

THE N.A. Way[®]

MAGAZINE

April 1991

\$1.75



Working together

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 these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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THE N.A. Way[®] M A G A Z I N E

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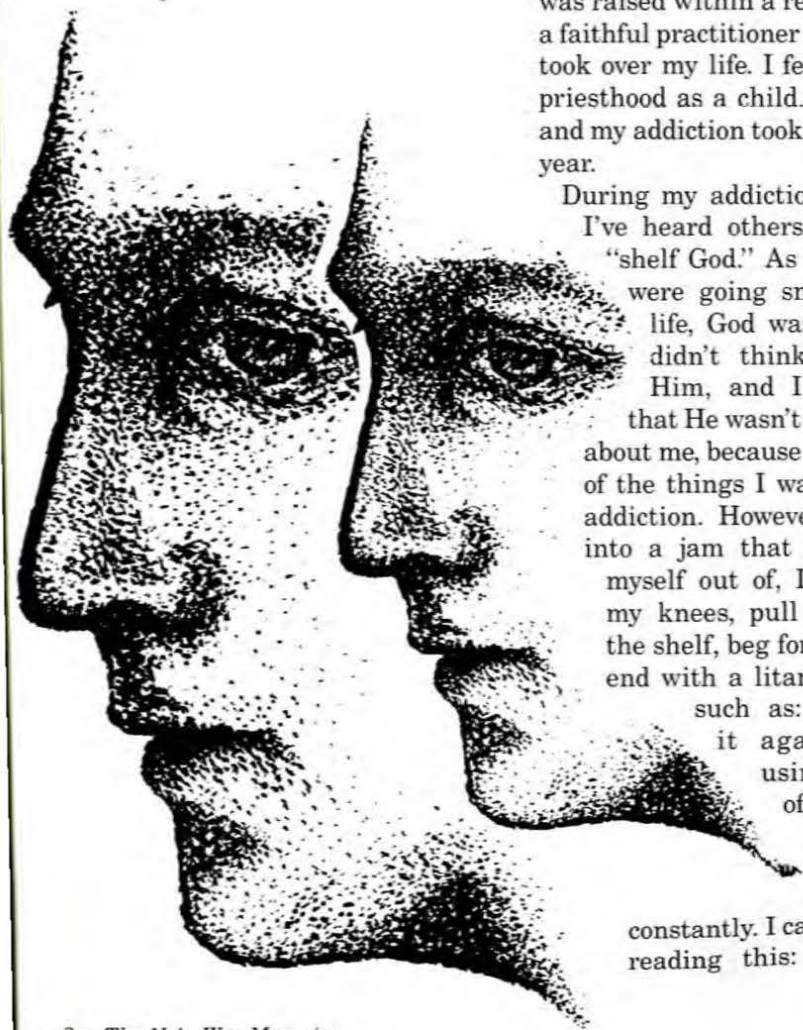
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Subscription rates, please remit in U.S. or Canadian currency: 1 yr. \$15, 2 yrs. \$28, 3 yrs. \$39, single copies \$1.75. Please inquire about bulk rates.

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The N.A. Way Magazine is published monthly by World Service Office, Inc., 16155 Wyandotte Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406. Second class postage paid at Van Nuys, CA. POSTMASTER: please send address changes to The N.A. Way Magazine, P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999.

The Second Step



My process of coming to believe has evolved over time. I started this journey of recovery in August of 1984.

Initially my focus was on a Higher Power, whom I choose to call God today, relieving me of my compulsion to use various chemicals against my will. The First Step had proven to me my powerlessness and unmanageability and had indeed created a vacuum in my life that no human power could fill. As a child I felt that I had a conscious contact with a Higher Power. I was raised within a religion and was a faithful practitioner until addiction took over my life. I felt a call to the priesthood as a child. Then puberty and my addiction took off in the same year.

During my addiction, I had what I've heard others refer to as a "shelf God." As long as things were going smoothly in my life, God was on a shelf. I didn't think much about Him, and I surely hoped that He wasn't thinking much about me, because I was ashamed of the things I was doing in my addiction. However, when I got into a jam that I couldn't get myself out of, I would fall to my knees, pull God down off the shelf, beg for Her help, and end with a litany of promises, such as: I'll never do it again, I'll stop using (tomorrow, of course!), I'll go back to church and will pray

constantly. I caution everyone reading this: never under-

estimate the power of those prayers said in the desperation of addiction. More times than not those prayers were answered, and in the way I asked for them to be answered. Then I would put God back on the shelf, go on about my life the way I wanted to, and forget all those promises until the next crisis struck.

It was after that I came into the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, the home for which I had been praying. When I took this Second Step in N.A., my sponsor and I read the step out of the Basic Text and all that I could hear was about the insanity of this disease. My sponsor shared his experience, strength and hope. I finally, sat down and started writing about what this step means to me, and I started writing about the insanity of addiction.

Something didn't feel right though, and I couldn't quite put my finger on it. It seemed that as I wrote about the insanity of addiction what I was doing, in fact, was rehashing my First Step. So I went back and read the step over again. All of a sudden it struck me, insanity is nowhere in the Second Step! The Second Step talks about sanity. This was my disease at work. My disease likes to take positive concepts, like sanity, and turn them into negative ones, like insanity.

When I began to look at this step from the standpoint of sanity, everything about it took on a new meaning. What I came to realize is that this step offers me an opportunity to dream. It gives me a chance to dream about what it would be like to live a sane life, something that is completely foreign to me.

So, I began to define what a sane life would be like. The basis of a sane life for me would be a deep level of self-acceptance and self-love. Not having to constantly seek the approval and affection of others, but to get it from deep within. Then I wouldn't have to prostitute myself the way I always have in order to get other's acceptance. The next aspect of a sane life would be a life lived in some kind of balance, something which I know little about. I decided that a balanced life for me would be one lived proportionately in all areas.

A sane life would be a life lived with the ability to experience and recognized the full range of human emotions. The ability to feel the feeling, but not get stuck in it, or place unrealistic expectations on it. To recognize and believe that feelings are neither good or bad, that they simply are. To see each of our feelings as keys on a piano, where the melody of life is being played.

At this point I was really getting into creating this sane life, and would have written pages if it didn't suddenly occur to me that I might be limiting the miracle. If I haven't ever lived a sane life, how am I going to be able to define it precisely? What I had written up to that point felt right; the rest I'll leave up to my Higher Power.

Anonymous

Fiscal vigilance

A little talked about problem in this fellowship is the matter of money and theft, and prosecution of offenders.

There are many groups, areas and regions wrestling with this problem today. It is no surprise that we lose money to theft. Where the crisis arises is what to do about it when it is discovered. If theft occurs through forgery it is a simple matter that the bank prosecutes and the group, area or region is powerless to do anything about the institution exercising its rights in the matter. It is a different spiritual question when that law has not been broken and it is a case where the cash was never deposited or cash was spent on something other than the stated purpose. To confront a member on their activity and ask for restitution is a difficult step for any group, area or region to take. We all seem to somehow feel wrong when we find someone less than honest in his

or her program. There have been cases where confrontation has resulted in an agreement to repay and then there were no payments made. What then? In some cases the area has proceeded to retain an attorney and prosecute. This is usually not done without considerable discussion at all levels and attempts made to resolve the situation in some other way.

This shows me that we are willing to hold each other responsible for our actions. Throughout most of our active addiction, many of us were not responsible for much of anything. In N.A. we say we are here to learn to live clean. My understanding of that is to become honest and responsible for my actions. What message of recovery do we give if we let unlawful and spiritually unsound actions go by unnoticed and not addressed in some fashion? I think we all hope that the steps are all we will need to run a personal program, but if that were true, why do we have meetings, sponsors and friends to be "our eyes and ears?"

In my personal program I have grown the most when I have been held accountable. I knew when I had my first group treasurer's position that the group money was not collected for me to put gas in my car, but that's what I did. I was lovingly and non-judgementally asked about the group money and given the opportunity to make amends before too much time has passed. I made restitution and kept the position. The person who confronted me did it for my personal recovery. I couldn't have lived with the secret very much longer and stayed clean. Since that time I try to

make sure I don't set anyone else up for the same temptation. I ask questions and offer to help people in their positions, if I can. I believe we are all basically trying to do the right thing and often don't know how.

As members, we need also to take the responsibility for our part when money is taken. Did we set that person up through our unwillingness to get involved? Did we elect someone to a position and not tell them how to do it? Do we have reasonable safeguards on the fellowship money? For instance, two signature accounts, asking for the bank statements with treasurer's reports, having only one person handling N.A. money, handling all cash only at area or regional business meetings, where everyone

can see what's going on and ask questions to understand what's going on. We need reasonable financial reserves, not savings accounts of money that never gets used, just waiting for someone to steal.

These are just a few of the things I believe, as members of N.A., we are all responsible for. We can't pick and choose the laws we abide by without realizing the consequences of our actions. Sometimes we will be able to make immediate amends for the mistakes we make, sometimes we will have made choices which fall outside the spiritual domain of the program, and we need to realize that membership in N.A. does not mean we are above or beside the law.

V.A., Washington



Keeping the faith

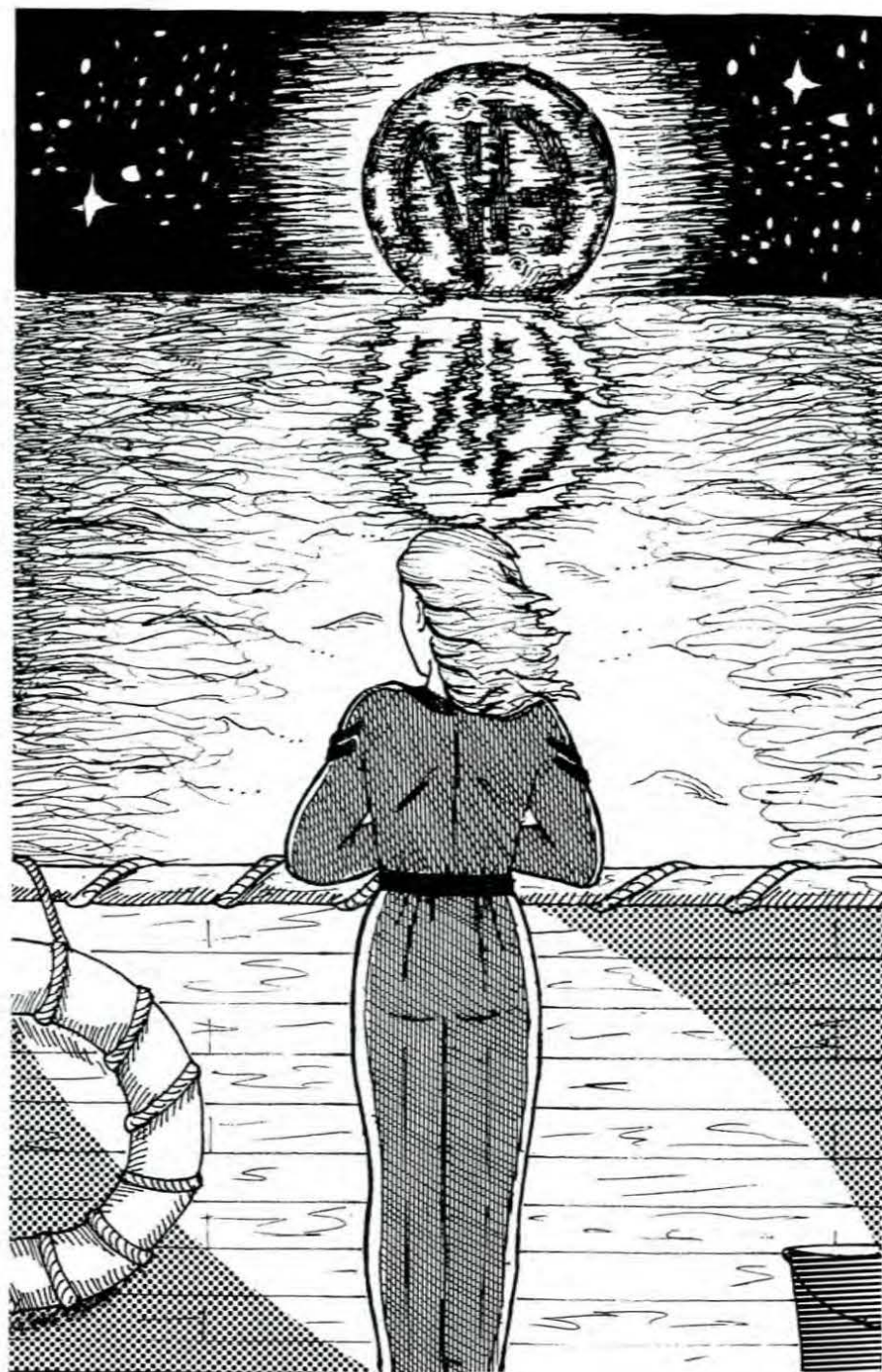
Knowing that we had N.A. members in the Persian Gulf, we solicited an article from a woman who is currently serving aboard a hospital ship there. What follows is her letter, written just before the bombing began.

Well, another day of waiting is slowly ticking along aboard the good ship *Mercy*. We had a surprise six-hour liberty in Bahrain last night to quickly gather supplies and 240 more crew members. They had moved us from our primary anchorage because a mine was sighted near us. I really don't think Saddam would be foolish enough to target a hospital ship, but other crazies might be. I fortunately was on a good-duty section and was able to make several phone calls. I haven't received any mail for twelve days, and I'm having withdrawal pains. It is just like a drug out here; information from family and friends calms the nerves.

Our fifth-month anniversary of deployment is tomorrow, January 10th. That's a long time to be gone with only 48 hours notice to get underway. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to end up out here, but I will never forget what a friend said to me when I had six months clean. One, my recovery comes first, above and beyond anything else in my life, because if I'm not recovering, I won't have a life. Two, go to meetings and share my experience, strength and hope. Three, work the steps to the best of my ability *every day*, and remember that I am not alone. These words I have never forgotten.

Over the years, I think I have learned a few things. Mostly what I have the power to change, which is only myself. Being aboard this ship I've felt even more powerless than when I was using. Mostly all my decisions have been taken away from me or are changed and overruled. I feel I can empathize with the addict in jail. I'm told when to get up, when to eat, when to work, when to sleep. My choices are very limited, and now they are talking about sharing my rack (cot) with another ship mate. With all the new crew coming to augment the ship's company, they don't have enough racks for all of us. We would work our twelve-hour shift, then switch work and sleep with our bunk mate. This is what is known as "hot-racking." If there is a war and we are full, I don't mind, but with nothing really to occupy our time I can see morale sinking fast.

My morale has been boosted with mail from friends in the fellowship. The letters I sent to *Meeting by Mail*



encouraged a lot of people to write. It was wonderful, but I got so many I couldn't write everyone back. I went to a meeting in Dubai, United Arab Emirate, and two people at the meeting had read my letters and recognized me when I introduced myself. Small world. Just to sit in a meeting, off the ship, was wonderful. It had been four months since I had said goodbye to the fellowship in Northern California, and experienced my last hug there.

I've tried to get a meeting going on board ship, but I'm usually having a meeting by myself. When it started, we had some support. Unfortunately, liberty call has much stronger appeal than a meeting. I've sought out people to share with when my attitude slips, but not always another recovering person. I prefer to write letters or listen to tapes sent out here by friends. I had a delightful surprise when I received a box of tapes recorded at a group I used to attend regularly in Miami, Florida. It contained tapes of all the people I knew and who knew me when I first came to the fellowship. I've been listening to those tapes almost constantly since they arrived. I've laughed, cried and identified, and temporarily left this ship, and crisis, in my mind. Never underestimate the power of a meeting, even if it is on tape.

My emotions have fluctuated wildly since I've deployed. There is no steady flow of accurate information. I've experienced sensory overload with rumors and sensory deprivation with lack of real news. We get videotapes of the network news from the U.S.A., about five to six days old.

Sometimes we watch the same newscast three or four times, just because any news is better than none. Right now, as we draw closer to the U.N. deadline, my basic emotion is fear, real fear. The first three steps have helped to deal with these emotions. I am the most powerless I've ever been while recovering. All I can do is accept where I am, and do the best job I can. A wonderful lesson I've learned was that God wasn't going to give me more than He and I could handle in 24 hours. And that's as true today as it was when I learned it.

Fear comes to life during emergency conditions when a missile is launched, gas mask, combat casualty training, and abandon ship exercises. These are realities of our lives out here. However, faith is a reality for me also. I remember that lesson and realize how far I've come in my recovery. God truly has never given me anything He and I couldn't handle in 24 hours, and nothing is going to change that now. I've been given so many gifts in my recovery, and to know I can handle this, with a little help from H.P. and my friends, is a gift beyond measure.

We woke up two hours ago to the news that we were bombing Iraq and Kuwait. They just called for outgoing mail, so I've enclosed what I've written so far. I'm afraid life will be busy. I had trouble getting started, so I just started it as a letter to my sponsor. God help us all to keep the faith.

*Love in Recovery,
Tay*

The right stuff

The gifts I continue to receive from working these steps in my life blow me and my self-centered disease away!

The Sixth Step is especially amazing. I've been working on it for a year now, and the more of my defects that I own, the more answers come from you, dear H.P., about the actions necessary.

I feel like I'm getting a choice I never had before, and from such an unlikely place. Three years ago I would never in my wildest dreams have imagined that owning something as humiliating and unwanted as "self-centered need for attention" would force a mean, full-blown migraine away!

I wake up at four a.m., with my skull about to screaming-burst-open over my left eye. These headaches are so bad and they helped keep me out there so long, that, even as I write this, another of my defects, "self-centered fear," tells me to stop writing—it might come back.

My ever deepening faith in the process of recovery tells me I have the choice today to share my pain and allow my H.P. to turn it into the peace and joy of recovery instead.

The weird thing is how these gifts of recovery are so much more and more obvious gifts from a power greater than me or my disease! I'm in one of the medical professions and spent years on drugs and both physical and

psychotherapy and, yes, religion, too, trying to cure these headaches. My best thinking said I'd done it all and that suicide was probably the only way out.

I don't have enough words to say how grateful I am that picking up the pen, the phone, and most of all, raising my hand at a meeting—that these tools are now powerful enough to take away killer headaches clean!

The thing that's really wild is this—if my self-centered need for attention and my pride and ego hadn't been disappointed when I didn't get something I really wanted and thought I had to have, then I wouldn't have received this most beautiful, precious gift of life this morning. Thank you H.P., for the Sixth Step, for my sponsor and for all the surprising gifts of recovery in N.A.

Anonymous



The meeting from hell tour

Are you tired of hearing the same old whining and moaning in your local meetings? Tired of relapse and relationship meetings? Can't stand another one of those meetings where the topic is "the cat pissed on the rug and I feel like using?" Could be that what your recovery needs is a "Meeting From Hell Tour."

The Meeting From Hell Tour concept started back in the spring of 1989, when my sponsor and I needed to get away from the socializing and nonsense that was going on in our local meetings. Now don't get me wrong, these meetings were the foundations of my recovery, but I had hit a point where I was hungry for knowledge. Knowledge that I wasn't getting in some of my meetings because I knew everybody and everybody knew me. So I would get to a meeting and start to fool around and shoot the breeze with my buddies and I wasn't getting all that I could from this program. I knew who was doing who and that was becoming more important. It was time for a change!

See, during my active addiction when I wasn't getting what I needed I went on the road to find it. I went to Pennsylvania for a beer once, and all the way to Georgia for some magic mushrooms. I was told in early recovery to put the same effort into

my recovery that I put into getting my drugs. So my sponsor and I got it together and, in the true tradition, set out "on the road."

It started with the two of us going to meetings every day for two weeks, but there was one stipulation—it had to be a meeting that neither one of us had ever been to before. And what an adventure it was! It was one of the greatest things I ever did for my recovery. We went all over the state. Monmouth, Ocean, Essex and Warren counties, Bergen, Passaic, Hudson, all

over. There was no stopping us. We flipped a coin to decide which meeting to go to. We got out on the road in one direction, changed our minds, and went the opposite way. But we always went to a meeting, and we stayed clean together.

Since that original "Meeting from Hell Tour," we have been to Staten Island, Philadelphia and Manhattan. I have been to North Carolina and Virginia with another friend of mine, and upstate New York. We met people and made friends from all over the place.



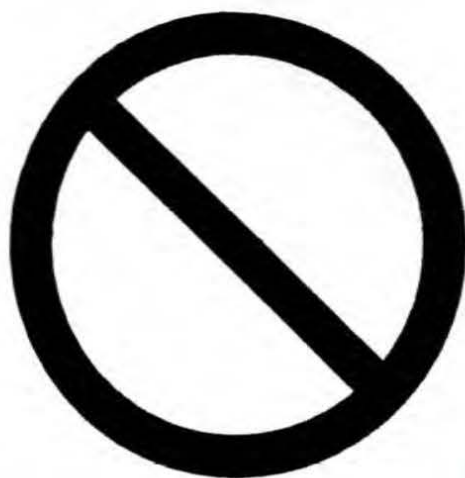
On these journeys recovery doesn't just happen in meetings, but on the journey. It happens in cars, diners, pizzerias, living rooms and even in my sponsor's driveway. All that driving and fellowship makes a person hungry. That is where all the diners and pizzerias come in to play. Let's not forget those donut shops that have the only coffee that even comes close to Don's coffee from the Tuesday night Old Bridge meeting. God bless you, Don!

I remember those afternoon lunches with chimichangas and Step One coming out of my ears. And how about that pizzeria in Bradley Beach. Why do I remember this place? Because my sponsor took me there four or five times, always on days they were closed. (He lost a lot of brain cells out there, but he's getting better.) Then there was the night we spent two of three hours dunkin' donuts and going over my Second Step. What about that killer lunch at the Japanese place to spiritually prepare ourselves for the NJRC4? Hibachi-grilled lobster sure sets the pace for your first convention. The next good meal I had was on Sunday, when I got home, but the interim was about feeding the spirit, not the body.

But this is not just about food, it's about recovery. My sponsor recently celebrated three years clean and I will celebrate two years, God willing, in January. We are not only clean, but we are recovering. We may not know where we've been and don't always know where we're going, but we sure eat good along the way!

Freddie P., New Jersey

We don't violate traditions anymore



My first experience with our traditions was hearing an entire meeting saying in unison "Principals before personalities." Frankly, that was all that I knew about traditions for several years, except when someone would periodically create a ruckus about someone else (never themselves) violating a tradition.

Years later (when I became involved in service), I became the person creating the ruckus. I studied the traditions, looking at what was a violation and what was not. People would come to me and ask me, "When so and so did this were they violating the traditions?"

Then my world turned upside down. I was at a meeting of the committee that was working on an N.A. book on our traditions, sur-

rounded by trustees and others with years more service than I had. Someone said that we should not use the word "violate" at all in our traditions book, because it was too negative and not in keeping with the spiritual nature of our fellowship. I agreed, but I became very confused. What did the traditions mean now that we don't "violate" them anymore?

I prayed, meditated, thought, wrote, and shared at meetings, and what I came up with is this: There is a feeling I get when I am at a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous when each tradition is in place. If I do not feel that feeling then it is my responsibility to do something to encourage that feeling in myself and others.

Here are the feelings I associate with each tradition:

FEELINGS

Togetherness

Trust

Qualified

Freedom

Purpose

Focus

TRADITION

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 that 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.

Independence

Equality

Simplicity

Peace

Attractive

All the above

In closing I want to say if you feel togetherness, trust, safe, creative, purposeful, focused, free, equal, uncomplicated, love and attraction, whisper a prayer of gratitude for our traditions, and keep coming back!

C.P.W., California

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 principals before personalities.

Seriously hanging on

I'm coming up on two years clean, but I don't feel like it. I guess I have a classic case of feeling stagnant in my recovery.

I have subscribed to the *N.A. Way Magazine* since I had eight months clean. I get a lot out of the personal stories and the fellowship information. It's nice to know that N.A. is getting stronger everyday. But why don't I feel like I am growing with the fellowship?

I love Narcotics Anonymous. It gave me a chance at a life I only dreamed was possible. In the beginning I took most of the suggestions and turned them into action. My life slowly changed for the better. I once was unemployed, lonely, desolate and disowned. And now, twenty-three months into recovery, I have a great job. I am engaged to be married to another recovering addict. We've planned our wedding so we will be able to honeymoon at the 1991 World Convention in Australia. I have my beautiful daughter back in my life. And I've become the nucleus of my nuclear family. I never had it so good. So why do I feel like I'm going nowhere fast?

They say the first year is a gift, and now the real work begins.

I'm not doing the things that got me clean and kept me clean all this time. It is time to get back to basics. I read

an article in the *N.A. Way* that prompted me to shift into a positive mode of my recovery. It was called "90 in 90 in 90." And the author carried a strong message for me.

So, I've decided it's time to up my meetings, call my sponsor, take a commitment or two, and finish my Fourth Step. After all, we're only as sick as our secrets. But, most importantly, it's time to pray with a vigilance, the way I did in the beginning.

I've been told, "anything you put in front of your recovery, you'll lose." Basically my life is good, and I want it to stay that way. Narcotics Anonymous gave me the tools. Now it's up to me to use them. Just for today. We do recover.

N.M., New Haven, CN



Home Group Opinion

"What does N.A. mean to you?"

Didn't you ask me this question last year?....



Learning to live, just for today, without the use of drugs.



NA is everything I looked for out there... love, growth, acceptance - NA is the freedom to be me!



One addict helping another - or to be more precise... NA, the recovery phenomenon, exhibits all the characteristic traits associated with the synergistic patterns of a social interaction - displaying the beneficial results of a bonding of a working



Money in the bank... nice clothes... lots of boys... and... like... a higher power, ya know?! *



Pain... glorious pain... but I mean that in a good way.



The broad perspective

WSO activity

The WSO, Inc., Board of Directors was slated to interview several applicants for the position of executive director during its meeting March 9th. It is possible that by the time you read this report the long-vacant position will be filled.

The annual report to the World Service Conference from the BOD recounts some of the thinking that likely bears on the choice of a new director. A preliminary draft of the 1991 office report was available as we went to press and includes the statement, "We... considered the management style that should prevail at the WSO."

"We agreed that, in the future, conference boards and committees should take part in defining the service goals and tasks to be administered by the World Service Office and its staff. This would give office management much clearer direction in fulfilling its responsibilities, and provide for a wider consensus in the making of decisions affecting World Service Office

activities. Additionally, we agreed that WSO management should be much more open in sharing information related to office operations and fellowship services. With wider, more direct access to this information, all members of the world service community would be able to play more productive roles in fulfilling their duties."

Since the decision not to renew the contract of past manager Bob Stone was made last summer, an interim management team composed of WSO directors, Board of Trustee members and officers of the World Service Conference has participated in study, and day-to-day decisions, regarding office operations.

According to the WSC 1991 office report, "The basic management plan now in place for World Service operations is simple. The WSO executive director, the director of our Fellowship Services Division, and the WSO Support Services Division director work as a team, collectively discussing and making decisions concerning administrative issues facing the World Service Office. These decisions are then carried out through the various departments in each of the two WSO divisions. While the executive director still retains final administrative responsibility for the World Service Office, both the decisions and the practical, hands-on administration of the office are shared among the executive director and the division directors."

"At the core of the World Service Office's current management plan is our understanding that WSO is our fellowship's primary service center.

As such, the World Service Office should facilitate the fulfillment of N.A. service activities in accordance with the guidance of N.A.'s World Service Conference. Our job is to administer the policies and directives of the conference's boards and committees, and to maintain the intellectual properties the fellowship has placed in our trust. . ."

WSC 1991 motions

Added to the conference agenda was a section that includes three motions not available in time to be reported in the motion-synopsis published in this column in the February N.A. Way.

These motions were included as part of the commitment to the recent settlement agreement concerning the production and distribution of the Basic Text. The motions:

#13—That the fellowship reconsider its decision on which edition, or parts thereof (First, Second, Third, Third Revised, Fourth, or Fifth), of the Basic Text shall be produced and distributed by the WSO as the official and accepted text of Narcotics Anonymous.

In order for this motion to be considered, a description of the differences between the respective editions will be sent to each registered area and region, along with a copy of the complete Basic Text Third Edition, Revised. It is expected that the WSC will rescind the motions adopted in 1988, which adopted the Fifth Edition as the Basic Text, as well as the motion restricting any change to the text for five years.

#14—That the WSO produce, at a reduced price, the edition of the text ratified by the WSC. The actual price of this text should be determined in view of the following factors: its affordability to the membership at large; a change in the cost and quality of the materials used in producing the book; the responsibility of the WSO to provide services from the income generated by sales of the Basic Text; and whether it includes personal stories or only the first ten chapters.

#15—That the WSC be directed to obtain a group-by-group tally of all the groups registered with the WSO, on Motions 13 and 14 above. This procedure will begin on July 1, 1991 and continue through December 31, 1991. All the registered groups shall receive a copy of a paper detailing the differences between the editions of the Basic Text, and a complete copy of the Basic Text Third Edition, Revised. In addition, each group shall receive complete information concerning the issues relevant to a reduction in the price of the ratified text.

The committee appointed to supervise this tally shall consist of the following: four RSRs, to be nominated by the entire group of RSRs in attendance at the 1991 WSC; two trustees to be nominated by the members of the World Service Board of Trustees; two WSO directors, to be nominated by the directors of the WSO; and the WSC Chairperson. Those nominated by the RSRs, the trustees, and the directors, respectively, are to be submitted to the World Service Conference in 1991 for confirmation by

two-thirds published roll-call vote, failing which, those not confirmed shall be replaced by others nominated by the RSRs, the trustees, or the directors, respectively. Two members of the WSO staff shall also be assigned as nonvoting advisory members. The results of the group-by-group tally shall be published in the Fellowship Report, and confirmed as official at World Service Conference in 1992.

N.A. Way review

With any luck at all you are reading this while there is still time to submit the names of nominees for service as members of the N.A. Way review panel.

Nominations are made in the form of a group of names read aloud during the WSC. You need not be present in order to be nominated. You do need at least five years (the last five) clean time, and a working knowledge of N.A.'s steps and traditions.

The names of nominees accepted by the conference are considered to be in a "pool," from which the N.A. Way Editorial Board chooses, in turn, active participants for the panel.

If you or someone you know is affirmed into the pool, you will be sent a brief questionnaire with a request that you write a very short description of some event related to recovery, and some other comments. The Editorial Board uses responses to those questionnaires as criteria and evidence of willingness to participate. In other words, nomination doesn't lock you in to a commitment to do a lot work.

Once chosen from the pool (you'd be

contacted to re-establish availability) the scenario goes like this: fifteen to thirty manuscripts of a variety of lengths and quality are sent, in a double-spaced, numbered-line format, to each of at least seven review panel participants, about every two weeks. In twice monthly, hour-long, conference calls each participant is asked, in turn, for both general comments and any line-by-line input. The editor uses consensus of the review panel as direction for preparing the stories.

A nine-page, comprehensive report of the magazine operations was recently prepared and is available upon request.

A dedicated attempt to make the content and editorial choices of the N.A. Way more and more reflective of the fellowship's diversity continues. Participation on the review panel is actively sought, and effective, in that effort. Please help if you can.

International Forum

In the course of preparation for the International Development Forum to take place Saturday, April 20, right before the start of WSC 1991, an open letter was sent to all the registered N.A. regions.

The letter requested input on the topics that might be appropriate and useful to the meetings and about a dozen written responses have been received. The WSB will host the forum.

Among questions advanced as possibilities in the open letter were "Is N.A. a world-wide fellowship?" and "Should it be?" Another, "What does 'world-wide fellowship' mean?" and, "What services do growing N.A. com-

munities want from N.A. world services?"

Responses have been received from Panama, Australia, Switzerland (German-speaking Region) and the United Kingdom, among others.

Arbitrarily chosen examples of some of the responses include:

"The language barrier appears to me as one of the biggest problems for N.A. as a worldwide fellowship. As it is at this moment, literature and meetings at any level above the region are being held in English. Although simultaneous interpretation is available at such meetings, and literature does get translated, it is difficult for members who don't speak English to participate in inter-regional meetings or in the 'original literature' process. I know a few members with a negative attitude toward the U.S. and anything that comes from there. They believe that we have or should have nothing to do with the WSO or the WSC. Others who don't speak English can't even read the *Newsline*."

Another, on national autonomy—"Should world services run offices as branches outside of the U.S., or should nationals and locals run their own?"

"How can we facilitate the development of national structures which differ from the U.S. model? Where should such a structure be validated—or does such a structure need to be validated by anyone but those who will have to live with it?"

"Reference national service conferences—NSCs would pose certain problems in Switzerland, since we are a country with three different languages. There has been talk of

whether a national service conference should be held or not. Some members were very keen on it, but looking at the experience of another fellowship (A.A.), we saw that all efforts to unite Switzerland according to its political borders didn't result in much, and I believe that this experience could be valuable to us. It was one of the main reasons why the German-speaking groups in Switzerland decided to attach themselves to the German-speaking Region. The French-speaking, in their turn, decided to form their own area.

"Currently I am serving on an ad hoc committee accountable to the European Service Conference Convention—the European Study Group. We are looking at different options for the development of a service structure throughout Europe. European members need to belong. Do we, too, run the risk of cutting ourselves off from our American family?"

(Ed. note: More on ESG on page 25 in this month's feature.)

These excerpts are not presented as necessarily representative of the whole of the wide range of ideas broached by respondents to the open letter, but may be considered indicative of the intensity and thoughtfulness that will be expressed in the April 20 forum.

Discussion among members of the WSB in recent weeks has included some expressions of hope that a more extensive International Development Forum, perhaps two to three days long, be planned for mid-fall, 1991. Conference participants may be sounded out for support of such a get-together.

German-speaking Region

... AN ENVOY TO THE WORLD



"DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE"

With almost seventy known N.A. groups in five countries, the German-speaking Region is facing the challenges and attaining the insight that a decade of N.A. growth heralds. Many Germanic N.A. communities, including Berlin and Munich, are currently celebrating five years of formally registered existence. At least one group has met regularly for more than 12 years.

German RSC discussions leading to the decision to be represented in the upcoming World Service Conference are likely illustrative of the combinations of concern and opportunity in other regions. "It strained our budget," said a trusted servant from Darmstadt, but "we are interested in the growth of the worldwide fellowship."

The German RSR's report to WSC 1991 includes similar remarks on fiscal and structural realities. It states, "A good deal of time was spent discussing whether to focus on European affairs, along with spending priorities. Some people wanted to rather send RSRs to European events. Many others consi-

dered our participation at WSC as a priority. Many people were concerned about questions such as: "What's the use of our participation at the WSC?"

Commenting on the expressions of concern about international matters during WSC 1990, the Darmstadt addict recounted, "We said, 'This is now starting to change, and we cannot stay away.'"

Regional profile

Centrally located in the European community, and, some say, central to the development of N.A. in Europe, the Germanspeaking Region has chosen to evolve its service elements in accordance with language parameters, rather than national borders. Hence, German-speaking N.A. members in Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Austria comprise the region, and can get literature from the same stockpile. This year the RSR Alternate comes from Switzerland.

(In the course of research for this article we placed a call to our one available number for an Austrian addict. We learned of one meeting "getting together" there, and that a group of addicts from St. Johann, Northern Austria, are regularly driving about 120 km (an hour-long trip) to attend N.A. meetings in Munich, which involves border crossings and passport checks.

Several addicts who have been involved in German N.A. for a decade or so (contacted by phone) noted their belief the "Young Love Group," now meeting on Friday nights in Frankfurt, is the oldest "still existing" N.A.

group in the region. One member commented that the Young Love group may have been meeting as early as 1977, at the 97th U.S. General Hospital in Frankfurt. "I remember in 78-79 people in London asked about it and we took literature and the Young Love format to them," he stated. The same addict said he had been attending A.A. and "wanting desperately to know how to get clean. Still smoking hashish. Someone gave me the address. I got clean from my first N.A. meeting." And, (laughing delightedly), "Those crazy American soldiers— and they stopped smoking it!"

A woman U.S. military officer is said to have started the meeting in the hospital, and for a while it apparently ran smoothly, but in about 1981 the requirements of the institution and those of the fellowship began to conflict.

"Some people got handcuffed," is the way one local addict described what happened. Another reports, "In 1981, we had not been able to go to meetings because of ID checks; the political situation. Non-military could not go in, and the military could not come out."

For some months recovering addicts met in private homes before beginning to find quarters in churches and other public facilities. There are still, according to the reports we have available, no established N.A. phoneline services in Germany. Individual phone numbers are printed on meeting lists and the lists are placed on bulletin boards in clinics and other places.

Regional services

An impressive N.A. literature translation effort has been undertaken by the German fellowship. The White Book, most IPs and the first four chapters of the Basic Text have been translated and are available through the regional address: N.A. Service Komitee, Postfach 11-10-10, 6100 Darmstadt. Work is proceeding on a translation of the remaining chapters.

In what sounds like a mixture of the type of old-fashioned literature get-togethers of the U.S., and a modern-technology formula, the German fellowship is said to be generating translations that are true to the spirit of N.A., and acceptable to the letter of the language. "Translation weekends" are held, and any member with some language ability may contribute to the work of the standing literature committee. The relative ease with which the work appears to have proceeded may be credited to the use of a professional translator. In other words, they get the work translated, first according to standards of usage acceptable to non-fellowship linguists, and then gather together and re-do it in terms that are true to the spirit of N.A.

In addition to the printed literature the regional contact point also now stocks six German language N.A. speaker tapes which "people are starting to order." Each tape includes the sharing of more than one member, and they are recordings of the speakers who addressed German Regional Conventions during the last couple of years.

This year's Eighth Regional Convention is planned for May 25-26 in the town of Aachen. Aachen is located "within walking distance" of both Holland and Belgium in the north-western extreme of Germany.

With a theme of "Neues Leben miteinander" (New life together), the Aachen celebration will feature several types of meetings and workshops, a disco-dance and a talent show. The next Regional Service Conference is tentatively planned for the first or second weekend of July.

The RSC meets three times a year, and seems another example of the developmental adjustments that sometimes happen between the youth and maturity of a regional service structure. Only two fully operable Area Service Committees have been formed in the Germanspeaking Region, though a past RSR said he "heard at the last RSC several ASCs are coming together." He said service in Germany has been "problematic," and that a regional meeting of only ASC representatives "wouldn't really represent the conscience of our fellowship," while, on the other hand, "with so many GSRs it sometimes gets too crazy." GSRs now vote on all matters before the RSC in "an assembly-type meeting."

One of the addicts who reminisced (above) about German N.A. in the late seventies, also shared concern about growing pains. He said "At first there was no need to study the traditions. Now, with so many newcomers, we have to look to the quality. It is not just automatic that the quality will stay." He noted a desire for "traditions workshops."

N.A. newspaper

"N.A. Zeitung," which translates simply "N.A. newspaper," is the German region's regular publication. It is printed quarterly and distributed by many groups. Several hundred copies are made for each issue.

U.S. addicts who can read it say that the *Zeitung* seems much more willing to include divergent opinions and expressions than what we have gotten used to in the U.S.A. Ten issues have been published, and it looks anything but boring.

The Spring 1991 issue is the latest, and includes an ongoing feature of thought-provoking questions and comments pertaining to the Twelve Steps; a copy of the article, "A call for freedom from prejudice," (December '90 N.A. Way, also printed in the N.A. Newslines); and discussion of some of the pros and cons of translating particular phrases.

The editor of the *Zeitung* recently visited the U.S. and was asked to comment on differences between meetings here and in her home region. She said there is "not so much an issue about N.A./A.A." in her country, but "you never hear anyone accidentally" refer to one fellowship as the other. "They know where they are."

European Study Group

In addition to the local service structure and ties with the world conference, the Germanspeaking Region has the developing benefit of some trusted-servant involvement with the European Study Group.

The Study Group, a sort of think-tank of addicts dedicated to better carrying the N.A. message in Western

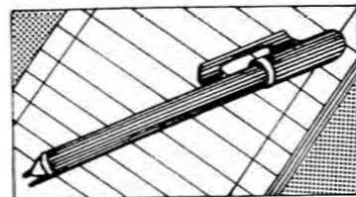
Europe, coalesced after a meeting of more than a score of regional representatives in Lisbon, Portugal, at the Seventh European Convention last July.

Its most active participants include at least one member from the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, and Switzerland. Among hopes of the group are the development of advocacy and inter-relatedness of European regions.

In meetings and conference calls of the group during the last six months tentative descriptions of several options for development of European consensus have been advanced. Among these options are what have been called "Big Perm," which is the possibility of a standing committee to address specifically European concerns; "Little Perm," which would be a process by which a succession of ad hoc committees might serve between the regional and world levels; and several other ideas, including the pros and cons if no new service mechanism is created.

The study group will possibly present a paper to the Eighth European Convention in Italy this summer. ESC8 is planned for July 26-28 at Domus Pacis, a college in southwestern Rome. The theme this year is, "Mai Piu Soli" or, "Never Alone Again."

Viewpoint



Where is the voice of the fellowship?

I have recently heard about a message some say we send to world services. It is a belief based on the lack of participation being a clear message from the fellowship. In other words, world services should be able to make our decisions because we tell them to do so by our lack of participation in group conscience, as a decision making process for the fellowship.

The spiritual principal of group conscience seems to sometimes get lost

when we look for the voice of our fellowship. Is the lack of participation in group conscience on the part of home group members a clear message that we want decisions made for us?

How would you like it if our local and federal governments abolished your right to vote, because the majority chooses not to participate?

The lack of participation in group conscience is usually spawned by apathy, bred by feelings of powerlessness or a lack of information. When I see a small number of groups carrying a group conscience at an ASC, it lets me know it still works. Just as the voice of our people is heard at an election, by those who choose to participate; the spiritual principal of group conscience, as a decision making process for the fellowship, is available to whomever chooses to participate in it.

If we are not vigilant in protecting our right to this vehicle through which a loving God may express himself throughout our service structure, we will lose it. So, when your motions are decided on by a minority of groups, we can be grateful that group conscience and God still work. You'll find that those that complain about these decisions and don't believe in group conscience, usually don't have it at their home groups.

B.P., Maryland

Seeing the forest for the trees

I think our fellowship needs to soon answer one basic question. What should the nature of our services be? This is not a structural question, it is a question of concept. To me, we can only answer this important question after we have decided how our services will be guided, how our services will be funded and how our basic service decisions will be made.

Recently one N.A. service acting on the encouragement of other N.A. services brought a lawsuit against an N.A. member. I believe that this specific disagreement regarding a specific action is evidence of a much deeper and more wide-spread disagreement. Furthermore, I think the disagreement illustrates a basic difference in perception of our Twelve Traditions, particularly the Second, Seventh and the Ninth Traditions.

Over the past several years I've observed the actions and reactions of both extremes in this difference of perception/opinion. I'll try to charac-

terize these extremes with the least possible bias. At their worst the extremes display authoritarianism versus anarchy; at their best enlightened beneficence versus total surrender. One seems to say that trusted servants must be qualified by time, experience, and credentials while the other feels adequate qualifications include stable recovery, willingness and personal integrity. The first seems to think that ideas for service projects should be developed from the best concepts of the most qualified service specialists while the second thinks ideas for service projects are evident from the expressed needs of those they serve.

Service time is best spent productively by a limited number of apparently qualified participants with clear goal-orientation, states one faction, while the other seems to feel that including any member who wants to help and the personal growth of those involved is more important than the results of the project.

While budgeting, fundraising and fiscal planning seem important to some, others feel that if the spiritual need for the projects is real, the money will somehow be there when it's needed.

At one extreme are those who seem to feel we should fund our services through literature and convention profits, while at the other extreme are those who feel we only need those services we are willing to fund through member, group, area, and regional contributions.

On one hand is the plea to trust our trusted servants, while on the other a demand of total accountability.

It seems we disagree on what constitutes trusted servants, group conscience, self-support and direct responsibility.

What is best for Narcotics Anonymous? I'm sure that a loving God knows and if we are able to get out of our own way we will find our answer in the principles that set us free from addiction.

What do we, as a fellowship, want the nature of our services to be? Will we require that each important issue be brought to every autonomous N.A. group, explained in a way that all members can understand, and then, after significant time to seek spiritual guidance, decided by those groups according to their consciences? Or will our important issues be decided by a "qualified" few to whom we've given our "vote of confidence?"

Will we select people to serve us based on their recovery, integrity and willingness, or based on their credentials, communication skills, and management abilities?

Are we truly self supporting and will we decline outside contributions by limiting our services to those paid for through our fund flow from members through group, area and region? Or will we set literature prices, sales goals and convention profits at a level to fund the services we think we need?

How do we as a fellowship define "direct responsibility"; how direct is the responsibility we require? What is responsibility in service? I'm sure that both sides in the recent lawsuit felt they were acting with direct responsibility to those they serve.

The questions I've posed are central

to the larger question of what should the nature of N.A. services be? I don't think we can answer them overnight, or in three months, or maybe even a year. I think we need time and open communication within the fellowship. We probably should consider the nature of our choices. If we choose a group of folks from among us to run the show for us and set them off by themselves with power, control and freedom to decide, they will necessarily give us selective messages, a picture of unity, efficient well-funded services, high literature prices, well promoted conventions, closed performance-oriented committees and an image of business-like efficiency. If, instead, we demand open communication, our fellowship will appear less unified. If we demand the lowest possible literature prices and most affordable conventions, we'll only get those services we can fund through "the basket." If we require service decisions made on clear issues by the conscience of N.A. groups the goals of our service boards and committees will be more general and their performance slower and less productive. If we elect people to serve us based on their surrender to spiritual principles and their recovery rather than their business credentials, we should expect more questions from them and less answers.

Much time has passed since the lines of this conflict were drawn. Our individual character defects/shortcomings seem at times to make each of us like two different people. If we deny these defects and fail to make an effort to change we risk relapse. If we accept our defects, pray for their

removal and begin to behave differently, illustrating our willingness to change, miracles happen. Our recovery is enhanced. We become changed people. And so I believe it is with our fellowship and its services; this rift has only gotten larger with time. It seems as if we are two fellowships. Perhaps there is something basically defective about our services; coming up short of filling our spiritual needs. If we continue to delude ourselves by believing that unity is a lack of controversy we risk the fellowship equivalent of relapse. I believe that real unity is the successful reconciliation of the controversy that naturally exists. In my personal recovery I could only change my behavior and become ready for the removal of my defects after I had taken a searching and fearless moral inventory, admitting to myself, my God, and another human being the reality of my life and motives. And so, I feel, it must be with our fellowship. When we look at ourselves, the history of our services; clearly, completely, thoroughly and honestly; when we search through the actions of our servants, past and present, dispassionately, with temperance and empathy, we'll see their motives clearly. And then our fellowship may begin to decide how the spiritual principles in Traditions Two, Seven and Nine should define our services. What shall the nature of N.A. services be? For our common welfare—for the addict seeking recovery?

J.M., Ohio

Sharing

Recently, in one of the N.A. Way issues, there was a report on India from two world services' representatives. In that report it was mentioned that a decision was taken to send the A.S.C. in Bombay, literature, on a pay-when-able basis, at production prices, for a period of two years. Also excluding the cost of shipping and handling of the literature.

As promised we have received literature worth twelve hundred for the year.

N.A. in Bombay, India, started in September 1983. When I came into this fellowship in 1984, we had one "cyclostyled" (draft rendition) copy of the Basic Text. White Book, I.P.s and tokens were rare. We had to share everything we got from W.S.O. Today, after receiving that promise made by two world service delegates, I can proudly say that attendance has increased. Addicts are attending in larger numbers than before we received the literature. Recovery has become less complicated. These two people told us something that I cannot forget. They told us the selling price of each Basic Text is eight dollars. To produce each book cost two, leaving a profit of six dollars. This six dollars is used to carry the N.A. message of recovery to suffering addicts in far

corners of the earth and support countries like India who cannot afford literature.

In India, an average collection made at an N.A. meeting is around ten rupees, that is about one half of a dollar, from that we pay for the tea served and rent. Normally, we rarely have anything left behind. An average income of a recovering addict is around seventy-five rupees month. What one visitor paid for his house rent in California is more than the salary of the President of India. We cannot afford luxuries like the Basic Text at selling price of eight dollars. We have to depend on members in countries like the U.S.A., who won't feel the pinch to buy the Basic Text at the price of eight dollars, and help a recovering addict like me in India.

When I read about the illicit publication of our Basic Text, I feared. That every time, instead of one official Basic Text was sold, another was sold, the W.S.O. might lose six dollars. This six dollars could have provided around forty I.P. #1 to forty different suffering addicts. Have we become so self-centered and forgotten that "Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on N.A. unity."

Those people involved with the illicit printing of our Basic Text, I want to ask you two questions. 1.) Can you send us in India literature at cost price, on a pay-when-able basis for a period of two years? 2.) Can you offer us various services and publications like the "Meeting By Mail" W.S.O. provides, on which our recovering depends? I plead and beg on bended knees to the World Service Confer-

ence to stop this illicit Basic Text and take all necessary action on my behalf and on the behalf of addicts in India.

Before I end I want to thank all the N.A. members all over the world who have purchased the Basic Text at the official price and helped N.A. in a far away country like India.

I have been attracted to stay in N.A. because two World Services representatives on your behalf showed me how you care and share the N.A. way.

I.P., India

(Ed. note: More info concerning literature-related cost is available in the annual WSO financial report.)

We exist too

Bonjour Les Dependants.

I am clean today, thanks to N.A. and to my God. I have been reading the N.A. Way for some time now, and I also read about the fellowship through the many different reports that I receive from various world committees.

I am French and I am very lucky to be fluent in English. Actually if I didn't speak English I wouldn't be able to understand what you say or read what you write, since everything being done on a world level is in En-

glish. When I first joined N.A., people told me "N.A. is a worldwide fellowship" and I took it for granted. At that time (1988) we didn't have the recovery text in French. We do now and since it came out it has given a tremendous boost to the French speaking N.A. community. Words are not strong enough to describe to you how many newcomers are coming and staying in the N.A. rooms in Paris since we got our Basic Text in French.

Today I read and hear about some problems within the fellowship in the U.S. What's going on? I can understand that the issue is about the printing of an illicit text, which is not relevant to the non-English speaking N.A. community, since the issue is about the English Third Edition rather than the Fifth and so on. Well Italian, Japanese, Swedish, Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Hindi speakers don't have their First Edition yet! Maybe those people would like to hear about N.A. and they can't because they don't speak English! You people want to carry the message to the addict who still suffers? Well there are plenty out there waiting to hear a message they can understand in their own language.

What I am saying is: Because of the actions of a few, money that might have been spent on translation was spent bringing these people to court. Taking them to court was just and was necessary, but let us not waste any further money, time or energy on this issue. We have been too soft with this group of people, perhaps if we had been firmer from the beginning we would not have gotten to this point.

Now we need to be very tough and tell them stop it, before we lose even more time, money and energy on it.

The other day we had a fund raising event and I gave, but afterwards I asked myself, "Where is this money going? Is it going to help to carry the message or is it going to feed the selfish goals of a group of people and their inside political purpose?" I feel as if I don't want to give my money anymore in the Seventh Tradition. I feel betrayed both by the way N.A. handled the issue (too soft) and also betrayed by these people who printed an illicit text for their own purposes (inside political wrangling).

What I am afraid of is that if we let this issue build up, then N.A. unity may be at risk and by doing so put in danger my own recovery. So if I have to choose between the feelings and recovery of a few people or the life of N.A., my choice is clear. I know that these people are recovering addicts as well and may have contributed to N.A. in the past, but I also know that there are thousands of people whose lives and recovery depends on N.A., today. I have learned from N.A. to live in today, so what's done is done, but, just for today, enough is enough. Let's stop this once and for all. Let's be firm. Stop talking, let's act. And please, please, please, don't spend all the WSC on this issue. There is a whole world out there that needs you! Is N.A. an American speaking, navel-focused fellowship, or is it a worldwide fellowship?

V.C., France

Reference February articles— The broad perspective & Taking the heat

I want to thank the authors for their "commitment to unity." Had articles such as this appeared in the fellowship reports and previous issues of the N.A. Way, I feel that the extreme actions taken regarding the Basic Text issues would have been avoided.

The repercussions of this matter are still being felt in the fellowship. At our February ASC a motion to drop meetings using the unapproved version of the Basic Text from the meeting list was made. Fortunately for the addict who still suffers and is looking for a meeting, this motion failed.

I am a believer in the group conscience process and now that these matters will be addressed at the WSC, I have resigned myself to abide by the fellowship's conscience on these matters.

This brings me to the article "Taking the heat." The sort of action taken by Anonymous in this article must

cease. From what I read in this article a newcomer with nine days clean, who has already been fortunate enough to attend a step study meeting and get our literature, even though it was not a conference approved Basic Text, and have it with her, shows a desire to stop using. This is the only requirement for membership!

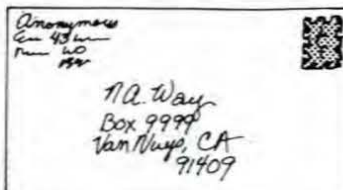
The confusion alluded to was not caused by the text she was carrying, but by the well intentioned, however misdirected, member who confronted her. We must remember our primary purpose, especially when it concerns newcomers. While it might be okay to debate, argue or whatever these matters between addicts who have some clean time (and I seriously question the wisdom of doing that) to involve people who, if they are like I was when I first came into the rooms—confused, angry, and hurt, is completely irresponsible.

Attempting to work the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A. and practice their principles without a Basic Text is at the very least a difficult task. We have placed a great deal of importance in our literature and rightly so. I agree with the writer that no one ever relapsed because he or she did not have a Basic Text, and, by the same token, I don't know of too many who have recovered without one.

Both sides of this controversy and all concerned must remember—the newcomer is the most important person at our meetings.

P.B., Florida

From our readers



Gift of Life

Tomorrow I celebrate eight years clean. My mother won't be there. But her spirit will be. She died July 8 of this year. I was there for her at the very end. Just like she was there for me all my life. I am a forty-eight year old addict and H.P. blessed me with seven and a half years of being who I always wanted to be. I could just be there adding strength with my presence.

I have additional needs and am limited but I have a message. And I share it in jails all through my hometown, New York.

The last two years of my active addiction I was a homeless man—living in doorways and hallways and eating in soup kitchens. I thought my life was over and all I did was put drugs down one day at a time, made meetings, and lived on what I was taught, and my life has gotten better.

I love my life today. I don't want to destroy myself. I found a reason to live today. Me. I am the reason. N.A., "never alone."

D.G., New York

Letting go

Today I am entering year five of recovery and am in awe that, even with my defects of character and omnipresent disease of addiction, I have survived my own deception.

For all of my using years (and prior to those years) I believed I was other than I am—an individual member of humanity. I manipulated my life, attempting desperately to exorcise my being from the body in which I was cast. Always out of synchronicity, I pondered many deep questions, plumbed the shallow depths of my drugged body, mind and spirit wondering why, and in true addict form, "why me?"

Today I am grateful to have an answer. At my second N.A. meeting I purchased an N.A. Basic Text, feverishly ingesting the many passages which spoke directly to me.

I read, "We no longer need to make fools of ourselves by standing up for non-existent virtues."

The N.A. Basic Text has said many other pertinent things to me over the past four years. And, if I am willing to let go of those non-existent virtues the N.A. Basic Text will continue to guide my progress. This time the movement will be more synchronized with a fellowship of individuals who show me how to live.

Anonymous

Appreciation

His line of work was an active addict's dream. He was a pharmacist. A pharmacist addict not ready to surrender. His problem (to him) was very unique and complicated. I am a registered nurse and in early recovery thought the same way. I wanted to have continuous access to my drugs of choice and start recovering yesterday. I learned through a slow, painful process to take suggestions from those with more experience. I identified closely with the "dilemma."

We began attending meetings together. At one memorable meeting, four months later, I glanced at him and he was nodding. I confronted him and he denied that he was high. He claimed he was just a little tired. I was furious. After all, I picked him up and drove him to the meeting—how dare he do this to me?

He came back and gained some clean time and I felt more comfortable resuming our friendship. It was really not as simple as it sounds. One of the things he told me was that he could not understand how I preached unconditional love, since I left him when he most needed a friend. I was very upset that he felt I had coldly abandoned him. I did my best to explain that I have to take care of myself today and that if we both pick up then neither of us could help the other. I shared with him that I had prayed for him and that he had been frequently in my thoughts. I had missed him.

He was an addict by his own admission, eventually he relapsed again. He wound up in the same E.R. This time he was not sent home but was in-

voluntarily sent to a psychiatric hospital. He was not happy about this. He called me and said he could not understand why he was there. I said "that's exactly why you are there."

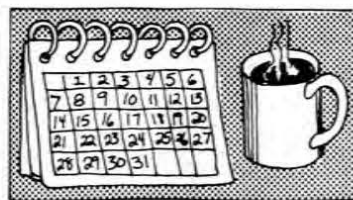
After a month he was back at meetings. He shared at our homegroup that he was in a lot of pain. His face was red, his eyes down, his voice choked with emotion. The room was quiet. Later he told me he hadn't shared well. It really broke my heart to hear this. To me sharing is being in the most real, most vulnerable, most honest state. This takes tremendous courage, and he had that. He just didn't know it.

Less than one week after this meeting he O.D. and died. I learned this on a Friday evening. I felt as if I was in shock Friday night and all day Saturday. It wasn't until I went to my homegroup on Sunday that I felt safe enough to allow myself to feel grief over his death. I felt as if the tears would never stop when "No addict seeking recovery need ever die" was read.

He was a big part of my anniversary in September. I spoke of him (through many tears), and other members of my homegroup opened up and shared their own feelings about his death. I felt that a major part of me was healed that day. Before this it seemed that no one mentioned his name. That day, people were full of thoughts and feelings. He had touched many lives, and no one had forgotten him.

Anonymous, New York

Comin' up



ALABAMA: Apr. 19-21, 1991; 5th Annual Spring Fling; Wind Creek State Park, near Alexander City; Registration Information, P.O. Box 2653, Auburn, AL 36830

ARIZONA: Apr. 27, 1991; Arizona Regional Talent Show; 5818 N. 7th Street, Phoenix; AARCNA, P.O. Box 26404, Phoenix, AZ 85282

2) May 24-26, 1991; 5th Arizona Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Hotel, 4550 South Palo Verde Boulevard, Tucson, AZ; rsvn.s (602) 746-1161; information (602) 244-0432; ARCNA V, P.O. Box 57443, Tucson, AZ 85732

ARKANSAS: Apr. 26-28, 1991; 8th Annual Central Arkansas Area Campout; Tumbling Shoals Campground, Greer's Ferry Lake, Heber Springs, AR; information (501) 373-8683; Central Arkansas Area, P.O. Box 250027, Little Rock, AR 72225-0027

2) May 31-June 2, 1991; 7th Annual Beaver Roundup; Buffalo National Park, Yellville, AR 72687; N.W.A.A.S.C., P.O. Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

CALIFORNIA: May 11, 1991; Lower Desert Area Splash Into Recovery; Oasis Water Park, 1500 Gene Autry Trail, Palm Springs; Tickets (619) 365-1279

2) Jun. 7-9, 1991; San Diego Imperial Region Convention; Red Lion Hotel, 1455 Frazee Road, San Diego, CA; rsvn.s (619) 297-5466; SDNAC, 2260 El Cajon Boulevard, P.O. Box 184, San Diego, CA 92104

CANADA: May 3-5, 1991; Calgary Area Convention; hotline (403) 235-9901; Area Convention Committee, P.O. Box 30086, Stn B, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2M 4N7

2) May 3-5, 1991; 7th L'Envol Convention; "Le Centre Communautaire" of Shawinigan, 253 Third Street, Province of Quebec, CANADA; information (819) 538-0630; helpline (819) 538-3535; Convention, C.S.L. Centre Mauricie, P.O. Box 68, Shawinigan, Quebec, G9N 1V0

3) May 31-June 2, 1991; 4th Ontario Regional Convention; Steps to Freedom; Holiday Inn, Downtown Toronto; information (416) 256-3149; P.O. Box 7079, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1X7

ENGLAND: May 25-26, 1991; 2nd South West Regional Convention; Beechen Cliff School, Alexandra Park, Bath; information 0225 481803; SW.R.C. II, P.O. Box 285, Bristol, BS99 7AS, ENGLAND

FLORIDA: May 16-19, 1991; 4th AL/NW FL Regional Convention; Ft. Walton Beach, FL on Okaloosa Island; 1110 Santa Rosa Boulevard; rsvn.s (904) 243-9181; Convention, P.O. Box 6499, Pensacola, FL 32503

2) May 31-June 2, 1991; 1st Gold Coast Convention, "Solutions by the Sea"; Bahia Mar Hotel & Resort on Fort Lauderdale Beach, 801 Seabreeze Boulevard, Ft. Lauderdale, FL; rsvn.s (305) 733-2172 or (305) 572-3429; G.C.C.N.A.-1, P.O. Box 23577, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307-3377

GEORGIA: Apr. 27, 1991; 3rd Anniversary "Just For Today"; Old Hunt Elementary School, Spruce Street; information (912) 825-8588; Anniversary, 208 Beach Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030

2) May 2-5, 1991; The Tradition Continues; 1991 Fun-In-The-Sun, Panama City Weekend; 1991 P.C. Weekend, P.O. Box 47848, Doraville, GA 30362

3) May 18-19, 1991; Georgia Regional H&I Awareness Weekend; Lake Tobestkee; information (912) 745-6513; PASC, P.O. Box 4362, Macon, GA 31208

GERMANY: May 25-26, 1991; Neues Leben Miteinander, 8th Germanspeaking Regional Convention, Aachen; Convention Committee, P.O. Stfach 11-10-10, 6100 Darmstadt, GERMANY

ILLINOIS: Apr. 19-21, 1991; 3rd Chicagoland Regional Convention; Recovery What a Concept; information (708) 848-2211; CRC III, 212 S Marion Ste 27, Oak Park, IL 60302

2) May 24-26, 1991; 3rd Basic Campout; Oak Hall Bluff; Sullivan, IL; helpline (217) 373-2063; Campout, P.O. Box 1053, Decatur, IL 62521

KANSAS: May 24-27, 1991; 9th Annual Pre-Campout-Campout; Harvey County West Park, Newton, KS 67114; information (316) 832-9441; Memorial Day Weekend, P.O. Box 1303, Wichita, KS 67201-1303

LOUISIANA: May 24-26, 1991; The 9th Annual Louisiana Regional Convention; Sheraton Pierremont Hotel, 1419 E 70th Street, Shreveport, Louisiana 70115; rsvn.s (800) 325-3535; information (318) 746-0910; LRCNA IX, P.O. Box 4937, Shreveport, LA 71134

MANITOBA: May 31-June 2, 1991; 1st Annual Winnipeg Area Convention, "N.A. The Life Line"; information (204) 589-1845; WACNA 1, P.O. Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2X 2G4

MISSOURI: May 17-19, 1991; "Lake of the Ozarks Weekend"; Camp of the Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks state park; Limited reservations; Ozarks Weekend, P.O. Box 7114, Jefferson City, MO 65109

NEW JERSEY: May 24-26, 1991; 4th New Jersey Regional Convention; Continue the Miracle; Ramada Renaissance, 3 Tower Center Boulevard, East Brunswick, NJ; information (201) 251-2402 or (201) 396-9809; NJRC VI, P.O. Box 1768, Rahway, NJ 09065

NEW YORK: May 31-June 2, 1991; 7th Greater New York Regional Convention; Hufstra University, Hempstead, New York; Convention, P.O. Box 285, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

NEW ZEALAND: May 3-5, 1991; Seize The Day; Auckland College of Education; information (649) 787734 or (649) 366-1892; Convention Committee, P.O. Box 6826, Auckland, New Zealand

NORTH CAROLINA: May 10-12 1991; Annual Coastal Carolina Area Campout; Roger's Bay Campground; Topsail Island, N.C.; information (919) 686-1173

OHIO: May 24-27, 1991; 9th Ohio Convention; We Choose To Live; Looking for tapes, must have minimum of 4 years clean; information (216) 543-9833 or (216) 442-9261; OCNA IX, 25931 Euclid Avenue, Suite 136, Euclid, OH 44132

PORTUGAL: Apr. 27-28, 1991; 1st Portuguese Convention; Stop, Listen and Keep Coming Back; Convento dos Padres Carmelitas, R. Marechal Saldanha no 145, Foz do Douro; I Convencao Portuguesa De, Narcoticos Anonimos, Apartado 21644, 1137 Lisboa Codex, PORTUGAL

TEXAS: Apr. 12-14, 1991; Lone Star Regional Convention; Brazos Inn, 411 Austin Avenue, Waco, TX 76701; information (817) 772-8734 or (917) 755-0149; Lone Star Reg Activities, 2513 Yeager Street, Fort Worth, TX 76112

WASHINGTON: Apr. 26-28, 1991; Washington Northern Idaho Regional Convention VI; Tower Inn, 1515 George Washington Way, Richland, WA 99352; information (509) 582-5418; W.N.I.R.C.N.A. VI, 1415 N. Young, -400, Kennewick, WA 99336

WASHINGTON, D.C.: June 21-23, 1991; University of Maryland, College Park; ECCNA-12, P.O. Box 91496, Washington, DC 20090-1496

WEST VIRGINIA: May 10-12, 1991; Out of the Shadows; Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV, 26502; rsvn.s (304) 372-7000; Mountaineer RSC, P.O. Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

N.A. Way

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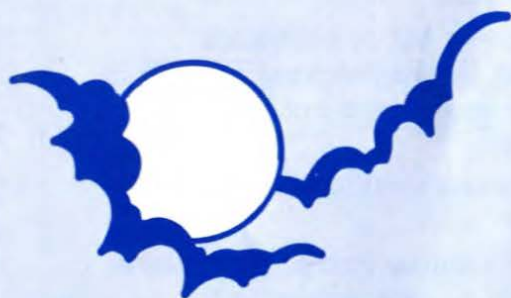
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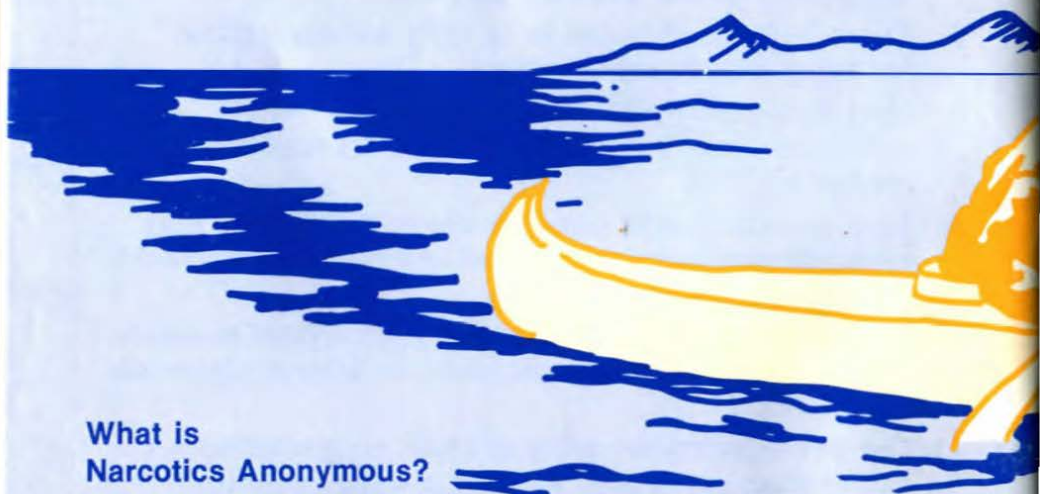
The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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.

Twelve Traditions reprinted by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.



*My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the N.A. way*



What is Narcotics Anonymous?

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 stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. 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.