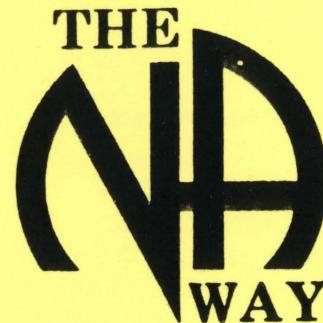


**My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.**



**SEPTEMBER
1986**

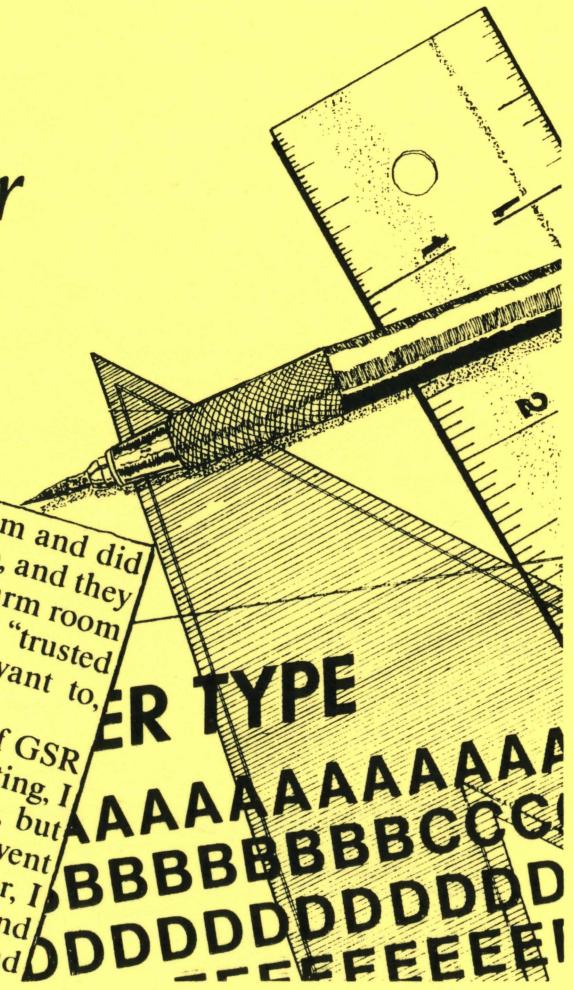
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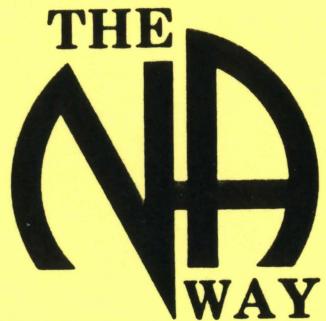
NUMBER 9

*Annual
Newsletter
Issue*

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THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MY CHAIR.....	1
SOME SPONSORS ARE LIKE...	
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PITCHERS	2
SERVICE	4
REPORT LINKS SERVICE TO RELAPSE	6
HONESTY, OPENNESS, WILLINGNESS TO TRY	8
LEARNING HOW TO LIVE	10
SPECIAL FEATURE: ON THE STEPS	12
GOD'S LITTLE MIRACLES	21
THE JOKE WAS ON ME.....	22
FROM OUR READERS	23
COMIN' UP	27
SUBSCRIPTION FORM	29
COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM.....	30

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide 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. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover. It costs nothing to be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. 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*. For more information about the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address below.

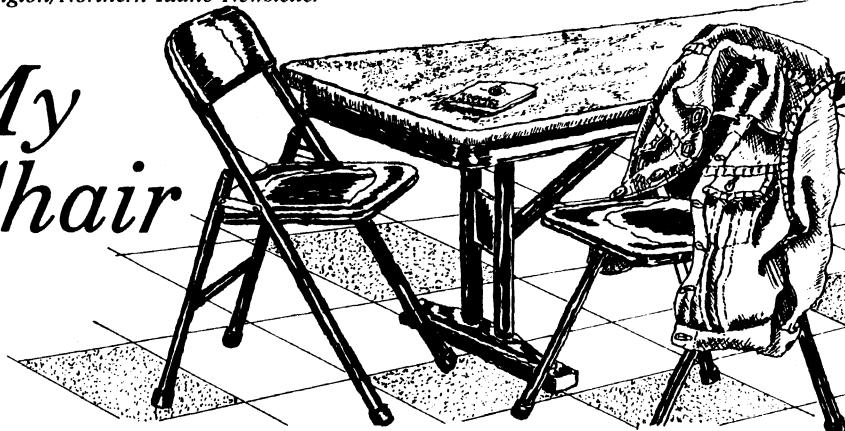
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THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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.
We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious
11. *contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried
12. *to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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My Chair



The room where my home group meets is still the same. The chairs, bookshelves, carpet, lights and walls are the same as they were a year ago. The difference is me. The person who sat there a year ago isn't the person who sits there today. I feel like all I did was sit in a chair faithfully and my life took on a depth and meaning. My eyes were closed and my spirit was dead. I had no friends, and I felt afraid, angry and lonely. Some of the faces in the room are the same but now they are important faces—people I have deep emotional connections to. I know and feel I am loved. I understand and accept the value of me. My self-hate has changed to self-appreciation. The Higher Power they talked about isn't a foreigner now. He's a friend. Weakness has turned to strength, unrest to peace, lost wandering to firm direction. The benefits they promised me that I doubted have come to me in a fullness I never expected.

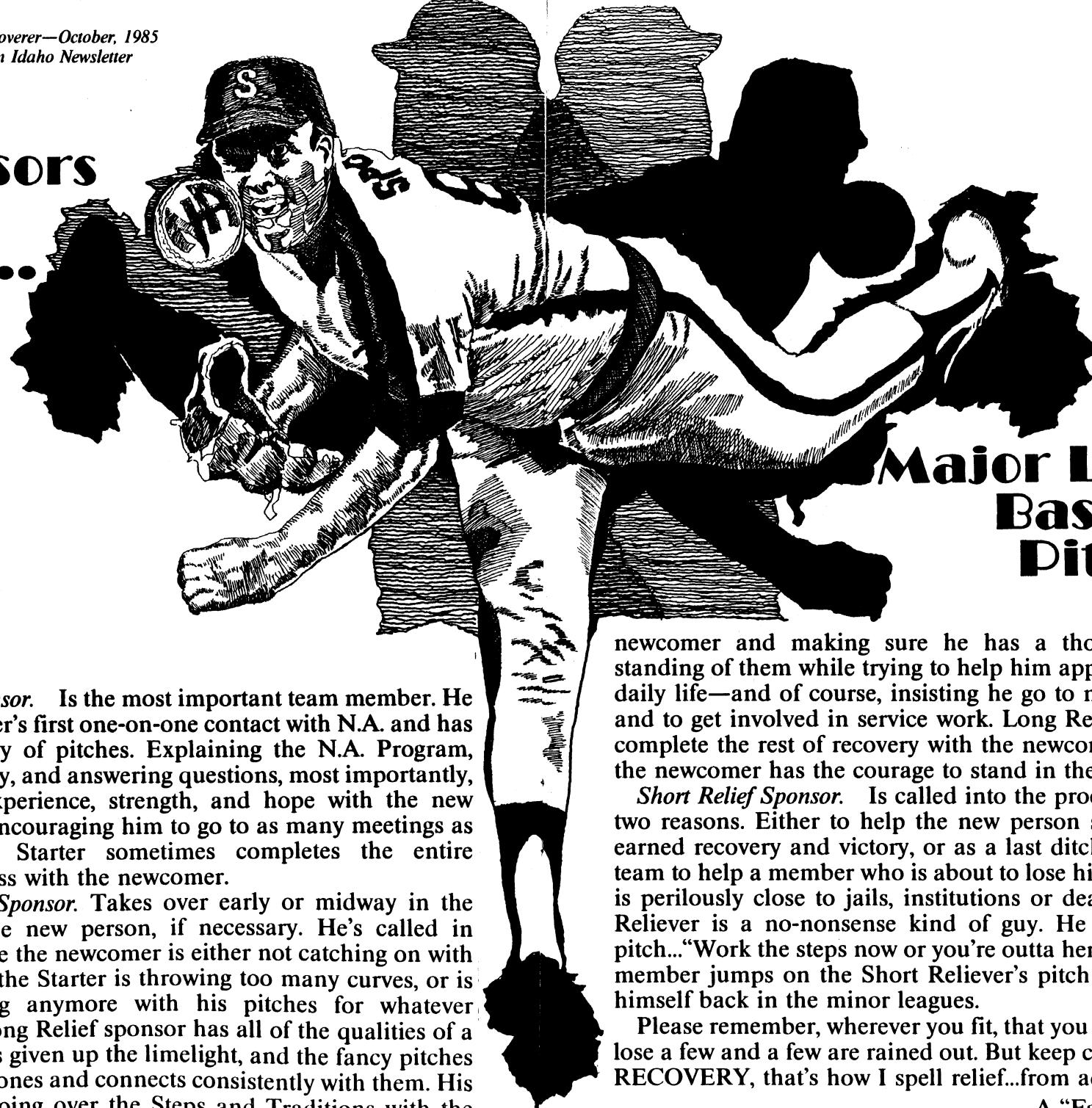
I keep looking at the chairs. Are they magic? How could all this happen from sitting in a chair? There was no energy in me to take an active part. I was suspicious and withdrawn. But despite me, the changes came.

Next week, I'll get in my car, drive to the building and go in the door. I'll find my chair and sit down. I'll relax, and wait for the blessings and steady growth that seem to flow when I'm sitting in my chair.

If you're a newcomer, empty and lost, please sit down. Your drug of choice or how you look doesn't matter. It's simple and free sitting down and finding me.

L.M.
Washington

Some Sponsors Are Like...



Major League Baseball Pitchers

Examples:

Starting Sponsor. Is the most important team member. He is the newcomer's first one-on-one contact with N.A. and has the best variety of pitches. Explaining the N.A. Program, listening closely, and answering questions, most importantly, sharing his experience, strength, and hope with the new person while encouraging him to go to as many meetings as possible. The Starter sometimes completes the entire recovery process with the newcomer.

Long Relief Sponsor. Takes over early or midway in the recovery of the new person, if necessary. He's called in usually because the newcomer is either not catching on with the Starter, or the Starter is throwing too many curves, or is not connecting anymore with his pitches for whatever reason. The Long Relief sponsor has all of the qualities of a Starter, but has given up the limelight, and the fancy pitches for a few solid ones and connects consistently with them. His best pitch is going over the Steps and Traditions with the

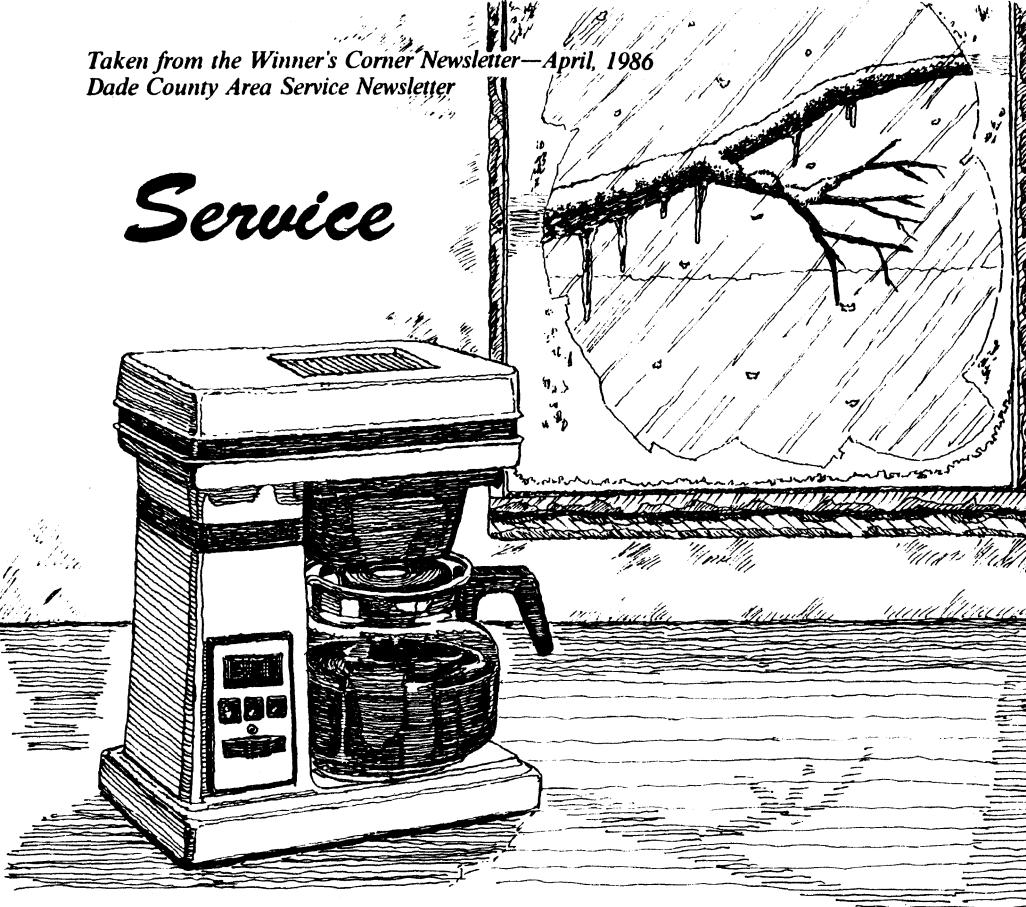
newcomer and making sure he has a thorough understanding of them while trying to help him apply them in his daily life—and of course, insisting he go to many meetings and to get involved in service work. Long Relievers usually complete the rest of recovery with the newcomer as long as the newcomer has the courage to stand in there with them.

Short Relief Sponsor. Is called into the process for one of two reasons. Either to help the new person save his hard-earned recovery and victory, or as a last ditch effort by the team to help a member who is about to lose his recovery and is perilously close to jails, institutions or death. The Short Reliever is a no-nonsense kind of guy. He has only one pitch...“Work the steps now or you’re outta here.” The falling member jumps on the Short Reliever’s pitch or soon finds himself back in the minor leagues.

Please remember, wherever you fit, that you will win a few, lose a few and a few are rained out. But keep coming back to RECOVERY, that's how I spell relief...from addiction.

A “Fanaddict”

Service



What "trusted servant" means to me...

When I first came into N.A., I heard the phrase "trusted servant," but, like a lot of other things I heard in the beginning, I didn't understand what it meant. Those words have come to mean a lot of things to me. I think I first began to understand what a trusted servant was when the group I was a member of asked me to be secretary. In that group, the secretary bought and made coffee, kept cookies, cream and sugar around, found a speaker for the meetings, opened and closed the meeting room and cleaned up. That seemed like a big order for someone who had about two months clean, but I figured people were starting to like and trust me, so I accepted the job.

Everything went along okay until the first big snowstorm on the day of our meeting. The wind was blowing and there was a bunch of snow on the ground. I looked outside and figured I really didn't want to go out, and probably no one would show up in that weather anyway. Then I thought

about that and figured any recovering addict who did show up wouldn't feel too good to find no coffee, let alone a locked door! So, grumbling all the way, I went to the room and did what I'd been asked to do, and everyone showed up, and they all seemed very happy to have some hot coffee, a warm room and recovery that snowy, cold day. That day, "trusted servant" meant showing up even when I didn't want to, because people trusted me.

The next position that I was asked to fill was that of GSR for a group. Since I'd never been to an area service meeting, I didn't exactly know what the GSR was expected to do, but I had faith in my Higher Power that it was okay, so off I went to my first area service meeting. Three or four hours later, I knew what an area service meeting was. It was long, and there was a lot of group business that was taken care of, and it was a little disorganized, but surprisingly the people there seemed to get a lot done. I could have used a nap afterwards, but since I'd had about ten cups of coffee so I wouldn't miss anything, I couldn't sleep when I got home. And the more I went to these meetings, the more I was amazed at how our Fellowship works, and works pretty effectively. I actually felt privileged to be a part of the group that helps the groups and N.A. as a whole in our area to work, and I learned about patience, and listening and even speaking my opinion out loud in front of a whole lot of people I didn't even know.

I am now involved in a subcommittee, and that has given me a new insight into what trusted servant means. There is always a lot of work to be done, and meetings a few times a month, and the people on the committee work together and have a good time getting things done for the good of N.A. There is a feeling of fellowship, and we have the traditions that are our guidelines, and I have learned about respect for those traditions, because, like the steps, they guide us and help us to serve the Fellowship.

And I haven't forgotten the foundation for my definition of trusted servant. I know today that when I empty ashtrays, and fold chairs, and help to clean up after meetings, I am a trusted servant of that group. When I do the work that needs to be done, whatever it is, I am earning the trust of the people in N.A., and when I help, I serve.

Anonymous



Report Links Service to Relapse

"Service can be a slippery place!" So says Dr. A. Nonymous, Director of the Institute for Scientific Recovery, and the soon-to-be-published results of a two year study appear to support his assertion.

While the accepted theory has been that service involvement contributes to recovery, research conducted during 1984 and 1985 has documented the previously unexplored relationship between service committee meetings and relapse.

Researchers, themselves recovering addicts, sat in on service committee meetings at all levels—area, region and world—in an exhaustive investigative effort probing the alleged service/relapse connection.

According to the recently released findings of this study, the following behaviors were repeatedly observed: argumentativeness, blaming, hostility, denial, defensiveness, irritability, intolerance, impatience, rigidity, resentment,

manipulation, self-centeredness, and irrational attempts to control, among others. Comments Dr. Nonymous, "Now I ask you—does that sound like recovery—or addiction? Some of these meetings were examples of a full-blown relapse, but without the drugs."

The Institute's scientists postulate that the stress created by the long hours, heated debates, political undercurrents, and personality clashes so often found in service committee meetings may result in an activation of the relapse dynamic.

"Some of this is to be expected," notes one researcher. "After all, these people are recovering, not recovered, and when the pressure builds there is a marked tendency to revert to the tactics and strategies of the past."

Dr. Nonymous is quick to point out that this reaction to service-related stress is not inevitable. "Many addicts, through the use of a personal inventory and by seeking the guidance of what they term their "Higher Power" have been able to greatly reduce the frequency, severity, and duration of these incidents. They are particularly fortunate to be in a Fellowship which provides them with the tools and principles needed to identify and understand these episodes of relapse and from them gain further insight into the nature of their disease and the status of their recovery. They must remember, however, that the measure of their success, both individually and in service, will continue to be not WHAT they may accomplish, but rather HOW they accomplish it."

Coming Soon: Invertebrates as Higher Power—The Pros and Cons.

E.H.
Washington



Honesty, Openness, Willingness to Try

"God I need some help! Why won't anyone help me?"

Familiar lines to all of us in recovery, whether addressed to our Higher Power or simply a response to our frustration. So often, in recovery as when we were using, we don't understand what stops us from getting effective help with our current crisis or problem. All we know is that it hurts right now and we want the hurt to stop immediately. Slowly, we learn to use the program slogans and information whenever we are in a jam. Honesty, openness and a willingness to try are the keys.

HONESTY. *Do we really want help with this situation?*

While using, maintaining a few unsolvable problems was necessary. Being a victim entitled us to self-pity, resentment, anger and continued return to our drug of choice. It also, in our minds, excused any of the abuse we dished out to others. After all, we were under so much stress because of our difficulties, the people we hurt should understand. If we really want help, we may have to give up the benefits of holding onto the problems.

OPENNESS. *How open are we to available alternatives? Do we want control? Do we want to dictate not only the solutions to our difficulties, but also the people and resources from whom we will tolerate assistance?*

Sometimes help comes most effectively from those we wish to avoid entirely. Perhaps through the authority figure we always hated, the parent, judge, parole officer, teacher, minister, doctor, boss or some other self-righteous S.O.B., that we decided we would never listen to again. Or it may come from that individual we looked down on, grateful that we were never "that bad." The answer may appear in

conversation with someone much newer in the program than ourselves, or from a person who knows little or nothing about addiction. We are not obligated to allow all these people to run our lives, but we do need to be open to them as possible avenues by which our Higher Power may provide us with the help we are seeking.

WILLINGNESS. *Are we willing to do our part? Do we do the footwork, or do we just sit, feeling abused, and wait for God or someone else to fix things for us? Are we working the steps, or did we skip the ones which involved discomfort and change, especially Steps Four through Nine? Does the answer lie in working the program?*

Step Twelve states that we sought to practice these principles in ALL our affairs. If we apply the steps and the Serenity Prayer to any problem, we become more able to recognize where we are powerless and where we are responsible to take action. We must be willing to let go of other people, places and things. Trying to control has never been helpful to us. Even more important, we must be willing to do our share of the work to resolve our difficulties. Whether work involves a change in our attitudes, or acceptance of our situation as a normal consequence of our previous behavior, or simply doing a full day's work for the pay received, it is our contribution to the resolution of our problem.

Most of all, we must fall back on Step Three. Our decision is to turn our will and our lives over to the CARE of God, as we understand Him. A Higher Power who cares deeply for each of us, He allows nothing to happen to us that isn't necessary for our continued growth and well-being. Do we really believe in that CARE, or do we only mouth the words with no commitment behind our decision. Learning to handle problems is part of our recovery. The difference today, however, is that we never again have to handle our difficulties alone. WE have the program, our groups, our sponsors and our Higher Power to support us. Through their help, the steps, honesty, openness and willingness, we find truly that "serenity is not the absence of a storm, but calm amid the storm."

Anonymous

Learning How to Live

We come to the Fellowship, our lives in shambles. Most of us broke, unemployed, divorced and unwanted. Some still have the outward appearance of a stable life. All of us have problems. Through detox and working the First Step, we begin to feel better. Our energy returns, appetites improve, dormant sex drives return and we wonder why we didn't find the program before. If we are serious, we find a sponsor, no matter how difficult it may seem or how hard it is to ask for help. Most sponsors will tell us to work the steps, go to meetings, stay out of dirty places, call them and stay out of new relationships for a year.

We usually ignore one or more parts of this advice and learn some things by our own mistakes. We are learning how to live—learning to do the things we never learned because we were too busy escaping life, taking drugs. We feared and hated the feelings that everyday life brought on and tried to get rid of them in oblivion. We learn how to get along with other people and have conscious contact with our Higher Power.

Sex is a problem. Many of us think that we can base our recovery on another person. Confused and almost overwhelmed by new feelings we have never experienced, we consider certain other people as "a gift from God" and they are, but not for sexual purposes. The Fellowship offers love and friendship but not the services of a thinly disguised brothel. The recommended year of celibacy is for getting in touch with our feelings, our own needs and wants, for changing values and morals, and for developing a relationship with our Higher Power. It is said that most people in recovery are young and won't put up with this advice. This makes it all the more valuable. Jumping from one relationship to the next at the first pang of loneliness leaves us no time to consider ourselves. The Fellowship offers us many opportunities to socialize with a multitude of people without concentrating on one.

Most of us, not having inherited wealth, find we must go to work, often for the first time, to support ourselves. Those of us who kept jobs throughout our active addiction often find

ourselves in an occupation we had no input in developing. Many of us choose jobs in the treatment field or go back to school. Luckily, re-education and continuing education are very popular with all people, not just recovering addicts, we get a chance to interact with others from different backgrounds in school. We find our attitudes at work changing also. No longer are we sullen, uncooperative participants, waiting only for our paycheck so we can go cop. We develop new understanding and friendships with our superiors and coworkers as human beings, and work better both as leaders and team members. Even if we dislike the work and are working toward something else, we find the one day at a time concept helpful here and realize that every day's work improves *our* experience and "sale-ability" in the job market. We also learn in some instances what our misguided aggressiveness did to those around us. We learn, painfully, through our mistakes, that authority doesn't make us the "cock on dung hill."

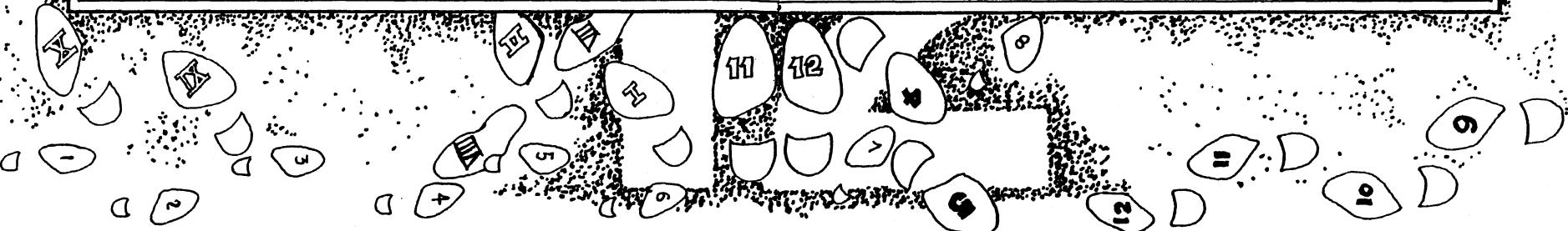
We begin to learn how to handle money. We start by putting our income into a bank rather than keeping it in our pocket for all too ready use. It's amazing how little cash you really need on hand to take care of daily necessities. A checking account can teach us how to balance figures. We go on to learn about credit cards, car loans, interest rates and begin to think about savings, retirement and IRA's. Sometimes, saving to go to an N.A. convention proves to us the importance of deferred gratification. We make our mistakes in this area, accept them and make amends through the use of the Twelve Steps applied to \$\$.

Being clean also teaches us that there is more to life than drugs or meetings. We discover that there is a whole big world out there around us that has been passing us by. It's filled with music, art, history, literature, education, sports, religion, politics, food, beautiful things, beautiful people and lots of different countries, cities and states that aren't anything like what we know. The Fellowship gives us a framework to build our lives on. It helps teach us how to live and recover into human beings. Go ahead, it's out there, go get it. Go for it! Live!

Anonymous

SPECIAL FEATURE

ON THE STEPS



Taken from the Bridge Back Newsletter—March-April, 1986
New York Regional Newsletter

STEP THREE

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

It is 6:27 p.m. and I have boarded the train after what seemed an endless day, filled with frustration, anger and tension. My only thought right now is when "they" say, "made a decision to turn my life and my will over to the care of God as I understand Him," "they" have no idea what my life is like.

But then—as the train rolls along—I think of where and how I was when I first saw the Third Step. I was physically shaky, having just been released from a hospital. I was mentally unstable, and unable to cope with the simplest of tasks. I had little or no grasp of any spiritual concepts, having been brought up atheist or agnostic; we rarely, if ever, made such distinction in my family. I was quite willing to turn what little I had over to anything or anyone that would have anything to do with me. Quite luckily, God as I understood Him meant "her," my sponsor; and it meant following her Good, Orderly Direction. In return, she praised my progress and guided me gently along, and I began to see results.

As I grew, mentally, spiritually, and yes, physically, my life began to take some interesting turns: new ideas, new places to live, some material success and a new sense of calm. I began to find that "turning it over" wasn't that easy anymore. Quite often I felt that I knew better, although my early training had me calling my sponsor anyway. Most times my instincts were good but other times my sponsor was able to point out motives in certain situations that were less than pure.

And now, having had continuous and daily experience with the Third Step for the big and small things, I find that the tools I used when I first started which had helped me to have the faith to move on and take risks are the same that I use today: my sponsor, my N.A. friends and meetings. These three things are as indispensable today as they were when I was doing "90 in 90."

So, once again, I find that the daily trials of life, my family, my work, my relationships, have me carrying the world on my shoulders. As the train pulls into the station, the weight begins to lift as I think of tonight's meeting. With relief, I remember what the Third Step teaches me: that decisions will be made with relative ease as a result of my daily footwork. I can let go and trust that the program will see me through the

good and the bad times, and that my willingness to continue to believe that I cannot, but we can, will lay another stone in this woman's growing foundation of recovery.

B.B.
New York

*Taken from the Marin Area Life Line Newsletter—April, 1986
Marin Area Newsletter*

THE THIRD STEP BACKWARDS

At first, the thought of seeking a power greater than myself sat like a nagging mystery in the back of my head. I was going to meetings every day, but it wasn't right away that I began to understand my Higher Power or make Him a part of my life.

My approach to praying was something I just had to try without knowing how or what to do. Even with helpful hints from friends at meetings, it felt very awkward. I would sit and look up at the night sky through my window, trying to envision some sort of rays or light coming down from wherever I thought my Higher Power was. I waited for a physical euphoria in my head, something similar to the feelings I'd had using drugs, the only sensations I knew. It did not come.

I kept going to meetings and working the steps with my sponsor. While doing the Seventh Step, and after having said the prayer, I felt a physical sensation not like ever before. This was new!! This was, I thought, God. But it didn't come down from the sky, these feelings came from within me!!

As I get further into the steps, my understanding of God progresses. His participation in my daily life becomes more obvious to me as I continue to seek his help. I've come to realize that He's always been with me, and that I'll always be aware of Him as long as I make that conscious effort to contact Him daily.

Three things have really helped me with the Third Step: Having become willing in the beginning to try a new way of life with an open mind. Not using drugs. And staying in contact with people who love me, people I find at meetings. I can now honestly say I'm doing the Third Step backwards: "As I

understand Him, I make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God."

P.V.
California

*Taken from the Twin Cities—February, 1986
Minneapolis/St. Paul Area Newsletter*

ONE ADDICT'S FOURTH STEP EXPERIENCE

Setting out to do a Fourth Step wasn't exactly the most enjoyable thing I've ever had to do. I mean it can be really painful to write all those defects and shortcomings down on paper. I had to take a good hard look at myself, my life, my deeds, and where my deeds had brought me. I felt a lot of shame and guilt about my using behavior, but I knew that if I didn't write it all down and take a Fifth Step that those secrets would eat away at me, and I'd use again and inevitably die. And at that point I was willing to risk it all to remain clean. What I risked was getting to know myself; who I really am. I'd had a lot of mixed up beliefs, the Fourth Step helped me clarify my values and where I'd failed to live up to them. As I looked back over my life, I wrote all of the things that brought up feelings of guilt or shame. And as I got all of it down on paper and reread it all, I got a sense of who I am and what I value.

It was painful to see how I had hurt myself and others through my behavior, yet the reward of being truly honest with myself for the first time in my life was so freeing. It was at this point that my faded outlook on life became more vibrant and more meaningful. I felt as though I were a pheonix, rising from the ashes of my self-destruction. Yet at the same time, I felt a sense of grief over losing the "old" me; self-destructive as the actions were yet they were me. I had to get reacquainted with the real me. I knew it would be a day by day process. I knew I needed to do it. Now I rise daily to the challenge of a new, clean, growing me. For this I thank the Fellowship of N.A. without which I would not be alive today.

Anonymous

ONE ADDICT'S SIXTH STEP EXPERIENCE

Step Six, "We were entirely ready to have God remove all"—*What? All? Aw man...*, "these defects of character." Whew, I had a hard enough time saying them to another human being.

That was how I seriously read Step Six for the first time. I wasn't even sure I covered them all in my Fifth Step. Now I had to be entirely ready to let go of them all.

By this time I was sure of one thing. I am an addict. I could whip through the first five at a pretty good clip, but Six had this kind of YOU BETTER BE SURE air to it. I wanted to get through the Twelve Steps now; be done with the work and get on with recovery. I suppose it was that word "entirely" that sent me back to the First Step. Then again, maybe it was about my relationship between work and recovery. Whatever, I just figured I missed something somewhere.

I needed to learn acceptance. The hard one was "work and recovery" vs. "work in recovery." Six months later I figured out that Step Six would be no overnight accomplishment and moved on to Step Two.

The God I had been working with was not an easy Man (my first hint) to get along with. When He said, "entirely" and "all," He meant it. The religion I was raised under said absolute this and absolute that. My world had been black and white. So I repeated my First Step and accepted the facts (my second hint) and began to read about Higher Powers.

I learned that the H.P. I could relate to was neither male or female. That male image was feeding my ideas about absolutes. Then I figured out that, for me, accepting the facts was an illusion. There are no facts. There's just acceptance. (I gradually learned the humor in my H.P.'s irony). Yes, I am truly an addict. My H.P. agreed with Me (Ahhmmm...) okay, okay—I agreed with my H.P.—that acceptance could be more perfect than mine was. H.P. taught me with the first book I opened.

For me, as long as my acceptance level was stabilized, I didn't have to work too hard. If the non-acceptance got a

little heavy, the long arm of H.P. would begin to fade. So basically I learned some good communication, trust, and faith with my H.P.

Ten months after the first time, I looked at the Sixth Step again. It was then that I saw the word "ready." I worked TEN months only to be ready. Well, I did learn the humor in good ol' H.P.'s irony.

So, in retrospect, H.P. got me ready...and good too.

Anonymous

STEP SEVEN

"We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

I did my Seventh Step along with the Sixth right after my Fifth Step. If you can understand that, you are doing great. That is the way my sponsor had done his Seventh Step, so I did the same. At the time, I was so relieved to have finished my Fourth Step and to be able to give it away—I would have done anything he told me.

I want, more than anything on this planet, to stay clean and I am willing to do everything that is necessary to do so. That means I must live with the steps of N.A. I cannot just intellectually take the steps, but I must incorporate them in my daily life if I want to live in some degree of comfort and grow spiritually. But at first, I do take the steps intellectually, and then a deeper understanding of each one comes about and enters my whole being.

At first I did not pay much attention to the Seventh Step. As a matter of fact, I did not see why it was necessary, for the Sixth would remove my defects of character and I would become a lovable, spiritual human being. (You can see how my mind worked.) It did not happen that way. The longer I stayed clean, the more subtle my thinking and behavior became. It was easy to recognize the defects—anger, lust, sloth, etc.—but shortcomings?

What are shortcomings? For me, they are anything that stands in the way of my spiritual growth and feeds my

disease. I continually have to get out of my own way and let that spirit shine through. One of my biggest shortcomings is the feeling that I have nothing to offer. But I do, thanks to N.A. I have my experience, strength and hope to offer, not only to the program, but to any suffering addict I come into contact with in the world as a whole. I have a full life today and I realize that I am just another human being trying to enjoy my journey on this planet. I no longer have to be alone, isolated with my disease.

Usually, my shortcomings are pointed out to me by others that I come into contact with. How I react depends on how spiritually fit I am. Sometimes I get defensive and act hostile. Other times, I will admit my shortcoming and realize that I have more work to do on myself. It is a continuing process of growth and I cannot grow if I think I have "arrived." I have to be humble enough to ask for the help I need on a daily basis to stay clean and grow spiritually.

Anonymous
California

Taken from the N.A. News—April, 1986
Northern New York Regional Newsletter

STEP NINE

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

The Eighth Step was difficult for me. As a rider of the Zoomland Express in my using days, it took me a long time to put together enough memory to figure out who was *in* my life, let alone who I'd harmed. Immediately after beginning the list—in *written* form, thank you—my fear of the project left me. Praying for willingness brought fast results, leaving me face to face with Step Nine.

Somewhere along the road I asked, "Who am I doing this for?" I got the answer when I thought of my reactions to feelings of guilt: decrease of self-esteem, refusal to be vulnerable, defiance, self-pity, self-loathing, isolation and general insecurity. Who do these things hurt first and foremost? Me.

I'd heard from some people that verbal amends included telling those involved "I'm sorry," and that the phrase helped heal the amends-maker because of the humility required to say those words. In all humility (read: acceptance of reality) I came to realize that "sorry" was not a magical word for me; it would not open the door to freedom from guilt. I walked into recovery a five-star wimp—I used the word "sorry" to take on responsibility that I had no right to bear. "I'm sorry that it's raining, that you bumped into me, that your car won't start..." On the other hand, I used "sorry" as a defense. "I know I haven't done the dishes in three days and that I've been sitting around for hours, but you can't be angry, because I said I was sorry." One of my roommates early in my recovery got fed up with my attitude. She told me I was the sorriest thing she'd ever seen.

In amongst admissions of sickness and good or neutral intentions, I need to say I was *wrong*. As I take responsibility for my actions, I can express sorrow or regret, but I need to say I was *wrong*.

The bulk of my amends are living amends. I can only make them by staying clean and taking the actions necessary for me to grow beyond my old and persisting twisted methods of dealing with life. If I have broken trust, I need to try to be more trustworthy. If I have been jealous, I need to try to be more loving and trusting. I can make amends to former employers by being a better employee *now*. I can amend wrongs against old friends by admitting my *wrong*, by showing them that I care enough to reestablish contact, and by being a better friend to those around me. I make amends to the dead by *living*, praying for them and becoming healthier.

Recently I felt the need to make amends to a member of our Fellowship whom I love dearly, yet was unable (more than unwilling) to speak to. I prayed for him frequently and wrote specific blessings; that his life would be made full and prosperous. Through these indirect amends, I found myself both willing *and* able to make direct amends. Our friendship is now healing.

How do I make direct amends to the person I hurt most consistently, both in addiction and in recovery? I take myself to meetings, I don't use one day at a time, I talk and listen to

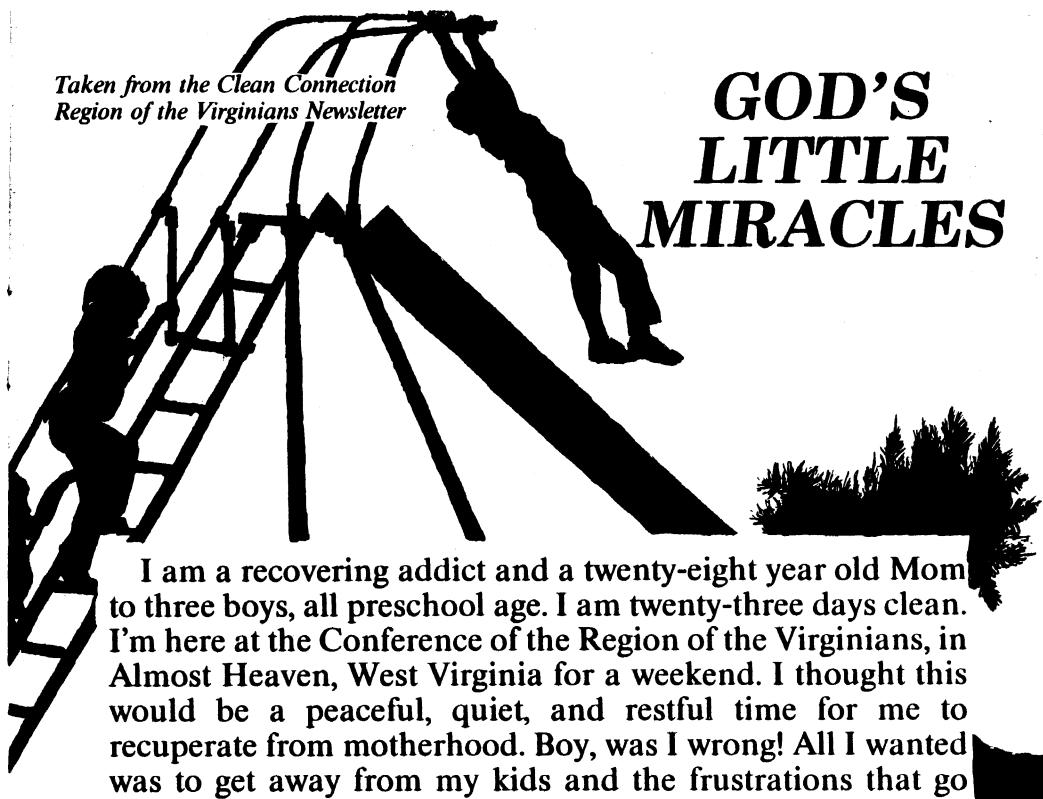
people, I love my Creator, I work the Steps and read the Basic Text; after that, I am free to do as I damn well please. Because of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, "what I damn well please" has changed/is changing a lot, and the longer I live this way, the fewer things I do that I need to make amends for. Even when I feel my worst, this is better than I'd ever hoped for. It works!

A.J.
New York

*Taken from the N.A. Today—April 1986
Australasian Regional Newsletter*



Taken from the Clean Connection Region of the Virginians Newsletter



I am a recovering addict and a twenty-eight year old Mom to three boys, all preschool age. I am twenty-three days clean. I'm here at the Conference of the Region of the Virginians, in Almost Heaven, West Virginia for a weekend. I thought this would be a peaceful, quiet, and restful time for me to recuperate from motherhood. Boy, was I wrong! All I wanted was to get away from my kids and the frustrations that go with the maternal job.

I don't know much about what this program of recovery is all about, but I'd like to share an experience that I've had here that has to do with humility and gratitude. There is a small child here with all of us at this conference. During a meeting, this child was making loud, disruptive noises while he was playing, totally oblivious to the seriousness of his surroundings. Instantly, I was full of anger based on my selfish desires to be free from that kind of noise that makes my skin crawl when I let it. I leaned over to the person next to me and whispered, "I came up here to get away from that noise." The person very softly replied, "That child is deaf. He can't hear himself and his noise isn't bothering him."

I sank in my socks with humility and thanked God for giving me three healthy, happy sons with the gifts of hearing and noise making. It's difficult beyond belief to be a mom in a life that's unmanageable. The responsibility is awesome! But I'm grateful to God for blessing me with my children and the strength and courage it takes to love and raise those children just one day at a time.

Anonymous

The Joke Was on Me



This is not just another, "Get involved in service or you're gonna die" article.

When I first got clean, being a part of the crowd was very important to me. I soon found out that getting other people's coffee during a meeting was a good way to insure that I would have someone to talk to after the meeting. Granted, my motives weren't pure, but they were effective.

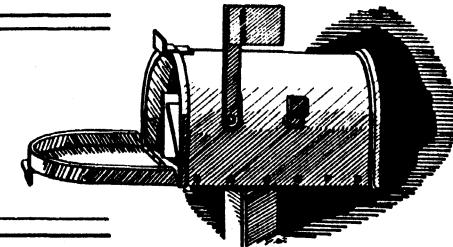
Then one day, I was in a meeting and the topic was "unconditional love." Everything that was discussed by the old timers in that meeting had to do with being of service to others and "working" on not expecting a return of any kind. I brushed this off as just another one of those religious holdovers that seems to find its way into the Fellowship from time to time.

Hah! What a joke. I went on getting coffee and feeling smug about it, because I always had someone to talk to. Then one night I got coffee for a guy that I thought was really my bro and went to talk to him after the meeting, as usual. Well, he was talking to a good looking red-head and couldn't be bothered with me. Needless to say, I was mad. So I stomped off and went to cry on my sponsor's shoulder about it and couldn't find him. Twice as angry, I went home to stew. I planned on how I was going to get even with my buddy for slighting me. So I went to the meeting the next night and saw my buddy there. I walked up to him as if nothing happened and asked him if he wanted a cup of coffee. He looked back at me, and smiled, as if nothing had happened, and said "yes." (This wasn't working out like I had planned). I went and got the coffee, and something inside clicked into place. Suddenly, I wasn't mad anymore. The meeting on unconditional love made sense to me.

I don't have to buy your time or your friendship. I don't need to buy your love. I only need to give something freely without any catches to remember what was given to me. That's true service.

Anonymous

From Our Readers



Dear N.A. Way,

Thank heavens the N.A. Fellowship is blooming here on the East Coast! About ten years ago several addicts who had a desire to stay clean tried to get a meeting going following the procedures developed on the West Coast, and the group folded with little sustained interest. Now there is a successful group meeting a mile from where I live and another to start shortly within one half mile. I am beginning to have the opportunity to make a meeting every night. What a Godsend.

As addicts, you can imagine what it means to have a daily program that works, and to have the support of others in their recovery. For years I was unable to stay clean and recover from my alcohol addiction, because I failed to grasp that my disease could be released again in the form of a compulsion to use to marijuana, then coke, then eventually back to the devastating sedative alcohol.

Abstaining from alcohol kept me from dying an alcoholic death, but did not teach me of the full dangers of my addiction. N.A. is finally making this point clear as a bell to me, and I am grateful beyond words.

Thank you for your service work. I am looking forward to receiving monthly copies of the *N.A. Way*, and I will share them with others.

Have a beautiful day; the experience, strength, and hope that we share, along with the spiritual principles of the program, work to make it that way for me almost every day; and the difficult days, well, they are learning days. I'm grateful for them too.

G.D.
Connecticut

Dear N.A. Way,

I just had to write to say how grateful I am to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The Twelve Steps literally gave me life. I realize now that I had not lived before

I reached out and found the program. All I had done for years was exist, use drugs, be depressed and hate myself and the world. For years I was always wondering why I was here and what the world was all about.

I now find great joy upon awakening to each new day. I feel very much a part of the world around me today. I know now why I am here, and it is definitely by the Grace of a loving God. Every breath I take is the gift of a Power greater than myself. If I had been completely on my own all those years, I would not be breathing now.

I have been gifted with a brand new start in the same old world, a clean slate, so to say. I am learning to change within myself so that even though the world is basically the same, it now looks new and exciting, and just plain fun.

I know that if I walk those Twelve Steps, if I truly try to do what I believe God wants me to do, and if I stay close to the unconditional love this Fellowship offers, I will be able to stay on this path to a freedom that I never knew existed.

I believe I have been given this new life so that I am now responsible for passing on the message of freedom from addiction to the people that are still out there suffering. All they have to do is ask, and I will take their hand and tell them they don't have to be alone and afraid anymore. They do have a choice.

Thanks N.A.

S.S.
California

Dear *N.A. Way*, THERE IS HOPE—GET INVOLVED

I have been coming around N.A. for about three-and-one-half years, on and off. But this time I have more clean time than I ever had before. The way it is working for me is through service work. I am very involved with H&I work in N.A. As a matter of fact, I am the co-chairperson of H&I in my area. You have heard many times that we cannot keep what we have without giving it away. That is why I am writing this.

Tonight I went to a meeting and came home and took an H&I literature count for the area. After that, I sat down, calmed myself and started reading the June issue of the *N.A. Way*. I read a story of a young member, and this is what let

me realize what I have done differently this time. You see, I have really reached out this time and got working in this way of life. So really, all I know is that if you come around and get involved, there is hope.

This program is the best thing in my life today.

S.K.
Tennessee

Dear *N.A. Way*,

“ADDICTS ANONYMOUS”

I'm really glad to see so many articles in the *N.A. Way* concerning our identity. I remember the very first issue of the magazine had an article written on this identity thing. A lot of addicts have come to understand the disease of addiction because of the efforts of the *N.A. Way*. Understanding allows acceptance for me.

The recent revisions in our literature will eliminate many contradictions that exist in our written message also. I'm grateful to see this action taken too. But what about our name? Narcotics refer to one specific type of drugs. It has nothing to do with the disease of addiction. It's another “catch-22”; you know, like when you share with someone that “sober” doesn't fit in our program and they point out a reference to “sober” in our Basic Text!

I feel our Fellowship's name is a contradiction in itself. Our name seems to undermine our efforts to eliminate inappropriate language and terminology. If we are to strengthen our identity we should strongly consider a name change. That is why I titled this “Addicts Anonymous,” this is much more appropriate to me. Of course, if we abbreviate it, it would be A.A., but who says we have to abbreviate our name anyway?

I would like to see other articles on this topic. I know I'm not alone!

Anonymous
Alabama

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I would like to see an article concerning quality. There's a statement that says that “quality, not quantity, is the most important aspect of recovery.” How does one measure quality? Is it measured by the outside, the inside, or both, or neither?

Also, in the I.P., *Another Look*, it is stated that, "If we accept empathy as the capacity to see ourselves knowingly, without losing our own identity, then we recognize a sameness in both." How does one do this without losing one's own identity? How does one maintain one's own identity?

C.B.
South Carolina

Dear N.A. Way,

AN ADDICT PRAYER

Please watch over this addict. Be my Power as I strive for contended recovery. Let me lean on You for love and forgiveness. Help me be honest with myself. Keep me grateful so I always value my recovery. Let me see the beauty of a new beginning each day, and the rewards of a sunset and a day well lived. Help me to forgive those who harmed me and to forgive myself for my shortcomings. Let me appreciate freedom from active addiction and that awful craving to use drugs. Keep me close to the people who know me best and love me anyway. Thank you for the gift of recovery. I did nothing to deserve this gift, but I want to keep it. May I always express my gratitude by reaching out to still-suffering addicts, so they need not die without having had a chance for recovery.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way,

TOGETHER WE DO RECOVER

*From the newcomer I remember my desperation and isolation.
From the relapser I see living proof that addiction gets worse.
From the recovering addict I share the experience of freedom.
From the oldtimer and newcomer I receive my hope.*

T.L.
Pennsylvania

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.

CALIFORNIA: Oct 24-26; So Calif 8th Annl Conv; Hyatt Regency, Long Beach, CA; CC of NA, Box 60846, Pasadena, CA 91106-6846; Valerie (213) 370-8052; Peggy (818) 505-8505

2) Mar 27-29, 1987; 9th NCCNA; Marriott Hotel, Burlingame, CA; 9th NCCNA, Box 6323, San Mateo, CA 94403;

CANADA: Oct 10-12; 2nd Bilingual Convention Montreal 86; MBCNA, Victoria Stn, PO Box 313, Westmont, Mont., Quebec H3Z 2V8; (514) Paul 484-4048; Beverly 489-1748

2) Apr 10-12 1987; 1st Annl Ontario Reg Conf; Windsor NA, Box 175, 2890 Dougall Ave, Windsor, Ontario N9E 1R9; (519) Bob 977-1743; John 255-7318

FLORIDA: Sep 19-21; London Alternative Conv for NA; LACNA, PO Box 2514, Ft. Myers Bch., FL 33931; (813) Pauline 263-2274; John 332-3467; Joe 332-4083

2) Nov 13-16; Serenity By The Sea; Colonnades Hotel, Singer Island, WPB, FL; Recovery 5, Box 164, Delray Bch, FL; (305) Ray 734-2601; Joe 499-2354

3) Oct 10-13; Keys Recovery Weekend III; Marriott's Casa Marina, Key West; Keys Recovery Group, Box 4664, Key West, FL 33041; Pat 296-2810; Susan 296-4420

HAWAII: Jan 9-11, 1987; 3rd Annl Gathering of the Fellowship; P.O. Box 23436, Honolulu, HI, 96813; Claudia (808) 235-0819

KENTUCKY: Oct 25; Kentucky Area H&I Awareness Day; Kentucky Area; Box 23544, Lexington, KY 40503; David 252-5151; Scot 272-7054

LOUISIANA: Nov 7-9; Second Chance Group 4th Campout; Burns Point State Park, So of Centerville LA; (318) Howard 386-5161; Fred 828-5888

MAINE: Sep 12-14; We're A Miracle III; ASC of Maine, PO Box 5309, Portland ME 04104; (207) Bruce C. 772-4558; Lisa D. 773-5492

MICHIGAN: Jul 3-5 1987; Freedom III RCNA of MI; Interested Speakers should submit tapes A.S.A.P. for review to Ron W., P.O. Box 30, Flint, MI 48501

NEBRASKA: Sep 19-21; NRCNA III; Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island; NRC 3, Box 1186 Grand Island, NE 68802; Dave (402) 346-3711

NEW JERSEY: Oct 4; 1st Annl East Coast Basketball Tourn; Essex County College Gym; NENJASC, Box 2132, Elizabeth, NJ 07207; Vincent (201) 673-8034

NORTH DAKOTA: Oct 18; 5th Annl Fargo/Moorhead Banquet; (701) Carrie O. 280-9072; Chris C. 237-6955

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct 31-Nov 2; TSRCNA-IV; TSRSCNA-IV, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; (412) Ken J. 731-9219; Jeff W. 363-8444;

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov 7-9; Serenity Festival IV; Myrtle Beach, SC; David Pressley, PO Box 91, Columbia, SC 29202; Stan (803) 781-2841

TENNESSEE: Nov 26-30; 4th Regional Conv.; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fourth & Union, Nashville, TN; PO Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212; Charlie (615) 868-3150

TEXAS: Mar 27-29, 1987; LSRCNA II; LSRCNA II Pro Subcom, PO Box 300794, Houston, TX 77230-0794; (713) Gino 697-4045; Mack 870-9048

WASHINGTON: Oct 24-26; 9th Annl Conv.; Everett Pacific Hotel; PNWCNA #9, Box 5393, Everett, WA 98201; (206) Mike S. 672-6848; Russ F. 259-4904

WISCONSIN: Oct 24-26; 3rd Wisconsin Conv; WSNAC III, P.O. Box 3305, Madison, WI 53704; (608) 258-1747 (phoneline)

Taken from the N.A. Today—May 1986
Australasian Regional Newsletter

the loner



I've had so many bad experiences in my (sexual) relationships



haven't any energy left for going out looking, actively searching to to speak...



If someone were just to appear on the HORIZON, perhaps I'd...



... NO, I'd rather be on my own, there are too many RISKS...



give some time to myself for a bit, and establish my own comforts...



IF SOMEBODY DOESN'T APPEAR ON THAT HORIZON, PRETTY QUICK, I'LL GO MAD!



THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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state of: _____ zip: _____, (phone): _____, on the day and year first above written.

ASSIGNER: (SIGNATURE); SPOUSE: (SIGNATURE)

ASSIGNEE: (TO BE COMPLETED LATER BY WSO)

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
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.
2. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
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.
5. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
6. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
7. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
8. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
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.
9. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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