**My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.**

THE NA WAY

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Grateful For

Freedom

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Table of Contents

From the Editor 1
Sponsorship 2
Finding a Sponsor 2
The Responsibility for Sponsorship 3
Then and Now 5
To Find Freedom 7
About Promotion 10
Today I'm Grateful For: 11
Complacency 12
Special Feature: Overcoming the Barriers . 14
I'm an Addict, My Name Is... 18
A Grateful Survivor 21
Letters from Our Readers 22
Comin' Up 27
Subscription Forms 29
Copyright Release 30

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N.A.

N.A. is a non-profit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only *one* requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A., but we suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work*.

All members of Narcotics Anonymous are invited to participate in this "meeting in print." Send all input along with a signed copyright release form to: The N.A. Way; *World Service Office, Inc.; P.O. Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409*

THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction — that our lives had become unmanageable.*

2. *We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

3. *We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God* as we understood Him.

4. *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

5. *We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

6. *We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

7. *We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*

8. *We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

9. *We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

10. *We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*

11. *We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God* as we understood Him, *praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out.*

12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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From the Editor

Well the World Service Conference has come and gone once again. One year ago at that conference, this magazine was turned over to the World Service Office. At that time the existing WSO staff began to put together the June 1984 issue, and a search was begun to hire a Managing Editor. The production schedule was about one month behind, as the June issue came out in early July. I was hired in mid July when the World Service Office was gearing up with the staff and equipment to produce this magazine.

Our first task as a new editorial staff was to get our production schedule back on time without compromising the quality of the magazine. We set a course that would have us mailing the October issue to our subscribers before the first of October. We were able to meet that goal, and have mailed each successive issue before the first of the month.

As with most new ventures of this kind, we started out with a large budget deficit. We lost money last year, as we projected we would. This year we expect to be operating in the black by about December. In order to accomplish that we will need to have about 3,000 subscribers. We began with perhaps 300 and have grown to about 1,500 to date. We now have about six months to double in size, or the WSO may be forced to discontinue the magazine.

In the months ahead, all of you who have come to be N.A. Way supporters will be called upon to rally behind the magazine to keep it growing and strong. If every current subscriber generates one new subscription, the goal is met. We also need lots of input, so we can keep up the quality. Please be sure that your groups, areas and regions are aware of the magazine, including the new bulk subscription offer on p.28.

To kick off this subscription drive, we are once again offering a special. Throughout the month of June, we are offering annual subscriptions for $10. See page 6 for details.

R.H.
Editor

Sponsorship

Two addicts share their views

FINDING A SPONSOR

When I entered N.A. eight years ago, the messages that came through to me the strongest were: don't use a fix, pill or drink, go to meetings every day and get a sponsor!

How does one get a sponsor? Early on I heard something that made sense: "Listen up at meetings, and you may hear the person you need."

My first sponsor would finish his sharing at meetings with the following statement, "If no one today has told you that they love you, let me be the first, because you people gave me that love when I walked through the doors."

Sponsors, in my opinion, are just as diverse as are human personalities. Some are into "tough love," some may be on a quiet spiritual path, others may be funny and care-free. Ideally, we might like to have a sponsor who's a little of each. One important aspect of sponsorship is finding that certain someone we can be totally honest with—someone we can let our defenses down with, who practices the Twelve Steps of N.A. in his or her daily life.

Our rapid and continous growth has enriched N.A. with an abundance of newcomers and relative newcomers (about six months to one year). When these men and women have practiced, say, the first five steps, they must be encouraged to reach out to the newest of newcomers to share their experience, strength and hope.

For me personally, I thank God for the newcomer, because time and time again he has saved my hide; by helping him, I am relieved from the bondage of self.

For me, sponsorship is a two-fold experience. First I am able to share freely my experience with the Twelve Steps. Secondly, I gain a new friend.

J.C.
California

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPONSORSHIP

When I speak of sponsorship, I mean the opportunity of the N.A. member who has made some progress in his recovery program to help another drug addict to gain and hold recovery through N.A. The sponsor may be a member with some years of clean time behind him, or he may have only months. His "age" and experience may well depend on the availibilty of sponsors in a locality. "Sponsorship" can also mean the responsibility of a group as a whole for helping the newcomer.

This responsibility is two-edged. The recovering addict wishes to share what he has learned with another addict because he knows how important it is for "one addict to help another." The other edge is our own

need to preserve our own recovery. We know from experience that our own recovery is strengthened when we share it with others who may need and ask for help.

Most present members of N.A. owe their recovery to the fact that someone else took a special interest in them and was willing to share a great gift with them. Sponsorship is merely another way of describing the continuing special interest of a seasoned member in a newcomer that can mean so much after that newcomer turns to N.A. for help.

Individuals and groups cannot afford to lose sight of the importance of sponsorship—the importance of taking a special interest in a confused addict who wants to stop using. Experience shows clearly that those who get the most out of the N.A. Program, and groups which do the best job of carrying the N.A. message to still-suffering addicts, are those to whom sponsorship is too important to be left to chance.

By these members and groups, sponsorship responsibilities are welcomed and accepted as "opportunities" to enrich personal N.A. experience and to deepen the satisfactions that come from working with others.

I personally am very grateful to my sponsors for showing me that special interst and love on more than one occasion.

Anonymous

> We have two ears and one mouth that we may listen the more and talk the less.
>
> GREEK PROVERB

Then and Now

When I got here a year and a half ago I had my tail between my legs, and was completely devoid of hope. There was no doubt in my mind that at the age of 34 I had nothing left going for me. I had no personal belongings that didn't really belong to some one else. No material items that I hadn't already pawned, sold or traded to the dope man.

If I saw something of value, it was mine. It didn't matter where I saw it—a store, my parents' home, a friend's, my son's or daughter's room, your house—if I could sell it for dope, I took it.

The only feelings I remember having then were fear of **having** any feelings and an overwhelming need to score, fix and forget. There wasn't much I wouldn't do to get my dope. It didn't matter whom I hurt or how many chances I took to get it.

I was convinced that I was somehow cursed with a moral deficieny that meant I could never stop, nor even want to. Stop? Why? I had tried to stop many times over the past 15 years and had never been successful. They said, "once an addict, always an addict," and I guessed "they" were right.

I was unemployed, shunned by friends. My family disowned me and refused to allow me into their home. My 16 year-old daughter hated what I had become, and made plans to run away from home. My seven year-old son became physically ill simply because of fear. The local narcotics agents were keeping a regular vigilance across the street from my home (need I go on?) and I still denied that my life was unmanagable. To me that was just the way my life was destined to be, and I would die that way. I prayed that that death would come fast and easy. "Be swift," I prayed, "and let my family begin to live."

I had an acquaintance in the other program who told me he was praying for me and that he loved me. He was an alcoholic, and it seemed to me he was sicker than I thought he was if he could love me. After all, he was one of my regular marks, and I took him for as much money as I could.

Well, God in His infinite mercy heard this man's prayers, and within one 30 day span I "admitted," "accepted," "came to believe" and "made a decision." That one decision, made while humbling myself before my God, has allowed me to become one of society's accepted citizens today.

Through my personal relationship with my God, I have earned the love and respect of the same friends and loved ones who once shunned me. Today I have hope. Today I have faith. Through the N.A. Program, the Twelve Steps, and God (as I choose to call my Higher Power), there are no limits to my recovery. One day at a time I can grow if I allow myself to. It is all up to me whether I want what I have today or what I had then.

I made that decision, and today I am clean, 24 hours at a time. If I can, you can—If you want it.

C.M.
Nevada

To Find Freedom

Hi all! I'm B——, an addict and grateful—grateful that my addiction found me the joy and peace I have today. My story isn't filled with gorey details about my using career. I never had a night when I couldn't remember how I got home, who I was with, or what happened. I never stuck a needle in my arm or got so desperate for a buzz that I had to steal from someone; but still I am an addict, by my own admission, and just as sick as those who did all those things.

My active addiction started early in my teens. I've always had an addictive self-centered personality. I started using at 14. I drank on weekends. A weekend was a waste without getting stoned.

I was put in a county home for kids when I was 13. I spent 3-1/2 years there, feeling very smothered. I felt like I wasn't allowed to have a personality, feelings, problems, joys, or pride. I rebelled against that smothering by using. Using made me feel free to feel.

When I was around my using "buddies" I was me! Surprise! I was an individual. I felt like a person instead of a number. I could cry with them. They let me feel the feelings that I couldn't seem to feel on my own.

The drugs (including booze) allowed me to feel even more. I O.D.'d on feelings. I had a five year love affair with those drugs. I loved the feelings they gave me.

When I turned 18 I quit school. I went back home, but soon moved away from my parents. In moving, I had to change school systems. Then I was kicked out of that system, but I didn't care. I cared only about pleasing myself, and school was not a pleasure.

When I moved back into my parents' home, I knew that my use of drugs was crazy, that I would have to stop somehow, but I didn't know how. I knew I couldn't hang around with my old drugging buddies, so I began hanging with one of my many cousins. She didn't get along very well with my buddies.

She introduced me to a Twelve Step Fellowship. I got a sponsor at the time who had four years in that Fellowship. She pointed me in the direction of another Twelve Step Fellowship for the addict. These people knew about drugs. After two months of looking forward to the Tuesday "drug" meetings, this group decided they could best serve the still-suffering addict by becoming part of N.A.

Before I found N.A. I was just staying clean. I didn't know how to grow. I found people in N.A. who taught me to grow, to laugh and to live. In N.A. I found love. I learned to know myself. I was free to feel. I was a person. I could feel joy, pride, love, gratitude, and it was okay. I was free. I felt it all—clean.

The N.A. members accepted me the way I was. They didn't want me to be someone I wasn't. They wanted me to be all I could be. I was free of another game I played with myself for so many years. Free again to not be tied down to drugs, to not have them running me.

I stay clean for me today. I have lots of help doing it—help from God, and from the other addicts in N.A. They are my family now. Oh, of course I have my real family, but I'll never be as close with them as I am with my family in N.A.

At seven months clean I started service work. Not a glamorous job, but it's rewarding all the same. It's just my way of giving something back in return for everything I'd been given.

I can tell everyone in N.A. that I love them, even if I've never met them. I know they all have the same purpose as I do in life—to stay clean, and carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

If it weren't for N.A., I wouldn't be the person I am today. I'm actually happy! I have learned to love myself, my God and others in N.A. I'm free of self and free of drugs. If we by chance get together again, I'd be in a prison. But today I'm free from my past.

A good friend of mine turned me on to this saying. "My worst day clean is better than my best day using." I'll close with his wisdom.

Lots of luck and love, and I pray you'll find the freedom I've searched so long and hard for, and finally found, right here in Narcotics Anonymous.

B.K.
Ohio

WHOSE ENDS ARE ALWAYS THE SAME...

Do you remember the guts it took to walk into your first meeting? Well imagine what the guy felt like who finally decided to go to an N.A. meeting after watching those P.I. videos on T.V. Instead of the church basement where the meeting was held, he walked by mistake into a funeral home. Unsure of what to do, he knelt down beside a woman next to a coffin. He asked her, "How did he die?" She answered tearfully, "He went too far this time. He died from a drug overdose." "Madam, didn't he know about Narcotics Anonymous?" She looked at him, shocked, "Narcotics Anonymous?! He wasn't **that** bad."

About Promotion

Recently our area was in a great turmoil. Certain groups were promoting the literature of another Twelve Step Program. All groups voted and our area felt this was in violation of the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. The end result was that several groups broke away from N.A. and started their own Twelve Step Program. Resentment is a powerful thing.

There is another kind of tradition violation regarding other Twelve Step Programs that often goes unnoticed. It would seem for one reason or another a lot of N.A. members resent other Twelve Step Programs. I remember attending one convention of N.A. where every one of the guest speakers had something bad to say about other Twelve Step Programs. What they failed to realize was that they were as much in error as the groups mentioned above. Putting down other programs—expressing personal opinions on outside issues—causes as much resentment as promoting them. And resentment makes some people leave N.A.

J.F.
Pennsylvania

He who plants thorns must never expect to gather roses. ARABIAN PROVERB

Today I'm Grateful For:

The N.A. Program—without it I would still be using, and therefore still spiritually bankrupt.

The real friends I've found—I have more friends than I ever had connections.

My family who loves me though they may never understand me. They respect my clean time and my program.

Service work—many times my responsibilities to the addict who still-suffers have kept me clean.

My liabilities, because I still have goals for spiritual progress.

My assets that are slowly becoming obvious to me now—before I had no self-esteem.

My job, and a chance to be a productive member of society instead of a terror on the streets.

My education, because with your help I finally accomplished something.

My friends, again, because they mean more to this former loner than everything, except...

My spiritual connection—the greatest gift of all.

Thank you, Higher Power.

J.P.

Complacency

I write this that others may not have to reach the level of pain I found. At nine months, my problem was complacency, the assassin of peace of mind. I started to regress. I had become as sick as if I had relapsed. All the other symptoms of addiction were there, even without the drugs. The pain was almost unbearable—the fear, the self-centerness—so not realizing that the problem was my own inactivity, like any addict, I started to seek relief. I talked to my sponsor, but did not listen.

I quit my job as a counselor at a treatment center to get some temporary relief. I took a lover. There was temporary relief when we were together, but when we were apart, I would come down off the high and be just as depressed as before, sometimes even worse. I was taking shots to my ego just as if they were drugs. My self-centered attempts at relief almost destroyed us both.

I had started placing reliance on people, things, and events for relief. I was completely insane, in pain, when, through the people in the Fellowship who loved me and through a loving God, I began to see myself in newcomers and started to listen again. I began to work my program all over again. I put my reliance back where it always belonged: on a loving God.

The gates of hell had opened again, and I had almost fallen back in. I thank my God for a well worked Step One. I thank the God of my understanding for a Fellowship where people really love and care. Now things are back in their proper place, and with my God's help and the help of my fellows in N.A., my life is once again peaceful, for I am no longer trying to control the outcome of my plans.

By myself I might lose, but I am alone no more. To rebuild my foundation, I needed honesty and a dependence on You Know Who. Spread the news—that's the way you heard it—to keep it, you must give it away.

W.H.
Arkansas

MAJOR CONVENTIONS EAST AND WEST

On the same weekend later in June, the Fellowship in both the Eastern and Western United States is gathering for major conventions. On the East Coast it's the **Sixth East Coast Convention For N.A.** in Baltimore. Because it's on a college campus again this year, the cost is down and the options are plentiful. There is plenty of opportunity for recreation, including tennis, raquetball, softball and volleyball. Of course the main attraction is the recovery and service events scheduled throughout. With over 2,000 recovering addicts expected to attend, this one promises to be a tremendous celebration of recovery.

If you're going to be in the Western U.S., then the big attraction will be the **Western States Unity Convention II** in Phoenix. This is the second annual, and the ball is rolling and picking up momentum. Besides the Well known Phoenix sunshine and the good Western States recovery at all the convention activities, the hotel offers a pool, whirlpool spa, and jogging track. The workshop topics, speakers and meeting formats were chosen carefully at both of these conventions to accommodate lots of people, have lots of fun, and learn a lot about N.A. Don't miss out on it! For dates and contacts, see the Comin' Up section.

SPECIAL FEATURE

An interesting trend is developing in Narcotics Anonymous. More and more these days in various places, attention is being paid to the special needs of disabled members of our Fellowship. Since we received an article from one such member this month, we felt it was a good time to mention some of these developments. As we look at the special barriers that disabilities can present, and then at our Fifth Tradition, more of us are becoming aware of the importance of our continuing sensitivity to these issues in our service efforts.

Several groups for hearing-impaired addicts have started recently around the U.S. Sign language interpreters are present each week to bridge the communication barrier between hearing and non-hearing addicts. It is also becoming more common in some places to see a sign language interpreter at regular meetings when a deaf addict attends.

Various materials have been and are being developed to better serve the needs of members with a disability. The Little White Booklet and several pamphlets are available now in Braille. Video tapes which are signed for the hearing impaired are being prepared of the Group Starter Kit and parts of the Little White Booklet. Speaker tapes are being reviewed by the Fellowship for future distribution, with plans to put much of our literature on audio tape in the future. Convention fliers often include a box to check if you have special needs during the convention. Wheel chair accessibility is a factor that some groups consider in choosing a meeting place. In these ways, we are truly "carrying the message" across the barriers.

Overcoming the Barriers

Here is an article written for us by one of our members with a physical disability. Well, perhaps we shouldn't say "written." This article was sent to us on an audio-cassette tape, recorded by punching the control knobs with his toes. To B.K., that is a routine, daily action. To us, that symbolizes the dedication that many members show in participating in their own recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

My name is B——, and I'm a recovering drug addict from Minnesota. I also have cerebral palsy. I started taking prescription drugs for muscle control when I was about fifteen years old. At that time they did a lot of good for me. I was taking them as directed, and was pretty well supervised with what I did with them.

I drank a little bit in high school, and I really liked it, but I was in a special school for the handicapped, and was too closely supervised to get in too much trouble. When I graduated from that school and went to college, nobody was there to watch over me and tell me what to do with my drugs. I was then introduced to other drugs—marijuana, speed, more alcohol. I took them on top of my prescription drugs for about eight or nine years before I began to develop a problem. When I did start having a problem with them, I would go from doctor to doctor trying to find different drugs that would work for me because it was my feeling that the drugs I was taking didn't work anymore. I was becoming frustrated. I never once thought that my prescription drugs weren't working

because of the other drugs that I was taking along with them, and I don't think the doctors thought so either.

I set out to the city about three years ago because I was really having problems. I was going from doctor to doctor trying to get bigger prescriptions. But then the doctors told me that they couldn't do anything for me, so I went to a clinic where I first got clean. They slowly took me off all the medication I was on, and they started me on some other medication which at the time I felt was nonsense.

After awhile clean, I was like a different person. I could think about what I was doing. But then I started smoking dope and drinking again, and I felt myself going right back into where I was before. I thought, "well it's got to be the booze—not the pot." So I quit drinking and kept smoking, and I made a big geographical move, because I really didn't know where else to turn, and I wanted to start school again.

By the time I was in school for only a short time, I knew that my problems were related to my using, so I went to my instructor and talked to him about it. He told me there was an N.A. meeting near the college, so I went.

I had tried N.A. before in another city, and hadn't been too impressed. The people seemed too "hard core," and didn't seem to be talking too much about recovery. Maybe I wasn't ready either. I'm not really sure. Anyway, this time it was different. The meeting was small and intimate, and the people were loving and friendly. They showed me that they cared. I am in a wheel chair, I have almost no use of my arms and limited use of my legs, my speech is slow and sometimes hard for some people to understand, but these people called on me to share every week like everyone else. For once I was not treated as "different." For once I felt "a part of" rather than "apart from."

It was still difficult to get to other meetings, because I had to get a ride, and I needed special help if the meeting place was not wheel chair accessible. Only occasionally was I able to get to a meeting besides my home group near the campus.

Then an event happened that changed things for me pretty significantly. I found out that there was a regional convention coming up in North Dakota, and a member of N.A. offered to bring me and make the special arrangements for me to get help in the mornings and evenings and at mealtimes. I went to that convention, and boy that was the biggest switch in my life. I talked at that convention, and I danced at that convention, and if you've ever seen a guy with cerebral palsy dancing in a wheel chair, then you know what I'm talking about. I danced for about two and a half hours and that was the best time of my life. The convention was what made me see that there is really a life without drugs.

Well, that's that. I have made a lot of new friends in N.A. I still have acquaintances with a few of the old ones, but that's all they are is acquaintances. I graduated from college this May, and some people have told me that I really changed within the last year. I just got my one year medallion about three weeks ago, and that really made me feel good. My mom and dad and my deaf brother came down for that and that made me feel good too. I still have to take medication for my muscle spasms, but now that I'm clean I can get by on a lot less than before. I cannot do without it. I am living proof that recovery can happen even if you do have to take medication. I know that I must not abuse it or take other things along with it.

I would like to say that I'm doing a lot better now than I was a year ago. An attendent of mine who knew me before and knows me now says she can't believe the change. I used to be frustrated and angry a lot. Today I am a lot happier, and I can accept who I am and what I am—a recovering addict. I work the steps, I am involved in service to N.A., I have a sponsor, I attend regular meetings with friends who are willing to help me up and down the stairs, and I stay clean, just for today. Narcotics Anonymous has completely changed my life for the better.

B.K.
Minnesota

I'm an Addict,

My Name Is . . .

This is the way I've introduced myself at meetings for the past couple of months. I heard someone else use this introduction some time back and thought there was something about it I liked, but I kept introducing myself the other way around. The reason I've made the decision to identify myself as an addict before I say my name is that I feel this can help create an awareness of N.A. language, and because I feel grateful that the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has given so much to this addict.

The rapid growth our Fellowship is going through is fantastic. But our quest for unity becomes burdened by mixed and misleading language throughout our Fellowship. When newcomers walk into our meetings and hear so many cross references to "specialty" addictions, they can easily become confused about whether N.A. is truly where they should be. This addict found out the hard way there is absolutely no place in N.A. for "SPECIALTY ADDICTIONS."

I've yet to see the First Step of N.A. (the hub of our principles) read, "We admitted we were powerless over our addiction (insert drug or drugs of choice here), that our lives had become unmanageable." This step quite clearly points to our disease, "addiction."

Our Fifth Tradition states that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the "addict" who still suffers. Also, our Third Tradition states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. These two traditions certainly don't point to any specialty addictions, but rather to addiction to all mood-altering drugs.

After looking at some of the principles, it appears to me that in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous we have no such beings as junkies, pot heads, coke heads, speed freaks, alcoholics, etc.., because those terms refer to drugs of choice, not addiction. There is only one disease that we come to N.A. to recover from, and that is "addiction." When we accept our powerlessness over any drug, then according to our principles we are accepting powerlessness over all drugs, and are therefore addicts.

I consider this an important issue because when I first began an honest attempt at cleaning up, there wasn't any N.A. in my area, so I went to a Fellowship whose very name signifies a one-drug addiction. Going in as a sick addict, I found myself time after time proving how "cunning, baffling and powerful" my addiction really was. As a sick addict I wanted to hear that the unmanagability in my life could be directly related to the use of certain drugs. As a sick addict, that concentration on "specialty addiction" allowed me to down-play those other mood altering drugs that I considered to be more manageable, and therefore I found myself justifying their use, because "they weren't really a problem." The point is, they were the biggest problem because they kept me from ever growing and enjoying a life free of all mood altering drugs.

After five years of trying to recover, I finally came to the realization that I had to stay clean from all drugs. I went to another Fellowship and finally started to have some success at staying clean. About

six months into my recovery I came into possession of the N.A. White Book (the only basic text in 1980), and for the first time I saw something that seemed to address me and my addiction. Some of us got together and formed the first N.A. group here. We went through many many growing pains due to the lack of awareness of the traditions, and because we were trying to be a supplement to another Fellowship. We eventually found out that N.A. unity is where our groups growth and strength lies—not at the doorstep of any other Fellowship or organization.

This is why I now identify my addiction first, so that it is clear to the newcomer that they are in an N.A. meeting with addicts. When we follow the same status quo of introduction as other recovery Fellowships, it is easy for those who choose to frequent those Fellowships to bring those specialty identities into N.A., and therefore divert us from our primary purpose. I would hope that a status quo of introducing addiction first would also eliminate introductions that describe old using behavior (loadie, dope fiend, toker, user, etc..), these terms are also contrary to the principles of recovery because they emphasize the sick, not the recovering—the drug, not the disease: the talk we talk is only important if it's consistent with the walk we walk.

I hope others will decide to identify themselves in this manner, but either way; please keep the message of N.A. clear—for all our sakes. Thanks.

M.H.
North Dakota

A Grateful Survivor

Some fifteen years ago, two others and I were involved in narcotics on a very large scale. Something happened—I'm not sure just what—but I got the blame, and subsequently I was pistol-whipped, barely escaping with my life. Early in 1973, in a small town upcoast, I was shot in the head. A year later I was released from the hospital, a controllable epileptic with one-eighth of his brain gone forever. (This is most difficult to write, as my memory is not too good!)

Now a second member of that threesome got it twice in the head—he is no longer among us. Then the third guy got it point-blank up front when he attempted an armed robbery here in Vancouver—he is gone, needless to say. I'd love to know just what came down, but whatever the story, all three of us have been shot, and two are dead. Guess who I think is better off!

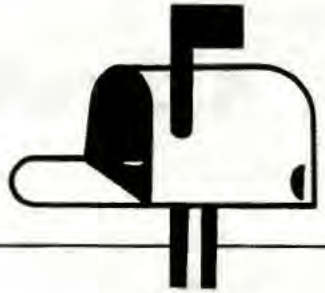
It has been ten years since I drove a needle in my arm, something I never thought I would say, considering all the years of using (I had even gone to the extent of having a tatoo put over the target because I never thought of any other way of life). Now with a plate in my head, with a prosthetic device in my throat for speech, with controllable epilepsy, and with only seven-eighths of a brain, I've gotton smart. If there's a better reason for quitting, please tell me—this was enough reason for me.

But I do know others who no doubt will end up like me, or worse. A man can only attend so many funerals in his lifetime, and Lord knows I've worn out many a good suit for others who still don't see.

I am now a proud member of Narcotics Anonymous, and feel if just one person benefits from my life's mistakes it has all been worth it.

R.R.—A survivor
British Columbia,
Canada

Letters from Our Readers...



Editor's Note: This letter is printed as a follow-up to last month's Special Feature. It was received from "Mike" mentioned in that article (not his real name) just before we went to print. Also since that article went to print there was a representative from West Germany at the World Service Conference. It appears that N.A. already has a strong base in that country, and is growing steadily. They are now in the process of reviewing and reworking the German translations of the literature, and are working toward establishing their own N.A. literature distribution center.

Dear N.A. Way,

Good news from Germany! I got together with V.V. the weekend of 2 March. We went to a German speaking N.A. meeting in Darmstadt. It was great, man. I asked them not to speak English and to please speak German. I really felt good about that. I'm already speaking some German (after two months). They have translated into German the "Twelve Step" section of our Basic Text. That really surprised me. As of this writing there are approximately 20 meetings right now in Germany. These are German-speaking meetings, mainly located in Southern Germany.

More good news. That letter you sent me concerning the public info. chair from A.A. is a God-send! This kind of support is just what we need in Germany. Even better, she lives in Bremen (30 min. away from me). God is really good to us. I could never arrange such things.

There isn't any N.A. that I know of in Northern Germany yet. But with God's help, your help, the WSO and this woman in Bremen, all will be well real soon!

I was also glad to receive the news from the German Consulate concerning German law. You know, different cultures can sometimes be scary. I'm hoping that when I contact this woman in Bremen she will assist me in that endeavor. I love P.I. people!

Now I realize why I got stationed so far away from V—— and all my American N.A. friends. Maybe God wanted me in the North (where N.A. hasn't started) for a reason. What a great privilege!

More news, I'm going to hold an N.A. meeting here in Nienburg on 23 Aug 85. I'm going to tell my story in German! I'm in school learning German right now. Sometimes I have to pinch myself to realize that this is really happening! Germany really is a fascinating place!

Well, please keep sending whatever information you can from your end of the world. I'll do my best to send it from my end of the world. Until I hear from you again—aufwierdersein (good bye). Ich mochste ein brief mach schnell, bitte (I would like a letter real soon please) (Not bad, huh?)

Tchus, (so long)
Yours in love, service,
fellowship and friendship,
M.D.

P.S. Today I live.

Dear N.A. Way,

I'm writing this letter in part as a form of meditation. I don't really know where to start. About three years ago, when I was still pretty new in recovery, I felt I was working a pretty spiritual program, even though I may have been somewhat intense. Before long, though, I got involved with a woman in the Fellowship, and soon dropped the spiritual growth altogether. I felt I was on the Sixth and Seventh Steps, flew through them, slid through the rest (if I practiced them at all), continued in that relationship for 2-1/2 years, and here I am, no longer seeing her, back to dealing with me.

I really have been moving in a positive direction the last six months—establishing a support base and so on—but I have felt something was missing. It's been exciting learning about myself and making friends, yet when I'm with them at meetings there are still times when there's just not a good feeling deep down in my guts. There's lots of room for improvement in the quality of relationships I want with people. In order to get that, I have to start with me. One way I have been doing that is by attending meetings where some mature members go, and trying to establish some contact. If I am to grow and mature, I need deeper and more mature relationships.

The other night I was reading the N.A. Way, and came across a story about the Sixth and Seventh Steps called, "Only in the Program," by K.S. of North Dakota [April, 1985]. It hit me real hard. Exaggerating, intimidating, over-powering—I've always thought I was a little wimp; how could I intimidate anyone? But man, when I think of it... The other day my boss told me I was vicious. I was talking about "kicking someone's ass" in raquetball. I lightened it by saying I'm a little cocky, that he'd probably kill me, but later I was thinking about it; just how immature the language is, for one thing. There are a thousand examples.

The article also talked about little white lies, that true honesty is "without intent to deceive." It seems I always play things up...

Anyway, that's where I'm at. Maybe I'm right where I left off a few years ago, because I didn't have the guts until now to get out of that relationship. I don't know. All I know is I'm starting from here. I'm reading and re-reading the Basic Text on the Sixth and Seventh Steps, re-establishing contact with my sponsor, re-reading that story in the N.A. Way, and I'll see where I get.

So take care. I think the magazine has been an excellent tool in teaching me about the N.A. Program; and if you got this far in this letter, thanks for listening.

K.G.
North Dakota

A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Two oldtimers in Narcotics Anonymous knew that they were getting up in years. They had been friends for a long time, so they made a pact. The first one to die would have to come back to let the other one know whether there was an N.A. meeting in heaven. A few days later, one of them died. In keeping with the pact, he came back and visited his friend. As soon as he recovered from the shock, the friend said, "Well, tell me, is there an N.A. meeting in Heaven?" "Well, I have good news and bad news," the ghost answered a bit reluctantly. "The good news is there is a **huge** N.A. meeting in heaven. The bad news is you're scheduled to lead it next week!"

Editor's note: Letters such as the following two have begun coming in. We are grateful for such support, but since the magazine is not "approved literature" in the sense that the book and pamphlets are, we are uncertain as to whether it is appropriate for use in meetings. We have written to the Trustees for an opinion, and will pass it along as soon as we have it.

Dear N.A. Way,

I wanted to share with you our group's appreciation for the Fellowship magazine. Many of us have experienced the "lift" of going to meetings away from home. Our programs get revitalized by hearing what is essentially the same message in new ways, from different voices. The N.A. Way has enabled us to bring the different voices to our group. We use the articles from the magazine in our meetings to do this. A selected article is read and then discussed. We feel that we have gained a great deal from this practice and are grateful to the N.A. Way for providing the opportunity to have these special meetings.

B.J.
Kansas

Dear N.A. Way,

Thanks for sending us copies of the N.A. Way. We really do appreciate your support. You would have been gratified to see people who had never heard of the magazine pawing them over at our Thursday meeting. We even sold one! (for one dollar). The money we get from selling them will go towards a subscription for the Thursday meeting.

Our Thursday meeting is now a magazine study. We kicked off last week by reading an article from the April issue. It was a bit complicated for some people, but interest in the magazine as a whole was good. It was refreshing to have a new angle to a meeting. Our first meeting showed us two things: First, that the secretary should read the magazine in advance and select one or two short articles that will hold addicts' interest, and second, we must make a disclaimer before

each meeting that though this material represents the sharing of N.A. members about recovery, and is therefore appropriate for use at meetings, the opinions expressed are strictly those of the writer, and not of N.A. as a whole.

It is satisfying to be carrying the message about a magazine that does such a good job of promoting unity within the Fellowship. Thanks again for your support.

An Addict,
Washington State

Comin' Up

This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least two months in advance. Include title, location, dates, contacts.

ARIZONA: June 21-23; Western Sts Unity Conv-2; Phoenix Hilton; WSUCNA-2, box 13311, Tucson, AZ 85732; John or Shari (602) 279-0744

ARKANSAS: June 7-9; First Beaver Round-Up; Eureka Springs; John or Shari (602) 279-0744; Ann (602) 840-6451

BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA: June 28-30; 6th Annl B.C. NA Rally; James Bay Community Ctr; call (604) 383-3553

CALIFORNIA: July 20; St. Mary's Church, Stockton; Wkshps, banquet, dance

2) Aug 2-4; San Diego RCNA I; Town & Country Hotel and Conv Ctr; 500 Hotel Circle N; write SDNACC, PO Box 4921, San Diego, CA 92104

3) Oct 25-27; 7th Annl S Cal Conv; Hyatt Hotel LAX; Stu (805) 584-1135; Terry (213) 370-9875; Preston (714) 761-3222; Bridget (818) 762-2305

CONNECTICUT: Jan 3-5, 86; Connecticut's first convention; Marriott Hotel, Farmington; Mike or Al (203) 347-7856

FLORIDA: July 4-7; FRCNA-4; Hyatt Regency of Miami, 400 S.E. 2nd Ave.; (305) Jay 255-0720; Andrea 758-2815; Julio 262-1362

INDIANA: Nov 1-3; Mid Coast RCNA; Atkinson Hotel, Indy; Box 2182, Indianapolis, IN 46206; (317) Terry 873-3295; Micky 873-6519;

IOWA: July 12-14; Iowa RCNA; Finn House and Knights of Columbus Hall, Algnoia; Dave 295-5028; Dan 295-5826; Shelley 295-7858;

KANSAS: July 4-7; 7th Annl 4th of July Campout; Camp Ada Walden, Salina; (913) Alan 827-3232; Jim 825-9510; Box 383, Salina, KS 76402

KENTUCKY: July 20-22; 5th Annl Abnormal Weenie Jam; Big Bone Lick, KY; days DeWayne (513) 825-8396; evenings Chuck (606) 525-0604

MARYLAND: June 21-23; 6th East Coast Conv; Towson St. Univ., Baltimore, MD; Box 26513, Baltimore, MD 21207

MICHIGAN: July 5-7; Central Great Lakes RCNA; Valley Plaza, Midland, MI; (517) Will 684-9168 or Greg 686-7622

MINNESOTA: June 14-16; Upper Midwest RCNA-II; Moorhead St. Univ., Moorhead, MN; Bryce (218) 233-6400; Box 9083, Fargo, ND 58109

MISSOURI: July 26-28; High on Life Picnic; Stockton Lake, MO; (417) Bob 781-6770, 623-1225; Blackie 623-6883, 623-2197

NEVADA: July 19-21; 3rd annl Stampede for Serenity (Campout); Stampede Reservoir, NV; Pre-registration a must!; (702) 322-4811

NORTH CAROLINA: June 28-30; 6th Annl Blue Ridge Convention; Cherokee, NC; (803) Pat 721-3247; Dee 246-7363

OREGON: Oct 11-13; 8th Annl Pacific NW Conv for NA; Valley River Inn, Eugene; (503) Martin or Susan 485-1397; Rick 746-7466; Doug 689-7711

OKLAHOMA: June 21-23; Clean-n-Crazy Campout; Sequoyah State Park Tonja (405) 360-2453; Ctrl Ofc Tulsa (918) 747-0017

OHIO: July 6; Ctrl OH Area Office fundraiser; Overbrook John Beltz retreat Ctr; Harlem Rd., Sunbury, OH (614) 252-1700

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct 25-27; Tri-State RCNA III; Ptsbrgh, PA; Airport Hltn Inn; (412) Carmina 257-1657; Terry 441-1277; Yvonne (304) 232-5858;

TENNESSEE: Nov 27-Dec 1; Volunteer RCNA; Benchmark Hotel, 164 Union Ave, Memphis, TN; (901) Bill 525-4798; Gene 454-1313; Joseph 529-8779

WASHINGTON, DC: Aug 29-Sept 1; 15th Annl. **WORLD CONVENTION** of NA; Shorham Hotel; WCNA-15, Box 2232, Washington, DC 20013; travel agent contracted: 1-800-368-3527; register soon—late fee after 7-31

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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.*
2. *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.*
3. *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.*
4. *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.*
5. *Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*
6. *An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
7. *Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
9. *N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
10. *Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
11. *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*
12. *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

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