

My Gratitude Speaks...

When I Care
and When I Share
With Others
The NA Way

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 NA WAY
MAGAZINE®

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The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of *God as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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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Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409-9099

(818) 773-9999



Volume fourteen, number three

from the editor	2
meeting in print	
A dopefiend living dead	4
Only with vigilance	6
The first ninety days	8
New beginnings	10
My chair	12
Fare well, love well, and you'll be well	13
About this hugging thing	15
HOW—the science of the second step	17
“God” stories	20
A letter to the uninitiated	22
Top ten reasons to attend NA regularly	24
ye olde puzzle	25
home group	26
comin' up	
NA calendar of upcoming events	27



The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the NA Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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From the editor



Classic recovery

Yes, it's time for our annual classics issue. We publish one each and every March so we can all benefit from the really great recovery that's been shared in these pages over the past fourteen years. The first issue of *The NA Way* was published in September 1982. We've often reprinted material from that very first issue in the annual classics issue. This year, the stories inside span eight years; our earliest story is from the March 1983 *NA Way* and the most recently published story appeared in the January 1991 issue. We hope you enjoy another issue of classic recovery.

Likes December issue

The NA members who write for the *NA Way* do so out of a profound gratitude and a desire to carry the message. It's always nice to know when that message has been received. We're sure that DS from Manitoba and ME from New York will be happy to read the following letter.

Hi NA Way,

My name is Kirk, a recovering addict clean by God's grace and my choice today.

I would like to commend you guys for your choices of manuscripts in the December *NA Way*.

I've been a reader of our magazine for nine years and I have never enjoyed anything as much as I did "Walking With Faith," by DS of Manitoba. Wow!

I was also really touched by "A Resentment by any Other Name," by ME of New York. I believe this person and I have a parallel experience, religiously speaking. Will you please let this person know I've written and would like to share my experience, strength, and hope concerning religion in recovery with him or her?

*Thanks ya'll and God's blessings,
KD, North Carolina*

Will there be a new NA Way?

That's a question only you, the fellowship, can answer. The issue of changing the format of the magazine is now before the fellowship for discussion and will be addressed at the coming World Service Conference, to be held 27 April to 3 May in Woodland Hills, California. Please participate in our fellowship's group conscience. Support your local CAR workshop!

Cindy T, Editor



A dopefiend living dead



run, and I felt the first flames of hell begin to singe my skin. I closed my eyes tight, hoping to rid myself of the pain, but Mr. Hell wasn't going for it.

Intense pain woke me as a reminder of the life I had chosen to live. Early morning heroin withdrawals had been my daily companion for the previous two years. I was fourteen when I first got caught up in that homemade hell.

Rita and I shared an extremely narrow cot that was really just big enough for one person. She lay curled up, unaware of my situation. Her own self-imposed hell wouldn't forget to awaken her to suffer the same fate as I.

I decided to let her sleep. Rita had started using at fifteen, and had been running long and hard for four years with no breaks. She was three years younger than I, but addiction doesn't discriminate.

The pain crept around to my back and pinched at my spine, causing me to hold my stomach and groan in agony. My eyes and nose started to

I found myself living from day to day as death awaited my cold-hearted soul. I had one foot and four toes in the grave, and knew it was only a matter of time before someone either pushed me all the way in or I took an overdose and fell in on my own.

Rita gave out a muted cry as her sickness took over, jolting her from sleep to confront her ordeal. At nineteen, Rita still maintained her beauty, but it wasn't going to last much longer if she continued to abuse herself with dope. Although she possessed a sharp intelligence, I felt pity for her. She could have chosen a better life than that of a larceny-hearted dopefiend. Rita did what was necessary to support her habit, and had only the tracks up and down both arms to show for it.

We were both sweating and shivering with the smell of poison seeping

through the pores of our skin. There came a need to reach for each other, searching in one another's embrace for the comfort we so desperately needed. We sought warmth, but found only coldness. Yet Rita and I had an all-consuming love, one that only other suffering addicts could have understood.

I left
before the break
started, but came
back within ten
minutes for some
unknown
reason.

I lay a moment staring up at the ceiling and walls surrounding my fortress. I saw myself as a dopefiend living dead. Fate must have dealt my fifth card from the bottom of the deck. The cigarette-stained ceiling signified nothing but agony upon agony. The peeling paint on the dull gray walls held a message, like tears flowing from the face of a loved one.

Those who love and care for me need not weep for the likes of a dog such as myself. Allow me the privilege of destroying my mind, body, soul, and spirit in solitude.

I still held onto that dopefiend mentality while awaiting trial in 1979 on robbery charges. I was tried, convicted, and sentenced to ten to twenty years.

I wasn't new to the prison system. My arrival back was greeted with handshakes, smiles, and questions like "What the hell happened?" It was only a short time before I fell back into the groove of things and had the distinct feeling I'd never left. I sought out what I'd come to know best. My drug of choice was heroin, but I had trouble getting it on a regular basis. I smoked pot, sniffed anything sniffable, drank pruno, and injected everything I could get my hands on.

I ran crazy for seven years, until the administration decided I needed a change of scenery, so they transferred me to a medium-security prison. Again, I found the drugs the day I arrived.

One evening in April of 1987, I found myself attending an NA meeting with a friend. Outside people were allowed on prison grounds to share their personal experiences as recovering addicts. I sat in the back and half-listened to what was being said. Every so often, I heard something I related to. Still, I wasn't totally convinced that they were as happy and fulfilled as they claimed to be.

One speaker mentioned that he had taken his First Step by admitting that he was powerless over his addiction and that his life had become unmanageable. Much was said that first night, but I still had my doubts; I felt nobody could have suffered as I had. I left before the break started, but came back within ten minutes for some unknown reason. Something had been said, or maybe a Higher Power had guided me back into that room.

I found myself listening more attentively this time, turning over in my

mind what was being shared. I began to take a serious look at myself, at who I was and what I had become. This meeting gave me a little hope that there was a way out of misery and back into living. I felt a sense of salvation while attending that first meeting.

I began to attend the meetings on a regular basis. Soon, I wasn't able to get enough of the message of hope. I listened to the speakers—both from outside and inside the prison—took advice, and followed the suggestions of the Twelve Steps. The energy I had poured into my pursuit of drugs, I rechanneled into working the NA program.

I took my First and Second Steps easily enough, but Step Three proved to be a stumbling block for me. I still wanted to hold onto my macho image, to be a man, a convict, a dopefiend. I couldn't bring myself to accept the fact that I needed to allow a Power greater than myself to steer me onto a different track.

I managed to get over that obstacle when I heard an outside speaker share the story of how he had overcome his problem with Step Three. He said the Serenity Prayer had guided him toward the path to his Higher Power, whom he chose to call God. I thought about it and agreed it wasn't a bad idea at that.

Since I began using the Serenity Prayer, I have gotten closer to my Higher Power. I soon acquired a taste for love, trust, motivation, and responsibility, not to mention so many other good things I've long been without. I had been lost in a world of darkness, but things became brighter with each passing day.

From the meetings, I've learned that I have to choose whether I wish to use or not. I have chosen not to poison my body with chemicals, and I feel great knowing I have that choice today. There's growth within me. I'm a person—a human being. That gives me a feeling I want to hold onto for the rest of my life.

I am learning how to deal with my problems, not bury myself in them. If I find myself with something on my mind that troubles me, I can talk with good-hearted people I've met in the fellowship. I've started to live my life one day at a time, and not worry about what tomorrow might bring. My recovery from addiction has become extremely important to me, more important than anything else.

As a person with a disease, I have come to accept the fact that I'm only a relapse away from a life I want to leave far behind. I never knew before how twisted my mind had become with the use of drugs. In the past, I had fooled myself into thinking I had everything under control and didn't have a problem. I take my recovery seriously today, not only because I have to, but because I want to.

The program suggests that I follow the Twelve Steps and abstain from drug use one day at a time. It guarantees my life will become more productive and meaningful. I've been drug-free for more than seven months, and already the changes in my life are unbelievable. People trust, love, and respect me today, and I feel the very same toward others. I never thought myself capable of having feelings like these. I never would have imagined that today is the beginning of a new life.

LB, Connecticut



Only with vigilance



I had been clean for nine years when I chopped off half my thumb in an accident. I had never had to deal with any medical emergency before that.

At the time, we were living in the mountains of New Mexico. We were thirty miles from the nearest town, and the roads leading out to the highway were impassable because of the mud.

When it comes to physical pain, I've always been a coward. This causes quite a dilemma for me, because I know my reaction to any drug will be predictably unpredictable. I had always wondered, "what if something serious happened to me, and I had to go under the influence of a narcotic? How would I react? Would it trigger my obsession and compulsion to use?" My sponsor told me that under such circumstances, I would have to experience being in recovery while under the influence; it scared me nevertheless.

My sponsor was with me, along with my wife and several other members of the program when I got to the doctor. I told the doctor about my recovery. He told me that the pain was going to be unbearable once the Novocain and shock wore off. He prescribed something for the pain. I agreed with my wife and sponsor that I would only take them at night if the pain was too much, and would try to tolerate the pain during the day. I did this, and after two days I was able to handle the pain without medication. I felt like I had dealt with the whole thing pretty well, and was proud of myself. The only problem was, I felt I had done so well, I should keep the rest of the pills around, "just in case."

A little more than a year later, my sponsor died of cancer. She passed away in our house. She was racked with pain all the time. The doctors gave her some heavy drugs that we dispensed to her. After she died, there were about 150 pills left. I thought, rather than throwing them away, I'd save them, "just in case of an emergency." So I put them up on my shelf with the rest of the pills.

I've been very active in the program, and I should have known better, but the

truth is, it never occurred to me that what I was doing was dangerous. I've grown and changed in every area of my life, but when it comes to my disease, it hasn't changed one iota.

About eight months later, we moved to another state. When I was packing, I came across all the pills. I had forgotten all about them. I thought to myself, "I'll take them along with me, just in case." So I put them in my art box.

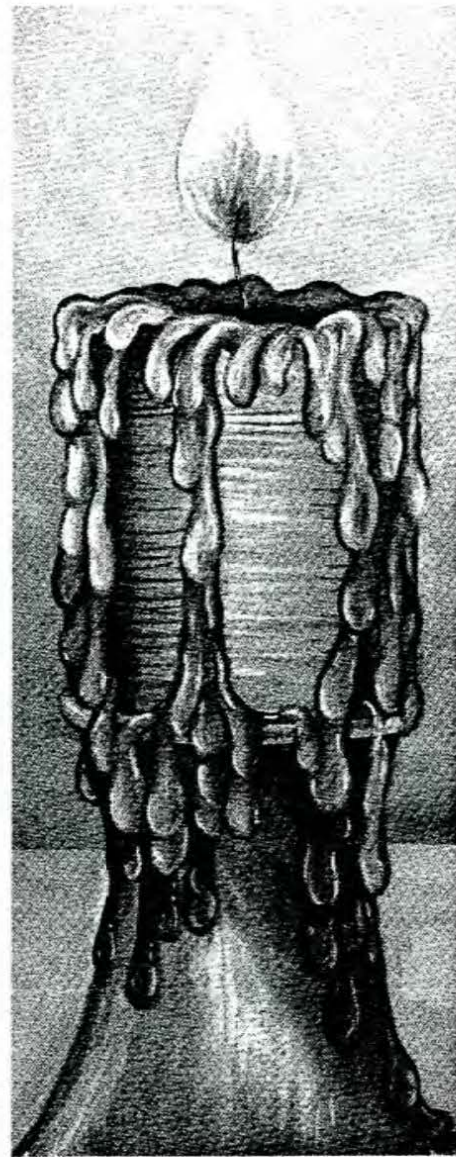
Six months later, I was at a meeting talking to a newcomer. I don't know what I was talking to him about, but I mentioned the pills, and suddenly it hit me: "What the hell am I doing with all those pills?" Then I remembered something that blew me away. When I used to get loaded, my stash spot was my art box.

I didn't consciously want to get loaded. I didn't have a desire to use. I had this program and a new life, but my addiction was out of the bull pen. I had heard people talk about constant vigilance. I didn't like to hear it. I would rather have believed that I'd never want to use again. As a result of this experience, my willingness to endure physical pain increased. Just recently, at fifteen years clean, I went through a hernia operation. I took a spinal to numb me from the waist down and took nothing for the pain. I was scared and wide awake. After six hours I went home. Six years ago, the willingness and vigilance weren't there to that degree.

I believe that had I not had that experience with the pills and realized how easily my addiction was activated, I would have gone in for general anesthesia and pain killers after the surgery. It would have been so unnecessary, and

ever so dangerous. Thank God for progress and this program. Never forget that our stories are not over with yet!

TM, Hawaii





The first ninety days



I completed my first ninety days in 1970. I had just returned from Southeast Asia and found I didn't fit in with the peer group for which I yearned. I wanted to become part of the new generation of pot-smoking long-hairs. But with my military haircut and lack of expertise in the counter-culture, I found myself spit on by some, shied away from by most, and, once, chased through the park on Martha's vineyard by people yelling, "narc! narc!"

Later, back at school, I could not make friends. My solution to this was simple: I would sell drugs. Having bought a couple hits of LSD to sell to two guys in a campus restaurant, I sold them for what I paid for them. And so the first drugs I sold were a great bargain—a bargain enjoyed by two state cops. My first ninety days were spent in the slammer.

I carried a major resentment for the last twenty years over the time I spent behind bars. And I hated authority figures, especially my jailers. I always said that anyone who took a job as a screw was probably a juvenile delinquent, and had to have been the school bully.

Yesterday, after a meeting, I spent several hours with a newcomer who was going through a painful separation. As we talked, I began to like the guy. Even though he was new to the program, he was on a path of recovery that was inspiring to me.

As he shared more of his story, it became clear that he was having trouble meeting people, some-

thing I could identify with. He seemed reluctant to talk about his job and said people judged him harshly for what he did. Often, he said, people would look at him with undisguised contempt. I couldn't understand why anyone would find this man to be anything other than a compassionate, caring human being, struggling on his own path of recovery and making progress.

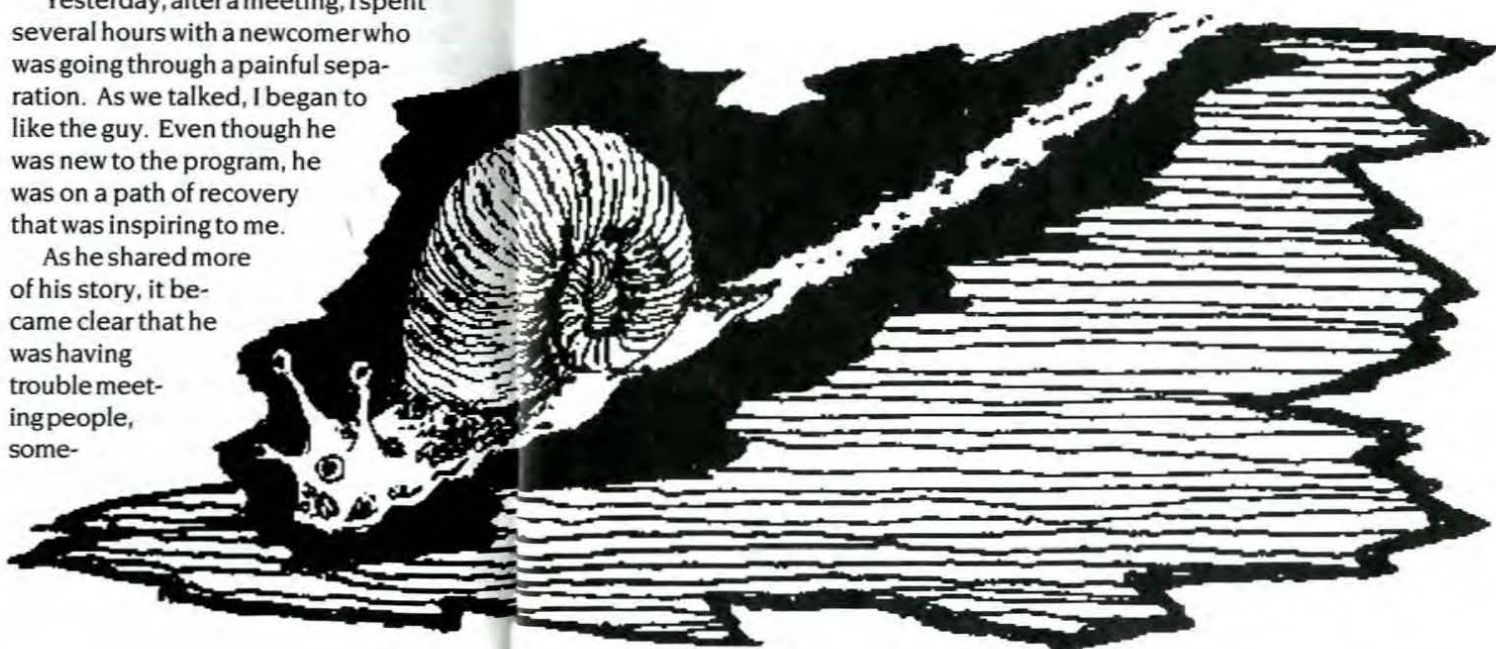
I found out that he was a *guard* at a prison down the road, hated his job, had six years till retirement, and was thinking seriously about quitting. He had not identified with the convicts he's been guarding for fourteen years, and looked on addicts with disdain. I was an outlaw, an addict, and a convict; and had carried a sizable chip on my shoulder for men like him for twenty years.

I think we were at that meeting and spent those hours together for a reason. After that, I found the chip on my shoulder no longer existed. I hope he learned that at least one person does not judge him for his job, but for who he is, a fellow traveler on the road of recovery.

Coincidence that we both came together in that time and space? I doubt it! I no longer believe in coincidence.

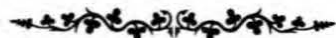
In a week's time I will have another ninety days clean. It's not the first ninety days, nor even the second, but one day at a time, I am confident this will be the last "first ninety days." I am finally changing. It has come slowly for me, but it is coming.

GB, Maine





New beginnings



Last night we had a meeting in a friend's living room. I'm new here. I've found work nearby and the local fellowship is warm and loving so recently I decided to move here. This is my first major move in a few years. In my first few months clean, I moved often.

I've made many close friends in the last few years, and I went through a lot of changes in making the decision to move away from them. It's painful; they're the friends who shared my early struggles with denial, anger, surrender, and God. They were there in my darkest hours. They held me with love and gave me assurance that if I kept coming back, things would get better. They shared the joy of celebrating my first and second anniversaries clean. They love me despite my character defects. Already I miss my fellow members from "home." Last

night helped me feel welcome and at home here in my new area.

There were only three of us there in front of my friend's fireplace. The decision to have a meeting was spontaneous. Peace and calmness engulfed me as I shared. I watched the flames dance above the logs and the warmth of the fire was very healing. I could feel the weight of defects that have caused a lot of pain and turmoil lately being lifted from my shoulders. I felt the ability to be more honest than I've been in some time.

One of my friends shared his struggle to understand and accept the end of a relationship. I remember the way I'd felt the last time I had to break up with someone. It was more than a year ago, but I could recall the pain and confusion I experienced then, and feel empathy.

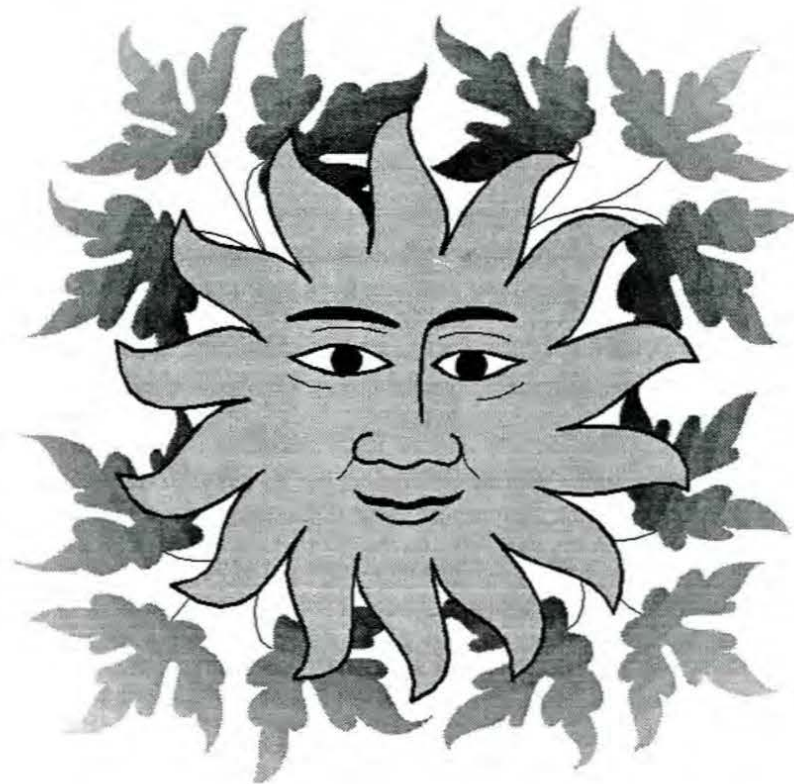
I'm now in a new relationship, going slowly, trying to let it grow a day at a time, at my God's pace. It's not easy to go slow after a year and a half without a mate. The addict in me wants to dive right in and feel the overwhelming instant gratification of this new love. The

results of acting on this sort of addictive desire are still written painfully in my memory. I've known this person for more than a year and first experienced the desire for a relationship four months ago. I made the decision to turn this over to my God and build a friendship first. We've now decided to share at a more intimate level. This transition brings on fear some days. I remember, however, that the foundation of our relationship is the firm bedrock of a real friendship and my fears subside. It seems we've been brought together for a reason. The honest communication that developed through our friendship keeps us in touch with each other, emotionally and spiritually. Last night I was reminded of the value of sharing my fears and hopes with

other addicts. They helped me gain the insight and understanding that I needed to maintain an intimate relationship. They also helped me to remember to keep my recovery first, and to trust someone outside of "us" with my feelings. I've watched a lot of addicts, including myself, make the tragic mistake of excluding others from their lives, trying to make one person meet all their needs.

Today, recovery has taken me physically away from the person I care for so deeply. I long for us to be together, but I realize we are together in my heart. I'm glad to be alive today, aware and living a miracle.

Anonymous





My chair



The room where my home group meets is still the same; the chairs, bookshelves, carpet, lights, and walls are the same as they were a year ago. The difference is me. The person who sat there a year ago isn't the person who sits there today. I feel like all I did was sit on a chair faithfully and my life took on a new depth and meaning.

Before, my eyes were closed and my spirit was dead. I had no friends and I felt afraid, angry, and lonely. Some of the faces in the room are the same, but now they are important faces—people I have deep emotional connections to. I know and feel I am loved. I understand and accept the value of me. My self-hate has changed to self-appreciation. The Higher Power they talked about isn't a foreigner now. He's a friend. Weakness has turned to strength, unrest to peace, lost wandering to firm direction. The benefits they promised me that I doubted have come to me in a fullness I never expected.

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

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

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

LM, Washington



Fare well, love well, and you'll be well



I didn't come into this program brimming full of love. I didn't know what love was. Addicts do not take spouses or lovers;

we take hostages. I was a taker. I was self-centered and dishonest, and from this spiritual disease stemmed a hundred forms of resentment, anger, and fear. I was not content with what I owned so I sought to take what you had. And when I couldn't steal what you had, I tried to prevent you from ever acquiring more than I had. I caused a lot of violence, suffering, and unhappiness.

Today, I am grateful to this twelve-step program of recovery. I have changed. I no longer seek to take from you nor do I seek to cause you harm. I have a program that teaches me to give unconditionally. I can only keep what I have by giving it away. If I give away my recovery, I'll recover. If I give away my disease, I'll keep it.

I'd like to share one of the most positive aspects of my recovery—I have become willing to learn what love is and to practice the principles of love (acceptance and giving) in my recovery. I have come to believe that unless I care and share my thoughts, my feelings and experiences concerning love, I cannot keep the warm comforting effects that loving produces.

For love to be effective in my healing process, it had to touch my body, mind, and spirit with two spiritual principles: unconditional acceptance and unconditional giving (acceptance and giving are what caring and sharing are all about for me today). My body has to accept the fact that love—more than being warm in bed, more than individuals seeking a hostage to take, even more than wanting to share—love for me today is giving what I need to get. Today, I seek rather to comfort others than to be comforted, to





give rather than to take, for it is in self-forgetting that I find self-love.

Acceptance is the key to mental freedom from the prisons of resentment, anger, and fear. Unconditional acceptance of God's will for me gets rid of my pride and ego that comes from self-will and self-deception. The Twelve Traditions also help to keep my pride and ego in perspective, in keeping with my primary purpose—to stay clean and carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

I cannot be free of my self-made prison of obsession until I accept the fact that I have the right to be wrong. Then I can accept that other people have the right to be wrong and the right to be right. I accept the fact that people have the right to be, and to express who and what they are at the time. I also accept that I have the right to associate with people whose positive way of thinking and living attracts me. Honest love comes from my accepting people, places, and things the way they are, and from knowing that trying to change them would make my life unmanageable. I feel a lot of serenity from accepting the things I cannot change. My mind has been touched by the principle of acceptance.

My spirit has been made whole again by the principle of giving. Physical love for me is giving what you need to get. If I need to be comforted I seek rather to comfort, and the kind and loving God of my understanding always comforts me.

Spiritual love is giving away what you need to keep. This is my favorite way of overcoming the bondage of self. As I said earlier, my two biggest problems are that I am too self-centered

and dishonest with myself. Twelve Step work helped me to recover the fastest because it keeps me honest and keeps me giving away the message of recovery that was freely given to me. It also keeps me in the here and now.

I am learning to practice the character-building virtues of patience, tolerance, hope, trust, compassion, empathy, and obedience to God's will. I am learning to forgive, and to forget, and to forget that I have forgiven. I am learning to become assertive, not aggressive. I find that it is in forgiving that I am forgiven, and that when I give peace, God makes me feel peaceful within. I am learning that I am working the steps and traditions today because I thirst for the mood-altering effects they produce. I want to be more happy, more joyous, more free—and I get more and more each day. I thirst for the knowledge of God's will for me, and I seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Him every day.

Let me end by sharing two important things that were revealed to me recently: It doesn't matter *who* you love or *how* you love, but *that* you love. Unless you love someone, nothing makes any sense. The Twelve Steps of NA are a guide to living, giving, and loving. I want to thank all of you who I may have touched by giving this message. You have already touched my life and given me another opportunity to give. For this, I am grateful.

Fare well, love well, and you'll be well!

Anonymous, Hawaii

About this hugging thing



About this hugging thing, I don't like it. It doesn't bother me at all if that's what you want to do. Just leave me out of it, please. I like having your arms on my shoulders during the closing prayer. Even a little squeeze afterward feels pretty good. But this automatic hugging stuff is not for this addict.

A have a little bit of history with those hugs. I've been trying to make peace with them for a number of years now. It's not getting much better.

In the beginning, when you hugged me, I froze. I didn't feel a thing. I didn't think much of it at the time. Back then, I froze when you looked at me. I thought I'd outgrow it.

As I worked the steps, I started to grow. I learned a lot about myself. I

learned that even though I hadn't been in and out of a lot of relationships, I had traded sex for drugs on a pretty regular basis. I was used to going into a room full of strangers and being touched—only it was too get high, not to get well. No matter how hard I try, I haven't learned to feel good about being touched by people I don't know well. I'm not always sure whether it's my disease or my burgeoning self-respect that makes me ask you to take your hands off me.

But I always—eventually—recognize my disease when I let myself accept hugs I don't want. It feels like submission, not surrender. Submission to many years of violence at the hands of other addicts—both inside and outside my home. Unless you've known home to be a hostile and dangerous place, it's hard to understand just how deep it cuts. That's a feeling I choose not to tolerate, on any level.

Today, my home is around tables in church basements and hospital cafeterias. How can I tell you that sometimes I don't feel safe when you touch me? That when I'm afraid, I still can't feel anything at all? That subtle little things push my physical survival buttons? I



HOW THE SCIENCE OF THE SECOND STEP



Hur Basic Text starts out explaining the Second Step by saying it's "necessary if we expect to achieve any sort of on-going recovery." I stayed clean for a while purely on the excitement of the fellowship and the sense that all these people *understood*. I received a big shot of gratitude when I did not have to live with the physical results from drug abuse. This early, exciting period in recovery is often labeled a "pink cloud."

Life was wonderful in those early days. Every meeting, dance, picnic, campout, or convention enabled me to meet new people recovering from this disease, people who understood me. It was all very exhilarating.

At some point, however, the excitement faded. When I tried to use the "courage to change the things I can," I found that life was not easy. Many of my old fears returned. Things did not always go as I had imagined they would. I got started in college and found the going

rough; the thought entered my mind that I might fail.

A very fundamental part of the NA program is HOW—honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. These are true keys to long-term serenity.

For me, HOW got quite a workout in Step Two. I found I was neither honest nor openminded. Willingness was entirely absent. I hated to be told what to do.

I felt I had been burned by religion and religious people. I vowed over and over that I would never have anything to do with God or religion again.

I had done some thinking about God and intellectually negated Him from my life. After rigorous study of the origins of life on this planet, I became one of the "enlightened." I came to believe that science alone held the answers to life's mysteries.

need to feel safe in meetings. I've learned to pretty much let go of the fact that people I care about sometimes relapse. I'm doing better with the sexual stuff, too. I used to feel dirty when you flirted with me. Now I feel flattered—as long as you don't invite yourself to touch me.

Please don't misunderstand. I love you very much. You're the most important people in my life. I just don't know what to do when you walk up behind me and "hug" my arms to my sides. Or when I offer you my hand and you push

past it. In some important, fundamental, and life-giving ways, I'm exactly like you are. But God as I understand Him created millions of individuals. I don't understand why you can't respect my history, the unique combination of experiences that make me who I am today.

Today, I try not to do things that make me feel like the person I was when I used. I want to share my experience, strength, and hope with you. And sometimes I want to hug you. But only when I mean it.

Anonymous, Vermont



I delighted in the "Big Bang theory"—the primordial explosion, leaving subatomic particles, atoms, and stars all to develop in accordance with the laws of physics. Great! A God was not required.

It was all simple and inevitable as an apple falling from a tree. Oh, yes, and there was so much proof. The whole universe was still expanding, and one could still hear the bang with a radio telescope. I looked arrogantly down at the dumb people who actu-

ally believed in a God. My brains almost brought about my demise.

Fortunately, most of life involves just showing up. If we keep coming back to meetings, we get better. There is a special magic that occurs in the meeting rooms. If we go to meetings often enough, we'll witness it.

The magic I have witnessed is the magic of people getting better. From the beginning, my interest was piqued. These people had done things I had done; they had thought things I had

thought, yet they were happy! They were leading interesting, fulfilling lives.

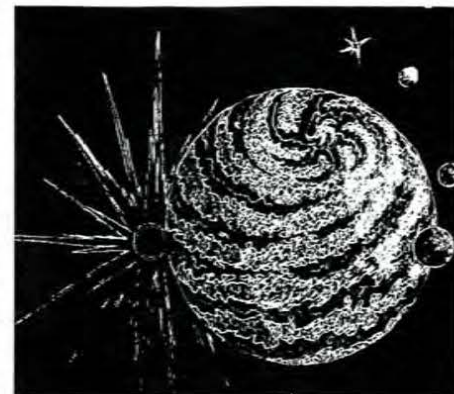
I heard them talk of their past suicide attempts, of long depressions, of lost families and jobs. Over a period of time, addiction had removed everything good from their lives. They had lost their dreams and their will to live. They had hated the world. I really identified with those feelings.

I realized, however, that they were different now. I wanted what they now had. The people at the meetings gave me hope; they gave me a vision and a faith that someday I could get what they possessed. So the stories of failure followed by recovery gave me a start in understanding and developing faith. Unconsciously, I understood that these rooms full of addicts had a healing power.

After a few months, I became aware of certain facts. The people who kept attending meetings sooner or later got better. Furthermore, it seemed that the people who worked the program the hardest had their lives transformed the most. It was as certain as the law of gravity: the program worked for the people who worked it.

When I was at meetings, I was able to make the observations which proved my hypothesis that this program is a Higher Power. This HP allowed addicts to recover from a disease and go on to live their dreams and help others along the way.

Step Two probably cannot be done without at least a little honesty, openmindedness, and willingness. Where did we find that HOW? It came to me through pain. The pain forced me to try something new in the chance it might relieve the pain. As I attended more and more meetings and saw more



and more miracles, I became aware of the benefits of HOW.

Still another factor softened me up: my way did not work. As I have heard others say, "My best thinking got me here." I had tried everything else. There was no place left to go. Hearing the gut-level honesty of others made it easier for me to be honest.

For me—a scientist by training—the Second Step was proven beyond the shadow of a doubt by the countless people I have seen who had their lives completely turned around. There is a direct correlation between the number of meetings I attend and the amount of happiness in my life. I like to be happy so I go to a lot of meetings. Ex-criminals, ex-mental patients—we all stay clean if we work the program.

Today, besides seeing "God" in the meetings, I see Him in my study of atoms, stars, and cells. I see a plan, an organization, a design in the chemistry and physics of the universe. For years, I did not want to be alive. Now I am grateful to be alive to study the cosmos. It is exciting.

JS, New York





"God" stories



I recently made the decision to change sponsors. I knew it was what I had to do, for me. I felt I deserved more attention than she was giving. But rather than hurt her feelings or (heaven forbid) have her mad at me, I kept putting off telling her. Finally, I talked to my grandsponsor, who said yes, she would sponsor me, but first I had to talk to my sponsor and share what my decision was and why. She said, "Pray before you dial the number and God will take care of it."

I dialed the number, praying hard, "God, you say what has to be said—I don't know how to do this." My sponsor answered, and after we exchanged greetings, said "I've been meaning to call you—we need to talk."

I said, "Yeah, I agree—but you first. What's on your mind?"

She said, "I just can't sponsor you any more. I love you and will continue to be here for you, but I've got so much

going on in my life that I'm not serving my sponsees as I'd like to. So please forgive me, and until you find a new sponsor, don't forget you have a grandsponsor."

Who did that?

A couple of months after I got clean (and before the urge to use had been lifted) I gave into the disease-voice one night and prepared to use. Not having a sponsor (I knew all the answers and didn't need any help), and not wanting to disturb anyone in the middle of the night (it was three in the morning), I tried to handle it alone. I sat in bed preparing my fix, crying, not wanting to use and not able not to, damning life, hating myself, and not believing in anything, hysterically telling myself that not only was God not there, NA didn't work—I was about to use to prove it!

The phone rang, and it was an addict I'd never talked to before—said he had been thinking about me—had gotten my number from a phone list and was coming over. He would be there in five minutes. He said *he* needed someone to talk to. I stayed clean that night.

Who did that?

At six months clean, I truly came to the end of the road, unable to function as a human being. Maybe a sponsor would have helped, or working the steps, or going to more meetings, or establishing a program in my life—but I didn't think of those things. Abstinence equaled recovery as far as I could comprehend. And it was making my life better.

In disgust and frustration with me, my teenage daughter ran away to the other side of the country and plunged deep into her own disease. After a few months, I had finally begun to do some of the things I needed to do and was beginning to get better. But my heart ached from missing my daughter and because I didn't have a God in my life.

Like a true addict, I decided to run a game on God, and threw out a challenge. I was in the shower and I said, "Hey, God, if you're there, you're going to have to show me, and nothing short of a miracle will do!" Five minutes later I stepped out of the shower and there was my daughter with a big ole grin on her face and a newcomer keytag in her pocket. I came to believe real quick.

Who did that?

During the first three years of my recovery, my son was in maximum-security prison. He was cold and hard, using as much in prison as he had on the streets, and was determined to parole back to his old stomping grounds and his old friends. Through the years, I had sent him NA literature and Basic Texts, and I shared with him all the changes going on in my life. I tried to do his time for him, to absorb his pain, to get him clean; I was obsessed with saving him.

Finally, in desperation, I hit my knees and told my God I just couldn't do it any more. I had turned over much of my life to him, but had held onto my son, and it wasn't working for either of us. He was retreating further and further into his disease, and I was missing recovery in my life because I was obsessed with saving him.

A week later, I got a letter from my son saying, "I've decided not to continue on this course of self-destruction—I want to try that NA stuff that's working for you. Can I parole to your house if I stay clean?"

Who did that?

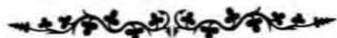
With another year of his sentence to complete, my son was getting real down as the holidays approached—another holiday season away from his family. He wrote and asked me when the miracles would start happening in his life, like the ones I'd told him about in mine. My heart was breaking: I was powerless over his situation. I wrote back, "Work the Third Step." On Christmas Eve, I got a call from him: "Come get me, Mom. I'm clean and free and out early—just in time for Christmas! How about that Third Step!"

Who did that?

SM, Indiana



A letter to the uninitiated



When I first encountered NA, I began to hear immediately about a thing called "service work."

At that time, the only service committee that existed in this state was the New Jersey Area Service Committee. It met once a month at a small, annexed student center at Seton Hall University in South Orange.

It was 1981. Early spring. There were about twenty meetings in the state. I remember my first experience of "area service." All the regulars were there. Two of them were arguing over the number of scoops of ground coffee to put in the pot.

It was hectic! Recovering addicts were all gathered around in a smoke-filled room, jockeying for comfortable seats. I sat on the radia-

tor and mentally took all their inventories.

I was not really sure what was unfolding there that day. Many of these people, only months before in the depths of active addiction, were debating arcane points of parliamentary procedure and vigorously contending about some "agenda," whose every item seemed to hinge controversially on the revealed will of God. Wow! I was hooked! It was the most expressive political event I had seen since Krushnev pounded his shoe on the table at the United Nations.

I had always been a political person, but never in a way that had my practical application or discernible impact on my life. My idea of political activism was scapegoating Richard Nixon as an excuse for taking drugs. But this was different! Area service offered me the singular opportunity of participating directly in the shaping of structure and policy in local NA—a social force as relevant as my next heartbeat.

But what was service all about? The last six years in NA have helped to answer this question, yet the story continues to unfold. I'd like to share some of these thoughts with you.

Service work is justified by one simple phrase: "as you have freely received, freely give." But it is not an entirely selfless act because we know that as we give away what we have received, more is added to us. We become richer through service. Our recoveries are deepened and secured through the giving.

Service work comes in two different but related forms: personal service and committee service.

Personal service is the kind we perform spontaneously, informally, and personally. Examples of personal service include picking up ashtrays after meetings; sharing our individual experience, strength, and hope in a meeting; and going on a Twelfth Step call. Sponsorship is also a form of personal service work.

Committee service work, however, arises out of the spirit of the Ninth Tradition, which states, "NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

I have come to believe that personal service is for everyone—but not everyone is cut out for committee service. And that's as it should be. Here's an easy way to decide whether committee service is for you. If your recovery has been sustained and enriched by the efforts of committee service (such as phonelines, H&I, conventions, dances, and workshops), then maybe you owe the fellowship a commitment or two.

Remember, you don't have to be a politician to love *Robert's Rules of Order*. Come on and join the fun. We're still debating God's will for the fellowship on a regular basis. Where else can you get all that plus free hugs for less than a nickel? See you at area service . . .

LA, New Jersey





Top ten reasons to attend NA regularly



Hear the most bizarre, unbalanced, and amazing stories ever told, and relate completely.

The coffee.

Meet interesting single people with at least two distinct personalities each and fall in love with them.

Narcotics Anonymous really needs the money.

"Melrose Place" is only on television once a week.

Stay in touch with the latest changes in meeting formats.

Basically, it's a jungle out there.

Get directions to the worst late-night restaurants in the area.

The coffee.

Check out the new fashions.

FEB, Pennsylvania

The Oldie Puzzle



Unscramble the following words and find the secret message

- SLELWFIPHO □□□□ □◇□□□□
- OEREFDM □□□□ □◇□
- ONNTIRYEV □□□□□□ □◇□
- INWAGKAEN □□□ □◇□□□□□
- ITPRUISAL □□□□□ □◇□□□
- THENSOY □◇□□□□□□
- LEWINSLNSIG □□□□□□□□ □◇□□
- SNODSNPDNENMIE □□□□□□□□□□ □◇□
- TATDMDIE □□□□ □◇□□□
- BANANAMGUELE □□□□□□□ □◇□□□□
- SEOLSEWRP □◇□□□□□□□□
- SYAINT □◇□□□□□

Home Group



JAKE...THIS IS SLUGG. I GOT A JOB.
-GROAN-. I JUST COULDN'T HANDLE
BEING BROKE ANYMORE.



WELL SLUGG, I THINK THAT'S
GREAT! I THINK IT'S A GREAT TIME
FOR YOU TO BECOME SELF-
SUPPORTING AND RESPONSIBLE!



AND YOU KNOW SLUGG...YOU MIGHT
EVEN GET A LITTLE BIT OF SELF
ESTEEM OUT OF THIS TOO.



YEAH...WELL...I DOUBT THAT.



Comin' up



AUSTRALIA

Western Australia: 14-16 Mar. 1997; Western Australia Area Convention; Royal Commonwealth Society Hall, Subiaco, Perth; info: 61/9/2724508 or 61/9/3353197 or 61/9/2278361; Convention Committee, PO Box 668, Subiaco, Western Australia 6008

CANADA

British Columbia: 30 May - 1 June 1997; H&I Awareness Weekend, Nanaimo; info: (250) 754-0156 or (250) 755-1195

2) 25-27 July 1997; British Columbia Regional Convention; Campbell River's Sportsplex; info: (250) 287-3499; BCRCNA, PO Box 912, Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada V9W 6Y4

3) 31 Oct. - 2 Nov. 1997; Pacific Northwest Regional Convention; Renaissance Vancouver Hotel Harborside; rsvns: (604) 689-9211; info: (604) 327-0928 or (604) 278-6595; PNWCNA, PO Box 78042, 2606 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V5N 4C0

Manitoba: 13-15 June 1997; Winnipeg Area Convention; Broadway Community Center; Winnipeg; info: (204) 774-2440 or (204) 775-9241; WACNA, PO Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2V 4C8

Ontario: 9-11 May 1997; Ontario Regional Convention; Ramada Inn City Center, Sudbury; rsvns: (800) 2-RAMADA or (705) 675-1123; info: ORCNA-10, 1942 Regent St. South, PO Box 248, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada P3E 5V5

2) Canadian Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; Ottawa; info: (613) 526-5937 or (613) 829-3231; CCNA-7, PO Box 929, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5P9

INDIA

Manipur: 1-3 Mar. 1997; 1st Imphal Area Convention; Khumanlampak State Youth Center, Imphal; other hotels: Anand Continental 91/385/223422, Hotel Excellency: 91/385/225401, Hotel Prince: 91/385/224010, Hotel Imphal Ashok: 91/385/220459; info: 91/385/221615 or 91/385/222967 or 91/385/310803; NACIA, Marwri Dharamsala R No.19, PO Box 93, Imphal 795001, Manipur, India

ISRAEL

Haifa: 4-7 Sept. 1997; 14th European Convention and Conference; Exhibition Convention Center, Haifa; info: 972/3/5758669; fax: 972/3/7526888; Israel RSO, PO Box 21470, Tel Aviv, Israel

ITALY

Lombardy: 25-27 Apr. 1997; 14th Italy Regional Convention; Hotel Splendid, Suisse Bellaria; rsvns: 39/541344314; info: 39/774920776

NORWAY

Buskerud: 8-10 Aug. 1997; Area East Convention; info: 47/32751637; OØKNA-97, PO Box 2399, Strømsø 3003, Drammen, N-Norway

SWITZERLAND

Vaud: 21-23 Mar. 1997; 3rd Swiss Convention; Leysin; info: 41/21/6486968; CSNA3, PO Box 181, CH-1000, Lausanne 9, Switzerland

UNITED KINGDOM

England: 28-30 Mar. 1997; London Convention; info: LCNA-8 c/o UKSO, PO Box 1980, London N19 3LS, England

UNITED STATES

Arkansas: 7-9 Mar. 1997; Central Arkansas Area Spring Retreat; Mount Nebo State Park; Dardanelle; info: (501) 224-1909 or (501) 663-4128

2) 4-6 July 1997; Central Arkansas Area Convention; Riverfront Hilton Inn, North Little Rock; rsvns: (501) 371-9000; info: (501) 221-1909; CAACNA, PO Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72225

California: 1 Mar. 1997; Southern California Regional Assembly; info: (310) 396-4812; Let Your Voice Be Heard, 1935 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016

2) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Southern California Region Spring Gathering; Westin LAX Hotel; rsvns: (310) 216-5858; info: (714) 638-5898 or (714) 639-1022; Spring Gathering, PO Box 7825, Torrance, CA 90504

3) 3-6 Apr. 1997; Northern California Regional Convention; Bill Graham Convention Center, San Francisco; Quality Hotel, rsvns: (415) 776-8200; Holiday Inn, rsvns: (415) 441-4000; info: (707) 453-0868; NCCNA, PO Box 840, Fairfield, CA 94533

4) 30 May - 1 June 1997; In Pursuit of Unity Campout; Marysville Riverfront Park, Marysville; info: (916) 742-5167; e-mail: mleahy@syix.com

5) 13-15 June 1997; San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego Concourse/Radisson Harbor View; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (619) 239-6800; info: (619) 465-7662 or (619) 696-9220; SDICRSO-CC, PO Box 16929, San Diego, CA 92176

6) 3-6 July 1997; Western States Unity Convention; Riveria Resort, Palm Springs; info: (619) 320-4023 or (619) 367-5828; WSUC, PO Box 399, San Jacinto, CA 92581

Connecticut: 4-6 Apr. 1997; United Shoreline Area Convention; Best Western, Mystic; rsvns: (800) 363-1622 or (860) 536-4281; info: (860) 886-7512 or (860) 437-7229; USANA, PO Box 323, Norwich, CT 06360

Delaware: 4-6 July 1997; Small Wonder Area Convention; University of Delaware Clayton Hall; info: (302) 427-0151; SWACNA, PO Box 808, Wilmington, DE 19899

Florida: 28-30 Mar. 1997; Florida Spring Service Break; Radisson Adventure Beach Resort; North Miami Beach; rsvns: (305) 932-2233; info: (305) 270-0030; FSSBNA, 7812 SW 103rd Place, Miami, FL 33173

2) 25-27 Apr. 1997; Recovery in Paradise; Knights Key Campground, Mile Marker 49, Marathon; info: (305) 294-3325 or (305) 293-8444 or (305) 292-5011

3) 23-26 May 1997; Gold Coast Area Convention; Cypress Creek Marriott, Ft. Lauderdale; rsvns: (800) 343-2459; info: (954) 747-7387; GCACNA-7, PO Box 23325, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

4) 3-5 Oct. 1997; Uncoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Sunspree, Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (904) 462-0799 or (352) 338-7929 or (352) 371-7918; UCACNA, PO Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

Hawaii: 4-6 Apr. 1997; 13th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; Camp Makuleia, North Shore, Oahu; info: (808) 988-7194 or (808) 262-0848 or (808) 988-7194 or (808) 261-4272; Oahu Gathering, 2819-A Kahawai Street, Honolulu, HI 96822

2) 12-14 Sep. 1997; Maui Area Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Keanae, Maui; info: (808) 879-6412; Gathering, PO Box 3002, Kahului, HI 96732

Idaho: 28-30 Mar. 1997; Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Weston Plaza, Twin Falls; rsvns: (208) 733-0650; info: (208) 733-7031; SIRC, 616 Blue Lakes Blvd. N., Box 177, Twin Falls, ID 83301

Illinois: 4-6 Apr. 1997; Rock River Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Rock Falls; rsvns: (815) 626-5500; info: (815) 964-5467; RRCNA-6, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

Indiana: 14-17 Mar. 1997; Indiana State Convention; Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza; Merrillville; rsvns: (800) 333-3333; info: ISNAC, PO Box M-609, Gary, IN 46401-0609

2) 23-25 May 1997; North Central Indiana Area Convention; Camp Mack, Waubee Lake, Milford; info: (616) 663-0267; please send speaker tapes to: Convention Programming, PO Box 1052, Elkhart, IN 46515

Iowa: 4-6 July 1997; Iowa Regional Convention; Best Western, Clearlake; rsvns: (515) 357-5253; info: (515) 424-5042 or (515) 423-6107; IRCNA, PO Box 53, Mason City, IA 50402

Kansas: 4-7 Apr. 1997; Mid-America Regional Convention; Dodge House, Dodge City; rsvns: (316) 225-9900; info: (913) 825-8163 or (316) 662-7491 or (316) 623-2054; MARCNA, PO Box 2341, Hutchinson, KS 67504

2) 18-20 Apr. 1997; MoKan Area Convention; Mount Convention Center, Atchison; info: (913) 367-3610; e-mail: Mhansen272@aol.com; MKACNA, 714 N 3rd Street, Atchison, KS 66002

Kentucky: 28-30 Mar. 1997; Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Owensboro; info: KRCNA, PO Box 126, Robards, KY 42452

Louisiana: 28-31 Aug. 1997; New Orleans Area Convention; New Orleans Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (504) 889-1304; NOACNA, PO Box 51196, New Orleans, LA 70151-1196

Maryland: 4-6 Apr. 1997; Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; info: (202) 362-4525; CPRCNA, PO Box 8006, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Massachusetts: 7-9 Mar. 1997; New England Regional Convention; Westin, Waltham; rsvns: (800) 228-3000 or (617) 290-5600; info: (508) 975-3057; e-mail: JDEdmo@aol.com or rahvan@aol.com; NERC-7, 733 Turnpike Street, Box 145, North Andover, MA 01845

2) 18-20 July 1997; 5th Western Massachusetts Area Convention; Springfield Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (413) 267-5099 or (413) 783-3644; e-mail: Noonoy@ix.netcom.com; WMACNA, PO Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101

Michigan: 27-29 Mar. 1997; Detroit Area Convention; Westin Hotel, Detroit; rsvns: (800) 228-3000 or (313) 568-8200; info: (313) 527-8684 or (313) 925-4613 or (810) 543-7200; DACNA, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

2) 3-6 July 1997; Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Resort, Midland; rsvns: (800) 825-2700, mention Group #G5275; info: (517) 548-4043; MRCNA, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

Minnesota: 25-27 Apr. 1997; Minnesota Regional Convention; Best Western Kelly Inn, St. Cloud; rsvns: (320) 253-0606; info: (320) 240-0487 or (612) 263-1595; web site: www.cyberx.com/mnevents.html; MNNAC, PO Box 171, St. Cloud, MN 56301

2) 13-15 June 1997; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; Ramada Inn, Owatonna; rsvns: (800) 272-6232 or (507) 455-0606; info: (507) 444-9852; email: dans@ll.net

Missouri: 6-8 June 1997; 12th Show-Me Regional Convention; Hilton Airport Hotel, Kansas City; rsvns: (816) 891-8900; info: (913) 384-0772 or (816) 363-5368; e-mail: woodyp@sound.net

Nebraska: 9-11 May 1997; Close Encounters of the Clean Kind; Airport Ramada Inn, Omaha; rsvns: (800) 999-1240 or (402) 342-5100; info: (402) 344-2591 or (402) 553-0282 or (402) 551-3129; ENNA, PO Box 3937, Omaha, NE 68103

Nevada: 27-30 Mar. 1997; Las Vegas Convention; Monte Carlo Hotel; rsvns: (800) 822-8652; info: (702) 658-0003 or (702) 252-4657; SNCC, 4542 E. Tropicana, Suite 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

New Jersey: 23-25 May 1997; New Jersey Regional Convention; Cherry Hill Hilton; rsvns: (609) 665-6666; info: (908) 826-2148; NJRCNA, PO Box 605, Englishtown, NJ 07726

New York: 7-9 Mar. 1997; Rochester Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Rochester; rsvns: (716) 546-3741; info: (716) 787-3290 or (716) 288-1842; RACNA, PO Box 485, Rochester, NY 14605

North Carolina: 18-20 July 1997; New Hope Area Convention; Omni Durham Hotel & Convention Center; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI or (919) 683-6664; info: (919) 479-1225 or (919) 220-8080 or (919) 572-0246 or (919) 687-4709; NHACNA, PO Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

2) 5-7 Sep. 1997; Central Piedmont Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Salisbury; info: (704) 638-9027 or (704) 637-0651; CPANA, PO Box 1294, Mooresville, NC 28115

Ohio: 23-25 May 1997; Ohio Regional Convention; Ramada Plaza Hotel at Cascade Plaza, Akron; rsvns: (800) 2RAMADA or (330) 384-1500; info: (330) 863-2400 or (330) 869-0536; OCNA-15, PO Box 2628, Akron, OH 44309-2628

2) 1-3 Aug. 1997; Tri-Area Gateway to Freedom Convention; Sheraton City Center, Cleveland; rsvns: (216) 771-5129; info: (216) 663-2118 or (216) 295-2239 or (216) 341-4842 or (216) 651-2936; Tri-Area 3, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44122

Oklahoma: 21-23 Mar. 1997; 11th Oklahoma Regional Convention; Fountainhead Hotel and Resort, Eufaula;

rsvns: (800) 345-6343 or (918) 689-9173; info: (918) 343-9807 or (405) 842-8114; OKRCNA, PO Box 12621, 39th Street Station, Oklahoma City, OK 73157-2621

Oregon: 14-16 Mar. 1997; Western States Literature Conference; Holiday Inn Portland Airport; rsvns: (503) 256-5000; info: (503) 224-8345; Lit Conference, PO Box 90415, Portland, OR 97290-0415

2) 16-18 May 1997; Pacific Cascade Regional Convention; Chinook Winds Convention Center, Lincoln City; info: (541) 752-3860 or (541) 917-3265; email: klupenge@ucs.orst.edu; PCRNA, PO Box 2392, Corvallis, OR 97339

Pennsylvania: 28-30 Mar. 1997; Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention; Adams Mark Hotel, Balacynwood; rsvns: (800) 444-ADAM; info: (215) 244-9547 or (215) 548-2433; GPRCNA-13, PO Box 6528, Philadelphia, PA 19138-9998

Puerto Rico: 11-13 July 1997; Unidos Podemos 8; Isla Verde; rsvns: (800) 544-3008; info: (787) 274-0488; Comite de Convenciones, PO Box 362313, San Juan, PR 00936-2313

Tennessee: 26-30 Nov. 1997; Volunteer Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency, Knoxville; rsvns: (800) 243-2546; info: (423) 523-4710; VRC-15, PO Box 38, Afton, TN 37616

Texas: 7-9 Mar. 1997; Rio Grande Regional Convention; El Paso Hilton; rsvns: (800) 445-8667 or (915) 778-4241; info: (915) 833-0012 or (915) 562-4654 or (915) 594-0417; RGRCA, PO Box 31563, El Paso, TX 79931

2) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Lone Star Regional Convention; Harvey Hotel D/FW, Irving; rsvns: (972) 929-4500; info: (972) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; Lone Star RSO, 1510 Randolph #205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Utah: 18-20 July 1997; 14th Utah Regional Campvention; Whittings Campground, Mapleton; info: (801) 476-7330 or (801) 491-9460 or (801) 489-8326; Campvention, PO Box 994, Springville, UT 84663

Vermont: 15-17 Aug. 1997; Back to Basics 13; Walling Pond Boys Camp, Wallingford; info: (802) 773-5575

West Virginia: 9-11 May 1997; Mountaineer Regional Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; rsvns: (304) 372-7860; info: (304) 562-5835; 12 Steppin' into Spring, PO Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

Wyoming: 26 Apr. 1997; Serenity Seekers Spiritual Principles Workshop, Feast, and Dance; info: (307) 682-2969; email: biltrite@vcn.com

2) 26-28 Sept. 1997; Convention of Unity of Narcotics Anonymous; Rawlins; info: (307) 362-9418; email: johnt@wyoming.com; CUNA-6, PO Box 445, Evanston, WY 82931

Back Issues

QTY.	ISSUE	QTY.	ISSUE	QTY.	ISSUE	QTY.	ISSUE
_____	Jul 83	_____	Jan 89	_____	Jun 91	_____	Dec 93
_____	Dec 83	_____	Feb 89	_____	Jul 91	_____	Jan 94
_____	Feb 84	_____	Mar 89	_____	Aug 91	_____	Feb 94
_____	Mar 84	_____	Apr 89	_____	Sep 91	_____	Mar 94
_____	Apr 85	_____	May 89	_____	Oct 91	_____	Apr 94
_____	May 85	_____	Jun 89	_____	Nov 91	_____	May 94
_____	Aug 85	_____	Jul 89	_____	Dec 91	_____	Jun 94
_____	Sep 85	_____	Aug 89	_____	Jan 92	_____	Jul 94
_____	Oct 85	_____	Sep 89	_____	Feb 92	_____	Aug 94
_____	Nov 85	_____	Oct 89	_____	Mar 92*	_____	Sep 94
_____	Dec 85	_____	Nov 89	_____	Apr 92	_____	Oct 94
_____	Jan 86	_____	Dec 89	_____	May 92	_____	Nov 94
_____	Mar 86	_____	Jan 90	_____	Jun 92	_____	Dec 94
_____	Apr 86	_____	Feb 90	_____	Jul 92	_____	Jan 95
_____	May 86	_____	Apr 90	_____	Aug 92	_____	Feb 95
_____	Jul 86	_____	May 90	_____	Oct 92	_____	Mar 95
_____	Aug 86	_____	Jul 90	_____	Jan 93	_____	Apr 95
_____	Sep 86	_____	Sep 90	_____	Feb 93	_____	May 95
_____	Oct 86	_____	Oct 90	_____	Apr 93	_____	Jun 95
_____	Nov 86	_____	Nov 90	_____	May 93	_____	Jul 95
_____	Dec 86	_____	Dec 90	_____	Jun 93	_____	Aug 95
_____	Jan 87	_____	Jan 91	_____	Jul 93	_____	Sep 95
_____	Feb 87	_____	Feb 91	_____	Aug 93	_____	Oct 95
_____	Mar 87	_____	Mar 91	_____	Sep 93	_____	Nov 95
_____	Apr 87	_____	Apr 91	_____	Oct 93	_____	Dec 95
_____	May 87	_____	May 91	_____	Nov 93	_____	
_____	Jun 87	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Jul 87	_____	_____ graphics classics*	_____		_____	
_____	Aug 87	_____	_____ special edition translated graphic classics *	_____		_____	
_____	Sep 87	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Oct 87	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Nov 87	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Dec 87	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Jan 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Feb 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Mar 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Apr 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	May 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Jun 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Jul 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Aug 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Sep 88	_____		_____		_____	
_____	Oct 88	_____		_____		_____	
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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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