizona Regional Convention; Dare to Dream; InnSuites Hotel; Tucson; event info: 520.622.3000 or 602.788.4066 or 602.242.8198 or 602.548.9814 or 480.844.3668; Clean time minimum for main speakers is 5 years; deadline for workshop speakers, topics, leaders is 15 Feb.; send tapes to: Committee Chair, 3526 W. Ocotillo Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85019

Arkansas: 16-18 Feb.; 17th TACNA; Four Points Sheraton; Texarkana; hotel: 800.325.3535; event info: 903.792.3687 or 903.791.0022 or 903.832.7126

California: 12-14 Jan.; Tri-Area Convention; Recovery—the Bridge that Unites Us; Red Lion Inn; Redding; hotel: 530.221.8700; registration: 530.273.8940

2) 19-21 Jan.; 6th San Fernando Valley Area Convention; The Ties That Bind Us Together; Burbank Airport Hilton; Burbank; hotel: 800.HILTONS; event info: 626.334.5858; registration: 818.891.9210

3) 16-18 Feb.; Central California Regional Convention; Recovery Runs Deep - Dive In!; Clarion Hotel, Ventura Beach; Ventura; hotel: 805.643.6000 or 800.252.7466; convention chair: 805.481.6228; vice chair: 805.937.5870; write: CCRCNA, Box 5246, Oxnard, CA 93031

4) 8-11 Mar.; 23rd Northern California Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Burlingame; Burlingame

5) 9-11 Nov.; California Midstate Region hosts 15th Western Service Learning Days; Doubletree Hotel; Fresno; hotel: 559.485.9000; event info: 559.651.8090 or 559.251.6061

Connecticut: 5-7 Jan.; 16th Connecticut Regional Convention; Happy, Joyous, & Free; Sheraton Stamford Hotel; Stamford; hotel: 203.359.1300; event info: 860.242.7411; convention chair: 203.736.2612

Florida: 16-18 Feb.; 19th Orlando Area Celebration of Unity; Ramada Resort and Conference; Orlando; event info: 800.327.1363

2) 3-6 May; 25th Annual Panama City Fun in the Sun Weekend; Boardwalk Beach Resort; Panama City Beach; hotel: 800.224.4853; speaker tape info: 404.325.4252 – deadline is 30 Jan.

Georgia: 12-14 Jan.; 3rd North East Georgia Area Convention; Spirituality Is the Key; Holiday Inn; Athens; hotel: 800.465.4329; event info: 706.353.0728 or 770.736.9409

2) 22-25 Feb.; 20th Georgia Regional Convention; Westin Hotel; Atlanta; hotel: 800.228.3000; event info: 770.474.7797 or 770.884.5587; registration: 404.766.7288; write: GRCNA-XX, Box 689, Stockbridge, GA 30281

Illinois: 25-28 Jan.; 13th Chicagoland Regional Convention; With Unity and Diversity, the Journey Continues; Hyatt Regency Downtown; Chicago; hotel: 312.565.1234; event info: 773.848.8648; registration: 773.277.6752

2) 6-8 Apr.; Rock River Convention 10; Holiday Inn; South Beloit; 815.389.3481; event info: 815.623.9017; registration: 815.394.1595; Rock River Area, Box 8544, Rockford, IL 61126

Indiana: 9-11 Mar.; Indiana Regional Convention: An Awakening of the Spirit; Radisson Hotel - City Centre; Indianapolis; event info: 317.568.1263; registration: 317.250.3636

Iowa: 27 Jan.; #2 Peace Area Wild Game Feed; Knights of Columbus Hall; Algona; event info: 515.295.5826 or 888.561.5662

2) 6-8 July; 18th Iowa Regional Convention; Best Western; Council Bluffs; hotel: 712.322.3150; event info: 712.323.9498 or 712.325.9161 or 641.743.8376; write: Iowa Region, Box 327, Greenfield, IA 50849

Kansas: 30 Mar. - 1 Apr.; 18th Mid-America Regional Convention; Ramada Inn; Hutchinson; event info: 316.665.1028

Kentucky: 19-21 Jan.; Louisville Area Convention; The Point Is Freedom; Seelbach Hilton; Louisville; hotel: 502.585.3200; event info: 502.675.8625; registration: 502.638.9350

2) 1-3 June; 3rd Annual Freebirds Group Recovery Fest; Elk City State Park; Independence; event info: 417.782.3298 or 316.331.4911 or 316.331.0930

Louisiana: 25-27 May; Louisiana Regional Convention; 2001 - A Recovery Odyssey; Hampton Inn; Alexandria; hotel: 318.445.6996; event info: 318.449.1778; write: Louisiana Region, Box 8334, Alexandria, LA 71306

Massachusetts: 2-4 Mar.; 9th New England Regional Convention; A Message of Hope; Sea Crest Resort and Convention Center; North Falmouth; hotel: 800.225.3110; conv. chair: 508.279.2079; registration: 781.335.8365; write: NERC-IX, Box 107, Weymouth, MA 02188-0004

2) 24-26 May; 6th Boston Area Convention; Boston Sheraton Hotel; Boston; event info: 617.437.1558 or 617.437.1558 or 617.492.4863 or 617.265.8901; registration: 617.492.4863; speaker tape info: 617.492.4863 or 617.265.8901

Michigan: 2-4 Feb.; "It Wasn't the High, It Was the Low" New Way of Living Group Speaker Jam III; Crown Plaza Hotel; Saginaw; event info: 517.753.6680

2) 12-15 Apr.; Detroit Area Convention; Sharing the Solution; Detroit Marriot Hotel Renaissance; hotel: 800.228.9290; event info: 313.345.7049; registration: 734.955.1306; speaker tape info: 313.538.4079 – deadline is 15 Feb.

Minnesota: 6-8 Apr.; 8th Minnesota Convention; Cragun's Resort; Brainerd; hotel: 218.825.2700; event info: 320.693.6438; write: New Directions Area, PO Box 576, Litchfield, MN 55355

2) 25-28 May; Upper Midwest Convention; Spiritual Refreshment; Fairhills Resort; Pelican Lake; hotel: 800.323.2849; event info: 612.822.9472

Nebraska: 16-18 Feb.; Eastern Nebraska Area Convention; Close Encounters of the Clean Kind - Secure in the Love of the Fellowship; Best Western - Redick Plaza; Omaha; hotel: 712.329.0517; registration: 402.556.2612; write: Eastern Nebraska Area, Box 3937, Omaha, NE 68102

New Jersey: 23-25 Feb.; Greater Newark Area Convention; Celebrating Recovery; Newark Hilton; hotel phone: 973.455.7997; hotel fax: 908.754.0585; event info: 973.623.8526; registration: 673.643.1343; write: Greater Newark Area, PO Box 3412, Newark, NJ 07103

2) 16-18 Mar.; 16th New Jersey Regional Convention; Newark Airport Sheraton; hotel: 800.325.3535; event info: 609.259.0006; write: NJRC, Box 134, Fords, NJ 08863

3) 12-14 Oct.; 6th Capital Area Convention; Road to Recovery; Ramada Inn; East Brunswick; hotel: 609.448.7000; send tapes before 31 Aug. to: Box 2464, Trenton, NJ 08607

New Mexico: 16-18 Mar.; 12th Rio Grande Regional Convention; Sheraton Old Town; Albuquerque; hotel: 800.237.2133; registration: 505.792.0319; write: RGRCA, Box 3692, Albuquerque, NM 87190

New York: 23-25 Feb.; Rochester Area Convention; Recovery is Possible; Hyatt Regency; Rochester; hotel: 800.233.1234; registration: 716.482.5989; conv. chair: 716.654.6743; write: Box 30485, Rochester, NY 14603

2) 16-18 Mar.; Bronx and Westchester Areas present "Two Areas, One Purpose"; Kutcher's Resort; Monticello; hotel: 800.431.1273; registration: 718.798.0046; conv. chair: 718.655.6308

3) 13-15 Apr.; Greater New York Freedom XV Regional Convention; New York Hilton; hotel: 800.HILTONS or 800.445.8667; speaker tape info: 212.242.8140 – deadline is 31 Jan.

4) 19-21 Oct.; ABCD Regional Convention; As the Past Continues, More Will Be Revealed; Ramada Inn Convention Center; Schenectady; phone: 518.370.7150; fax: 518.372.3000

North Carolina: 5-7 Jan.; Western North Carolina Area Convention; Spiritually High in the Land of the Sky XVI; Ramada Plaza Hotel; Asheville; hotel: 800.678.2161; event info: 828.298.9385

2) 27-29 Apr.; Greater Charlotte Area Convention; Bound for Freedom XVI; Hilton Tower; Charlotte; hotel: 704.377.1500 or 800.445.8667; registration: 704.532.0017 or 704.536.0053 or 704.344.8018

Ohio: 5-7 Jan.; Central Ohio Area Convention; Point of Freedom – Ain't No Stopping Us Now; Columbus Marriott North; hotel: 800.228.9290; event info: 614.235.5926

NA Way Magazine Themes and Deadlines

April 2001 – July 2001

April 2001 NA Way

Deadline: 1 January 2001 (manuscripts in to WSO)

Theme: A Recovery Odyssey

- Why do people speak of recovery as a journey? How has your recovery been a journey?
- Infinite potential for recovery.
- Developing increasing faith, hope, and courage; deepening surrender.
- Changes and challenges.
- Fellow travelers on the journey: sponsors, sponsees, friends, other people who have taught you.
- Recovery as its own reward.
- Close encounters with a Higher Power.
- Loneliness—when you've gone where no one else in your NA community has gone before. Where do you find support, identification, motivation to continue spiritual growth?
- Journeys in service.

July 2001 NA Way

Deadline: 1 April 2001 (manuscripts in to WSO)

Theme: Carrying the Message

- Tradition Eleven—issues of attraction and promotion in carrying the message.
- Carrying the message, not the addict.
- Why is carrying the message our most important (primary) purpose?
- Personal service and general service; places to carry the message—recovery meetings, service meetings, PI, H&I.
- Hearing the message.
- How does NA unity help us carry the message?
- Sponsorship and selflessness, humility, accepting limitations.
- What does carrying the message have to do with our common welfare?

2) 9-10 Feb.; Ohio Convention Fundraiser; Diversity in Recovery; Holiday Inn; Hudson; write: Box 543, Lakewood, OH 44107

3) 25-27 May; The Gift Is in the Giving; Holiday Inn Hudson; info: 330.653.9191; Great Lakes Area hosting, OCNA XIX, write: Box 1394, Painesville, OH 44077; speaker tape deadline is 31 Jan.

Oklahoma: 19-21 Jan.; 11th Annual Winter Convention; 2001 - An NA Odyssey; Super 8 Motel; Norman; hotel: 800.800.8000; event info: 405.329.6862 or 405.447.5447

Oregon: 11-13 May; Pacific Cascade Regional Convention; The Message Is Hope; Red Lion Hotel; Medford; hotel: 541.779.5811; event info: 541.773.3587; write: Box 3931, Central Point, OR; www.ccountry.net/~pcrcna_8

Pennsylvania: 9-11 Feb.; Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference XVII; Lancaster Host Resort; Lancaster; hotel: 717.299.5500; event info: 610.705.9523; registration: 610.970.8688; write: Mid-Atlantic Region, PMB 229, 3440 Lehigh St., Allentown, PA 18103

2) 13-15 Apr.; Philadelphia Regional Convention; Radisson Valley Forge; Philadelphia; event info: 215.227.5936; registration: 215.961.2154; write: PO Box 21144, Philadelphia, PA 19114-0344

3) 1-3 Nov.; 2nd Inner City Area Convention; Philadelphia; event info: 215.991.9505 or 215.225.3884 or 215.232.4062; conv. chair: 215.218.9171; write: PO Box 50374, Philadelphia, PA 19132

South Carolina: 19-21 Jan.; Upper South Carolina Convention; Ramada Inn; Greenville; hotel: 864.678.7800; conv. chair: 864.232.8603; registration: 864.876.4488

2) 16-18 Feb.; Central Carolina Area Convention; Just for Today XII - Expect a Miracle; Hilton Head Island Beach & Tennis Resort; Hilton Head Island; hotel: 800.475.2631 or 803.842.4402; event info: 803.735.8088 or 803.790.0608 or 803.743.0838; write: Box 11513, Columbia, SC 29211

Texas: 2-4 Feb.; Tejas Bluebonnet Convention; A Recovery Odyssey; Holiday Inn Emerald Beach; Corpus Christi; hotel: 361.883.5731; event info: 361.991.0723 or 361.284.3374; conv. chair: 361.528.2303; vice chair: 361.993.4654; write: Box 10054, Corpus Christi, TX 78460-0054

2) 13-15 Apr.; 16th Lone Star Regional Convention; Radisson Plaza Hotel; Fort Worth; event info: 817.870.2100 or 972.245.8972 or 800.747.8972; Lone Star Region, 1510 Randolph #205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Utah: 23-25 Feb.; 8th Northern Utah Area Convention; Ben Lomond Hotel; Ogden; hotel: 801.627.1900; event info: 801.644.6013; write: Box 242, Ogden, UT 84402

Virginia: 12-14 Jan.; 19th Annual Virginia Convention hosted by the Shenandoah Area; It's an Inside Job: The Door Is Always Open; Westfields Marriott; Chantilly; hotel: 800.635.5666; event info: 540.662.2951 or 540.667.5128

Washington: 9-11 Mar.; Washington/Northern Idaho Region hosts Clean and Free by the Sea 2001; Ocean Shores; event info: 206.382.0534

2) 18-20 May; Washington/Northern Idaho Regional Convention; Walking the Circle of Recovery Together; Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel; Everett; hotel: 425.339.3333; event info: 206.382.0534; speaker tape info: 206.382.0534

Wisconsin: 5-7 Jan.; Greater Milwaukee and Inner City Areas host Unity Convention VI; Milwaukee Hyatt Regency; Milwaukee; hotel phone: 800.233.1234; hotel fax: 414.276.6338; event info: 414.871.2102 or 414.438.2795

From the World Service Office

Just to remind everyone, the five-percent literature price increase that was originally scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2000—that is, one year ago—has now been implemented. The schedule for a price increase every three years began in 1996; however, last year's increase was delayed to allow other policy changes to be completely implemented. The uniform, across-the-board five-percent increase applies to all items in the WSO catalog.

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

Brazilian/Portuguese Bronze Medallions

Available 1—20 years, and 18 months
Item No. BR/PO-4300—4320 Price US \$2.35 each

Finnish Working Step Four in NA

Neljännän askeleen työskentely Nimettömissä Narkomaaneissa

Item No. FI-3110 Price US \$0.65

Greek IP #1

Πως, Τι, Πως και Γιατί

Item No. GR-3101 Price US \$0.21

Greek Keytags

Available from Welcome through Multiple years
Item No. GR-4100—4108 Price US \$0.37 each

Russian Basic Text, Book One and Book Two

АНОНИМНЫЕ НАРКОМАНЫ

Item No. RU-1102 Price US \$9.70

Russian Keytags

Available from Welcome through Multiple years
Item No. RU-4100—4108 Price US \$0.37 each

Swedish White Booklet

Anonyma Narkomaner

Item No. SW-1500 Price US \$0.63



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At the time of filing

Extent and nature of circulation	Average No. of copies In preceding 12 months	Actual copies as of 10.1.00
Total printed copies	28,175	27,700
Requested subscription—outside county	27,080	26,546
Requested subscription —in-county	875	899
Total requested subscription	27,955	27,445
Free distribution	105	95
Total distribution	28,060	27,540
Undistributed copies (office uses)	115	160
Total	28,175	27,700
Percent requested circulation	99.62%	99.65%

Certified, correct, complete

Home GROUP

And now... *The NA Way* asks some Home Group members:

"How Do You Celebrate Your Recovery?"

I do eighteen holes... just me, my Higher Power, and 20 of my closest sponsees to caddy!



I write a gratitude list, call my sponsor, and cover every available service position.



Oh, a Jacuzzi, a massage, and a weekend away with a sponsee or two, my treat!



I light three candles... one for what was, one for what is, and one for what will be... then I shop online for the rest of the night!



Gee... I can't decide... either root canal... or listen to tapes from the World Service Conference. Hmmm...

