

My Gratitude Speaks...  
When I Care and When I Share  
with Others The NA Way

# THE NA Way<sup>®</sup>

## MAGAZINE

June 1996 \$1.75 US \$2.50 Canadian

### What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit 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.



## 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 NA Way<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

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# From the editor



## Update on the possible discontinuation of *The NA Way Magazine*

In the envelope along with the April issue of the magazine, and at this writing we were preparing an update to either be inserted with the May issue or sent separately. Unfortunately, at this writing we have no new information, although by the time this arrives in your mailbox, the issue will have been discussed at the World Service Conference.

Rather than trying to give you new information via this column, which doesn't get to you until about a month or two after I write it, I am going to try to keep sending special bulletins either with the magazine or separately.

I realize that many of you have a strong attachment to the magazine and need to know that your feelings about its possible discontinuation are being heard. I am keeping track of the phone calls and letters I've received, and I will also try to share a few here each month.

## From Minnesota:

I felt great sadness after reading your letter spelling out the intention to terminate *The NA Way*. *The NA Way* has been an integral part of my recovery for many "twenty-fours."

I'll never forget the first lesson I learned from *The NA Way*. I had a roommate who I had developed a major resentment against. I criticized everything this person said and did. My sponsor was heartless in pointing back to scrutinizing my own behavior. I found minimal fault with myself, so my sponsor suggested I write down the things my roommate "preached" about and check those things I agreed with. A smattering of his "preaching" included: don't use no matter what, go early to and stay late at meetings, call newcomers and old-timers, help set up and clean up the meeting room, share solutions, be honest, and subscribe to *The NA Way*.

I'm sure you can see what I was faced with. I agreed with every single one of these beliefs, and moreover, I knew that he practiced every single one of them. Unfortunately, I myself had been too busy nursing my resentment to concentrate on these simple actions. My pathway back to sanity included beginning to practice all these things. Subscribing to and reading *The NA Way* has been a part of my recovery ever since then. Though my roommate moved overseas some time ago, I sometimes read articles he has written in our magazine, and I can honestly say I'm grateful that he still shares his experience,

strength, and hope with me in our meeting in print.

Last fall, I moved to a rural community several hours drive from any NA meetings. I have been reading our magazine the minute it arrives in the mailbox, and I shall mourn its loss.

MJC

## Via e-mail

I was saddened to hear that NA will be discontinuing *The NA Way*. I continually try to emphasize the importance of reading literature when I lead meetings. Too often, my suggestions are cast off as the "old-fashioned" kind of recovery. I have heard that retention of the written word is much better than retention of the spoken word.

I must admit that even as a subscriber to *The NA Way*, I sometimes have to force myself to read it. The format and presentation are obsolete. It really looks like more money and time are spent on slick covers rather than working on a better presentation. Some things like that cartoon just plain stunk. Sorry, but that's my opinion.

I am amazed that a major overhaul of the format and presentation is not being undertaken. The recovering addicts entering our rooms are younger; our literature must reflect and attract their interest. This doesn't mean we have to change our message, our policy, or our purpose, just modernize it. I urge you to consider a replacement for *The NA Way*.

RB

## From Florida:

I have been a reader of *The NA Way* for some time. I really enjoy reading it. However, if it's costing the fellowship that much, I can read something else. I hope you will decommission *The NA Way*.

Anonymous

## An apology

In the April 1996 issue of *The NA Way*, we featured an illustration that depicted a portion of Central and Eastern Europe, and that inaccurately showed the juxtaposition of Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, and Germany. Also, the Ukraine was mislabeled as the USSR. We apologize to those who may have been offended by the illustration.

CT, Editor



# Everyone carries a message

On this day last year, one of my friends killed himself. During my active addiction, suicide was a frequent thought and something I attempted on more than one occasion. Even in recovery, there have been times when suicide has seemed like a viable option, but one that I never pursued as earnestly as my friend did. I can empathize with the way he must have felt this day last year—the hopelessness, desperation, and utter loneliness. When we're in the depths of such feelings, we can't see how things could ever change—we believe we are doomed to feel that way forever. I know how the disease deceives, the lies it tells, and what it wants us to believe.

I remember the hopelessness, knowing inside that I was incapable of loving or being loved, and feeling that my life would never change from the way it was. Because of Narcotics Anonymous, I have learned not to give up five minutes before the miracle happens. I know that in a very short amount of time, Michael's life would have changed. We call it hope, but he had lost it.

Within the last twelve months of my life, so much has changed: I graduated from college with a bachelor's degree. I got engaged to a man I have been with for a very long time. I celebrated another year clean. I have entered at least three new relationships with other women who are real friends. I started graduate school. I found out that I was pregnant. We got married. I moved to a new place. And I have gained forty pounds (all baby, of course!). Not all of these changes have been easy to accept or have seemed like the best thing that could have happened. NA has taught me that there is a Higher Power—and my Higher Power always has my best interest at heart, and never gives me more than I can handle with the help of that Power and you people.

I remember the desperation. I would have done anything to escape the way I felt and who I had become. I came to the program out of desperation. I needed to find a new way of life. Narcotics Anonymous has taught me a new way of life. I have learned to live clean, just for today. I have learned to take direction from others who have gone before me. I have been trusted and have learned how to trust. I have learned the principles of forgiveness. I have learned how to be honest, open-minded, and willing to try new things.

I remember the loneliness. I was sure no one loved me. I pushed everyone away, sure that if they really knew me, they would never even like, let alone love, me. I was sure that no one had done the horrible things I had done. I was certain (well, pretty certain) that there was no God, and if

there was, God certainly didn't want anything to do with me. The disease was in control of my life. It fed me these lies and I believed them. I came to Narcotics Anonymous and you taught me that "never alone, never again" was a reality. You loved me until I learned to love myself. I was lovable and I was capable of loving.

Today I write out of sadness and gratitude. Sadness because Michael gave up five minutes before the miracle happened. He had just started to reach out for help. Sadness because Michael believed he was alone; his disease made it seem that way. At his funeral, we stood in the hallway with at least thirty others because all the chairs were taken. Michael was not alone.

Gratitude because I know the truth today. I know that the disease does not discriminate. Michael was only eighteen years old. The disease will, however, distort the truth any chance it gets and isolate me from what I really need most: the love and understanding of you people. When I feel this baby inside me move, I know that miracles happen. When I look in the mirror and smile at the girl I see there, I know that miracles happen.

There is a speaker in our area who says, "Everyone carries a message." Michael's message was a clear one—and it cost him everything to carry it. My message is that the program works, and it costs very little to carry—a phone call, a meeting, service work, the steps, and prayer. The message is hope. The lie is dead. We do recover.

SH, Pennsylvania





# Getting God

When I arrived in the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, I was totally convinced that God wanted nothing more to do with me. I had made promises to God that I never kept. I had made deals with God and never even attempted to fulfill them. I had used the concept of God in con games. I had lied to God on many occasions. I had been a faithful churchgoer while selling and using drugs, sometimes on the church premises. I had blasphemed the name of God in every conceivable way. In my heart of hearts, I was sure that God had only bad things in store for me.

The first time I went to treatment and was introduced to NA, I understood the concept of a Higher Power. I knew that spirituality was the key to this program. The whole "keep it simple, stupid" concept could only work if something other than a human was in charge. I knew this in my mind, but there was no way these ideas could get through to my heart and soul because I felt so totally outside of anything vaguely spiritual. It was not only difficult; it was impossible for me to stay clean.

I tried going to meetings regularly, but I went only to see if I could find a cute man to date. I tried sharing in meetings, but I only shared good things so it would look like I was very healthy. I went to three different types of treatment centers and got kicked out of all of them. I tried getting a sponsor, but I used her only for transportation or as a loan officer. I tried reading the Basic Text, but I thought I could rewrite it and make it better, so that didn't do any good either. I tried writing/working the steps, but I was so thoroughly dishonest that it did absolutely no good.

Not once did I try praying. I was sure there was nothing out there to listen to the prayers of a woman as bad as I. There was a hole inside of me that I could not fill. I had not hurt enough to let go and let God.

I went back out. Of course, it was worse than before. I justified and rationalized things for a few weeks, but I discovered that the saying, "A body full of drugs and a head full of NA just don't mix" was very true. I tried to moderate; that was a joke. I tried switching drugs, which just allowed me to get sick on stuff I hadn't already done. I tried to use with different people, and ended up just making some new enemies. I tried to do it alone, which just made me more miserable.

I had a Basic Text and some other NA literature lying around the house, and every time I saw some of it or read the inscriptions in my book, I was sad. I knew there was a better way, but I didn't believe there was a way for me to get to it.



I then took a "geographical cure." I was sure that the small town I was moving to would solve all my problems. Never mind that I got high the night before I left. After I moved, I stayed clean for about six weeks, more because I didn't know where to go to cop than because I really wanted to stay clean. I appeared at NA meetings, but I was still not getting honest. As soon as I found a connection, I was out of there. I used mostly alone, because I wanted everyone to think I was clean and serene. These were some of the most miserable using days of my entire life. I had finally hit bottom. I was doing things I had sworn I would never do. I was going places I had never had to go before. I was out of control. I had to surrender or die. I thought of killing myself, but didn't have the guts to go through with it.

Finally, a night came when I was robbed and degraded beyond all endurance. I contacted a friend in the NA Fellowship and began to go to meetings. No one had known me very long, so I was like a newcomer who talked very good. I was attending meetings on a daily basis. By the end of ninety days, I knew that there was still something seriously wrong with me because, in addition to the urge to use, I was thinking of ways to kill myself.

I still had this huge hole inside of me that I had no idea how to fill. Working/writing the steps just did not seem like a viable option. Anyway, my sponsor had told me to just live the steps, but never told me how. I tried filling my emptiness with sex; that didn't work. I tried to fill it with NA memorabilia—T-shirts, coffee mugs, magnets, etc.—to no avail. I



tried out being an atheist, and although I believe that's fine for some people, it didn't work for me. I even tried filling the hole with conventions and service work. That succeeded in getting me well-known around the fellowship, but did nothing to heal what was basically wrong with me.

Don't get me wrong. Service work is wonderful, but not if it is the only tool of recovery being used. I was desperate again, and was unsure of my ability to live, let alone stay clean.

*If these people  
could put up  
with me and  
allow me to  
participate,  
then maybe  
God...  
could also.*

I got a new sponsor about this time. I shared with her about how I thought God didn't care about me, and that I felt spirituality was the only thing that was going to allow me to live a full and happy life. My sponsor suggested that I start by working the steps. I was willing to try anything by this point.

I wrote the First Step and came to an understanding that if I surrendered, I wouldn't have to fight any-

more. That filled a small part of the hole inside me. I did the Second Step and realized that the group was my Higher Power, and that its members loved me unconditionally. If I could practice insanity in recovery and still not be ostracized, then maybe there was hope. If these people could put up with me and allow me to participate, then maybe God, whom I believed was omnipotent, could also. The hole got smaller. I finished the Third Step, and came to believe that I was important. I found out that God was on my side. I found out that I was forgiven, and just needed to forgive myself. I began to believe that I was not responsible for my disease, but that I was definitely responsible for my recovery. The hole inside me was getting smaller and smaller with each step I took.

I found all these things in the Basic Text. I admitted, I came to believe, and I made a decision. Once I did all these things, I was on my way to a better and fulfilled life. I still have a long way to go. After all, there are nine more steps, but I am on my way. As for that hole, it continues to shrink and it is bearable now. I am grateful for an HP that I understand, and I hope that everyone who is in recovery can find an HP that works.

*Anonymous*

## All good, all God

The fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, its principles, traditions, and members have been so good to me that I could just cry an ocean of tears of joy.

When I first came around, I felt that while the program worked for "them," it probably wouldn't work for me. I wanted someone in the rooms to give me the secret remedy that would help me stay clean *after* the meetings. But I kept getting the same response: "The answers are in the Basic Text. Read the book."

But I didn't have time to read! I wanted the pain to stop right then and there. Well, I kept coming back, and when the pain of staying the same got too great, I decided to look in this book just to see if it could help me stop feeling so ugly on the inside. To my amazement, the people in the rooms of NA knew exactly what they were talking about. The more I read the Basic Text, the more I felt a part of NA. In fact, I wondered if the people responsible for writing the book were following me during my active addiction because the book described so clearly how I felt, before, during, and after my active addiction.

Today I know for a living fact that the literature of Narcotics Anonymous is very factual. Still today,

when I read the prayer written by the recovering addicts responsible for the compiling of this book (on page xvi), I get chills because I can feel the compassion and sincerity of their goal.

Today I am a grateful recovering addict. I've worked very hard to get out of that dark tunnel into which my active addiction led me. I'm doing swell. I go to meetings six days a week. I have a wonderful job, a car, and a great reputation. On 9 October, I had two years clean. I have a sponsor. I love my sponsor. I have sponsees. I love my sponsees. I take suggestions. I try to remain as open-minded as I possibly can.

But wait! Here comes the wreckage of my past trying to tell me that, even though I've completely turned my life over to the care of God as I understand Him, it's not okay. I still must deal with life on life's terms. Here's a great time to whip out that factual Basic Text. It reminds me that we are not responsible for our disease, but we are for our recovery. Hey, that's all I needed to hear.

My disease would have me believe this means that anything I did wrong in my active addiction really isn't my fault and shouldn't be held against me, because I didn't know any better. That's what I thought when I was new. But I kept coming back, and it was revealed to me that, no, I am not responsible for having a disease, but I am responsible for my actions no matter when they occurred.

I have received the message in the rooms that if I just continue to do the next right thing for the right reason, it will all come together. That basically works just fine for me. So, I was



given an opportunity to deal with two serious criminal cases I left drifting in the wind when I moved from Georgia to Michigan, fleeing my active addiction. God blessed me with two very good lawyers that I didn't have to pay a dime, because that's how my HP takes care of me. These lawyers became my friends, and they were willing to go to any lengths to help me clear up my past. Finally, and unexpectedly, they gave me time to walk in and see the judge and deal with the situation.

That's exactly what happened. I flew to Georgia with my lawyer. My fiancé and friends drove down, too. My mom and sister who still live there also came. As we faced this judge, we all clung to our faith, yet we were full of "what-if" fear. Court started. The DA had me take the stand, and he tried to cut me down to size. But God was guiding my tongue. I had the principles of this program in my heart. I had people who love me there. You could hear how assured I was that everything would come out fine. The DA wanted me to do the rest of the time on my original sentence: two to four years in prison. He said that over and over, making it very clear. I have never been to prison, but I did go to college for six years. I have a master's degree and I work in my field.

To make the story shorter, when the judge got finished with me, I was placed under arrest and put in the county jail until space was available at a "diversion treatment center." I was incarcerated for two-and-a-half months in the county jail, and now I am in the center for three or four months.

"Here I am doing all the right things for the right reasons and this is what I get?" you're thinking. Well, this may sound strange, but I am so very grateful for what I got. You see, neither the judge nor the DA could ever inflict the type of guilt, isolation, embarrassment, dereliction, and degradation that I imposed on myself. Of course, I wanted to leave that court a free citizen the way I came in, but life on life's terms doesn't always work the way I want. The biggest pain I suffered during this whole ordeal was the cancellation of my wedding. I had been in motion with nearly everything bought, dates selected. On my wedding day, I was in jail. Can you imagine what that felt like? Still, in spite of all this, I know my HP takes care of me, and if it's meant to be it will be.

I have now been locked up for five months with one-and-a-half to go. I keep my thinking positive and remind myself that it could have been much worse. I let God have his way with me, because I believe I am experiencing growth in every aspect of my life, especially various forms of humility. My NA family has been there every step of the way, walking me through this, getting hope from my situation, and giving me hope to carry on.

I will celebrate my clean date here, but you know what? It's all good because it's all God.

CC, Michigan

## Coincidences leading to faith

I am an addict from the Northeast Ohio region. I went to a Friday night meeting in my area. There is a group of addicts in my area who rent a community center. They have drug-free dances. They also play pool or cards, or just socialize there. This is wonderful on a Friday night. This provides a safe place for a recovering addict to go without risking his or her recovery by going to one of those "old playgrounds."

I went to this function one Friday night. It was nice. I ran into an addict I knew. I was ready to catch the bus home. The addict said he would give me a ride. After this addict danced a few numbers, we were ready to go.

When we got to his car, we began to have car trouble. Another addict gave us a boost. We drove a ways, then the car stopped again. We pushed it to the curb. A stranger came over to assist us. The stranger flagged down two more strangers who had battery cables. They gave us a boost; we paid them for their services. We went on our own journey. The car stopped again. We were in a hole and couldn't

get out. We didn't know what to do. We had no emergency equipment and it was 1:30 in the morning. Lo and behold, the ultimate weapon came along, a recovering addict who helped us without parallel.

I've read this phrase many times, but to experience it is awesome. This addict has been active in service since I've known him. He was out to buy a meal. He saw us by the grace of God. He gave us both a lift home. I'll be forever grateful to that addict who had car trouble, who offered to give me a ride home in the first place. If he hadn't offered me a ride, and I hadn't accepted, I never would have experienced the miracle early on a Saturday morning. I'm grateful for the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

SG, Ohio





# WORDSEARCH

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## Sponsorship

BOND  
 CARRYING THE MESSAGE  
 COMFORT  
 COMPASSION  
 CONCERN  
 CONFIDENTIAL  
 DIRECTION  
 EXPERIENCE  
 FEELINGS  
 GROWTH  
 HELP  
 HONESTY  
 HOPE  
 HUGS  
 IDENTIFY

INSIGHT  
 INTEGRITY  
 LOVING  
 RELATE  
 RESPECT  
 SHARING  
 STRENGTH  
 SUPPORT  
 TELEPHONE  
 THERAPEUTIC VALUE  
 TRUST  
 TRUTH  
 UNCONDITIONAL  
 WISDOM  
 WORKING THE STEPS  
 WRITING

## Home Group





# Newsletters



## Regardless of age

**A member shares from the heart about how age discrimination invaded her recovery.**

*From The New Life Messenger, the Ottawa, Ontario area newsletter*

I'm A, and I'm an addict.

After seven years of being treated differently in Narcotics Anonymous, I would like to speak up about a problem that goes against our traditions and hurts me and other addicts: age discrimination. I've grown tired of my own apathetic silence. I want to give a different view of "youth in recovery."

Recently, I celebrated my seventh anniversary of recovery. Afterward, I came home and cried for a long time. I no longer wanted to be a member of this fellowship. I've grown so tired of being an "age" in NA, so tired of trying to understand rather than be understood. My celebration left me feel-

ing hurt and devalued. The way I felt was magnified because it came after seven years of the same treatment. Addicts who shared at my birthday did not comment on my seven years of recovery, but on my youth, as though all I've ever been through in NA is different from others.

I think if I was gay, or HIV-positive, or a millionaire, and the focus of my celebration had been on those things, most people would have been outraged. If members had shared something like, "when I think of you, I think of sending you all the black people, or all the gay people—you have so much to share with them," they would have been reminded that such comments compromise the principle of anonymity.

Years ago, when the age thing bothered me, I shrugged it off. I believed that if I worked the steps hard enough and stayed clean long enough to be called an old-timer, I would get the same respect as any other addict. Not so. And that's why my birthday celebration wound up being so painful to me.

I came to NA from skid row. I had been sleeping in parks and abandoned buildings. My addiction consumed me twenty-four hours a day. I have OD'd, gone to institutions, stolen, lied, prostituted myself, eaten from garbage cans, and attempted suicide

several times. Must I go on or do I qualify? Must I keep on requalifying myself every time someone patronizes me because of my age?

Believe me, if I could have used longer, I would have. I am envious of your age. I envy how well thirty-four-year-olds fit into NA, how easy it is for them to explain to others why they need to keep coming back, how "normal" their recovery is. I envy them, but I'll be damned if I'll go use some more so I can come back at an "acceptable" age.

Like every other addict, I came to NA because of my disease. It took me three months of treatment to finally admit that I was just as much an addict as any older addict. It was difficult to fathom that I belonged in NA at fourteen. I wanted to believe that my age exempted me from going to

any lengths for recovery. Finally, at three months clean, I walked into my first NA meeting fully accepting my disease. I was not prepared for the reality that awaited me: members' reactions to my age. These reactions and comments made me feel different. I have had to do a lot of work to overcome such feelings in my recovery.

My age has not prevented me from having to learn all the things that other addicts have to learn. For seven years I have worked the steps, read the literature, had a sponsor, gone to meetings, practiced spiritual principles, and been of service, just like everyone else. My process of recovery has been just like any other addict's. When members share about what recovery was like in their second, fourth, sixth year, I can relate be-





cause my recovery went along the same path. None of the pain of growing in recovery has been alleviated or diminished in deference to my age. Nor has any of the joy. I have experienced miracles, gained a wonderful relationship with my Higher Power, and I have a lot of gratitude for the gifts of recovery.

I have never considered my age an asset in recovery. It has been difficult. I have to work a program in spite of my age, not because of it. When I have been in pain, members have been there to offer their support and love, but when it was time to socialize, my age has been a lonely disadvantage. Quite understandably, the adults rarely reached out to me socially. In fact, they don't reach out to me for support in recovery either, unless they want me to talk to their kids about drugs.

I started high school at three months clean. Do you have any idea what it's like to spend all day in an environment where your peers are discussing boys, TV, and hair styles, while your primary concerns are abstaining from relationships, drug withdrawal, and surrender? I didn't have many friends in high school, and I didn't have many friends in NA, either.

I've heard it shared at meetings that we've all earned our chair. If you tell me that my chair cost a different amount of pain than yours did, how do you expect me to fight off my self-centered disease that would dearly love to have me believe that I'm different from you, that I'm excused from the hard work of recovery, that maybe I don't really belong here?

Please don't jeopardize my recovery with age discrimination. I want to stay here and live. Anonymity is not just about confidentiality. Anonymity is a spiritual principle that protects us from our disease and gives us a sense of unity.

Our reading, "What is Narcotics Anonymous?," explains that "anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion." That's how our fellowship ensures an atmosphere of recovery. It means that whatever our differences, we share a disease. We are here to validate each other's recovery, not discredit it.

A

## Too much to handle?

*From The Recoverer, the Washington/Northern Idaho regional newsletter:*

Someone told me in early recovery that "God will not give you any more than you can handle." Throughout my recovery, I have clung to that belief. When times were difficult or seemed unbearable, that phrase would drift through my confusion to remind me that no matter what happened, things were unfolding as God saw fit, even if it wasn't what I thought I needed. As I look back on

continued on page 25

# 26TH WORLD CONVENTION OF NA



## Show Me How To Live

St. Louis, Missouri, USA  
August 29, 30, 31 & September 1, 1996



## An Open Letter to All Members...

Well, we suppose you've heard by now. NA is growing... growing at a rate and in ways we hardly imagined a few years ago. And if you ever want to see the evidence of all this growth in one place, all you have to do is come to a world convention. A world convention also seems to have all the things that challenge NA as a whole—plus a few of its own. There's a variety of languages spoken in NA; our members with special needs must be accommodated; getting to the convention site must somehow be managed; registration should be accomplished without having to stand in line for hours; and there should be enough merchandise. Most of all, we want our members who come to the world convention to enjoy our fellowship's celebration of recovery.

Making sure this happens requires that we take definite steps to ensure that our fellowship's diversity is properly supported. Last year, at WCNA-25, members from over twenty countries attended the convention. Anticipating such attendance, we translated the convention flyer into seven languages. While English was the official language of the convention, simultaneous translations in six languages were provided in the main meeting room throughout the weekend. Several bilingual meetings took place. Multilingual staff and volunteers were placed in key areas to help convention-goers find their way around and get their questions answered. We provided discount travel packages to the convention from as many places as possible. We had greeters stationed at the airports on the heavy arrival dates to assist travel-weary and bewildered members. The result was that we had the most diverse worldwide celebration of recovery in our history.

It is in this spirit that we would like to plan for all world conventions. We plan to translate the registration flyer from now on. We plan to continue to provide simultaneous translations equipment at all world conventions. We will make any accommodation possible for members with special needs. We plan to negotiate discount travel packages wherever possible.

We need your help. Don't wait until you register to tell us if you require translations assistance or have special needs. Please contact us as soon as possible so that we can arrange for the things you need. We also need your ideas. We are committed to making every world convention a special celebration of recovery for all who attend. Any input you have that will help us achieve this goal is more than welcome.

Please direct all questions, requests, and input to the World Service Office, (818) 773-9999, extension #172.

Thank you,  
Board of Directors  
World Convention Corporation

## WCNA XXVI Registration

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State/Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Additional Registrants \_\_\_\_\_

"Confirmation notices will not be mailed to you for any registration received after August 1st."

EVENT	PRICE		QUANTITY	TOTAL
Registration (before 7/1/96)	\$30.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
Late Registration (after 7/1/96)	\$40.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
**Stand-Up Comedy Show	\$15.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
**Live Concert	\$30.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
**Saturday Jazz Breakfast	\$15.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
*11oz. Coffee Mug	\$7.00	X	_____	= \$ _____
*Heavy Embroidered Tee-shirt	\$15.00	X	M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____	= \$ _____

\*Limited to one of each per registrant paid before 7/1/96.

See "SPECIAL MERCHANDISE OFFER" on back page.

\*\*Limited seats available.

Newcomer Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF PAYMENT: ☐ U.S. Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Credit Card

Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or charge my: ☐ AMEX ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ Diners Club

Charge Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need translations? If yes, what language? \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify any special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fax credit card registrations to the WSO at (818) 700-0700

or

Make checks payable to WCNA XXVI and mail to:

**WCNA XXVI**

c/o World Service Office, Inc.

PO Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409-9099, USA

For more registration information, please call 818-773-9999 ext. 200.



## Ground Transportation

- The Lambert International Airport is approximately a thirty minute drive to downtown St. Louis.
  - The MetroLink Rail is located on the upper level of the Main Terminal. The cost is \$1 each way.
  - Taxi cabs are available outside the baggage claim area. The approximate fare is \$18-\$21 one-way.
  - Shuttle transportation via Airport Express is located on the lower level of the Main Terminal at exits 7 & 13, and on the lower level of the East Terminal. The fare is \$8 one-way, \$14 round-trip.
- From Amtrak St. Louis Station and the Greyhound Bus Station take the MetroLink.
- If you are driving to St. Louis, parking is approximately \$10 per day.

## Hotels

### WCNA XXVI will be held at the America's Convention Center

- 1 Adam's Mark** — This deluxe hotel serves as headquarters for the convention and is located six blocks from the Convention Center. Rooms are \$99.00/night.
- 2 Missouri Athletic Club** — This private executive athletic club boasts very comfortable historic sleeping rooms located two blocks from the Convention Center. Room rate includes continental breakfast and full use of the all athletic facilities. Rooms are \$85.00/night (no triple or quad accommodations). Suites with one queen bed are \$99.00/night.
- 3 Doubletree Downtown Suites** — This quaint European-style boutique hotel offers beautifully decorated suites and is located immediately across the street from the Convention Center. Suites with one or two beds are \$99.00/night.
- 4 Drury Inn Convention Center** — This moderately priced hotel situated in a historic building located two blocks from the Convention Center offers free Quickstart breakfast, coffee, and parking for all guests. Rooms are \$89.00/night.
- 5 Drury Inn Union Station\*** — This economy hotel is located seventeen blocks from the Convention Center along the Metrolink line. Rooms include free Quickstart breakfast, coffee, and parking for all guests. Rooms are \$89.00/night.
- 6 Hampton Inn Union Station\*** — This economy hotel is located nineteen blocks from the Convention Center and is accessible to the Metrolink line. Rooms include free Quickstart breakfast, coffee, and parking for all guests. Rooms are \$85.00/night.
- 7 Holiday Inn Convention Center** — This moderately priced hotel is located on the west side of the Convention Center. Guests are offered free coffee in the morning, and free cribs for children are available upon request. Rooms are \$79.00/night.
- 8 Holiday Inn Riverfront** — This budget hotel is located five blocks from the Convention Center. Suites include kitchens, and pots and pans are available for a small deposit. Rooms are \$69.00/night. Suites with one or two beds are \$79.00/night.
- 9 Hyatt Regency\*** — This deluxe hotel situated in historic Union Station is among the most beautiful Hyatts in the USA. It is attached to the old train station which offers many shops and eateries. The hotel is located fifteen blocks from the Convention Center along the Metrolink line. Rooms are \$99.00/night.
- 10 Marriott's Pavillion** — This moderately priced hotel, offering free cribs upon request, is located ten blocks from the Convention Center. Rooms are \$85.00/night.

\* Limited Bus Shuttles between these hotels and the Convention Center will be available between 11:00pm and 3:00am when the Metrolink is not running.

## WCNA XXVI Hotel Reservation

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is very important that your reservations are made BEFORE the August 1st cut-off date. Convention rates may not apply and rooms may not be available after above cut-off date.

**READ CAREFULLY:** Confirmation will be sent by the hotel to the individual named in Part I. If more than one room is required, this form may be photocopied. If confirmation has not been received within thirty days following your acknowledgement from the Housing Bureau, contact assigned hotel directly.

Send To:  
**WCNA Housing Bureau**  
 c/o St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission  
 10 South Broadway, Suite 1000  
 St. Louis, MO 63102 USA

or Fax to (314) 621-9467

No telephone reservations will be accepted

### PART I

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State/Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

### PART II

**NOTE:** Rooms are assigned on a first-come/first-serve basis in the order received. If your first choice is not available, assignment will be made at next available choice. An acknowledgment of your room assignment will be mailed to you by the Housing Bureau. All changes and cancellations must be made directly with the hotel.

Select four choices from participating hotels. Enter name below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (first choice) (second choice) (third choice) (fourth choice)

Arrival date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Please check:</b>	<b>Names of additional occupants:</b>	<b>Check room type:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> smoking	1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Single—One Bed/One Person
<input type="checkbox"/> non-smoking	2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Double—One Bed/Two Persons
	3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Double/Double—Two Bed/Two Persons
		<input type="checkbox"/> Triple—Two Bed/Three Persons
		<input type="checkbox"/> Quad—Two Bed/Four Persons
		<input type="checkbox"/> *Suite—One Bed/One or Two Persons
		<input type="checkbox"/> *Suite—Two Bed/Two to Four Persons

\*Suite accommodations refer only to hotels #2, #3, and #8 as described on the previous page.

### PART III

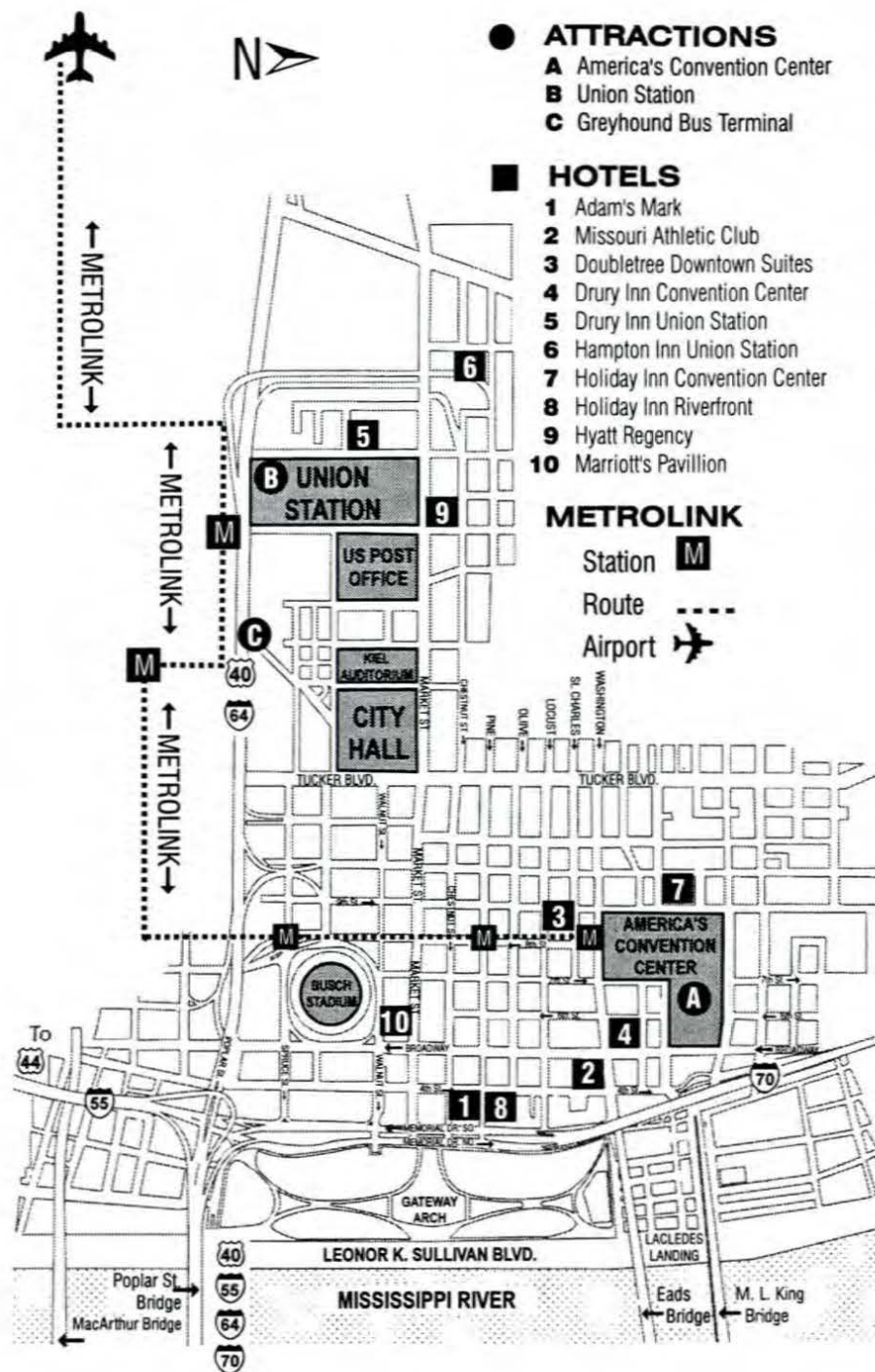
An advance deposit of \$100 is required for each room. Forms will be returned to sender if received without deposit. Checks should be made payable to the **WCNA Housing Bureau**. The **WCNA Housing Bureau** accepts no liability once deposits are transferred to the assigned hotel. Deposits will be forfeited for any cancellation not made in writing directly with the hotel at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled arrival.

Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or charge my: ☐ AMEX ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ Diners Club

Charge Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_





## ● ATTRACTIONS

- A America's Convention Center
- B Union Station
- C Greyhound Bus Terminal

## ■ HOTELS

- 1 Adam's Mark
- 2 Missouri Athletic Club
- 3 Doubletree Downtown Suites
- 4 Drury Inn Convention Center
- 5 Drury Inn Union Station
- 6 Hampton Inn Union Station
- 7 Holiday Inn Convention Center
- 8 Holiday Inn Riverfront
- 9 Hyatt Regency
- 10 Marriott's Pavilion

## METROLINK

Station **M**  
Route **---**  
Airport

## Discount Airfare

Special discounted airfare is available on American Airlines as follows:

- A discount is being offered to St. Louis from all American airline cities in the United States; Canada; San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. Thomas; St. Croix; Bermuda; and the Bahamas. Reservations can be made directly with American Airlines by calling (800) 433-1790 and refer them to **Star file #S3086PA**.

**You must give them the Star file number in order to receive the discount.**

- For international flights from Europe, Central and South America, special rates are available for travel no more than seven days and six nights. To purchase tickets, please call your local American Airlines office. Ask for the international congress desk and give them the **Star file #S3086PA**.

**You must give them the Star file number in order to receive the discount.**

Additional discounts to St. Louis from all international cities are available for groups of ten or more traveling together to the convention. For more information, please contact the WSO at 19-1(818)773-9999, extension #172.

## Special Convention Merchandise Offer

For the first time, you can now purchase a convention tee-shirt and mug with your registration. In our effort to assist registrants in obtaining convention merchandise, a special seven-ounce heavyweight embroidered tee-shirt and a large eleven-ounce coffee mug can now be purchased if you register before the July 1, 1996 general registration cut-off date.

This merchandise is limited to one of each item per paid registration. Please refer to the registration form to place your order.

**All purchased merchandise will be available to be picked up on-site at the convention.**

## Wish to Speak?

Speakers must be at least eight years clean for main meetings, and at least five years clean for workshops. If you would like to be considered as a speaker or would like to recommend someone for consideration, please submit a tape along with the speaker's name, address, telephone number, and clean date.

Consideration will also be given to individuals without a tape if they are recommended by their area or regional service committee. This recommendation should also be accompanied by the speaker's name, address, telephone number, and clean date.

**All tapes and speaker recommendations must be received by May 1, 1996.**

All submissions should be sent to the:

**WCNA XXVI Program Committee**

c/o World Service Office, Inc.

PO Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409-9099 USA

## Volunteering to Help?

If you would like to volunteer to help at the convention, or would like to chair a marathon meeting, please report to the convention information booth located in the Convention Center beginning Wednesday, August 28, 1996.



You are invited to join us at  
WCNA XXVI  
**Show Me  
How to Live**  
August 29, 30, 31, September 1, 1996  
St. Louis, Missouri  
featuring  
Meetings, Workshops  
Concert, Comedy Show  
Nightly Coffeehouse, Dances  
NA Art Gallery, Pool Party  
Jazz Breakfast

**T**his year's Host Committee welcomes you to enjoy the wide scope of restaurants, bistros, delis and shops. From shopping at Union Station or the St. Louis Center, to strolling the cobblestone streets of Laclede's Landing, or attending a Cardinals Baseball game, St. Louis has something for everyone. Forest Park, and the coffee shops and restaurants of the Central West End, are just a short trip away.

Take a horse drawn carriage ride or attend the annual St. Louis Blues Festival being held the same weekend.

So meet us in St. Louis, the Gateway City, and  
**Show Me How to Live!**

the last nine months, I realize again that God has not given me any more than I can handle and that I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be in my recovery, even if I think it's not where I should be or where I'd like to be.

Nine months ago, I stepped onto a plane bound for a country I had never been to before, to live for a year surrounded by a language I couldn't speak, and, scariest of all, to a place that didn't have any recovery meetings. I was tearful when I went to my "last" NA meeting in Tacoma to pour out my feelings of fear and uncertainty. Then, with address book in hand, I stepped onto the plane and was on my way to the Great Unknown.

Within a week, I was settled into my new surroundings and feeling optimistic. But within the next few weeks, as the wonder of it all wore off, I experienced the inevitable culture shock. Everything was so different! I found myself concentrating on the strangeness of it all. I couldn't read any of the street signs or storefronts. Even shopping for simple things became an ordeal. I wandered from place to place, hoping to find what I was looking for by myself. Oftentimes, there wasn't anyone around who spoke English. I couldn't even ask for directions. Even if I found what I wanted by looking at the pictures, needing to ask the store clerk to hand me what I wanted from behind the counter was something entirely different.

There were times that I felt entirely overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all, by my "uniqueness" in being a foreigner and being "illiterate."

Then, just when my loneliness and frustration seemed unbearable, I would remember that "God will not give you any more than you can handle." I became comforted and recharged. I could make it! It was just different from what I was used to.

*...things were  
unfolding  
as God  
saw fit,...*

Although it took me quite a while to reach that conclusion, and I sometimes still forget it temporarily, I liken my experience here to early recovery. When I first got clean, everything was also new and different. I was changing my lifestyle and going off into the Great Unknown. I was experiencing emotions that were new and different and oftentimes overwhelming. I felt unique. I went to meetings, and though the people I met there were speaking English, the language still seemed foreign to me. What was this recovery stuff they were talking about? I often didn't understand it, and only through their patience and understanding did I slowly begin to learn and catch on to their particular lexicon. Just like here. In the nine months I've been



here, I realized that the more I focus on the differences, the less I see the similarities and the more I isolate myself. I am already isolated from meetings. The closest is five hundred miles away. Still, that doesn't mean I have to do it alone. I receive mail from family and friends who let me know that they are there for me. And I have a Higher Power who is with me always, even during the times I choose not to notice.

Only a day or two ago, I was feeling down about all the superficial things I tend to get caught up in sometimes and about not being able, at that very moment, to feel the comfort of a meeting, when a new friend and fellow traveler suddenly started talking about his concept of a Higher Power. Although he's not in a twelve-step

program, the words he spoke were exactly what I needed to hear. Suddenly, it didn't matter that I wasn't in a meeting room. I realized that although I may not have all the tools of recovery available to me at all times, I do have a Higher Power working in my life through other people who show me recovery—even outside the meeting rooms—when I'm willing to hear and see it. I am not alone.

Through all of my frustrations and setbacks here in this strange land, I have developed new strengths that I would not have known had I not had the struggle. And through all of the uncertainties, one thing still holds true: God will not give me any more than I can handle. That I know for sure.

*DM, Washington via China*



"GOD WON'T GIVE US MORE THAN WE CAN HANDLE"

## Viewpoint



## On unconditional love

After having worked the steps for the last few years, I have been able to draw some spiritual conclusions. Among them are the following: There are no loopholes in God's will. It is God's will for me to practice unconditional love. Not only is unconditional love practical, without it there would be no NA.

The unconditional love of our fellowship began with the love Higher Power showed us. For God knows how long, addicts have caused many people great harm. My mind can scarcely imagine the amount of pain we and our predecessors created for others while in our active addiction. We all know of the sick, pathetic, and destructive actions we took against ourselves.

Yet God had nothing but compassion for us. Our Higher Power looked

down upon us and saw that we were no match for the disease of addiction. The disease was older, smarter, and stronger than we were. Without help, the massacre of addicts would continue unchecked. God did not allow that to happen. God gave us Narcotics Anonymous, and with it came the Twelve Steps. With the Twelve Steps came the awareness that, if we were to change and grow into the people our Higher Power hoped we would be, we would need to practice spiritual principles.

We practice just like Little Leaguers practice baseball in between real games, hoping to become better. We practice because none of us applies spiritual principles perfectly. We practice because the biggest room in the world is room for improvement. It is in the practicing that we come to see just how practical principles like unconditional love are.

Unconditional love, practiced consistently, strengthens our First Tradition. Unconditional love makes our Twelfth Tradition a reality. It is this kind of love that helps ensure that an atmosphere of recovery is maintained at our meetings. Unconditional love allows me to fully reap the therapeutic benefits of one addict helping another. This love, which is made easier to practice through faith in a Higher



Power, has enabled me to reach out and help other NA members, in spite of feelings like anger and resentment.

I have learned that such feelings are obstacles that come between me and God's will for me. What a joyous feeling it is when these obstacles are overcome and I learn, by helping you, that I have helped myself. That is God's simple will for me, to treat you the way I would want you to treat me.

That was what I needed in order to feel whole, to find serenity. I now realize that when I fail to show other addicts unconditional love because of some shortcoming they have displayed in the past, I have forgotten that unconditional love God has so freely given to me.

My experience has allowed me to get a glimpse of just how infinite God's wisdom is, and to realize how much I have to learn. With this knowledge in mind, I would be a fool to look for loopholes in God's will. May God bless all of you, my recovering brothers and sisters. Please keep coming back. NA needs you.

*PH, New Jersey*

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## Opposite-gender sponsorship

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In many cases I agree with the suggestion that it is better to have a sponsor of the same gender, but I believe that under certain circumstances, faced with honesty, opposite-gender sponsorship should not be ruled out. There are many real dangers in opposite-gender sponsorship. On the other hand, I have found some wonderful gifts from it in my recovery.

I believe that forming bonds with those of the same sex is imperative. In my early recovery, I needed to learn to do that. I am a woman and had a woman sponsor for ten years. I know that if I had allowed myself to have a man sponsor early on, I would have been cheating myself. I had never had healthy relationships with other women. I never wanted to. Having a woman sponsor helped me to avoid becoming emotionally dependent on a man for nurturing, allowed me to get in touch with myself, and let me learn to trust other women.

Honestly checking my motives for choosing a sponsor of the opposite gender was essential. Since honesty was foreign to me in my early recovery,

I needed to avoid choosing a man sponsor because I would have done it for the wrong reasons. I needed a woman sponsor. By having a woman sponsor, I avoided setting up the possibility of a male NA member getting involved with a vulnerable female—something that wouldn't have been good for either of us.

A few years ago, I found myself without a sponsor. I lived in an area that is isolated, and there were no other women with any length of recovery in my immediate area. I corresponded with some women from other areas. At first, I was not able to find someone with the willingness and time to sponsor me. I formed a relationship with a man in recovery who had years clean. After much discussion between us, he became my sponsor.

This has been one of the most open and rewarding sponsor relationships I've had in my recovery. Nothing is off-limits to talk about. The solutions of recovery are universal, so age, race, or sex do not hinder the relationship. If an issue does come up that needs to be addressed by a woman, he would be the first to direct me to one. Recovery is about spirituality and growth. I have found that at this point in my recovery, he is able to help me on that journey.

I am not recommending opposite-gender sponsorship, but I felt compelled to share my experience in this area. Before closing, I want to add that a few factors in my life were imperative for me to consider before getting a sponsor of the opposite gender. I have a happy and healthy marriage and so does my sponsor. (If one of us

didn't, the chances of forming an unhealthy dependency would be too great.) I have strong relationships with other women, and forming more does not frighten me. I have worked the steps and have a commitment to continue doing so with my present sponsor. I have also examined my motives for choosing my present sponsor.

I am grateful to have a sponsor I can trust and learn from.

I opened this with some of the dangers of having an opposite-gender sponsor. There are many factors to consider (many more than I expressed), but I remain open-minded and I no longer say "no" when opposite-gender sponsorship is discussed.

*Anonymous*

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## Time to get up-to-date

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Hi. My name is Charlie. I am a grateful recovering addict. I am a little shy of seven years clean. I'm a firm believer in using the tools of recovery. One very important tool for me is the Basic Text; however, I feel it's time for a change in the "Personal Stories" section.

I would like to hear from addicts who are clean today. Don't get me wrong. The personal stories we currently have are and always have been



a great inspiration to me, but those stories were written many years ago.

Today, some addicts in the fellowship deal with health problems that didn't even exist fifteen years ago. Other recovering addicts deal with problems that existed, but just weren't talked about much, such as mental illness.

I believe that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. Many addicts have reached me over the years, including those who reach out through the pages of our Basic Text.

I would like to see many of the "old stories" remain, but let's face it, the times are changing and we have to change with them. We identify with each other's experiences. So, including present life issues and how to apply the NA program to them will reach more addicts.

Thank God that Narcotics Anonymous has given us a proven way to recover from active addiction and to live and enjoy life.

*CK, Florida*

## Therapy-speak or steps?

I hear a lot of "therapy-speak" these days, and I wonder whatever happened to working the steps. Recently, I had coffee with some people in recovery and began discussing the fear of success one of them was going through. An old-timer tried to point out the danger of remaining in that kind of fear, because it's so familiar and enjoyable to us to remain in that state. The old-timer was met with a barrage of therapy-speak.

"We need to nurture the inner child by staying in the fear in order to feel the feeling. We should stay with it, and not take action until the time is right."

The more the old-timer tried to suggest that the solution was simply a matter of working the steps, the more he was discounted and told he was "coming from the male fix-it perspective, not the feminine perspective, which requires nurturing." Finally, I guess my own feminine, nurturing side came out because I suggested that we were dealing with a semantic issue, which met with agreement and a sudden discovery on the part of the fearful person that she was late for an appointment.

I have been subjected to exactly the same fear of success as this other person. We both entered the same university at forty-plus. We have the same financial concerns. We both have new lifestyles to adjust to. We are both holding down jobs and dealing with families. And we both managed to get straight "A"s in our first semesters. We have both been in recovery the same number of years, give or take a couple of months.

Yet four-and-a-half months after school started, she is still indulging in feeling the feeling, and I haven't had to do that for a while. What's the difference? I don't know, but maybe part of it is that she attends several different fellowships, sees a therapist weekly, and depends strongly on a "spiritual advisor," whereas I just work a program of recovery in NA. Whose way is right? I don't know that there is a right or wrong way; I only know what works for me. I have serenity in my life today.

I was taught that I have Twelve Steps to use on any issue in my life, and how to use them. In this case it went this way:

Step One: I admitted that the fear was making my life unmanageable and had to surrender to that fact. Step Two: I came to believe that my Higher Power could restore sanity to my life by helping me through the fear. Step Three: I turned the fear over to my Higher Power and concentrated on the next thing I was supposed to do: studying instead of worrying. Step Four: I wrote about my part in the problem, the defects that led to it, and the assets that could help me get through it. Step Five: I

shared that with another human being. Step Six: I became entirely ready to have God remove the fear. Step Seven: I prayed for His help in overcoming it. Step Eight: I listed the people I harmed with my fear and unmanageability and shared my situation with them. Step Nine: I made amends by using the courage gained through prayer to do my personal best at the things I needed to accomplish. Step Ten: I kept a journal, inventorying my behaviors and reactions, honestly admitting when I was acting on unrealistic fear, both in my journal and to the people affected. Step Eleven: I continued to pray and ask God for the courage to continue doing His will for me. Step Twelve: I carried this message by sharing about it in meetings and with my sponsorship family, even with people outside the fellowship who were going through similar problems, thus practicing the principles in all my affairs. Also, I made sure I went to each person who helped me through this time and thanked them for being there for me, not just once but whenever I thought of it.

Next semester I will be taking more classes and they'll be more difficult, but I have faith that I can get through them successfully by continuing to work the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous on all my life issues. That fear is still there somewhere, but just for today I don't have to let it take control of my life, just as I no longer let drugs control my life. Just for today, I will have a program. I will try to work it to the best of my ability, the NA way.

*MT, California*



# From our readers



## Promptly admitting it

When I first came around, I heard it said that the steps could be used to solve any problem in an addict's life. I believed it then because of the hopeless state of mind I was in. Today, I have experience that proves it to be true.

Recently, I moved to another part of the state. My fiancée and son couldn't come with me because it was near the end of the school year and we didn't want to pull my son out of school then. This move was job-related, and I had to go right away to begin my new assignment. I planned to return home in two weeks for a weekend visit.

A friend who works for the same company let me stay at his house until I was able to move my family, too. He also let me use one of his cars, since I left my car with my fiancée. I had the opportunity to look for suitable housing and learn my way around.

Finally, the day came for me to return home. The night before I left, I spoke to my fiancée on the phone and found out that she was preparing a special dinner (the friend I was staying with is a bachelor and I really needed a home-cooked meal).

Knowing I would be on the road for three hours, my plan was to leave at five o'clock, right after work on Friday. That would put me home at eight

o'clock. It was perfectly organized. Well, needless to say, whenever I plan anything, my Higher Power seems to make alternate plans for me.

My friend had to be out of town that day with the car I was to borrow to drive home in. He got back about five o'clock and asked me to assist him with making a presentation at a town meeting. He promised it would only last an hour and, then, I would be on the road home. I agreed to help, but we didn't get back to his place until nine-thirty that night.

Since I had gotten up very early that morning, I was really tired. I called to tell my fiancée that I wouldn't be leaving till the next morning. She was very upset. When I didn't arrive at the expected time, she had begun calling the house. Receiving no answer, she got scared, thinking I could have broken down or gotten into an accident. She wanted to know why I hadn't called sooner. After I explained, I promised to leave early the next morning. She said, "What for?" and hung up. Not wanting to make matters worse, I didn't call back.

The following morning at seven, I was on the road. During the drive, I realized that I owed my fiancée an apology for not calling earlier. I arrived in town and went straight to the

florist. I bought a single, long-stemmed red rose. The cashier asked me if I needed a card to go with it. I thought about it a minute, then said yes. On the outside of the small envelope I wrote the words to Step Ten; on the inside was my apology.

She was at the laundry when I got home, so I put the card and rose on the table and went to meet her. When we got back and she saw the card and flower, she was all smiles. We spent a wonderful weekend together.

What would I have done if I didn't have a Tenth Step to work? I don't know, but things surely wouldn't have turned out as well as they did. It never fails. When I mess things up, NA always gives me the perfect way to make them right again.

*OB, Louisiana*

## Clearing away the wreckage

I am writing this from the county jail. I have two years clean, and I am finally taking care of my legal wreckage. Turning myself in on these old warrants was not my decision. It was the work of my Higher Power, who insists that I practice rigorous honesty in all my affairs. The truth is that I would have ignored these warrants, figuring they would never affect my life if I didn't return to this state.

But today I have a conscience because I believe in God. My God is loving and caring and has only my best interest in mind. For me this is a daily learning process, because I ran on my own self-destructive will for so many years.

When I entered the rooms of NA a little over two years ago, I wanted to stop using but I did not believe that I

ever would. What I did was listen at that first meeting and, surprisingly enough, I heard some things that made sense. Nobody had ever told me that I didn't have to use. I believed that I was a junkie and that was my destiny.

When I came into the rooms of NA, going to jail was a part of my life. It wasn't something I enjoyed, but I accepted it as part of the price for being loaded every day. Jails and institutions were regulars; death was something I hoped for.

My life is good today. I have a relationship with God. I also have a sponsor I trust, respect, and learn from constantly. Other gifts of recovery have included re-establishing a relationship with my teenage son and the rest of my family. I have many friends today. When I filled out the phone list here I was able to put down names of twenty people who will accept my collect out-of-state calls. I don't know about others, but when I was using, no one would accept my collect calls from jail. Finally, I have gained the self-acceptance that has allowed me to embark on a romantic relationship with another recovering addict.

My recovery has afforded me opportunities that I did not know even existed. I just graduated from college, and in a few short weeks I will be starting law school. I have been fortunate in recovery. Even though I am sitting in jail right now, I know that I am finally doing the right things to keep my life honest.

*ST, California*



## You are!

When I hear the expression, "going to any lengths," I think of the HOW of this program. For me, "going to any lengths" means being honest, open-minded, and willing in all aspects of my life and recovery.

When I hurt, I need to be honest about how I'm feeling, open-minded enough to trust you enough to share with you, and willing enough to follow suggestions given to me about what to do about it.

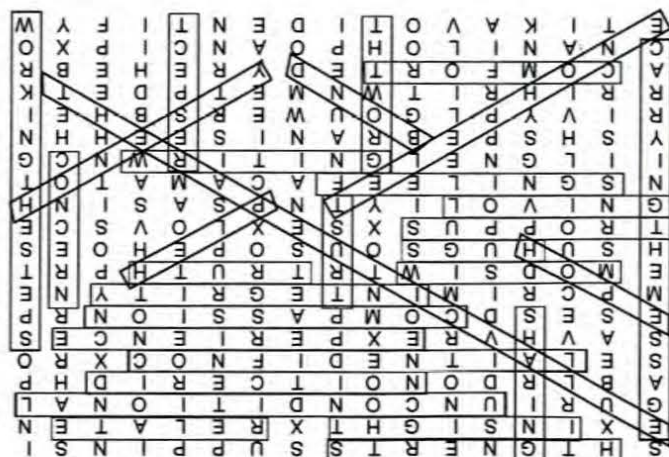
In my recovery, over time I have followed the HOW of this program, and it has worked. I have received many gifts in this program, and I can't convey how grateful I am. You see, this program is really very simple if I don't fight it. All I have to do is be

honest, open-minded, and willing while every time working the Twelve Steps.

All my life I've said "if only \_\_\_\_\_, I'd be all right." Well, since I've come into this wonderful program of Narcotics Anonymous, I've received every single one of those "if onlys," and the crazy thing is, I still don't have enough to fill that great big hole inside of me. The only thing that ever fills it is a conscious contact with my Higher Power and fellowship with you beautiful people in Narcotics Anonymous.

And you are beautiful, every single one of you—every recovering addict who has that love and strength in his or her eyes that says "I'm a miracle." And you are.

*Anonymous*



# Comin'up

## JUNE

### Canada

**Alberta:** 28-30 June; 6th Canadian Convention; Highway Motor Inn, Edmonton; rsvns: (800) 661-5193; info: (403) 450-3449; CCNA, 1907 36th Street NE, Edmonton, Alberta T6L 3N1

**British Columbia:** 14-16 June; 2nd Sunshine Coast Campout; info: (604) 885-6572; SCNA Campout, RR #1, S-14 C-39, Gibsons, British Columbia V0N 1V0

**Manitoba:** 7-9 June; Winnipeg Area Convention; Robert A. Stein Community Center, Winnipeg; info: (204) 586-4432 or (204) 774-5991; WACCNA, Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2V 4C8

**New Brunswick:** 14-16 June; 6th New Brunswick Area Convention; Keddy's Inn and Convention Center, Fredericton; rsvns: (506) 454-4461 or (800) 561-7666; info: (506) 451-8492 or (506) 454-3465; NBACC, Box 20064, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 6Y8

**Ontario:** 9 June; Baseball/Dunk Your Sponsor Day; Little Lake Park, Midland; info: (705) 538-0672; Box 29030, Barrie, Ontario L4N 7W1

### Sweden

**Kramfors.** 21-23 June 1996; 8th Midsummer Regional Convention; Høla Folkhogskola; info: 46/861230525; Midsommarkonventkommitten, Box 5, 87024, Sandoverken

### United Kingdom

**Dorset:** 28-30 June; 4th Wessex Area Convention; Commodore Hotel and Beaufort Community Centre, Bournemouth; rsvns: 44/1202/423150; info: 44/1202/789789; WANAC, Box 1980, London, England N19 3LS

### United States

**Arkansas:** 21-23 June; 12th Annual Beaver Round-Up Campout; Buffalo Point State Park, Yellville; info: (501) 925-1123; NAASC, PO Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

**California:** 14-16 June; 8th American River Area Campout; Orchard Springs Campground, Rollins Lake; info: Campout Committee, PO Box 823, North Highlands, CA 95660

2) 14-16 June; 4th California Mid-State Regional Convention; Fresno Hilton, Fresno; rsvns: (800) 649-4955; info: (209) 294-8667; CMSRCNA, PO Box 27253, Fresno, CA 93729

3) 14-16 June; San Diego Regional Convention; Bristol Court Hotel; rsvns: (800) 662-4477; info: (619) 464-3975; SDIRCNA-CC, 2260 El Cajon Blvd., #184, San Diego, CA 92104

4) 23 June; 4th Annual Blues Fest; West Los Angeles VA Medical Center Golf Course; info: (310) 822-4034 or (310) 390-0279 or (310) 559-6111; Blues, 1800 S. Robertson #227, Los Angeles, CA 90034

**Georgia:** 7-9 June; 14th Piedmont Area Anniversary; Master Inn, Macon; rsvns: (912) 788-8910; info: (912) 746-7712 or (912) 956-5533

**Illinois:** 7-9 June; Show-Me Regional Convention; Cape Girardeau; info: SMRCNA-11, PO Box 1226, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702

2) 28-30 June; Flight to Freedom Campout; Sherwood Campground, Route 37, Ina; info: (618) 244-6027; Flight, PO Box 1561, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

**Maine:** 7-9 June; Nature of Recovery; Camp Mechuwana, Winthrop; info: (207) 377-6895 or (207) 621-2989; Unwashed Group, Box 120, Winthrop, ME 04364

**Maryland:** 27-30 June; Baltimore Area Convention; Hyatt Hotel Inner Harbor, rsvns: (800) 233-1234; Sheraton Inner Harbor, rsvns: (410) 962-8300; info: BACNA, PO Box 1331, Baltimore, MD 21203

**Missouri:** 7-9 June; Show-Me Regional Convention; Holiday Inn/Exit 96, Cape Girardeau; rsvns: (314) 334-4491; info: (618) 661-1527; SMRCNA, 320 N Frederick, Box 1226, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702

**Montana:** 21-23 June; 8th Montana Regional Gathering; Boulder Hot Springs; info: (406) 442-4705 or (406) 933-5723; Gathering, PO Box 133, Jefferson City, MT 59638

**New Hampshire:** 21-23 June; Granite State Area's Fellowship in the Field; Bethlehem; info: (603) 645-4777

**New York:** 15 June; Clean in Queens Fundraiser; St. Helen's School Cafeteria, 157th Avenue & 84th Street, Howard Beach, Queens; info: (718) 848-4518

**Oklahoma:** 28-30 June; 8th Annual Mirror of Miracles Campout; Sycamore Valley Recreation Area, Wyandotte; info: (918) 542-3471 or (316) 231-0903

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**Utah:** 7-9 June; 10th Celebration of Recovery Convention; American Legion Hall, Vernal; info: (801) 789-6675; HUASC, PO Box 1476, Vernal, UT 84078

## JULY

### Canada

**Ontario:** 12-14 July; North Western Ontario Area Convention; Thunder Bay; info: (807) 345-6936 or (807) 768-0879

2) 20 July; NA Family Recovery Days Boat Cruise; Midland Dock, Midland; info: (705) 538-0672; Box 29030, Barrie, Ontario L4N 7W1

### Portugal

**Lisbon:** 26-28 July; Unity in Diversity, the 13th European Convention and Conference; Centro Cultural de Belem, Lisbon; rsvns: Hotel da Torre 351/1/3636262, Hotel Atlantico 351/1/4685170, Hotel Estoril Sol 351/1/4868541, Pensao Setubalense 351/1/3636639; info: ECCNA, PO Box 526, 2795 Carnaxide Codex, Portugal

### United States

**California:** 28 July; Bay Cities Area Rockfest '96; Wilson Park, Torrance; info: (310) 325-3776 or (310) 542-1546; e-mail: bigdaddy@winteractive.com; Rockfest '96, 1351 W. 252nd Street #4, Harbor City, CA 90710

**Florida:** 4-7 July; 15th Florida Regional Convention; Grenelefe Resort, Haines City; rsvns: (813) 422-7511; info: (813) 874-2300; FRCNA, c/o RSO, 2940 W Columbus Dr., Tampa, FL 33607

**Hawaii:** 12-14 July; Maui Gathering, Camp Keanae; info: (808) 879-6412 or (808) 572-8012 or (808) 573-1305; Maui Gathering, PO Box 3002, Kahului, HI 96732

**Idaho:** 12-14 July; Southern Idaho Region Serenity in the Wilderness; Chemeketa Campground, Sawtooth Recreational Area, Stanley; info: (208) 467-9910; HDASCNA, Box 9291, Nampa, ID 83652

**Illinois:** 12-14 July; Honest Beginner's/Joliet Area Camping Trip; White Oaks Campground, Utica; info: (708) 759-2593 or (815) 755-9058

**Iowa:** 5-7 July; Iowa Regional Convention; Holiday Inn and Convention Center, Waterloo; rsvns: (319) 233-7560; info: (319) 233-2906 or (515) 454-3026 or (515) 274-4347 or (319) 233-5011; IRCNA, Box 1886, Waterloo, IA 50704

**Massachusetts:** 19-21 July; Western Massachusetts Area Convention; Springfield Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290 or (413) 781-7111; info: (413) 536-2468 or (413) 746-8306; WMACNA, Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101

**Michigan:** 4-7 July; 12th Michigan Regional Convention; Flint Radisson; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (810) 239-1234; info: (810) 545-2179; MRCNA, PO Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

**Nebraska:** 20-21 July 1996; Eastern Nebraska Area Convention; Airport Ramada Inn; rsvns: (800) 999-1240; info: (402) 330-6090 or (402) 553-3262; ENNA, Box 3937, Omaha, NE 68103

**Nevada:** 19-21 July; 5th California-Arizona-Nevada Area Convention; Riverside Resort, Laughlin; rsvns: (800) 227-3849; info: (520) 763-9734; CANAC, Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

**New Hampshire:** 19-21 July; Seacoast Area Campout, Freedom Under the Stars; Camp Wakuta, Freedom, New Hampshire; Campout, PO Box 682, Dover, NH 03821

**New York:** 26-28 July; Northern New York Regional Convention; Wells College Campus, Aurora; info: (716) 467-1234 or (716) 288-7232 or (716) 232-1039; NNYRCNA, PO Box 1425, Rochester, NY 14603

**North Carolina:** 19-21 July 1996; 3rd New Hope Area Convention; Omni Durham Hotel; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI or (919) 683-6664; info: (919) 409-3190 or (919) 405-2370; NHACNA, PO Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

**Ohio:** 12-14 July; 1st Dayton Area Convention; Days Inn South, Dayton; rsvns: (513) 847-8422; info: (513) 274-3380 or (513) 252-5840; DASCNACC, Box 578, 3470 Salem Ave., Dayton, OH 45406

2) 19-21 July; GLASCNA North Coast Recovery Roast; Tri-County Kamp Inn; 17147 GAR Highway, Montville; info: (216) 481-8353 or (216) 752-0238

**Puerto Rico:** 26-28 July; Puerto Rico Regional Convention; Condado Plaza Hotel, San Juan; rsvns: (800) 468-8588 or (809) 721-1000; info: (809) 274-0488 or (809) 721-4267; Unidos Podemos, Box 362313, San Juan, PR 00936

**Tennessee:** 5-7 July; Fourth of July Campout; Cookeville; info: (615) 520-0996

**Texas:** 5-7 July; Houston Area Convention; Houston; rsvns: (800) 465-4329; info: (713) 473-7367; HACNA, Box 7649, Houston, TX 77270

**Utah:** 19-21 July; Utah Regional Campvention; Weber Memorial Park, Ogden; info: (801) 489-1321 or (801) 627-3832; URCNA, PO Box 994, Springville, UT 84663

## AUGUST

### Canada

**Nova Scotia:** 2-4 Aug.; 7th Nova Scotia Area Convention; Truro; info: (902) 477-1983 or (902) 469-1609; Back to the Basics, PO Box 65, Central Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2L4

## Norway

**Vest Agder:** 16-18 Aug.; Norwegian NA Convention; info: 47/38095521; NA-Kristiansand, Postbox 58, 4601 Kristiansand S, Norway

## United Kingdom

**West Midlands:** 9-11 Aug.; United Kingdom Convention; Birmingham Metropole Hotel, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham; rsvns: 44/121/7804242; info: 44/171/2729040 or 44/171/7300009; UKCNA-10, c/o NA Helpline, 38 Ebury Street, London SW1, England

## United States

**California:** 10 Aug.; Southern California Region celebrates NA's 43rd Birthday; Bren Events Center, UC Irvine Campus; info: (714) 824-5050

**Florida:** 9-11 Aug.; Uncoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Sunspree, Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (352) 338-7929 or (352) 371-7918; e-mail: mikek@gnv.fdt.net; UCACNA, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

**Georgia:** 8-11 Aug.; Midtown Atlanta Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Courtland & International Blvd's; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (404) 659-6500; info: (404) 753-5206 or (404) 753-1831; MACNA, Box 17557, Atlanta, GE 30316

**Minnesota:** 16-18 Aug.; 2nd Annual "Just For the Weekend" Campout; Whispering Pines Campground, Houston; rsvns: (507) 281-4923; info: (507) 289-4104; ODSANA Campout, 220 13th Avenue SE, Rochester, MN 55904

**Ohio:** 16-18 Aug.; Gateway to Freedom; Holiday Inn, Westlake; rsvns: (800) 762-7416 or (216) 871-6000; info: (216) 486-6644 or (216) 691-1024; Tri-Area Convention, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44120

**Oregon:** 16-18 Aug. 1996; Campout & Fish Fry; Canal Creek, Waldport; info: Newport NA Fish Fry, Box 2071, Waldport, OR 97394

**Pennsylvania:** 2-4 Aug.; Unity Weekend; Brookdale Campground, Meadville; info: (814) 336-3527; CWPASCNA, PO Box 1281, Meadville, PA 16335

**South Carolina:** 16-18 Aug. 1996; Carolina Regional Awareness Weekend; Ramada Inn, Clemson, South Carolina; rsvns: (800) 288-2828 or (803) 654-7501; info: (704) 566-1974 or (803) 972-9441; Carolina Regional Service Awareness Weekend; CRSRC, 1327 Beeman Pl. #9, Greensboro, NC 27408

**Tennessee:** 16-18 Aug.; Unity in the Mountains; Kingsport Inn, Kingsport; rsvns: (423) 247-3133; info: (423) 357-7464; MACNA, Box 5609, Johnson City, TN 37603

**Virginia:** 9-11 Aug.; 10th Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4-H Education Center, Front Royal, Virginia; info: (304) 274-1522; CCC, PO Box 3329, Martinsburg, WV 25410

**Wisconsin:** 9-11 Aug.; Kettle Moraine Area Unity Jam Campout; Camp Y-Koda, Sheboygan; info: (414) 458-7078; KMACS, Box 1022, Sheboygan, WI 53082

## SEPTEMBER

### United States

**Connecticut:** 27-29 Sept.; United Shoreline Area Spiritual Weekend, Enders Island, Mystic; info: (860) 767-3299; USANA Spiritual Weekend, Box 354, Centerbrook, CT 06409

**Kentucky:** 20-22 Sept.; Western Kentucky Area 9th Annual Freedom Between the Lakes; Energy Lake Campground, Golden Pond; info: (502) 443-5874; WKANA, PO Box 2866, Paducah, KY 42002

**Maine:** 20-22 Sep.; 13th Southern Maine Area Convention; Notre Dame Spiritual Center, Alfred; info: (207) 832-5129; SMASC, Convention Committee, Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

**Wyoming:** 27-29 Sep. 1996; Convention on Unity; Rawlins; info: (307) 875-5867; CUNA, PO Box 325, Green River, WY 82935

## OCTOBER

### Mexico

**Baja California Norte:** 4-6 Oct.; Baja California Convention. "El Milagro Continúa"; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; rsvns: (800) 472-6385; info: (619) 661-6100, ext. 2123 or 52/66/815248 or 52/66/815242; CBCNA, 4492 Camino de la Plaza, Suite TIJ, Box 1080, San Diego, CA 92173

### United States

**California:** 25-27 Oct.; Southern California Regional Convention; Anaheim Hilton; rsvns: (800) 445-8667; info: (805) 265-8518 or (909) 824-9104 or (818) 342-1411; SRCNA, PO Box 60046, Pasadena, CA 91106

**Nebraska:** 4-6 Oct. 1996; Nebraska Regional Convention; Beatrice; info: (402) 266-5808; NRCNA, Box 83872, Lincoln, NE 68501

**Virginia:** 4-6 Oct.; OLANA Unityfest; Virginia Beach; rsvns: (800) 926-4466; info: (804) 488-8056; Unityfest, PO Box 120484, Newport News, VA 23612

**Washington:** 18-20 Oct.; Pacific Northwest Convention; Holiday Inn Select, Olympia; rsvns: (360) 943-4000; info: (206) 382-0534; PNWCNA, Box 841, Kelso, WA 98626

**Wisconsin:** 18-20 Oct.; Wisconsin Regional Convention; Eau Claire; info: WSNAC, 142 Broadway Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703



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**The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA 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 NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA 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. NA, 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 NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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