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"We have found that the way to remain a productive, responsible member of society is to put our recovery first. NA can survive without us, but we cannot survive without NA."

Narcotics Anonymous (Basic Text), pg. 102

Practicing principles

How we live the program

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|--------------------------------|----|
| Practicing principles | 1 |
| Our readers write... | 2 |
| Living the program | 3 |
| NA: A daily program | 5 |
| What program do you work? | 6 |
| NA equals life! | 7 |
| Staying clean no matter what | 8 |
| A program of humility | 9 |
| On the right path | 9 |
| Picture this | 10 |
| Being 'a part of' | 11 |
| On being of service | 12 |
| Finding a home | 12 |
| NA has been very good to me... | 13 |
| Why are we here? | 14 |
| H&I Slim | 15 |
| 50th Anniversary/WCNA-30 | 16 |
| San Diego | 18 |
| HRP | 19 |
| Calendar | 20 |
| WSO product update | 23 |
| Home Group | 24 |

IN THIS ISSUE

Many NA slogans refer to the concept of "living the program." Those slogans are as numerous, varied, and colorful as our membership. In meetings around the world, at any given moment, we might hear, "I try to practice these principles in all my affairs to the best of my ability," or "Just for today, I'm living in the solution," or "I know I have to work my life around my program and not my program around my life."

Learning to live the program of Narcotics Anonymous is as much a part of the foundation for our recovery as not picking up drugs a day at a time. But what does living the program *really* mean?

The stories in this issue are testaments to the power of this simple program. Over and over again, with each member's experience, we see that living the program is more than just a chapter in our Basic Text or the title of a pamphlet.

Living the program is about courage, and faith, and willingness to go the distance no matter what. Living the program is about being faced with life's most incomprehensible horrors and not giving up. Living the program allows us to actively participate in life and all that it brings.

NA offers us a choice of how we want to pursue our newfound life. Staying clean and working the steps gives us the freedom to make that choice. We have all been given a second chance to live a life that can transcend any dream we've ever had. It is up to us whether we want to take that chance and live.

"Just for today I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear."





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Our readers write...

Regarding the article entitled "How to Share"
(The NA Way Magazine, April 2002, Vol. 19, No. 2)

Dear NA Way,

I don't know how to express what I feel other than to say that I'm outraged! I truly fear for the newcomer or anyone else who shows up with a problem that doesn't relate to the topic of discussion at the Friday Night Roaming Home Group in Maryland, not to mention the addict who comes late and who really needs to share. I've been around for several years and I've never heard such self-centeredness. I'll try to cover their ideas in order.

For starters, I don't believe there is a "correct" way to share, as long as I'm sharing honestly.

- ◆ I do agree that people should be aware of each other's desire to share and try not to monopolize the time available.
- ◆ Sometimes—in fact, most of the time—when I come to the rooms with a problem, it is because I don't know the solution and I'm seeking the experience, strength, and hope of those who may have had a similar experience.
- ◆ There are times, especially when I'm hurting emotionally, when I just don't feel very spiritual and, for whatever reasons, I'm incapable of being the spiritual person I ought to be.
- ◆ I've had the opportunity to travel, and in many meetings around the world there are no discussion leaders to call on people. Everyone simply jumps in and takes turns. It is not my place to say when someone does or does not have a need or desire to share.
- ◆ It is truly okay to speak briefly.
- ◆ An NA meeting is a garbage dump if that's what I'm full of at that time. I come to meetings with what's inside of me. Sometimes it's experience, strength, and hope; other times it's pain, agony, and misery. It depends on how well I've been applying the program to every aspect of my life, which varies from day to day.

Continued on page 10

Ed. note: On the opening page of the July 2002 issue (Vol. 19, No. 3), "Anonymity," I noted that we currently have 125,000 subscribers to *The NA Way*. We did mail 125,000 copies in 2001; however, that was for the *whole year*. So, we actually have approximately 29,500 subscribers since the magazine is published quarterly. Please excuse my enthusiasm!

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

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



Living the program

Reflections on 20 years in NA

I got clean in Narcotics Anonymous in East Central Wisconsin on 8 July 1982. When I came to NA I was 21 years old, and I feared going to prison. My lawyer told me that if I wanted to have a chance at staying out of prison, I would have to stop using all drugs, including marijuana. He said I needed to go into a treatment program, provide urine drug screens, and attend NA meetings.

I came to NA to get out of trouble. I didn't realize how much NA would change my life.

My first NA meeting

While in treatment, I went to my first NA meeting. There were three or four NA members besides the four of us from treatment. When I heard "our whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another—the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more," it described my life in a nutshell. I had never heard such a statement before. I identified from the beginning. Over the next several days, I memorized that sentence. It was the first real mental or intellectual exercise I had done in a very long time.

When I came into NA I really didn't have a lot. I owned a bicycle and a stereo. I didn't lose material possessions, financial resources, a home, and/or a marriage and kids because I hadn't yet accumulated them.

I was young. I didn't have health problems, I guess mostly due to the fact that I used daily for only about five years. By many measures, this is not a long time. It was difficult for me to understand the unmanageability addiction caused in my life. This was especially true when I compared my story to others who had lost so much. Powerlessness was a little easier for me to understand since I never stopped using for long on my own. Before I hit bottom, I never made any serious attempts to stop using everything and become completely abstinent. I would substitute one drug for another. I genuinely liked and enjoyed using drugs.

Hugs, not drugs

At 60 days clean, the world convention (WCNA-12) was taking place in Milwaukee. There were about 500 NA members who attended that convention. An interesting thing happened at WCNA-12. People started hugging one another. Some might think that hugs were always a part of the NA Fellowship, but it wasn't universal across the country.

Many members were clearly uncomfortable or chose not to hug others, especially men hugging other men. However, at WCNA, the love of the fellowship took over. Our text states this another way: "Recovery becomes a contact process; we lose the fear of touching and of being touched. We learn that a simple, loving hug can make all the difference in the world when we feel alone. We experience real love and real friendship." (*Narcotics Anonymous*, p. 88). "Hugs, Not Drugs" was one of the best T-shirts I ever had.

Another important thing happened for me at WCNA-12. I met my best friend, who shared a story from his past that matched with parts of my story. I didn't know anyone who had experienced what had happened in my addiction. This helped me to identify even more. We have been friends for a long time, and my friend now has 22 years clean!

The Basic Text

I remember hearing some members in the early 1980s begin to talk openly about how the disease of addiction included all mind- and mood-altering substances. This was further supported by the Basic Text Approval Form (an unpublished literary work). We photocopied and distributed that booklet to the members in our NA communities. We couldn't wait for approval from the World Service Conference to get the text printed.

I mailed \$25 to Jimmy K's garage, which at the time was operating as the World Service Office, to purchase a special, numbered First Edition. I still have that special, red-covered edition—First Edition No. 1457—and the postcard that Jimmy K mailed back as receipt of payment.

NA only

About this time many of us in the Midwest and across the country made a commitment to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. It sounds funny now, but I can remember when people in NA and AA thought that if we went to NA only, we would end up drunk!

Our Basic Text doesn't state anything about going exclusively to NA, but during those early years, many of us came to believe that if we attended NA regularly and actively participated in our NA recovery, we would and could stay clean over time from *all* drugs, including alcohol. And there it was in print: "Our identification as addicts is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. Alcoholism is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called addiction" (*Narcotics Anonymous*, p. xv).

During this time some members, including myself, became NA "purists." We

talked about our identification as addicts, we introduced ourselves as addicts, and we said and did a lot of things to promote NA. While our intentions were in the right place, these beliefs and practices were sometimes counterproductive, especially when exercised without compassion, common sense, or maturity. Today I don't criticize members who attend other twelve-step fellowships. I keep the focus on me. NA is *my* home.

Relapse: A continued threat

Relapse is one of the things that scare me the most. My best friend relapsed just before he had four years clean. He taught me about Step One and how it was not a particular substance(s) that was our problem, but the disease of addiction.

Two years ago another member relapsed with over 20 years clean. Three weeks ago a woman I know shared that she had relapsed after 14 years. I wonder when will it happen to me? I hope and pray that I will continue to stay clean, just for today.

I believe the primary reason I have stayed clean is because I continue to attend meetings on a regular basis. In meetings I get to witness the miracle of recovery. I am reminded to work the steps, and I hear what can happen if I pick up and use again.

However, I know it is more than just meetings that keep me clean, so I try to the best of my ability to practice the principles of NA on a day-to-day basis.

When I had about 14 years clean, my recovery was at serious risk. I had a lot of NA friends, had a strong, personal relationship with my Higher Power, was active in service in one form or another, and had a tremendous amount of success in all areas of my life.

I had always put my recovery before anything else. But at this time, I started to shift my priorities. I put my career, money, and material possessions before my recovery.

We built a new home in a new area. I attended fewer meetings. The people at the new meetings were different, and I was not accustomed to how they ran

their meetings. My meeting attendance dropped to one meeting a week, and sometimes I would go two or three weeks between meetings. I wasn't praying as much. I even said to myself that it was okay since I had been clean for a while.

After two years, I started having problems. I lost three jobs in three years. My wife was not sure she wanted to continue living with me, and my relationship with my Higher Power wasn't strong.

I didn't have any overpowering desires to use during this time, and somehow I maintained my clean time. After hitting a spiritual and emotional bottom, I was at the point where I could not save my face and my ass at the same time, as the Basic Text says.

I tried to actively participate in my recovery again. It was difficult. I got a new sponsor after going without one for some time. He saved my recovery and my life. He told me to do "ninety in ninety." He told me to find a meeting that needed someone to set up, and I did. He told me to find a meeting that needed a chairperson, and I did. Slowly, I began to get some satisfying recovery into my life. It took over a year before I felt spiritually connected to the fellowship and my Higher Power again.

I believe the only thing that saved me from a relapse and all the unmanageability that results is that I never entirely ceased attending meetings. I resented being an addict who needed to go to meetings—but I went anyway.

Today I am glad to have recommitted to my recovery by attending meetings, working the steps, daily prayer and meditation, sponsorship, and service.

The gifts of recovery

My recovery once again is the first priority in my life. The gifts of my continued recovery in Narcotics Anonymous are many. I have a strong and ongoing relationship with my Higher Power. I have self-esteem and some humility. I have a great home group that's just minutes from my home.

My wife and I have been married now for 13 years. We have a deep commitment to each other, and we have developed a level of intimacy unmatched from

my prior experiences. I'm not saying our marriage is always cheerful and rosy—sometimes it is not. But we continue to move forward together with trust and respect for one another. We have two great kids, and I wouldn't trade being a parent for anything.

My current job is not that *big* job I thought I should have; rather, it is the one my Higher Power has guided me to, and I am grateful for it.

I am active in my local NA community and my community outside NA. I have a service position with my home group. I participate with the area PI subcommittee, and I do volunteer work.

I have respect and esteem not only in our fellowship but also at work and in my neighborhood. All of these are continued gifts of active participation in my personal NA recovery.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all those members who have helped me in my recovery. Many people have helped me not only in achieving 20 years clean but also in achieving freedom from the degradation of active addiction. The members of NA—newcomers and oldtimers alike—inspire me to stay clean.

Just for today, I am glad to be an addict. I love what recovery provides for me. It is more that just staying clean—it is a way of life!

Bill L, Ohio



NA: A daily program

Hi, I'm Rosalinda, and I'm an addict.

My daughter—my only child—was eight years old when I first came into these rooms. She was dragged along to all the NA events and wreaked havoc along with the other NA kids. She had been my constant companion since I was 18 years old. We were together through my using and recovery, through my bouts with depression and my attempts at geographical changes.

She was my anchor, as I was hers. The first time I went to my RSC meeting (1,000 miles away) as an area representative, I forgot my report. I was in a panic, but she calmly dictated it to me over the phone.

We could tell each other anything. Milly was my best friend and my entire family.

Four years ago she died. She committed suicide. My world, my sense of self, and my faith were all turned upside down, inside out, and completely scrambled. I felt such powerlessness and crippling devastation. I am sobbing helplessly right now as I write about this.

I pray that no one who reads this will ever have to experience the agony of losing a child. I've been attending a support group for bereaved parents for nearly four years. Many members of this group become workaholics, or compulsive gamblers, or turn to other forms of addiction. Most were not addicts before.

Me? Well, I've always been prone to depression, and I've been suicidal pretty much from the age of five. In all honesty, it wasn't drugs that called to me when Milly died; it was death. So how have I survived?

Feel it—feel it all! Don't hold back. Breathe—if possible—although it isn't always an easy thing to do.

I used to think that my emotions were my enemies. I spent most of my life trying to crush them. Now I know that my emotions are the greatest allies I have. It sounds strange that I can say this when living with bereavement, doesn't it? But my emotions carry vital information for me. They let me know what works and what doesn't. They strip away intellectual frippery and bring me face to face with who I am. Tears even trigger my body's self-anesthesia to make sleep possible.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I think most folks can survive the first two months after the loss of a child. Shock alone can carry a person that far. Don't get me wrong. It's not that those first two months aren't unbearably agonizing, it's just that it gets worse after the shock starts to wear off.

I have NA to thank for not being squeamish about joining a support group. It was a bit shocking at first, with no traditions and no steps, but I needed people who could understand me. I probably always will.

For me, I hit the wall ten months after Milly died. I wanted to join her, but I postponed it—hoping it would go away—while doing all the legal stuff, tending to her

friends, dealing with the coroner's office, and putting on her 21st birthday party as we had planned.

I was working a program daily. I continued to open our local meeting just as I had for years. I read our literature, kept a journal, worked the steps, prayed, called other members, and compiled gratitude lists. I even completed and shared my Fourth Step after her funeral.

My emotions flow unhindered. The depth of my agony for the loss of my daughter lets me know how close we were and how much I truly love her.

Why would I want to block that out with chemicals? Why would I want to risk blurring any precious memory that I have of her? Milly lives on in my heart and in my memory. I can't allow her to die again!

Sometimes the people you think will

What program do you work?

There are a couple of things that I thought about regarding this topic. First, of course, is the NA program. You know: the one where you call your sponsor on a regular basis, work the steps, attend meetings, and try to practice spiritual principles in all of your affairs.

I remember the program where honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness are a way of life instead of just an ideal. The program where we forgive others and ourselves and make amends to those we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I'm thinking about the program where we reach out to others and attempt to be totally selfless. The program where we focus on giving back to others what was freely given to us; where we love each other until we have the strength to love ourselves; where we give our phone numbers to newcomers and socialize after the meeting with other NA members.

I'm talking about the program where we are grateful for the freedom from the bondage of active addiction; the program that shows us how to become a productive member of society; the program that teaches us to not judge people either by what they do or do not have, or by whom they know or do not know. It is in this program that we learn that "clean time does not equal recovery"—and neither does a bank-account balance.

You know that program, right? Yeah, the program that saved my life, and probably yours, too. The program where the coffee wasn't that great, but it was better than the kind I couldn't afford.

I remember that program—or, should I say, I remember working that program because, just like my Higher Power, that program has never turned its back on me. Whenever I have made the decision to work that program during my six years clean, I've had great personal successes, moments of serenity, and feelings of uninhibited happiness along with the feelings of pain and sorrow.

Today I feel alive through every cell of my body, through every shred of pain, joy, anger, and contentment I experience.

Then all my survival strategies failed. Utterly. I couldn't concentrate on anything other than death. I had gone beyond obsession and was into compulsion. I even tried to sign myself into a psychiatric hospital, but all they could offer was a prescription for antidepressants.

I took that prescription to the only other member within an hour's drive, and I asked her what to do. (My sponsor had a stroke and was not available at that time.) My friend reminded me that we take our problems to professionals, and if I felt the medication made me feel "out of it," I could always stop.

My survival was more important. I never did feel out of it, and I was able to go back to working a program. I was able to come off the medication nine months later.

I left my relationship, I lost my stepchildren, and I lost some friends, too. I've lost all hope of grandchildren as well. So what do I do?

I work a daily program. I'm in the process of writing another Fourth Step. I pray for my ex to find inner peace and happiness. I eat when I can, sleep when I get too tired, put one foot in front of the other, and breathe.

I cry a lot, laugh a lot, write a lot, and talk about Milly a lot. I weep several times a day, but it's okay. I can weep for Milly, laugh with joy, and drive a car—all at the same time!

be supportive fade off into the distance, while others to whom you never have felt close before will be there for you. Embrace that support from these new friends. Reach out. Hugs can save your life.

I will never be the person I was four years ago. I am more than four years older today, both in body and in spirit, yet I am more than four years wiser, too. I am stronger and more emotional and more determined to live my life and my dreams and be who I really am, without excuse or apology.

I think it was Descartes, the rationalist philosopher, who said, "I think, therefore I am." I disagree. *I feel*, therefore I am!

Today I feel alive through every cell of my body, through every shred of pain, joy, anger, and contentment I experience. I am grateful for the NA program, for my ex-sponsor, for my current sponsor on the other side of the world, for my NA sisters-in-sadness, and for all of my NA family all around the world. I love you all.

Rosalinda R, Australia



Now, I don't know where it was that I heard about this other program, or if I just invented it, but I did find one that was different. Today I call this other program the "Trevor B Program." You might call it something else or recognize it by a different name, but this is how I am able to best recognize the "My Way" program.

In this program, clean time *does* mean something, because clean time is the only thing I have when I am working the "My Way" program. It's the program where I take your inventory instead of mine and where material possessions determine how I feel about others and myself.

It's the program where I talk *about* newcomers and anyone else who is working the NA program instead of talking *to* them, where what I do depends on how you treat me, and where I never have to take responsibility for my own actions.

Does this sound familiar to you? I know it does to me. The "My Way" program is when I have a sponsor but don't call him. I don't reach out for help, don't express my feelings, and don't admit to my wrongs.

The "My Way" program is where I take service positions so that people will like me—and when they don't, I resign.

In "My Way," I act out on my defects of character instead of looking at them and turning them over. And when and if I pray, it is usually because I have done something about which I am ashamed, and I want my HP to help me hide it from others or "get me out of this situation

just one more time and I'll change, I swear."

In the "My Way" program, meditation is the period of time in my day when I try to figure out exactly what went wrong with my life. It's the program that can make using drugs look like the best choice and, often, feel like the *only* choice. In this program, if I end up doing the steps, my writing is thoughtless, short, and closed-minded.

If my step study group mentions something I don't agree with while I'm working the "My Way" program, I explode and quit instead of listening to what they have to say or looking for what they see in my behavior. This is the program where the only meeting I go to is the one where they are giving me a medallion, where an act of selflessness is to not tell you what I think of you, but tell everyone else because I think you can't handle the "truth."

Today I realize why I choose to act this way, why I choose to work the "My Way" program. The answer for me is *self-centered fear*. The only way I have found any real freedom from this defect has been through working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous and following the suggestions other recovering addicts have given me.

Over the last couple of years I have been caught in the "My Way" program, and it took devastating events to bring me back to the "NA Way" program.

The message I want to share is one we have all heard before—and now I really believe it. That message is: "It works if you work it!"

Trevor B, Canada

NA equals life!

Living the program has been a long, slow learning process for me that started 23 years ago with my decision to ask for help. When I asked for help, it was to enter yet another detox. I ended up in a place that introduced me to the disease concept of addiction.

They said it was going to take me a lot longer than a week to get well! My insanity was clear to everyone but me. I had nice clothes, had money in the bank, and I was only 23 years old. I still looked okay if my arms and scars were hidden. No one knew that having drugs inside my body 24 hours a day was the most important thing in my life.

They said drugs were just a symptom of my problems. I could identify with feeling ill at ease with living life drug-free. That's why I never stayed clean until this last time. Everyone always told me to stop using (and get rid of that boyfriend)!

At this last detox I had the support of other recovering addicts who were doing what I had wanted for years—to be happy and free to choose. They introduced me to the Twelve Steps that, even today, never cease to amaze me with such wisdom and the simplicity of how to live.

When I got clean in 1979, there wasn't much literature—certainly no step working guide—and not a lot of people on this side of the world with more clean time than I had. With my faith in the program, and learning to put into practice principles like patience, faith, and courage, I've been able to stay clean a day at a time since then.

I am convinced that my passion to carry the message and get a fellowship helped me to keep at bay the very self-centered nature of my disease. I learned early in my recovery that, when I wake up in the morning, it helps if I gently remind myself that I am an addict, make a decision to *not* pick up today, and ask my God to help me be loving toward others and myself. It works.

When I resist doing the things I need to do, I get into "control mode." I start nagging and wanting to change my reality. My day doesn't go smoothly, and I lose acceptance of the present. I have

no doubt that if I keep following such a tangent, I will feel more and more miserable and eventually have to use again.

I still struggle to find and maintain the balance I must have to take care of my daily needs. Caring for myself means doing such things as eating well, exercising to keep my immune system healthy and to help with my self-acceptance, and doing a little service. Then there is the rest of my life and responsibilities to indulge in—which I do with relish.

I still fear my disease, so I stay immersed in the fellowship. I knew after completing my first Fifth Step and seeing myself properly for the first time in years that I never needed to use again, as long as I did the suggested basics.

I continue to write and share my steps. Each time I work through the steps I gain a deeper understanding of myself that takes me to a new place of consciousness and self-honesty.

I have a home group in which I stay involved and accountable. I am missed and challenged if I don't attend, because my home group members care about me. This doesn't mean I don't have a life outside of NA—I actually have a fulfilling one.

NA keeps me focused on what I need, the important things in life—otherwise I get caught up in things that really don't matter, like wanting yet another pair of shoes!

Committing to service has been a lifesaver more than once. I have never used it as a substitute for personal recovery, but as more of a support structure and a way of staying involved. Having group-level commitments has steered me to at least a weekly meeting where, more often than not, I hear just what I need to hear.

Service has also been a catalyst in my learning about the traditions and concepts. My practice of these has given me even more freedom. I have come to realize the strength and wisdom of a group working toward a common goal. And, of course, service has been a provocateur in bringing my defects of character to the fore.

I sponsor a number of women. I don't ask them to do what I am not living myself. They are a constant source of chal-

lenge and inspiration to keep me growing and learning in all areas. Sponsorship has played a big part in teaching me how to communicate, listen, and love.

Currently, I have a co-sponsorship relationship with a woman in Australia. We share written work on the steps, traditions, and concepts via email or post. Luckily, we have managed to be in the same country for our Fourth and Fifth Steps. When I feel I need more experience, I trust she knows me well enough to help guide me.

Sponsorship was hard in the early days here in New Zealand. I felt isolated and hungry for fellowship. Communications were less instantaneous then, and I am forever grateful for the women who took the time to write and support me during that time right through to now. Today I have women friends at home who are there for me, if I am willing to be humble.

I treasure the intimacy I have with women today. Prior to NA, I didn't trust women at all. They didn't have what I wanted! I also cherish the extraordinary encouragement, love, and respect I have received from my male peers in Sydney, Australia. I love those guys!

I didn't want to get clean unless it meant I could have fun. I had such an aversion to normality. In some ways I still do! My life has been and continues to be full of fun and opportunities beyond my dreams.

I laugh with my friends. I can still be wicked and mischievous, not harmful like in the past. I have rich and long relationships with all kinds of people today because through the steps and traditions I have learned how to be myself with God and others.

I can be spontaneous and feel free to say what I think and believe. Yes, I still have regrets sometimes over what comes out of my mouth, but today I do something about it. Better than the old me, who used to hold back and filter it all and never say what she really thought about anything.

At age 35 I became a mother and went through the shock of losing my independence while at the same time learning about unconditional love. Parenthood has to be the most responsible job I have

ever had. It has also been the most joyous. I am convinced it has kept my mind young, reminding me to be playful, as do the younger people coming into the program today.

Oh, I have so much more to say now that I have started. My fears were huge, weighing down my life. I can't believe I have stayed involved and committed to a dream that became a reality over 20 years ago.

It's not about any power I have had; rather, it's because I have been blessed with the ability to embrace this program, put aside my doubts, and have faith in a power greater than myself. That's such a long way from the frightened, self-destructive, abused woman I was when I came into NA.

Janet C, New Zealand

Staying clean no matter what

I feel like I barely remember being a mother. My loss includes two sons. The word *loss* understates the void in my life caused by their deaths.

My sons died three months apart. Traumatized, I found myself operating on pure gut instinct. I had no previous experience with death in my immediate family, but I did know the role of victim/survivor, and I felt defeated.

When that gut instinct kicked in, I knew what I had to do. My reactions were based on the tools my recovery in NA had given me.

Step One: "I can't."

Step Two: "We can."

Step Three: "I need help."

I asked for help.

Over and over, I meditated on a simple prayer for help as well as the Serenity Prayer. I felt that my Higher Power was carrying me, and I came to believe that I could stay clean no matter what.

My family, friends, and local community were in disbelief. The loss was difficult to comprehend—not just for me, but also for them. Often I just needed someone to be with me so I was not alone. NA placed many people in my life,

a home group, a purpose to live, and a sense of belonging somewhere.

My trust issues, abandonment issues, and grief issues took a toll on my family, as well as on those relationships I had built in NA. Naturally, being the good addict that I am, feelings of uniqueness, shame, insecurity, and self-centeredness were created. All I could think about was, why me?

You see, my sons committed suicide. Up until that happened, my understanding of how to deal with grief was basically a Band-Aid solution. You know, cry at least one time; write a goodbye letter; say whatever you want; read it out loud to someone; and then let it go! Today I know it's not that simple.

It's difficult and sometimes overwhelming to be around people, places, things, or events that trigger memories of my sons.

The action plan I use today to get through those times includes planning around dates, events, and whatever else may arise in the day. My feelings change rapidly, and sometimes I can't deal with life on life's terms; hence, my need to have some sort of a plan. My sponsor, friends, Higher Power, and family support me on those days.

I have revised the Band-Aid approach. Here's what works for me now: crying as often as needed. Writing. Talking. Sharing whatever I need to share, as often as I need to share it. And letting go the best that I can.

I often let go of things by practicing a ritual of reflection. I burn letters, personal items, or duplicated pictures along with some sage or sweet grass. This ritual helps me feel like I'm offering a gift of love.

As the smoke rises, I visualize a thought of placing my sons into God's hands. This energy can feel nurturing, even though I know nothing can bring back the dead. Taking a silent moment makes me feel as if I *can* do something. I send my love and energy to them every day.

I may think about my HP in many ways and engage in a number of comforting rituals. I do know, however, that what's truly important is staying clean, living just for today, and sharing and caring the NA way.

Debbie N, Minnesota

A program of humility

For me, the NA program equals humility, something recovery demands. I need to be humble in order to give and to take. I need to be humble in order to learn and to teach.

Humbleness is the sensation I feel standing in front of a big mountain. It is the awesome sense of respect I feel for the mountain's immensity, and for the magical wonder of life itself.

For me, humbleness means do not interfere, do not stand in the way of (you fill in the blank), and do not seek to be right and important.

Humbleness helps to keep my point of view flexible and open-minded so that I do not waste too much time defending views that have become stale or outdated.

Humility is accepting the need for changes.

Humility is knowing that there is nowhere to go. There is only the way—the NA way.

Humility is admitting that I do not know, accepting that my path is to learn, and opening the door to new teachers.

Humility does not mean giving up my dreams and ambitions. Rather, humility is fulfilling those dreams without flattering myself.

Humility is having the knowledge that in any situation, good or bad, there is a lesson to learn—and that I am the student.

Humility is having the knowledge to know where I stand—and to be there.

Miko N, Israel

On the right path

I just finished my class in college, and— can you believe it?—I got an "A"!

When I was using drugs, I never got anything better than a "C." Because of NA, I have found a fun way to study, and I discover something new every day.

Not long ago I got laid off, and here in Russia that is a big deal. But my sponsor helped me to walk through this big drama.

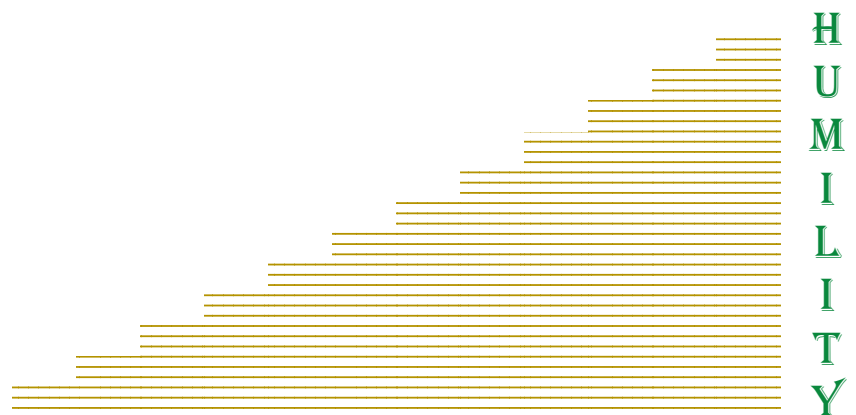
When I first got clean, I didn't have a sponsor, and everyone around me sponsored me. I did okay for a while, but then I found that I needed a sponsor who was going to take me through the steps. I needed someone with whom I could share all of my secrets.

I finally met my sponsor at a meeting, and she has helped me greatly. We are friends, and I love her with all my heart. Working the steps of NA with my sponsor and studying Eastern philosophy have helped me to find some inner peace.

I want to let you know that my home group here in Chita is doing well. More people have started to show up at our group, and we hope that, with the new translated literature from NA World Services, we will be more able to fulfill our primary purpose.

There is no doubt that my Higher Power is working in my life, and that I'm on the right path.

Irina Z, Russia



Our readers write...:
continued from page 2

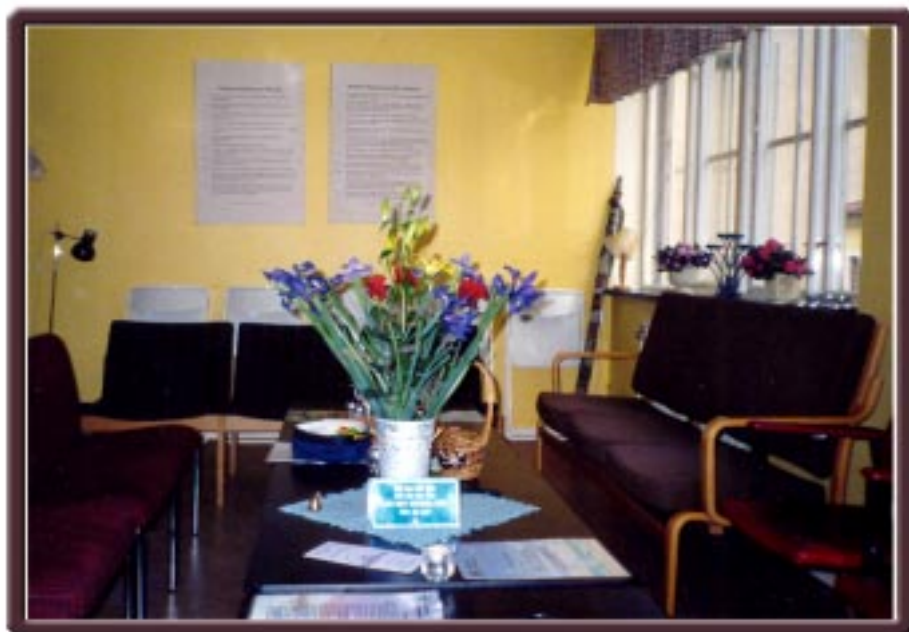
- ◆ Yes, I was taught not to get up and walk out of a meeting, regardless of whether or not I've shared. If I do, then I might miss the very thing I need to hear to stay clean.
- ◆ One of my biggest character defects is time management. I'll tell you one thing: If I'm late to a meeting and I need to share, I will!
- ◆ I grant that a step or topic meeting should stay focused, but if someone has a problem or is hurting, I pray that they will be able to share so they don't feel the need to use. People can identify with that person, share their experience and hope, and then share on the topic at hand in order to keep the meeting focused.
- ◆ What about the things we usually say at the beginning of our meetings, like "It costs nothing to belong to this fellowship" and "You are a member of NA when you say you are"? Does the Third Tradition apply only to those who put money in the basket? Of course not! If you have a dollar, put it in; if not, maybe next time. Meanwhile, keep coming back and participate fully—you are a member when you say so, not because you have money to donate.
- ◆ I'm not here to please you or to follow your rules; I'm here to save my life. If I happen to offend you in the process, I apologize for my part in creating your resentment, but I will not risk my life just to keep you happy.
- ◆ No, I don't necessarily have to share at every meeting I attend, but if I wish to, it is my right. If my sponsor says I need to share, then I probably do. Perhaps I need a shove to get out of my shell. Regardless, it is between my sponsor and myself—which, incidentally, you are not. I'll progress in my recovery at my own pace, with the help of a loving Higher Power and the love and open-mindedness found in *most* of the rooms of NA around the world.

Written with love and care for all addicts, regardless of wellness, sickness, clean time, or progress,

Frankie H, North Carolina

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.).



This is one of two groups in Ystad, a small town in southern Sweden. Our group's name is Ystadgruppen (Ystad Group). We have meetings at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays (Step/Tradition), Fridays (Theme), and Saturdays (Eleventh Step with meditation).

We are about 10 to 14 regular members, and sometimes when we have visitors we have about 22 people attending our meetings. We hope to see a photo of our meeting in *The NA Way*.

Ystad Group, Sweden



Being 'a part of'

It is late summer 2001, and while I sat in a downtown hotel meeting room on a sweltering summer day in Atlanta, I thought I was dreaming. Three members from NA World Services—one who came all the way from New Zealand—were talking about bringing the world convention to Atlanta over the July Fourth weekend in 2002. We were in the process of being informed of the things we would have to do in order to be a part of this wonderful event.

My mind drifted back to Labor Day 1979, when WCNA-9 was being held at the Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta. Two things happened to me while attending that convention: I knew for the very first time I was not alone; and I met, married, and later divorced the Friday night speaker.

Now, 23 years later, I finally have a chance to be part of a world convention! The region elected me to the committee as secretary/treasurer. What an honor! Our committee worked hard to recruit the volunteers needed, which was the primary duty of the WCNA Support Committee. What a relief! You see, NAWS had to worry about putting the convention together. We provided input on speaker selection, but mostly we called almost 1,500 volunteers and worked out schedules for them to work in registration, developing programs, merchandise, convention information, events, volunteer sign-in, and serenity keepers.

Somehow, by our Higher Power's grace, we got everything done. I did very little compared to the hard work of the others on our committee. For reasons yet unclear to me, I was asked to open the convention on Thursday evening.

NAWS had put together a big-screen PowerPoint presentation using pictures of the Biltmore and the single ballroom that held all 500 members who were present at that 1979 convention. These pictures were a sharp contrast to this year's convention, where our Saturday night meeting would be held at the Georgia Dome.

I stood at the podium and wept as I looked out over thousands of brother and sister addicts. I remembered how *many* those five hundred members looked like in 1979, and how *few* the "many" of that year looked like as compared to the many of this night. I realized that this *many* were still but a few of the many yet to come, and I wept some more.

We were told by some of the members from NAWS that there would be "moments you'll never forget," and this was certainly one of them.

Nothing, however, prepared me for the Unity Day celebration on Saturday in the Georgia Dome. We were told earlier that at previous world conventions, we had been unsuccessful at getting a hook-up with India. But tonight, we all agreed, would be the time for a miracle!

Do you know what happened? Yep, we got India!

A member put her arm on my shoulder, and we both cried when she said, "Scott, we got our miracle tonight." It was at that moment that I *knew* I was part of a worldwide fellowship, and that we were just witnessing the sunrise of Narcotics Anonymous around the world.

I suddenly felt at one with all NA members and with my God. It was, and is, indescribable.

I will be 60 in January 2003, and I will be clean 29 years the following month. I have now spent almost half my life as a clean, recovering member of Narcotics Anonymous. When I got clean in 1974, there were barely 1,000 members of NA in all the world. Now we are legions.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of you and for being such a big part of me. All that is good, all that is decent about me is a direct result of our program and my Higher Power.

Thank you for giving me the program and leading me to my Higher Power.

Love and blessing,
Scott A, Georgia

Home Group*

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

The Group Booklet, pg. 1

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

*See page 22 for an update on *The NA Way's* new group column.

On being of service

I first became a group service representative (GSR) before I had a year clean, and learned by hard experience to go with a full belly. Also, when I am using caffeine, I try to have enough in me to keep people from hearing me snore, but not enough to want to engage in shouting matches.

Like war, area service committee (ASC) meetings are boring, except when they're not. War should not be a good comparison to an ASC meeting, but we (people, not just addicts) do thrive on conflict!

I was told, and have often heard, that the most important thing for a GSR to do is buy literature for the group and get the current schedule of meetings. I don't know about priorities, but that is only one of the duties of the GSR.

It is also our responsibility to make sure that any excess funds from our group travel to the service structure. In my region, this means we give the cash to the ASC treasurer, and after they have paid for rent, phoneline, H&I and PI literature, activities, and minutes, the rest goes to the regional service committee (RSC).

I also have learned to have paper and pen, because I cannot count on getting the minutes of the ASC before my home-group conscience, and even if I get them, I might forget to bring them to the group. Having notes doubles the chance that I will have something substantial to report to my group.

My system for taking notes is to write down everything that might be significant and later go over my notes, putting a star by the things that I want my home-group members to know. The most important things are any motions to be voted on by the groups and nominations for open positions at the ASC.

I have found it is much better to fill positions by approaching people directly and letting them know I feel they would be very good at such and such a job. Maybe this makes me a member of the G&I (guilt and intimidation) committee, but it gets the message where I want it.

If I just announce open positions at meetings, I usually get no response, or at worst alert some power-hungry addict that there is somewhere for them to practice their manipulation.

It is important for me to choose my battles in committee work. I have opinions on every topic of discussion, but I save my voice for the ones I consider most important.

My experiences as a chair have taught me that most committees are dominated by a few individuals who feel the need to express their views on every topic. My "solution" is to nominate these individuals to a chair position where they would be prohibited from expressing their opinions, their sole duty being to give everyone with something to say a chance to express their views. More often than not they learn the lesson and become better committee members.

Being a GSR and holding other service positions has been a growing experience. I stop short of saying "a rewarding experience," but it has given me lots of practice in

working the steps. I must remember I am powerless over other people, that there is a power greater than myself in control, and that I need to let what happens happen.

Service often forces me to look at my role in creating and resolving conflict, and share that experience. I may find myself doing things I know are wrong and remember to ask for help in changing those behaviors. I have to see the people I have harmed and make amends as necessary. I have to admit I am not perfect, but seek perfection.

It works, if you work it.

Jim M,

Chesapeake and Potomac Region

Finding a home

The following article is from a member in Upper Dharamsala, India, in the Himalayas of far northern India. This is the home of many Tibetan Buddhist exiles as well as the Dalai Lama. It is a very remote spot, and it takes many hours by Jeep to even reach the train station.

Please keep in mind that in Tibetan culture it is disgraceful to be an addict, and usually something like this would never be known outside of the family. For these men to join NA and declare themselves addicts shows a great courage and understanding of our principle of anonymity.

I want to share with you that it appears that NA Dhasa is finally, really happening. After losing our meeting place last winter and being without meetings since January, I received an email informing me that NA meetings will be held on Saturdays and Wednesdays. There are now six Tibetan male addicts who want to have meetings and get involved with translation work. The meetings are conducted in the Tibetan language.

There are also another eleven or twelve Tibetan members in Delhi for treatment, and they will be getting out soon. We will have to find a larger meeting space when they return.

It looks, four years after NA first opened here, like it might just get going!

Lisa M, India



NA has been very good to me...

Narcotics Anonymous has given me the gift of dreams that I never knew existed and having them come true. I couldn't make an inventory that counted them all—it would just be too extensive!

One of those dreams that I didn't know existed when I got clean in 1986 was the service I would be allowed to do in NA. Service comes in many shapes and sizes. We do service to the best of our ability, and as we do we find out what our best abilities are.

Perhaps the greatest gift of service I have received is the honor and privilege to be invited to share my recovery at conventions. I have had the opportunity since 1997 to be a speaker at several NA conventions.

While doing this particular service, I've met many extraordinary people from all over the world.

At a recent convention I experienced a profound spiritual awakening. It has become the foundation for making amends to anyone who needs to hear it, as well as to myself.

I believe that language, word choice, and profanity have long been points of contention throughout our fellowship. I have been called controversial, irreverent, radical, and even militant. I need to claim my own part in this, no matter how large or small it may appear to be.

Profanity has been a struggle for me. It has been a hard, uphill battle to moderate and soften it. My use of profanity is not what it used to be; however, I know that resting on the progress I've already made is not enough.

Whenever I share at a convention, I always give a warning that I am prone to using colorful language. The uncomfortable reality is that for a long time I felt that this disclaimer was sufficient license for me to not be conscious of using colorful language. Until this past convention experience, I didn't know the extent to which my indulgence in profanity obscured my message.

An addict whose opinion I greatly respect sent me an email after I left the last convention at which I shared. The email told, in part, about how disappointed many of the members were with my use of profanity. It also pointed out that their local NA community doesn't tolerate swearing in their meetings and pointed out several ways in which they deal with this challenge.

This one addict's "share from the heart" had a stunning effect on me.

One of the most significant gifts that NA has given me is respectability as a human being. Respect and dignity are attributes for recovering addicts if we are to achieve unity and help to create a loving and safe environment for newcomers and oldtimers alike.

Part of my new awareness includes not treading upon another addict's sensitivity by using inappropriate expletives. Anything I can do to bridge that separation, I believe, is my responsibility to do.

I have come to understand that profanity for effect or by unconscious usage is not suitable when I am a convention speaker—certainly when my presence represents carrying a message of recovery in NA. I don't have the right to drive fellow addicts from any meeting just because they prefer the English language to be spoken as it should be!

For my program and myself, I am newly dedicated to becoming a person who no longer uses profanity while at the podium of Narcotics Anonymous.

I welcome the challenge of continuing to become a better person and discovering the essence of self-respect.

Bob G, California

Why are we here?

I'm writing to you to discuss something that has slowly been gaining momentum in my region—the Greater Philadelphia Region—and, I suspect, elsewhere. It's the evolution of the non-profanity meeting.

I personally have no problem with a group that would like to request at the beginning of the meeting that we be mindful of our language due to the presence of children or the rules of the facility in which the meeting is being held and leaving it at that. What has evolved, though, is a belief that eradicating foul language from all meetings would be a good idea.

How that works is if you curse during your share, the chairperson interrupts you each time and informs you that this is a nonprofanity meeting and no cursing is allowed.

This might not sound like a big deal, but in a region that has gotten rid of most of your garden-variety controversies—other fellowships, special interest meetings, etc.—this is quickly becoming a heated topic.

These well-intentioned members believe that we can set examples for the newcomer by making the statement that part of getting clean is cleaning up our language. I've even heard some of the oldtimers around here say they are tired of profanity, referring to it as "the language of disease."

I've heard members use the common justification of the Fourth Tradition for imposing an idea upon their group, while neglecting the Third Tradition, which clearly states the only requirement for membership and participation.

As a recovering addict who loves NA, who continues to write and work the steps, who loves to help newcomers, and who has tried to be a servant for the last twelve wonderful years, I am having great difficulty being policed in meetings for my sometimes colorful language.

People, this is neither a church nor English 101. Correcting our use of language is not what we're here to do. If I had come to NA and only heard all of you "better" people sharing, it might have been harder for me to identify.

Besides, these nonprofanity meetings are in clear disagreement with the Third Tradition. Remember that we're here saving lives from the horrors of active addiction, not something as petty as improving people's rhetorical skills!

Our cause is much more grand and much more noble. Let's not forget where we came from or whom we're here to help.

*Just another ****ing committed addict, Pennsylvania*



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,

I'm an inmate in a state prison doing a life sentence. I've been going to meetings here for a few years now. We are somewhat isolated (mile-wise), and the local H&I committee can only bring in one meeting every other month, but we have an in-house NA meeting once a week.

I am fortunate and grateful to have a copy of the Basic Text, but I am getting somewhat confused and frustrated. Listening to the guys who come in here to share and the guys who are in NA on the inside, as well as reading my text, I understand that recovery is working the Twelve Steps. I want what those H&I guys have—that peace of mind and that look of being comfortable in their own skin.

I know I need a sponsor, someone to help me through the steps, so I can stay clean and live the program while I live my life out. I'm basically asking, "How do I get a sponsor?" I know some guys who have sponsors from the other fellowship, but I'm an addict, and I need an NA sponsor. I've already asked some of the guys who come in here to do H&I to sponsor me, and they said they couldn't sponsor me due to a conflict of interest. Help me, please. I want to live at peace within my surroundings and within myself.

Louisiana

Dear Friend from Louisiana,

"How do I find a sponsor?"

I honestly wish there was an easy answer to that question. I know the World Service Office receives countless letters from addicts just like you who are in search of sponsorship.

Over a period of time, a number of committees have developed that engage in sponsorship behind the walls. Unfortunately, at this time such committees are rare. If those services were provided in the area or region where the facility is located, I am confident that the H&I members would have informed you. I know there are those who believe that sponsorship should be face-to-face, but when circumstances dictate, you have to do the best you can with what you have.

You have a few members of H&I who come in to do a meeting a month. You have a few guys on the inside who have exposure to NA. You also have a copy of the Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*, which includes Chapter Four, "How It Works." It's going to take some effort from you and others to make these tools work for all of you. Nevertheless, I believe that they *can* work.

I hope this will fall into place for you, as well as for the addicts yet to come to your facility.

If you want to work the steps, you may want to focus on Chapter Four in the Basic Text. If at all possible, also get hold of one or more copies of the book *It Works: How and Why*, for a beginning. (*It Works* is NA's book on the steps and traditions.) You could follow up with asking the H&I members coming in to your institution to share their own experiences with the steps.

You could then change the format of the in-house meeting, alternating a step study with a discussion or topic meeting. As you begin to build your experience and knowledge about the steps and some of the principles embodied within them, you could find another addict who is serious about living the program. You could begin to work the steps together.

Perhaps someone who has had previous exposure to NA would be a good person to begin with. As you move along, and as time goes by, sooner or later you and perhaps the other inmate will have gone through the steps and in turn be available for sponsorship. It could continue to grow until there are a number of inmates sponsoring one another.

As you are going through this process, I would use the H&I members from the outside as a sounding board—if they are willing—to align your step work with the way a member on the outside works the steps.

I know this isn't the suggested or perfect way to accomplish the intended goal of sponsorship and step work, and I'm sure some members will disagree with this method; however, as I mentioned earlier to you, you have to do the best you can with what you have.

I am confident that while you go through the steps you will identify spiritual principles you can start practicing in all of your affairs. When that happens, all will be well—and whatever happens, I wish you all the best.

In loving service,
H&I Slim



So you want to speak at WCNA-30...

We are looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of Narcotics Anonymous in July 2003! It promises to be an awesome experience, and we are asking for your help with finding workshop speakers for this special celebration.

Names and/or tapes of members wishing to speak at a world convention workshop.

Clean time requirements are: ten years clean for main meeting and five years clean for workshops. Workshop speakers will be selected from the convention's preregistration list.

Members wishing to evaluate speaker tapes.

Should have a willingness to serve; adequate time to evaluate the tapes (you will have approximately 100 tapes to evaluate); ability to keep deadlines; a minimum of five years clean; and a completed World Pool Information Form.

**Simply complete the form below and send it to the WSO via mail, fax, or email.
Recommendations for workshop speakers and/or submissions for tape evaluations should
be sent as soon as possible and no later than 31 January 2003.
You may also send a tape to the WSO.**

Name of person to be considered as a workshop speaker: _____

I'm willing to be a tape evaluator: _____

Street Address _____ Apt# _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Postal Code _____

Daytime Telephone () _____ Evening Telephone () _____

Clean Date ____/____/____ (Ten years/main meeting and five years/workshops required.)

I am currently planning to attend WCNA-30. Circle one: Yes / No / Not Sure

Please fax or email completed application to (818) 700-0700 or WCNASpeaker@na.org.

Mail to: NA World Services
Attn: WCNA-30 Speakers
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409



WCNA-30...

closer than you think

The 50th anniversary of Narcotics Anonymous and WCNA-30 are just a short nine months away! This mega-celebration will take place from 3 July to 6 July 2003 in San Diego, California. Because of the enormity and historical significance of this event, we are asking for your help!

Help Our WCNA team...

- Gather both visual and written information about NA history throughout the world.
- By recommending workshop speakers and/or submitting tapes for consideration.
- Identify members willing to help evaluate speaker tapes submitted.

Written History And Tapes...

- We hope to capture a tapestry that will represent our colorful history at WCNA-30. NA struggled through many hard times—and almost vanished—over the years since its humble beginning in 1953 to become the worldwide fellowship we know today as Narcotics Anonymous.
- Does your group have any items of interest that we can display at this special celebration? If you, your area, or your region has anything you would be willing to share with the world, please send it to the World Service Office as soon as possible or contact the WSO for additional information. Sometimes flyers, pictures, and other memorabilia can speak to us in a powerful and unique way.
- We would also like to collect written histories about the beginnings of Narcotics Anonymous in your community, and we ask that you consider developing this information for distribution at WCNA-30.
- If you have a tape or you are interested in evaluating speaker tapes, please fill out the form on the previous page. If you do not have a tape, you can submit your name and personal information on the form as well. We will use the preregistration list to try to determine who will be attending the convention when choosing workshop speakers. You can also contact WCNAspeaker@na.org for more information.

Here is your opportunity to take part in this once-in-a-lifetime event
and truly give meaning to the phrase *together we can!*

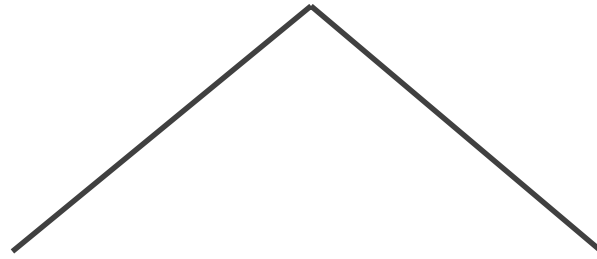
We look forward to seeing you in July 2003!

San Diego

One of the top five summer destinations in the US!

San Diego is among the top summer destination cities, especially for conventions, since the weather is always warm and balmy. Room rates are especially high—similar to New York and San Francisco—with typical vacation rates for downtown hotels running \$200-\$300 per night. Downtown San Diego is bustling with multitudes of restaurants and hot music spots. You can expect to find our convention rates higher than most world conventions. However, these rates are significantly discounted to prices that will be nearly impossible to beat in any downtown property. Watch for hotel rooms to go on sale 1 December 2002 and for rooms to sell out fast. There is no way to purchase hotel rooms before they go on sale. Calling the hotels directly will not help you, so we ask that you please be patient!





You, too, can become a responsible and productive member...

Do You...

- ◆ *Have five or more years clean, service experience, and skills that could contribute to World Service projects?*

Have You...

- ◆ *Already submitted your name to the World Pool by using the previous version of the information form?*

If you answered yes to either question, then you...

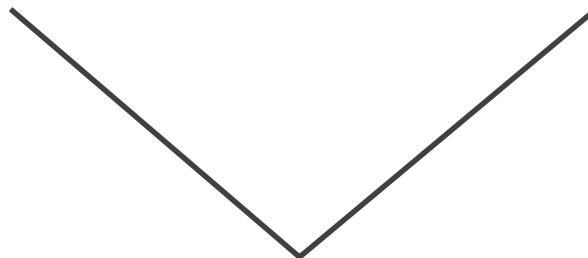
- ◆ *Will need to submit the new and improved World Pool Information Form. The new form has more areas that correspond with our new and improved database.*

Being a member of the World Pool gives you an opportunity to selflessly serve **YOUR** fellowship. It also means your name is available for projects and/or nominations.

When the World Board needs individual members (and this could be **YOU**) to participate in projects or work groups and/or when nominees are needed for World Service Conference elections, the World Pool database is searched for people who meet certain requirements.

The World Pool Information Form is available upon request from the WSO. You can also fill out and submit the form via the Narcotics Anonymous World Services website, www.na.org. You can mail or fax the completed forms if you wish. The mailing address for the WSO is 19737 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311. The fax number is 818.700.0700.

Don't deprive your fellow members of you and your service any longer... sign up today!





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 date. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

Argentina

Cordoba: 15-17 Nov; X Convención Regional Argentina (CRANA X); Hotel Luz y Fuerza, Villa Giardino; hotel rsvns: +05.41143425464; write: Argentina, San Martin 66 2do 216; www.na.org.ar

Australia

Victoria: 17-19 Jan; 2nd Combined Tasmanian and Victorian Area Convention 2003; St Hilda's College, University of Melbourne, Melbourne; event info: +61.395.92.2345; write: Australian Region, Box 2470V, Melbourne, VIC 3000, Australia

Bermuda

Southampton: 28-30 Mar; 3rd Bermuda Islands Area Convention; Sonesta Resort Hotel, Hamilton; hotel rsvns: 441.238.8122; event info: 441.296.2492; event registration: 441.295.5300; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Mar 2003; write: Bermuda Islands Area, Box DV690, Devonshire, DVBX, Bermuda

Brazil

Parana: 13-15 Dec; 9th Encontro-Parana Area; "We Are a Vision of Hope"; Curitiba; event info: 329.0005 (in country), 264.8443 (in country); write: Parana Area, Caixa Postal 18118, Curitiba CEP 80811-970, Parana, Brazil

São Paulo: 17-20 Oct; XIII Convenção Regional de NA; Serra Negra; event info: +55.11.6693.6713, +55.11.9688.1194; write: Brazil, Rua Dr. Costa Valente 144, 2º andar Sala 24 cep 03052-000, São Paulo SP; www.na.org/13crna

Canada

British Columbia: 15-17 Nov; Canadian Convention X; "The Adventure"; Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites, Vancouver; hotel rsvns: 604.688.7711; event info: 604.572.0815, 604.828.3629; write: British Columbia Region, CCNA X, Box 54140, Lonsdale West RPO, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L5, Canada; www.bcrscna.bc.ca

Ontario: 7-9 Feb; Toronto Area Convention III; Crowne Plaza Hotel, Toronto; write: Toronto Area, Box 5700 Depot A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1N8, Canada; www.torontona.ca

2) 28-2 Feb; Ontario Regional Convention XVI; Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, Hamilton; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 905.529.5515; write: Ontario Region, Box 5939 Depot A, Toronto, Ontario M3W 1P3, Canada; www.orscna.org/o.r.c.n.a.xvi.html

Central America

Costa Rica: 14-17 Nov; Convención Regional de Costa Rica VII; "Vivo en libertad...un despertar espiritual/I Live in Freedom...A Spiritual Awakening;" Best Western Irazú, San José; hotel rsvns: asolano@grupomarta.com; event info: 506.382.2727, 506.376.4250; write: CRNACR VII, Box 2148-1000, San José, Costa Rica

El Salvador: 28 Nov-1 Dec; CRENAES I; Regional Convention; Costa del Sol, San Salvador; write: El Salvador Region, 55 Ave Sur Y Ave Olimpica N 10, San Salvador, El Salvador

Honduras: 8-10 Dec; Convention International Spanish NA; Hotel Princess, Tegucigalpa; hotel rsvns: +976.5316; event registration: +2395910; speaker tape submission deadline: 7 Nov 2002; write: Tegucigalpa, Honduras Convention International, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

India

Maharashtra: 22-24 Nov; Pune Area Campout; "Asha (Hope)"; Deshpande Bungalow, Pune; email: nairfchair@hotmail.com, napune@hotmail.com

Matheran: 16-18 Jan; 10th Bombay Area Convention; Widening Horizons; Hotel Riviera, Matheran; event info: +98.212.09510, +98.201.44155, +98.201.30770; write: Bombay Area, Box 1953, GPO, Bombay 400001 India

Mexico

Baja California: 18-20 Oct; Area Baja Costa; "Una Decada de Esperanza/A Decade of Hope"; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; hotel rsvns: 866.472.6385; event info: 858.277.6438, 626.331.2027, 925.755.8885; write: Area Baja Costa, PMB-80, Box 439056, San Diego, CA 92143

New Zealand

Auckland: 25-27 Oct; 8th Regional Convention; "20/20 Vision: Celebrating 20 Years of NA"; Freeman's Bay Community Centre, Auckland; event info: +0064.0.25.745.611, +0064.0.9.360.7073

Poland

Warsaw: 8-11 Nov; 12th Polish Regional Convention; email for event info: kowna@go2.pl, janusz@pkhe.pl; write: Warsaw Region, Natolinski Osrodek Kultury, Ul. Na Uboczu 3, 02-791 Warszawa

South America

Venezuela: 8-10 Nov; Convención Regional de Venezuela I; Hotel Caracas, Caracas; hotel rsvs: www.hiltoncaracas.com.ve; event info: +58.412.7356740; email: scr@na-venezuela.org; www.na-venezuela.org

Sweden

Göteborg: 28 Feb-2 Mar; "En Ny Chans (A New Chance)"; 16th Anniversary; Folkets Hus Göteborg, Olof Palmes Plats, Göteborg; event registration: +460707235862; email: ennychans@hotmail.com; www.nasverige.a.se

United States

Alabama: 7-9 Feb; Out of the Darkness into the Light VII; Holiday Inn, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 256.355.3150; event info: 256.852.2308, 256.498.5031, 256.751.2088; write: NAACC, Box 18231, Huntsville, AL

Alaska: 11-13 Oct; Alaska Regional Convention XVIII; Millennium Hotel, Anchorage; hotel rsvns: 800.544.0553; event info: 907.522.2069, 907.349.9707, 907.332.4539; write: Alaska Region, Box 102924, Anchorage, AK 99510-2924; www.akna.org

Arkansas: 7-9 Mar; ARVANA 10th Annual Hangin' in the Fort Convention; Fifth Season's Inn, Fort Smith; hotel rsvns: 479.452.4880; event info: 479.484.0254, 479.561.2307, 479.522.7515; speaker tape submission deadline: 10 Jan 2003; write: Arkansas River Valley Area, Box 5631, Fort Smith, AR 72913

California: 11-13 Oct; Rainbow Convention VII; Ramada Plaza Hotel, San Francisco; hotel rsvns: 800.227.4747; event info: 415.401.7095; speaker tape info: 415.550.8393; event registration: 415.401.7095; write: San Francisco Area, The Rainbow Convention, 78 Gough St, San Francisco, CA 94102-5902

2) 10-12 Jan; Tri Area Convention III; Red Lion Inn, Redding; hotel rsvns: 530.221.8700; event info: 530.321.8069, 530.892.9399; www.triareaconventionregistration.com

3) 21-23 Feb; Central California Regional Convention XI; "Keep It Simple"; Marriott, Ventura; hotel rsvns: 877.983.6887; event info: 805.937.5870, 661.250.2164; event registration: 805.382.1922; write: CCRCNA, Box 2170, Santa Maria, CA 93457-2170; www.ccrna.org; email: ccrna-registration@excite.com

4) 3-6 Jul; WCNA-30; 30th World Convention; "50th Anniversary of NA"; San Diego Convention Center, San Diego; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311

Colorado: 11-13 Oct; CRCNA XVI; Millennium Harvest-House, Boulder; hotel rsvns: 303.443.3850; event info: 303.427.2068; write: Colorado Region, Box 1437, Denver, CO 80201-1437; www.nacolorado.org/CRCNA

Florida: 4-6 Oct; MidCoast Convention 2002; Embassy Suites-Boca Raton, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 1.800.EMBASSY; event info: 561.702.2000, 561.945.7488; write: MidCoast Area, Box 1613, Delray Beach, FL 33447; www.midcoastarea.org/MCCNA

2) 18-20 Oct; Heartland Area Convention; "Real Freedom Is Possible"; Grenlefe Resort, Haines City; hotel rsvns: 863.421.5004; event registration: 863.667.2087; event info: 863.647.0863

3) 8-10 Nov; Rainbow Weekend VI; Ramada Plaza Marco Polo Beach Resort, Miami Beach; hotel rsvns: 877.327.6363; event registration: 954.426.4746; speaker tape info: 954.925.0344; write: New Path Group, 1231 A Las Olas Blvd, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33301; www.rainbowweekend.org

4) 23-26 Jan; 14th Annual Palm Coast Area Spiritual Retreat; at Gold Coast Christian Camp, Lantana; event registration: 561.743.5578; event info: 561.630.6446; write: Palm Coast Area, Box 20984, West Palm Beach, FL 33416

Georgia: 10-12 Jan; Peace in Recovery XV; Wingate Hotel, Augusta; hotel rsvns: 800.993.7232; event info: 706.793.5454, 706.564.5391, 803.279.0172; write: CSRA, Box 133, Augusta, GA 30901

Hawaii: 24-27 Oct; HRCNA XI; "E Pukupahi (We Are One)"; Radisson Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel, Waikiki; hotel rsvns: 888.557.4422; write: Hawaii Region, Box 90365, Honolulu, HI 96835; www.na-hawaii.org/convention.htm

Idaho: 24-26 Oct; Pacific Northwest Convention 26; Doubletree Boise Riverside, Boise; hotel rsvns: 800.222.8733; event registration: 208.886.9856; event info: 208.869.4568; speaker tape information: 208.866.8221; write: Southern Idaho Region, Box 651, Wendell, ID 83355; www.sirna.org/pnw26.htm

Illinois: 15-17 Nov; GIRCNA VI; "Never Alone, Never Again"; Mark Twain Hotel, East Peoria; hotel rsvns: 309.699.3000; write: Greater Illinois Region, Box 6326, Peoria, IL 61601-6326

Kansas: 4-6 Oct; Dodge City NA Roundup; Moose Lodge, Dodge City; event info: 620.225.3066; event registration: 620.225.6505; write: Dodge City Area, 2317 Fairway Dr, # A, Dodge City, KS 67801; www.angelfire.com/ia/naroundup

Massachusetts: 10-12 Jan; Weathering the Storm; Sheraton Braintree, Braintree; hotel rsvns: 781.848.0600; event info: 508.653.2342, 617.592.2131; event registration: 617.427.8207; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 Oct 2002; write: Boston Area, 398 Columbus Ave, Boston, MA 02116

Minnesota: 28 Feb-2 Mar; Circle of Sisters 6th Annual Women's Convention; **NOTE: Hotel Change:** Doubletree Grand, Bloomington; hotel rsvns: 952.854.2244 or charity.marra@starwoodhotels.com; event registration: 651.487.5000; speaker tape info: 651.455.4888; event info: 612.879.8203; write: South Suburban Fireside Area, Circle of Sisters 6, Industrial Station, Box 4580, St Paul, MN 55104

Nebraska: 18-20 Oct; NRCNA XIX; Howard Johnson Inn, Lincoln; hotel rsvns: 402.464.3171; write: Nebraska Region, NRCNA XIX, Box 29693, Lincoln, NE 68529-0693; NRCNA@nebraska.org

2) 21-23 Feb; Close Encounters of the Clean Kind; Best Western Redick Hotel, Omaha; hotel rsvns: 888.342.5339; event info: 402.551.5199; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 Dec 2002; write: Eastern Nebraska, Box 3937, Omaha, NE 68102; www.close-encounters-na.com

New Jersey: 1-3 Nov; Northeast Area; Together We Can in the Spirit of Unity VIII; Sheraton Hotel, Newark; hotel rsvns: 973.690.5500; event registration: 732.613.6149; event info: 908.653.0004, 908.355.3200; write: Northeast Area of New Jersey, Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

2) 31 Dec-1 Jan; BASCNA New Year's Eve Convention 9; "Come to Believe"; East Brunswick Hilton, East Brunswick; hotel rsvns: 800.445.8667, 732.868.2000

3) 21-23 Feb; Celebrating Recovery II; "The Process Continues"; Wyndham Hotel / Newark Airport, Newark; hotel rsvns: 800.996.3426; event registration: 973.399.2751; event info: 973.623.8526, 973.416.0095; write: Greater Newark Area, Box 3412, Newark, NJ 07103

New Mexico: 14-16 Mar; Rio Grande Regional Convention XIV; Best Western Inn and Suites, Farmington; hotel rsvns: 800.528.1234; event registration: 505.327.5221; www.riograndena.org

New York: 4-6 Oct; Lighting the Way IV; Sheraton Hotel, Hauppauge; hotel rsvns: 631.231.1100; event registration: 631.581.1234; speaker tape info: 631.580.3827; write: Suffolk Area and Greater New York Region, Box 460, Islip Terrace, NY 11752; www.sasna.org

2) 9 Nov; Nassau Area Mini-Convention; Valley Stream Central High School, Valley Stream; speaker tape info: 516.541.6022; event info: 516.322.1061, 516.647.9625; write: Nassau Area Convention Committee, 161 Levittown Pkwy Ste 12, Hicksville, NY; www.nassauna.org

North Carolina: 3-5 Jan; WNCA XVIII; "Spiritually High in the Land of the Sky"; Ramada Plaza Hotel, Asheville; hotel rsvns: 800.678.2161; event info: 828.683.6144, 828.686.0785; write: Western North Carolina, Box 16238, Asheville, NC 28816

2) 21-23 Feb; Freedom by the Sea II; Holiday Inn Sun Spree Resort, Wrightsville Beach; hotel rsvns: 877.330.5050; event info: 910.342.0693, 910.815.3147, 910.792.1709; write: Coastal Carolina Area, Box 561, Wilmington, NC 28401

Ohio: 29 Oct-1 Nov; Greater Cincinnati Area Convention; King Island Resort, Cincinnati; event info: 513.396.6881, 513.661.2583, 513.706.1139; write: Greater Cincinnati Area and Northern Kentucky, Box 19439, Cincinnati, OH 45219; www.nacincy.org

2) 3-5 Jan; Central Ohio Area Convention (COACNA XIV); Columbus Marriott North, Columbus; hotel rsvns: 800.228.3429; event info: 614.257.0407; write: Central Ohio Area, Box 32351, Columbus, OH 43232-0351

Oregon: 1-3 Nov; PCRNA; Western Service Learning Days XVI; Holiday Inn-Portland Airport Hotel and Trade Center, Portland; hotel rsvns: 503.256.5000; event info: 541.547.4162, 541.607.7042; write: Pacific Cascade Region, WSLD #16, Box 71942, Eugene, OR 97401-0281

2) 14-16 Feb; Mid-Willamette Valley Area Convention V; "The Journey Is Spiritual"; Spirit Mountain Lodge and Casino, Grande Ronde; hotel rsvns: 888.668.7366; event registration: 503.393.8444; event info: 503.391.4614; speaker tape info: 503.585.8748; write: Mid-Willamette Valley Area, Box 17525, Salem, OR 97305

Pennsylvania: 15-17 Nov; Start to Live XX; Hilton Pittsburgh and Towers, Pittsburgh; hotel rsvns: 800.445.8667; event info: 412.853.2742; event registration: 412.366.3244; speaker tape info: 412.243.6968; write: Tri State Region, Box 337, Homestead, PA 15120

South Carolina: 21-24 Nov; Serenity Festival XX; Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach; hotel rsvns: 910.602.3546; event info: 910.326.5529, 910.997.3395, 843.602.7738; write: Carolina Region, Serenity Festival Planning Committee, Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578-1198

Tennessee: 27 Nov-1 Dec; Volunteer Region Convention XX; Sheraton Music City, Nashville; hotel rsvns: 615.885.2200; event registration: 615.399.0545; speaker tape info: 615.364.3047; event info: 615.868.3356; write: Volunteer Region, Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212; www.NANashville.org

Texas: 4-6 Oct; Frolic in the Woods; Garner State Park, San Antonio; hotel rsvns: 512.389.8900; event info: 210.699.4806; www.eanaonline.org

2) 11-13 Oct; Northside Area Convention; Chain-of-Lakes Resort, Cleveland; hotel rsvns: 832.397.4000; event registration: 281.446.8734; speaker tape info: 936.441.1644; event info: 281.923.7454; write: Northside Area, Texas NA Region, Box 3594, Humble, TX 77338; www.nacna.org

3) 18-20 Oct; Best Little Region Convention XV; Holiday Inn, Midland; hotel rsvns: 915.697.3181; event info: 915.368.0515, 915.682.2946, 915.363.8159; write: Best Little Region, Box 1245, Odessa, TX 79760

4) 19-21 Oct; Fort Worth Area Convention IV; Fort Worth; speaker tape info: 817.441.1841; write: Fort Worth Area, Box 122028, Fort Worth, TX 76121

Utah: 8-10 Nov; URICNA IV; Take My Will and My Life (Old-timers Convention); Park City Marriott, Park City; hotel rsvns: 800.234.9003; event info: 801.230.7853; write: Utah Region, Box 520397, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-0397; www.utahna.org

Vermont: 8-10 Nov; CVACNA XIII; "God Brought Us Here; Faith Keeps Us Here"; Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington; hotel rsvns: 802.865.6600; write: Champlain Valley Area, Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406-4714; <http://www.together.net/~cvana>

Virginia: 18-20 Oct; OLANA Unityfest X; "Reaching for Hope in the Face of Despair"; Holiday Inn-Chesapeake, Chesapeake; hotel rsvns: 757.523.1500; event info: 757.562.2244, 757.934.1849, 757.562.3079; write: Outer Limits Area, Box 1063, Franklin, VA 23851

2) 10-12 Jan; 21st Areas of Virginia Convention; Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center-Double Tree, Roanoke; hotel rsvns: 866.594.4722; speaker tape info: 540.389.7229; event registration: 540.857.4251; event info: 540.772.1088; write: Roanoke Valley Area, Box 5934, Roanoke, VA 24012; www.rvana.com

Washington: 18-20 Oct; Pacific Northwest Convention #25; "Unlimited Possibilities"; Tacoma Sheraton Hotel, Tacoma; hotel rsvns: 253.572.3200; event info: 206.382.0534 ext 1; write: Pacific Northwest, Box 981, Tacoma, WA 98401; www.wnir-na.org/pnw25.html

2) 15-16 Nov; Washington/Northern Idaho Regional H&I/PI Combined Learning Days; Lake City Community Center, Seattle; write: Seattle Area and Washington/Northern Idaho Region, Box 70404, Seattle, WA 98107

West Virginia: 25-27 Oct; MRSCNA Fall Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; hotel rsvns: 340.372.7863; event info: 304.342.9129; write: Mountaineer Region, Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

Wisconsin: 25-27 Oct; WSNAC XIX; "Renaissance of the Soul"; Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Green Bay; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; event info: 920.430.3744, 920.490.9446; write: Northeast Wisconsin XIX, Box 175, Green Bay, WI 54305-0175; www.wsnac.org

The New Home Group Column

Since we have received so many great title suggestions for the new group column and we are still undecided about choosing a name, we are extending the deadline to **1 November 2002**. In the meantime, until we have selected the column's name, we will call the column *Home Group*.

We want to remind you to "keep it simple." *The NA Way Magazine* is published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, and sometimes, when a title rhymes or sounds good in English, it does not always translate with the same effect in another language.

You may continue to submit your ideas for the column's name to *The NA Way Magazine*, 19737 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311 or email nancys@na.org.

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE



English

NA Audio Archive Sampler

This CD is a compilation of portions of several business and recovery meetings from the 60s and 70s. Through these recordings we are given a glimpse into our past, especially through the eyes of Jimmy K.

Item No. 8950 Price US \$15.00

Castilian

For Those in Treatment

Para quienes están en centros de tratamiento

Item No. CS-3117 Price US \$0.25



Chinese

Welcome Keytag

Item No. CH-4100 Price US \$0.37

Japanese

Who, What, How, and Why

だれが、なにを、なぜ、
どのように

Item No. JP-3101 Price US \$0.21



Hebrew

Just for Today

רק להיום

Item No. HE-1112

Price US \$7.70



Home GROUP

BEFORE RECOVERY, WE COULD ONLY
SEE THE DARKNESS IN OUR LIVES.



AFTER RECOVERY, WE HAVE THE
FREEDOM TO LIVE OUR LIVES WITH
EYES WIDE OPEN.

