



THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



(Webmaster's Note: This is the inaugural issue of the new NA Way Magazine posted on the WSO website. You will find it in English, German, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Each file is complete and, because it captures twenty pages worth of material, may take some time to load. Please be patient, we believe it will be worth the wait.)

The NA Way Magazine, *published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as current service and convention information. Foremost, the journal is dedicated to the celebration of our message of recovery — "that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."*The NA Way

"User's Manual"

The NA Way Magazine is a broad-based service magazine for the NA member. Besides standard reports from world services, editorial content ranges from personal recovery experience, to opinion pieces regarding topics of concern to NA as a whole, to humor or nostalgia about the recovery experience. We look for a spirit of unity and mutual respect, and we don't back off from controversy if a constructive solution is offered. We accept submissions in the same languages in which we publish editions of *The NA Way*: English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

All manuscripts are subject to a review and editing process and must be accompanied by a signed release.

Criteria for the various sections of the magazine are as follows:

Feature articles

Everything from reports about current issues or events in NA to thoroughly documented historical essays on NA's beginnings in an area, region, or country. Please send an inquiry first. Maximum length: 2,500 words.

Sharing

Personal recovery experience, from 500 to 2,000 words in length.

Parables

These are fiction pieces in which the writer illustrates a spiritual principle or some sort of recovery-related object lesson. Maximum length 1,500 words.

Humor and "Last Laughs"

"Last Laughs" are NA newsletter clippings (including material from *The NA Way Magazine*), misreadings of NA literature heard at NA events, etc. Other humor pieces can be anything from a "top ten" list to a parody of NA's literature to a multiple-choice questionnaire. Maximum length: 1,000 words.

Featured trusted servant

NA communities are invited to send us descriptions of local trusted servants whom they'd like to see featured in *The NA Way Magazine*. Submissions must include the trusted servant's first name and last initial, position, and contact information for the group or service body submitting the trusted servant for this section. A paragraph, no more than 50 words in length, describing why the trusted servant deserves this honor should accompany all submissions.

Feature Article

The privilege of self-support:

Who's responsible for NA services?

At the 1997 World Service Conference, participants adopted the *Guide to Local Services*. This new service manual describes some changes to the way we can provide services within the NA service structure. Not the least of those changes will be the revamped fund-flow system described by the *Guide*, which includes the practice of direct donations from groups to the area, regional, and world levels of service. Yet, if our service efforts are to prove successful for the future, we may wish to look beyond the mere mechanics of how the money moves through our service system and into our own hearts to the principle of self-support.

First, a bit of history about fund-flow in Narcotics Anonymous. The earliest editions of our fellowship's service manuals recommended direct group donations to all levels of service. However, in 1982, when the World Service Conference approved a revision of the service manual sections on the group, area, and region, groups were encouraged to donate all their excess funds to the area committee—which was then to donate its excess funds to the region, and the region's excess was to flow on to the world. Direct donations as now suggested in the newly adopted *Guide* were replaced by this system of passing on surplus funds from one service level to the next.

So how then did we come full circle? How have we arrived right back where we started from all those years ago? Well, the surplus funds often haven't flowed: In many cases, our resources are exhausted at the area level, leaving little or nothing to be passed on to the regional and world levels of service.

"So what?" some members ask. The region and world seem to be doing okay with what they're getting, and besides, how does what they do affect my home group, anyway? The fact is, world services and regions (and in some cases, even areas and groups) have seen an increasing dependency on profits from fundraising activities such as conventions, dances, memorabilia sales, and the inflated price of NA literature in order to make up for a lack of group support. In a very real way, our home group members have been affected by our ineffective fund-flow system—in the form of inflated convention registration fees, service boards and committees not always being directly accountable to those they serve, and, more significantly, higher prices on our recovery literature.

For many of our members, these have become increasingly troublesome problems within our fellowship. Problems such as service bodies' diversion from our primary purpose by "money, property, and prestige" (conventions often generate huge sums of money, and encourage wildly extravagant spending by well-intentioned convention committees); the amassing of huge prudent reserves to provide operating capital for dances and other functions; and the creation of merchandising "businesses" that often seem to lead us away from the spiritual focus of our program—all of these symptoms indicate a decreasing dedication to our primary purpose and a growing lack of accountability to the groups, on whose behalf NA services are supposedly provided in the first place.

Yet our effort to provide services to a growing membership is confronted by a serious dilemma: We know we need money to provide such services, but the basket doesn't seem to be providing the necessary resources to pay for them. Our group donations simply aren't enough to allow us to provide all of the services we know to be essential to the growth of our fellowship and to carry our message to the addict who still suffers.

But even this knowledge is nothing new. As far back as 1986, the World Service Conference Finance Committee made a special report to the fellowship, suggesting that the fund-flow system was "unable to support many segments of our service structure in many parts of the world." The Finance Committee stated its concern about our ineffective system quite strongly: "The fiscal problems Funds Flow spells for the Fellowship as a whole need to be addressed before they reach any larger proportions."

The Finance Committee's answer to our collective money problems? Direct group donations to all levels of service—a suggested return to our earlier system that had been discarded in 1982. The committee also provided a suggested fund-flow plan, the "60:30:10 Plan," as they called it. Under this plan, groups would have donated sixty percent of their surplus cash to areas, thirty percent to their region, and ten percent directly to world services.

Trustee Bulletin #22, "Direct Donations", argues for the advisability of such direct donations as well, yet that bulletin makes another essential point: "Direct contributions are not a magic answer that will relieve us of all our financial concerns. Our

responsibility as members to fund the services we request is an issue that requires broad discussion."

It's an excellent point. The fact is, with the passage of the *Guide to Local Services*, we now have officially re-adopted direct group contributions to all levels of service. Yet, without a discussion of our principle of self-support, this reinvention of the fund-flow wheel may not make one bit of difference in our fellowship's collective ability to fund NA services. To a member, we must discuss how we have fallen short in our responsibility to support our service structure.

We must question whether precarious and unpredictable sources of income such as convention profits, merchandise sales, and literature profits are the most prudent foundation upon which to base our provision of services. Is it wise to continue to bet our fellowship's future upon such unstable sources of income? We must ask ourselves: What should happen to the money I put into the basket at every meeting beyond paying for the meeting's rent, supplies, literature, and coffee? Why aren't we collecting enough Seventh Tradition money to adequately support our services? For if we do not have fellowship-wide discussions about our responsibility for self-support, all the fancy old or new fund-flow systems in the world won't matter. If the money isn't hitting the basket, then services don't get paid for. Period.

One of our early members understood this clearly enough. In a trustee bulletin written in 1985, an early member described the real issue underlying all of our attempts to get the fund-flow thing right once and for all. He wrote: "It is sad that in our efforts to recover we take great reversals of attitudes and actions, from high-rolling, grandiose, free-spending people to tight, selfish individuals with great rationalization and justification for our actions. . . . We forget that every one of us had to support our own habits by whatever means we could find. If we could give just a small percentage of the monies or efforts we spent for drugs, how well we would be able to carry the message of recovery to those many unfortunate addicts who have not yet found NA."

The problem may not be with our fund-flow system. It may just be that we have forgotten where we came from. What it took for us to get clean. What it means to keep what we have by giving it away. What a change "remaining self-supporting through our own contributions" represents for so many of us, who did nothing but take for so long. What a gamble it is to rely on convention and literature profits to pay for our services. What it could mean to suffering addicts around the world for our fellowship's resources to become as stable as its groups—the backbone of Narcotics Anonymous.

While we look proudly and gratefully at the effectiveness of our message and way of life, we must at the same time turn to look once again at our principles. We must rededicate ourselves to the principle of self-support through our own contributions. We must face the fact that a dollar doesn't go as far as it used to, either in buying a loaf of bread or in our Seventh Tradition basket. We must remember that, just as that early member wrote some twelve years ago, "The survival of NA depends on us all. That little

something we don't give might be the difference between one addict dying or surviving. That addict could be you."

Letters to the editor

Wants to read about NA's history

I took a look at the prototype for the new *NA Way* format, and I believe it will work. I went to my local *Conference Agenda Report* workshop, and as the proposals for the new *NA Way* were discussed, the chair asked how many people had the magazine sent to their homes. I'm sorry to say only four out of thirty-nine were subscribers. I will miss the cover art. I hope you will still use addicts' art somewhere in the new format.

I'd really like to see more about our fellowship's history. I have some material from an unknown source, but I'd really like to see something that can be confirmed as a valid part of our history. *Mike H, Illinois* With change comes growth

I commend the people in NA for making this new magazine and offering it to readers such as myself. I'm service-oriented, so of course I read the motions in the CAR, and at first they concerned me. My first thought was, "No more *NA Way*!" But I understand the problems you face. And in fact the changes happened, as they were meant to happen.

One of the blessings I have received from applying a program in my life is the ability to be open-minded. I am able to look at this from other viewpoints, not just my own. I know that we have to consider the greater good. With change comes growth. I will stand for Narcotics Anonymous, and I feel very grateful for the blessings it has given me. *Thomas F, Maryland*

The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in *The NA Way*, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First names and last initial will be used as the signature line, unless the writer requests anonymity.

It's a new day for *The NA Way* by Stu T, Ron S, and Rogan A NA Way Editorial Board

The new *NA Way Magazine* is more than just a reformatted version of the old *NA Way Magazine*. How?

First of all, the new *NA Way* will be a multi-language magazine. Besides English, we're going to print it in French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. Just this fact speaks volumes about our growth as a fellowship. Before now, NA members who lived in the communities where those are the languages of the land have been limited to sharing in local meetings, translated NA literature (a pretty new development in most places), and—sometimes—a locally produced NA newsletter in the community's language.

While these things are wonderful, and provide the means for an addict to find recovery, the NA community as a whole needs a connection to worldwide NA, to know it is part of something that transcends national boundaries, language barriers, and cultural differences. This is good news for those who want to write articles, too. If your language is English, just go on as you always have: Submit an article for publication. If it's approved, your sharing will be printed in five languages and sent to about 26,000 addresses. How's that for carrying the message?!

But what if you speak French, German, Portuguese, or Spanish? How will this affect you? For the first time, you'll be able to write an article about recovery in your native language and submit it for publication. When it arrives at WSO, we'll translate it into English (for the benefit of our editorial board). If it's approved for publication, it will appear in your original language in the appropriate edition of *The NA Way*, and be translated for publication in all the different editions of *The NA Way*.

More than strictly business

Something else that will be different about the new *NA Way* is its inclusion of service-related reports. In addition to all the world service news that has typically been featured in the *WSO Newslines*, the *Conference Digest*, the *PI News*, and the *H&I News*, there will be—we hope—a wealth of local service experience. We're going to be actively seeking out NA communities that have done something in service that can benefit other NA communities: a particularly original PI effort, a successful solution to the usual lack of trusted servants at the area level, etc. We're also hoping for opinion pieces. We truly want to represent the diversity of opinion and experience that exists within our fellowship and will not hesitate to print a piece that challenges traditional viewpoints.

The world service reports will be geared toward the average member who just wants to know in a general way what's happening in our fellowship. What's the state of the WSO? What new literature and/or translations are in the works? How are national and international PI and H&I projects working to promote NA's growth and reputation, and how will that help the addict who still suffers? Where and when is the next world convention? And more.

World service trusted servants and staff are very excited about the communication possibilities that are opening up in the new *NA Way*. We've been frustrated for years with our inability to communicate directly with the groups. Every time a member told us that we weren't communicating effectively, or widely enough, or in the right language, we'd feel the same frustration and redouble our efforts. The publications we've put out in the past either have had such a limited mailing list that they haven't made it to the groups, or, in the case of the *Newslines*, haven't always been perceived as containing important information. The new *NA Way* will be our opportunity to tell you what's happening in world services, but to do so with a very important goal: to get your feedback. We firmly believe that if our members are informed of what's happening in NA worldwide, you'll let us know how you feel and what you think about what we're doing.

The more we know about what's needed by our fellowship, the better we can develop services that meet those needs.

What will be the same?

The new *NA Way* will continue to feature the things that our fellowship has expressed a desire to keep: the convention and event calendar, the "Home Group" comic strip, and the ability of any member to submit an article with the possibility that it will be published.

How much will it cost?

One of the best things about the new *NA Way* is its price: absolutely free! Just call or write the WSO and request it. However, due to the very real possibility of a mailing list expanding beyond what we can accommodate, we will be asking recipients of the new *NA Way* to reconfirm their desire to receive the magazine periodically. This will serve the additional purpose of helping us keep accurate records about our groups, members, and service committees.

Of course, there are costs associated with the new *NA Way*—in fact, about \$85,000 a year. The WSO has always absorbed such expenses in order to fulfill its mission of providing services that promote the growth and development of Narcotics Anonymous. However, NA, as a fellowship, has reached a point in its organizational development where we will have to begin discussing our future—what we want to do, and how we're going to pay for it. Please see page 1 for an in-depth report.

The NA Way Magazine belongs to you, the members of NA. We encourage you to read it, and write for it. The "User's Manual" on page 2 explains how to submit a story. We'll be watching our mailbox.

The NA Way Magazine

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SHARING

Complete surrender

Like most addicts' stories, mine is a war story, where the many battles I fought all blended into one indefinable mass that I simply refer to nowadays as "my active addiction." Once I start, I tend to get caught up in trying to impress you with how hardcore I was, the drugs I did, and how tough and slick I was, but I've been trying not to do that anymore. Suffice it to say that where drugs were concerned, I used whatever I could, in whatever hole I could. If I didn't have an appropriate hole for a drug, I created

one. I did whatever I could to put anything in my body that would buy me one more day of survival in a world I didn't understand, yet sought to control. I wasn't tough, slick, or even hardcore. Mostly, I was lost, confused, and lonely.

One thing I know today is that the First Step didn't get me clean and it doesn't keep me clean. I've had the First Step down since the first three or four years of my using. I knew I was an addict. I was powerless. My life was a mess, and I knew it was going to stay a mess. It was simply the lifestyle that was to be expected for people like me. I lived it, knowing it would never change. Once an addict, always an addict. I know you who are reading this know the feeling.

Like so many addicts, I experienced jails, institutions, and being close to death. I was pulled back from ODs many times by well-meaning professionals, only to curse them for messing up my nod. Many times I believed death would be a good alternative to the degradation, the knives, the guns, the rapes and beatings, the panic, the blood, the tortures, the bodies, the terror, the paranoia, the narrow escapes, the people-pleasing, the frozen vacant smiles, the empty eyes, the staggering through dark streets, the familiar lonely sidewalks, sleeping in urine-soaked hallways, day after endless day, in many different cities—but death never came, and it all just continued.

I didn't get clean because it was something I wanted to do. The very idea scared me like nothing ever had before. I would look at people squeezing tomatoes in a grocery store and wonder how they did it, how they were able to be so concerned with tomatoes when we were all going to die anyway. How could a person sitting at a traffic light, picking his nose, believe that where he was going and what he was doing mattered? Didn't he know the truth? I knew I wasn't like them, and I knew I couldn't live like that. I couldn't verbalize the way I felt, but whatever it was, it hurt like hell, and I knew that if the rest of the world knew what I knew, they'd all be using, too.

I once stood at the edge of a cliff holding my daughter, who was three, in my arms. I thought of dropping her, of letting her crash into the rocks below and ending it for her. I thought it was better than letting her grow up to find out the truth as I knew it. I didn't want her to feel the pain I felt, to have to go through what I had gone through. I thought it would be an act of love to end it for her then, while she was still naive and innocent. I stepped back and put her back in the car, a sweat breaking over me.

By 1979, I had been on the methadone program, had traipsed all over, been divorced, lost a home, been evicted more than once, given up my children, and had no self-respect or any of the things that most people struggle all their lives to achieve. All I had were my drugs and the lonely, vacant life that goes with them. In early 1983, I married my using partner. A short time later, I almost lost a foot when I tried to create a hole to force some drugs into it. I was on crutches, and sleeping twenty-two hours a day. My husband was stealing my pain pills, and I was in pain physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I had witnessed a murder by OD, and had told what I'd seen. Friends of the dealer who did it kept coming to my door. I didn't answer, and they pounded so hard I

was afraid they'd break the door in and find me. I lived in the closet. I was paranoid, delusional, and suicidal.

Right around that time, an old using friend took me to my first NA meeting. When I slithered through the door, you were there and you welcomed me as if I was someone who mattered. I was loaded. I nodded and drooled. I don't remember much, except that when I behaved and spoke inappropriately, you didn't throw me out like everyone else had. You simply hugged me even harder and told me to keep coming back.

A relative suggested treatment for me and my husband. Of course, we had our conditions: must share a room, must have a TV and a pool, must be out of state. He went one place; I went another. Mine was a psychiatric institution, another of many I had been in throughout my life. He left early and stayed clean. I left early and used on the plane home.

We had sold our furniture, and we moved in with his parents. I went through treatment again and again. I went to halfway houses and three-quarter houses. I continued to use. I also continued, when I could summon up the courage, to go to meetings. Although you continued to welcome me, I felt painfully out of place because I knew that I'd never be able to stay clean for long. After all, I was an addict, and addicts never change. Still, I managed, mostly by white-knuckling it, to stay clean for thirty-sixty-ninety-thirty-thirty days and so on. Each relapse has its story. Once it was a medicine cabinet, once a quack doctor, another time a bottle of cough syrup, and then a bottle of wine. Despite the darkening pit of failure into which I sank, deeper and deeper, I kept coming back to these rooms. I had no place else to go.

One day, after you helped me stay clean for six months—longer than ever before—I found myself again in the parking lot of a drugstore with a bottle of codeine syrup in my hand. In a smooth move I had perfected over my lifetime, I stuck the bottle to my lips and drained it. But unlike before, this time it wouldn't stay down. I vomited it up. I was dying to get loaded and the drugs were all over my shoes. I had no veins left, and now I couldn't even keep drugs in my stomach. I knew then that I was not only a failure at recovery, but at using as well. I cried when I thought about the fate I had in store: a limbo, a purgatory, a middle world between active addiction and recovery. I sat in the parking lot, stared through my tears at the mess on my shoes, and knew that drugs had lost their power to help me survive. I knew that without drugs to numb the pain, my life would be a lonely, vacuous existence of meaningless movement through time and space—and I knew I couldn't live like that. I believed I had only one thing left to do: drive my car into a pole and end it all.

However, there was something else going on that day, something that kept nagging at me, something I couldn't shrug off. I had gone to meetings and listened to you addicts—with a lot of suspicion, skepticism, and doubts, but I listened. I found that each of you had your own truth, and it wasn't a whole lot different than mine; that each of you had your own pain, and we shared that, too. These were things I thought that no one could understand, yet somehow I believed that maybe you could, maybe you knew what it

was like to live the way I'd been living, maybe you had been there, too. For the first time in my life, while in the middle of pain that drugs couldn't numb, I thought that maybe, just maybe, there was hope, and maybe, just maybe, that hope lay with you.

So it was there in that parking lot that I finally moved beyond my long-term First Step, gave up the struggle, and surrendered body and soul. I truly came to believe that only a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I consciously made a decision to turn my will and life over to that power, and as I did, hope began to glow in the dark, empty cavern that was me. I didn't drive my car into a pole that day. Instead, I walked through the doors of NA again, but this time I gave myself completely to God, you, and the spiritual principles of the NA program. The next day was 4 May 1984. I have thirteen years clean today. Thank you.

Maimu A, Ohio

A member's-eye view of the World Service Conference

I'm just sitting here trying to formulate my report to the region about what happened at the World Service Conference. I'm sure I'll come up with a businesslike report, but right now all I can think of are the more touching moments of the conference. Perhaps it was because this was my last year as a participant that I found myself with that lip-quivering lump in the throat, the "I'm going to cry in public" feeling on more than one occasion—but I don't think so. I wasn't the only one who was moved when the representative from the Philippines appealed to the conference to get back on track, or when Anthony E, one of the WSO executive co-directors, stood at the podium fighting back tears about Debbie G, a staff member who had passed away at work during the year. I wasn't the only one who felt transported by joy when a newcomer with fourteen days clean asked, "How can I join?" and the whole conference stood and cheered and told him he already had. I wasn't the only one who fought back tears when the representative from Japan finished sharing through her interpreter and then stepped back to the microphone to say "I can't, we can" in English.

There are more things that make up a World Service Conference than are seen later in the parliamentary procedures and motions recounted in the conference minutes. Maybe some will measure the conference by what we passed or didn't pass, but I will measure this conference in a very personal way: by those events and the people who made them happen. Those things will continue to touch my life long after the last motion is passed.

Nick G, Massachusetts

A great gift

Hi to my friends all over the world.

My story is the same as anyone else's. I picked up and used for a number of years, and today I am clean because you have taught me to live the NA way. I am still learning and I want to participate in life.

I have a son who is three years old, and I am a splendid father to him. I am able to give him all the love I didn't receive as a child. My early recovery was a confusing time. I couldn't handle the feelings I had, and I didn't know what to do about my son. I felt so much guilt for not taking care of him. My sponsor (God bless him) taught me that if I didn't take responsibility for myself and my recovery, I wouldn't be able to take responsibility for anyone else. I don't live with my son's mother, but we have a wonderful relationship. We don't use our child as a weapon to hurt each other with, and we are both very aware that we owe that ability to recovery.

I haven't been clean very long. Soon, I will celebrate my three-year birthday. It's a long time for me. NA just celebrated ten years in Sweden, and I was there with all my friends in recovery. Isn't that a wonderful gift!

At last night's meeting I felt a wonderful sense of gratitude at being restored to enough sanity to learn from my mistakes. Yesterday, before the meeting, I walked through my old neighborhood and met an old friend. He asked me if I knew someone who had something. Maybe I should have invited him to the NA meeting, but I didn't.

Today I will clean my apartment, and tonight I will have my son at home. I'll be able to make sure we both have a bath, and that I shave, and that we both put bedclothes on. And I'll sleep, oh so well. I bet no drug can beat that feeling.

I will continue to recover with you in NA, one day at a time. Thanks for helping me live a wonderful life.

Anders S, Sweden

Not waiting to exhale

I'm clean today. Some days it isn't easy to stay that way—not because I want to get high and have a good time; rather, it's because I want to die or just numb out for a few hours.

I had nine years clean at one point, until one lonely, isolated night I succumbed to the desire to self-destruct and picked up a box of tranquilizers that had been prescribed for someone else. Now I have eighteen months clean. And unlike the first time I got clean, I didn't have withdrawals, I had shame instead. And also unlike the first time, there has been no significant reduction in the number of times through any given day that I just want to die.

Now this isn't a new thing in my life. In fact, from early childhood to early 1987, it was the one consistent norm in my life. Everything else could change; my partners, my sexuality, my drugs, my address, my accent, my name, and my friends; but this was consistent. Through it all, at least once every day (and more frequently, all day), I just wanted to die.

I learned so much about myself in those first nine years—first, that I was an all-around addict and that I could use caffeine and sugar as mood-changing substances as easily as I had used drugs, so I had to cut those out.

Then I noticed (well, actually, my sponsor and my Higher Power noticed first, and called it to my attention) that I was being compulsive in service, i.e., member of four home groups; a service position at each; area service responsibilities, two subcommittees, phonenumber roster, seven sponsees, etc. So I had to swear off (well, all except the phonenumber and the sponsees) until I learned how to be moderate. But still, I believe that the people who get this program are the ones who do some kind of service in their first two years clean. It helps build a sense of belonging. I just overdid it a little.

My daughter saw less of me than she did when I was out using drugs. And my partner—well, that might have been part of the reason why I did so much service. That way I didn't have to notice how messed up our relationship was. So that's when I started to see that my methods of relating to people didn't work very well for anyone; least of all for me.

Some people in NA think the word *codependency* is a dirty word. I don't. The way I see it, it's just another defect of character that needs to be sweated over, prayed about, and hopefully, learned to live without.

It seems to have a few layers. Just as I think I've got its measure, it pops up somewhere else, with roots deeper in my psyche than I thought my psyche went! I've heard others share the same kind of difficulties with some of their defects, so I know I'm no orphan here. I just keep plugging away at it, one day at a time.

Well then, at five years, just as I thought my life was starting to take shape (I'd ended that relationship, was holding my service down to one title only, working full time, studying nights), my Higher Power deemed I was ready for another curve ball.

I started to have sensations, emotions, and memories I'd never had before. Turns out there was a very good reason why I always found out, subsequently, that all my closest NA friends were incest survivors. Obvious, really; they were my kind of people, literally. I was one myself.

Well, I ignored it for a while. "I'll just get through this semester, then I'll look at it," or, "I'll just get my scores up to get into the university," or, "I'll just wait until I'm off the nicotine patches first." But you know how these things are when you ignore them; they just creep into every area of your life!

Then one of my dear friends died of this disease. And with her story, it's really hard to say whether it was an accident or suicide. She had six years clean once. So I got counseling and started this new voyage of self-exploration. And it got harder.

How could I get a handle on this one? What do I abstain from, one day at a time? What defect do I ask to have removed? My childhood? How do I handle family gatherings with my abuser when I feel terrified and nauseated? How do I deal with the shame?

I dropped out of the university (it didn't help) and formed a relationship with a woman I adore (very fulfilling, but the shame and terror were still there). I quit work. I moved. I quit service. I took up smoking again and ultimately, in the dead of night, I picked up because I still wanted to die.

Since then, I've moved again. I have no more contact with my family. My partner is as supportive as she can be, and I still feel suicidal on a regular basis. Somehow I have to find a way to work the steps on this one. Oh, there's counseling and groups, and I do them, but the only thing that's ever really made a difference in my life is the Twelve Steps of NA.

So I look back and reexamine: What did I do in 1987 that I didn't do in 1995 that I still haven't done in 1996? And the answer comes.

When I had three months clean in 1987, I started writing a Fourth Step. I did that because I was asking questions like "How do you know when you're ready for the Fourth Step?" and "How do you know when you've really got the Third Step?" And this old-timer pulled me aside after a meeting and said, "I knew I was really working the third when I started on my fourth, 'cause it sure as hell wasn't my will to do a fearless and searching moral inventory. Go to it," he said, "you don't have to wait for a sign. You don't have to wait to exhale."

Oh God, I'm crying; that must be it. I'm gonna have to write an inventory, and include everything that happened to me, what I did with it, and how it's still messing up my life. The whole idea fills me with horror. That's the real reason I haven't done it yet. I've had all the signs I'm likely to get. I'll need guidance and help and support on this one. My home group doesn't know what they're in for, but I have my answer. As often happens, I've found my answer through sharing my story and my pain. It's time to take up my pen (still mightier than the sword) and fight on. I hope my words help someone else as much as it has helped me to share them. Thank you for letting me share. *Ros R, Australia*

Service

Changes on the way for local services

by Mary C-V, 2nd Vice Chair World Service Conference

After fifteen years of doing service in a "temporary" structure, the NA Fellowship now has a permanent structure—at least for its local services. At the 1997 World Service

Conference in April, conference participants approved *A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous*.

What happened to the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*? With the adoption of GTLS, the conference also deleted the local services sections from the TWGSS and renamed that manual the *Temporary Guide to our World Service Structure*. The alignment of world services will be decided and implemented in the next couple of years, and a description of the eventual structure will most likely replace the TWGSS at that time. The conference also replaced the contents of *The Group Booklet* with the chapter titled "The NA Group" that appears in GTLS.

GTLS is the first conference-approved book-length manual on local services. The adoption of this new guide will represent a significant shift for most of our members. It is the most comprehensive piece on local services that NA has ever had, and it presents a whole new set of terms and titles for everyone to get used to.

The names and functions of some service responsibilities are different. Roles and responsibilities between and within levels of service are described in more detail, and in some cases have undergone a radical change. There is even a recognized structure for metropolitan services between two or more areas. This is a completely new idea to many areas, although, like every idea in the GTLS, it grew out of the needs and often the practical experience of local NA communities. Some of the ideas in our new service manual may seem very strange; others may be what your area and region are already doing.

Speaking of which, is an area still an area? A region still a region?

Yes, the names most familiar to the NA Fellowship—group, area, region, and world—remain the same, and they go in the same order they always have: The groups have the final authority over the rest of the service structure.

But many other names have changed to reflect a change in the roles and responsibilities of a position. Where there used to be "area service representatives", there are now "regional committee members". Where before there were "regional service representatives," there are now "regional delegates". Where before there used to be nothing, there are now "metros" and "metro committee members".

Above all, the GTLS emphasizes function, not form. In other words, world services recognized that the best people to decide how to provide local services are the people who provide them. While the GTLS outlines certain things that need to be consistent throughout NA, there is also ample flexibility to adapt certain functions to the needs of each NA community.

As it says in the introduction to GTLS, "Portions of [GTLS] may prove to be inappropriate for your use either because of geography, national or provincial law, cultural differences, or the developmental state of your NA community. If this is the

case, your NA community should feel free to adapt the Guide to meet your own needs, provided that those adaptations are consistent with NA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for Service."

How each NA community begins to use the GTLS will depend to a large degree on how familiar its members are with the GTLS. Perhaps some have been involved in service for several years and have seen the whole process of restructuring NA services evolve. Others may be brand-new to service and just know that ASRs are now going to be called RCMs, but they will still go "to region" and return with information. The GTLS is based as much on the Twelve Concepts as it is on the Twelve Traditions, so developing an understanding of the concepts is a good way to start learning about GTLS.

Local NA communities may want to plan learning days that include workshops on the Twelve Concepts or on GTLS itself. Area and regional meetings may want to allow time at their regular meetings for study and discussion of the concepts and GTLS.

One of the best ways for service committees to begin the transition to using GTLS is to first evaluate how well they are fulfilling NA's primary purpose. This can be done by using the "Area Inventory" found within GTLS. The inventory can also serve to clarify needs and priorities in service, which is important when considering how the GTLS can be implemented in an NA community. After taking inventory and discussing some of the models presented within the GTLS, areas and regions may find it helpful to meet with neighboring areas and regions to discuss the opportunities for shared services or just to share perspectives on local possibilities. These discussions can provide a strong base of ideas on how to move forward with implementing the GTLS and continue to meet the needs of the local fellowship in the process. If a community knows where it wants to go, it's much easier to map out how to get there.

Eventually, there comes a time when we just have to act. All of the planning, discussing, evaluating, and re-evaluating in the world will do no good if it's not followed by action. Practice is what brings experience, and it is through the sharing of experience that we gain the knowledge needed to improve our service so we can better carry the message to the still-suffering addict.

The WSC Policy Committee hopes local NA communities will avail themselves of the above suggestions for implementing GTLS. The committee is also anxious to hear about your successes and struggles with implementing GTLS so that others can benefit from your experience. Please write WSC Policy c/o WSO.

T-shirts, mugs, and music boxes

Vendor obligations and consumer rights

The WSO originally began licensing vendors to protect the fellowship's property and at the same time allow members the opportunity to purchase items they desired that contained the fellowship's trademarks. An "approved vendor" is a business or person who has been granted limited permission to use NA trademarks on specific

merchandise items and has acknowledged that these trademarks do not belong to them. This keeps the ownership of NA trademarks clear as described in the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust, which requires the WSO to hold these properties in trust for the Fellowship of NA.

Over the last four years, the level of activity for processing vendor requests has grown dramatically. Much of the increase in demand has come from the fellowship (NA groups, areas, and regions have been requiring that vendors be licensed with the WSO before they will allow them to sell merchandise at their events and conventions).

This increased activity level has made it difficult for the WSO, due to the staff time and legal counsel required, to administer the vendor licensing process. As a result, the WSO Board of Directors has decided to make three changes to our vendor licensing process.

The first is to charge a \$50.00 nonrefundable annual processing fee and an annual licensing fee of \$500.00 to all vendors beginning in January 1998. All vendor licenses that are requested or renewed between now and December 1997 will only be issued through January 1998. At that time vendors may reapply for permission under the new policy. We believe that WSO resources should be used to provide service and support to the fellowship. We hope that by charging fees for vendor licensing, we can reclaim some of those resources and put them toward the priorities set by the fellowship at its World Service Conference.

The second change is that there will only be two periods during each year in which the WSO will process vendor license applications: 1-31 January and 1-31 July.

The third change is to stop altogether the WSO licensing of audiotape vendors. We reached this decision after receiving numerous questions and complaints from the fellowship about our current practice of allowing the use of NA trademarks on the vendors' tapes, which mistakenly gave the impression that there was some endorsement or approval of the contents of the tapes. This was never our intention. Most tapes are recorded at an NA event, function, or convention that is sponsored by a group, area, or region. Any area or region that is registered with the WSO already has permission to contract with a vendor to create something for their exclusive use. This means that if an area or region contracts with a taping vendor for a specific event, the contract can allow the taping company to use NA trademarks and/or their event logo for tapes recorded and sold at that event, provided that the artwork is turned back over to the area or region after the event. Since this limited permission already exists, we see no reason to continue to have WSO license taping vendors to use NA trademarks.

We'd like to clarify the issue of vendor access to fellowship events. Permission from the WSO to use NA's logos and trademarks does not grant automatic access to Narcotics Anonymous events or functions. In other words, just because a vendor approaches your activities or convention committee with a license agreement in hand, he or she does not have the right to sell merchandise at your event unless you say so. Granting access to these functions is a decision that rests solely with the local service committee involved.

Also, this license agreement is not an endorsement by the WSO of a vendor's business, business practices, or pricing policies.

What if we held an H&I meeting and no one showed up?

By David J, Vice Chairperson WSC H&I Committee

Sad thought, huh? Well, it happened to four of us for almost a year. About six years ago, I moved into a very rural area in southwestern Pennsylvania. The peace and quiet were great—still are, as a matter of fact. Three years after moving here, I ended up in the county jail for a few hours (another story). While I was there, I thought about my H&I commitment in the city I had left, and wondered if my new area had an H&I committee.

A couple of weeks later, I got hold of the local H&I chair. He told me that several years before they had regularly taken a panel into the county jail, but it had folded and they were now struggling to fulfill the commitments they had. Anyway, to make a long story short, after several phone calls and a lot of coffee, we had an okay from the warden to bring a panel into the county jail. I had four willing panel leaders, and I was feeling great. We were giving it back; we would make a difference.

I brought in the first meeting, and it went well. Most of the good old boys in the facility hadn't heard of NA before, but they listened. After the first month, attendance started dropping. Over the next five months, it went from bad to worse. There was a period of several months when not one addict from the jail showed up at the meeting. Our hearts broke. After a year of minimal attendance, our area H&I chair called the warden, gave him a phone number to call if anyone requested an NA meeting, and closed our H&I meeting.

I felt worse than I had the night I was locked up in that very jail. I questioned my motives. Was I running on self-will? I went to meetings and shared about it. It was at one of those meetings that I saw him—one of the addicts from the jail who had come in the last months we were doing the meeting. He said he was trying to stay clean, and thanked H&I for making a difference in his life. Wow!

We now do a shared service H&I in another not-so-rural correctional facility. We have four meetings a month, and twenty to thirty addicts at each meeting. So what if we had an H&I meeting and no one showed up? Depends on what you mean by "nobody," I guess.

Our next world convention, WCNA-27, will be held 3-6 September 1998 in San Jose, California, USA. Just think, 1997 marks the first time in twenty-six years that there will be no world convention. Strange, but true! WCNA has gotten so large that the World Service Conference passed a motion three years ago to make the convention a biennial event.

We expect WCNA-27 to be one of the largest conventions in our history. NA members will virtually take over the Silicon Valley as we fill fourteen hotels. The convention will take place at the San Jose Convention Center. The Saturday night meeting and Unity Day celebration will be held in the San Jose Arena, which has a seating capacity of 20,000 people. Can't you already sense the excitement as members from all around the world converge to celebrate our recovery in one of the oldest NA communities on earth?

The city of San Jose is planning to roll out the red carpet to welcome us—San Jose, the heart of the Silicon Valley, just a forty-five-minute drive from San Francisco, Monterey, Carmel-by-the-Sea, or the beaches of Santa Cruz. The downtown area should be buzzing all weekend. In addition to our convention being in town, the "Talent in Tapestry" Festival is held, offering its usual array of artists, craftspeople, and music.

As of this writing we are fifteen months from the start of WCNA-27, and already the planning has begun. A host committee has been formed in the Northern California region. By the time this article is printed, the convention theme and logo will have been selected, paid events will be planned, and the registration flyer will be in production. By late December, we will mail the English version of the flyer out to the fellowship, and then turn our attention toward translating the flyer into several languages. If you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive a registration flyer once they become available, or if you have any questions, please call the WCNA helpline at 818-773-9999 818-773-9999, extension 200. See you next September!

by Paul M, Voting Member WSC H&I Committee

Over the years, I have seen local H&I committees face a great many struggles in their dealings with jails, rehabilitation centers, detox centers, halfway houses, and other facilities. I think that many of our struggles could be eliminated if we improved our relationship with the facilities into which we take H&I meetings.

To get into a facility, we can start by obtaining letters of referral ("sunshine letters") from WSO. These are perfect to include in our initial contact. They've been very helpful in getting us the opportunity to make a presentation to the staff of a facility. Our presentations are usually done jointly by members of the PI committee and members of the H&I committee. Once the initial presentation is done, H&I takes over and begins its regular panel in the facility.

Each time H&I does get into a facility, we have to act responsibly and we have to prove ourselves. It's important to continue communication with the facility after we have begun a commitment. The area H&I committee may want to have a position that includes this job as part of its duties, or the panel coordinator may handle it. This person should make sure that any problems are resolved quickly. It helps to keep informed about any rule changes in the facility.

Sometimes we are asked by the facility to participate in awards ceremonies and accept certificates or plaques for our work. As long as the certificate or plaque honors NA or the H&I committee rather than an individual, it's good public relations to accept it. Developing a good relationship with one facility will not only ensure that we're allowed to keep carrying the message in that facility, but will open the doors to other facilities as well.



H&I Slim

Readers of H&I News are familiar with H&I Slim. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure, H&I Slim is the ultimate H&I kinda guy. He hangs out in hospitals and jails all over the world. You might say he's always in the know, and always on the go. Got a question about H&I? Need some help? Write H&I Slim in care of WSO.

Dear H&I Slim,

There are a lot of H&I commitments at correctional facilities in my area, and it's been hard for panel leaders to find members who can get clearance—not to mention that it seems like members don't want to do these panels at all.

I could probably go on some of the panels. I have the required clean time to get clearance, and I have the time to give, but some of my friends tell me I have nothing to offer incarcerated addicts because I have never been arrested.

I thought we were all the same in NA. One of our readings tells us that it doesn't matter what we have done in the past. I'm scared, but I feel I might have something to give, and I know that my area H&I committee could use my support. What should I do?

Confused but willing

Dear Confused,

Our fellowship's message "is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live"; that the freedom from active addiction we've found through the Twelve Steps can be theirs also. Each of our stories varies in individual pattern, but the message is always the same.

The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry that message to addicts who aren't able to attend regular NA meetings. The spiritual principle of anonymity helps us recognize our similarities, not our differences. You're right. It doesn't matter what or how much we used, who our connections were, or what we have done in the past. Today, we focus on the solution to our problem: recovery. Any addict with a willingness to share and who is capable of carrying a clear and consistent NA message is perfectly suited for H&I work.

H&I service after a relapse by *Jim S, Massachusetts* Occasionally members ask why, after a relapse, it's necessary to reacquire the required clean time before doing H&I service. This question seems to come up more often if members had substantial clean time before their relapse.

The clean time guidelines suggested in the H&I Handbook were developed based on many years of experience. One primary consideration regarding clean time requirements relates to the principle of anonymity—the collective experience and wisdom of those who came before us can be applied to all of us, regardless of circumstance or personality.

Another very important consideration is our message. The message we carry in NA must be attractive and contain experience, strength, and hope. Does an addict who relapses retain his or her experience, strength, and hope? No, unfortunately, it is lost in the relapse. But once an addict returns to the recovery process—meetings, sponsorship, steps—experience, strength, and hope begin to build again.

To omit this part of the recovery process by waiving clean time requirements does a disservice to the addict who has relapsed, the still-suffering addict, and others involved in H&I service. The message we carry is not in our individual personalities or even in H&I—it is the message of Narcotics Anonymous, that you never have to use again.

In Narcotics Anonymous, staying clean has to come first. Clean time isn't a badge of honor, but it is a part of our program of attraction. Our message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life. All that takes time, time counted simply from our first day clean.

Being a "newcomer" on the job, at home, in a new town, and in recovery can be difficult. It takes humility. But humility is the ideal state for an addict to be in. Narcotics Anonymous needs each of us to be open to serving where we are needed, asked, and qualified to serve.

Inside or outside, the lie is dead

by Bob L, recently active member WSC H&I Committee

I am an addict. My name is Bob. Today I celebrate twelve years clean in Narcotics Anonymous. Every year on this day, I try to celebrate my clean time in the same setting where I first heard the NA message—at an H&I panel.

This year is no different from the previous eleven. I had the privilege of participating in a panel at the Salvation Army in my area yesterday evening. Those of us who regularly carry the message at a hospital or institution know the gratitude that results from such a commitment.

I used to think that I really needed to go "inside the walls" to be a really solid supporter of our H&I efforts . . . my best thinking. In reality, the way to be a really solid supporter of H&I is to carry the message in a place where the addicts can't go to outside meetings. This is the case for members of the Salvation Army community. My strongest feelings of gratitude come from seeing the addicts who are a part of my local fellowship (Kevin, Mike), some with three and four years clean, who heard the message from an H&I panel while they were in that facility.

Although expressing my love for H&I does include my participation in H&I meetings behind the walls, I don't limit myself to only prison or jail meetings. I am grateful that I have been able to assist in many places with proving that the lie is dead. We do recover!

Issues, issues, issues,

Almost daily, the World Service Board of Trustees receives letters asking for guidance on a variety of issues. We respond to the letters, and also take notice of problems that seem to crop up all over the fellowship. In response to widespread or recurring problems, we prepare bulletins.

Approximately a year ago we released a bulletin titled "Regarding Methadone and Other Drug-Replacement Programs." This year we are working on a bulletin that will address other areas of concern regarding NA's views on abstinence. We will address questions such as "Is drinking 'near beer' or other 'nonalcoholic' beverages considered using?" "What about the use of psychotropic medication?"

We are also planning on a bulletin that addresses the issue of retaining members in meetings and service. Many NA communities have found that their "elders" no longer go to recovery meetings, or notice that at functions, the newcomers outnumber the old-timers by more than seems reasonable. What has happened to our long-term members? Is there some way we can keep them involved? What about getting and keeping them involved in service?

We welcome your thoughts on both of these topics and invite you to send input to us in the care of WSO.

Why do we need to translate service material?

by Bo A, Voting Member Cynthia E, Vice Chair WSC PI Committee

We are becoming what once we only dreamed of: truly a worldwide fellowship. By bringing our message of recovery to addicts throughout the world, in their own language, we do more for the individual addict than we can even imagine.

But what of those emerging NA communities that are separated by language from others in the service structure of NA? Clearly there is a need for translation of service material.

At the World Service Conference in April, WSC Public Information and WSC Hospitals and Institutions hosted a round-table discussion on this need at the Development Forum. We wanted to find out how we could respond to the fellowship's need for translated service material— especially in reference to those materials used by PI and H&I committees. Participants were asked to share their practical experience with translating service material.

The following points summarize the things that members shared at the round-table discussion.

Why does service material need to be translated?

NA is a worldwide fellowship and it has many members who do not speak or read English.

In some locations, service material needs to be adapted for cultural reasons as well.

If NA communities don't have service material in their own language, service committees end up reinventing the wheel rather than learning from the experience of older NA communities.

With language barriers, local committees don't enjoy the strong link to world service boards and committees that English-speaking service committees do. Translated written materials are needed to forge and strengthen that link.

When is an NA community ready for service material translation?

Translation of recovery material is the top priority. Without recovery material, addicts will struggle to stay clean. Service can't happen before recovery is solid. Once addicts have recovery materials, they can turn their attention to translating service materials.

Each local NA community will decide for itself when it is ready to translate service material.

Who works on translating service materials?

Local communities may be able to translate service materials.

Often it is the work of professional translators or trusted servants who have sufficient time and energy to devote to the project.

Service materials are rarely translated by a committee, although we hope that those working on the project will work under the guidance of an established committee.

The World Services Translation Committee works on recovery, not service, materials.

WSO staff can assist with translation of service materials by coordinating such efforts. The office also keeps records of materials that have been submitted.

What procedures are best for translating service material?

Before recovery or service material is translated, a "glossary" of NA terms needs to be created within each community. This ensures that nothing of the NA message gets lost in the translation. In many language groups, a glossary has already been developed. You can obtain a copy from your local translations committee, or contact the World Service Office.

Make sure those involved in the translation efforts are part of the local service structure and are working to translate the materials most important to the local committees.

Don't divert the attention of the local translations committee that is focused on recovery literature. That committee may be able to help you start a service-literature translation committee, or direct you to one that already exists.

Contact the World Service Office to determine if any material has already been translated by another committee and sent to the office. The office does not manufacture or produce translated service material at this time, but it does keep records of work done by local committees and will send the material to you upon request. Although a list is kept at the office, it is not published because it is changing so rapidly.

Contact the World Service Office to see if there are other committees working on translating material into your language. Your committee may be able to correspond with other committees, combine your knowledge and skills, and divide the work to accomplish more.

Make sure to let your local translations committee and the World Service Office know what you are working on so other interested members can join you in that effort.

The WSTC just recently released a series of resource papers (available from WSO) that are aimed at helping LTCs. Although they focus on translating recovery literature, the experience can just as well be applied to translating service material.

Which PI and H&I service material should be translated?

Whatever best serves the local fellowship's needs should be translated first. The WSC PI and WSC H&I committees have developed short versions of their guides and handbooks specifically for translation. These will help get a new committee in a developing NA community started. WSC PI's piece is titled "Basic Guide to Public Information" and WSC H&I's piece is titled "H&I Guide."

After these basic guides have been translated and service committees are functioning, the committee may want to translate all or part of the H&I, PI, and phonline handbooks. Please note that the PI and phonline handbooks are currently undergoing major revisions, and this would not be a good time to start translating these guides. However, translating portions of these guides for single projects (examples of "sunshine letters," public service announcements, etc.) would be a good use of resources.

PI committees also need informational material to send out in informational packages. This is usually recovery literature, and a great deal of it has already been translated into many languages. The pieces PI uses most frequently are:

The Little White Booklet

IP #1 - Who, What, How, and Why

IP #7 - Am I an Addict?

Other materials used with the public include:

Narcotics Anonymous: A Resource in Your Community

Facts About Narcotics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous: A Commitment to Community Partnership

(Note: "Facts About Narcotics Anonymous" and "Narcotics Anonymous: A Commitment to Community Partnership" are documents that were written specifically for use at international events. They are excellent sources of material for presentations to, or answering questions about NA from professionals.)

What discretion does the local NA community have in adapting materials to local laws and customs?

There are currently no written guidelines for translating service materials.

Some of the procedures may seem strange at first, and it may seem easier to eliminate some suggested steps. It's important to differentiate between adaptation to fit local laws, customs, etc., and unnecessary changes because it seems like too much work to follow the process. We hope the local committee will at least try the methods suggested in the existing service materials before adapting them. The suggestions in the service materials have worked for many committees in many countries.

Some of the procedures or projects used in the United States cannot be used in other countries because of different legal systems. NA service committees need to be aware of the local laws and adapt the procedures accordingly. WSO may have information about alternatives that have worked well in other countries with similar legal systems.

How do we find out more about service and translations?

The WSO Fellowship Services Team and translations staff have a great deal of material available and can also put you in contact with world-level trusted servants who have experience with translations and doing service in developing NA communities.

Contact your area, regional, or national committees and ask if anyone is working on translations.

Developing NA communities have the same needs that new NA communities in English-speaking countries have. What they lack is the availability of the experience, strength, and hope collected in our present service materials written in English. These challenges can be overcome in time. But when? Can PI & H&I committees grow without access to this valuable experience? Yes, but only very slowly and with a lot of frustration!

The important part of our discussion at WSC was that it raised the awareness of world-level trusted servants about the need for translated service material. Though there often aren't any definitive answers to our questions about translating service material, there is a wealth of experience in the fellowship. We hope that by going forth and adding to that experience, we can change the future for the addicts who serve Narcotics Anonymous with the experience, strength, and hope that our service materials give us.

WCNA-28 goes to Colombia!!

Well, it's official—the 28th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous will be held 6-9 July 2000 in Cartagena, Colombia. After a year-long selection process that also considered Panama City, Rio de Janeiro, and Buenos Aires as possible sites, it became clear that Cartagena would be the best site for the convention. Cartagena is an enchanting, casual vacation destination located on the Caribbean. It combines modern beaches and hotels with a historic, rustic, walled city that was used as Colombia's first defense against pirates in colonial times. As a result, Cartagena enjoys freedom and isolation from the typical concerns that come to mind when thinking about traveling to Colombia.

Probably the most exciting factor is the historic nature of this decision for us. It will be the first world convention ever held in Latin America. Also, Colombia is home to one of the two largest NA communities in Latin America today. It started in the early eighties, and today there are more than one hundred weekly meetings in fourteen cities throughout Colombia. The region has a service office in Medellin and holds an annual regional convention. The region has active H&I and PI committees and sends a delegate to WSC each year.

For the city of Cartagena, WCNA-28 will be the largest convention ever held there. The mayor of Cartagena has been instrumental in helping us to make our decision to go to Cartagena. He traveled to Los Angeles to make a presentation to us on behalf of the city, reserved the main plaza in the old walled city for us to use for the Saturday main meeting and unity day celebration, and arranged meetings for us with various representatives of the Colombian government to begin cooperative planning for visa approval for travel to Colombia.

One of the best results of our relationship with the mayor was the press conference he arranged to announce our decision to come to Cartagena. Virtually all the major press in the country attended because the conference was hosted by the mayor. WSO staff, along with members of the fellowship in Colombia, met with more than twenty representatives of Colombian TV, radio, and newspapers. The press conference resulted in newspaper articles about NA in two national papers and one local city paper, several television news stories, and radio interviews. This event was probably the biggest PI opportunity in our history in Colombia.

For many of us, there will also be special significance in carrying the message of recovery in Colombia. The demonstration of our unity as we celebrate our recovery together at a world convention is always a powerful message. Can you think of a better place in the world to acknowledge that no addict need die from the horrors of addiction? Stay tuned. More will be revealed!

Last Laughs

Of all the factors contributing to our recovery, our capacity to laugh at ourselves is pretty

important. Indeed, with all we normally have to face—powerlessness, character defects, spiritual struggles—humor is indispensable to sanity. In this spirit, we present "Last Laughs," a regular feature of The NA Way Magazine. —Ed.

None of your business!

A loving but irreverent look at NA service

After more than ten years in NA service, I have survived more meetings, drunk more Drano-flavored coffee, and had more laughs about our collective silliness than you would believe possible. Just for fun, then, I'd like to share this, and hope you find service as loaded with laughter as I do.

So how about those service meetings? Those gatherings of pale, twitchy, earnest-looking addicts that we all found so mysterious and intriguing when we were new—all those acronyms. The seat of power, the places where God expressed himself through us (!), the semi-sacred policy discussions, the paperback Robert's Rules on the table. Ahhhh, selfless service—the very pinnacle of membership.

These guidelines are for the World Service Conference, but they could easily apply to any lesser (or higher, depending on your point of view) service entity.

The revolutionary wars
(or motion sickness)

One of the purposes of the conference is to make policy for NA. This is done through the passage (or rejection) of motions and resolutions. Resolutions are gaining in popularity as they usually require very little actual staff time or volunteer effort. It is only when resolutions are accompanied by implementation plans that things get scary. Fortunately, this doesn't happen often, or at least it doesn't happen in the same year, or in the same service body, for that matter.

Anyway, here are some of the rules:

The resolutions and motions should only come from the floor (regions are the only valid fellowship entities). Executive committees, conference leadership, and staff undergo a de-spiritualization process when they go from being conscience carriers to "leaders." They can no longer be trusted to handle motions and resolutions without contaminating them.

Resolutions and motions should have been discussed before the WSC by people who belong to regions. All resolutions and motions are sent out in the DUI (Discussions Unencumbered by Information) three minutes prior to the WSC so that group consciences can be conducted. Two trustees will be cloned and sent to the four corners of the earth to provide the information not included in the DUI. Business should not be conducted until the conference has met nonstop for three days and been thoroughly wrung out by the emotion of meeting recovering addicts from all over the world. That way, the body is too bleary to do any real damage.

All resolutions should start with "Be it resolved," and include at least three whereases and two caveats, so we can prove everyone was in the loop and we're not shooting from the hip. All motions should be amended by the maker

upon hitting the floor.

All motions should end something like this: "By doing so, we will carry out the will of God as we understand Him in a diverse and inclusive process that ensures no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction." (This provides the necessary fat for harmless "friendly" amendments on the floor, but beware, someone will demand de-genderizing God. Also, there will be enough fat to conceal the real intent of the motion.)

As the business session begins (one-and-a-half days behind schedule), the chairperson will say, "It's now six in the evening, and I know you want to break for dinner, but Admin and I were up all night punctuating these motions and we think the comma placement deserves your careful consideration. . . ."

"Point of information, Mr. Chair," barks a woman at the middle microphone. "I'm regional delegate, Region of the Pests. I have just one question. Do we have a quorum?"

The chair, after whispered consultations with the parliamentarian, announces that a quorum consists of fifty percent of the number of participants present, and asks the body if it is ready to vote. The RD from Region of the Pests starts to appeal the chair's ruling but the mike, which is controlled at the dais, goes unaccountably dead.

The RD dashes for another mike, finally reaching one by the time three more motions have been carried. Finally, she gives up and leaves. One by one, other RDs and their alternates begin shuffling out, dazed looks on their faces. Only a few die-hards remain, who wildly amend motions, unmindful of conflicts with existing policy, until the chair realizes he can call a recess due to lack of a quorum. The administrative committee staggers toward a meeting room on the 16th floor to discuss the parliamentary quagmire that will have to be navigated to undo everything the conference will want undone the following morning, which will be everything that was done in the previous session.

Create an adhoc committee

Addicts are unusually prone to committees. No one knows why. Perhaps for the same reason they are prone to addiction.

Committees are created primarily to justify all that has gone on before and prevent any major changes from taking place. NA's founders did not have a committee. If they had, the Twelve Steps would still be a draft document marked "Not for Distribution." And "We admitted we were powerless over our addiction . . ." would read something like, "Wherever practicable, and subject to reversal according to the individual's sustained or suspended willingness, some of us may have found, in a few cases, that some of us were challenged by gender-neutral forces that seemed to threaten our free will over various and sundry manifestations of a general malaise that for some of us was characterized by an excessive consumption of a multitude of corporeal and non-corporeal substances, or by prolonged activity that may for some of us have been detrimental . . ."

Committees are powerful brakes against irresponsible action. The process of keeping everyone "in the loop," collecting and collating fellowship input, and reaching consensus effectively discourages any action whatsoever. If action threatens to erupt, despite this carefully orchestrated process, a consultant is called in to examine all the material and provide recommendations.

Any place that addicts come together for recovery or service is sure to provide opportunities for growth. You wanted fun and relaxation?!? Sorry, NA has only one promise. . . . *Barbara G, California*

Author's Release

This signed release must accompany all submissions.

I hereby grant permission to the World Service Office, *The NA Way Magazine*, their successors, assigns, and those acting on their authority to publish the attached original material titled. I understand that this material may be edited. I further understand that this material may be reprinted in other NA fellowship journals. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the World Service Office and *The NA Way Magazine* from any blame by myself, my successors, and/or my assigns.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

Due to changes in our sales policy, effective 1 August, prices increased for IPs, keytags, and chips. These price adjustments brought them more in line with the cost of goods associated with other WSO products. The exact increases are detailed in the WSO Product Catalog.

NEW ITEMS

It Works: How and Why on audiotape

- This six-tape set contains the entire *It Works* text. Item #8820 Price US\$15.95

Sluggfest: A Home Group Anthology

- This two-color book contains the Home Group comics strips published in *The NA Way Magazine* over an eight-year period. Item #9406 Price US\$8.95

Italian Basic Text, *Narcotici Anonimi*

- Item #IT-1101 Hardcover Price US\$5.25

Turkish keytags

- Welcome through Multiple Years Items #4100 - 4108 Price US\$0.35

Norwegian *For Those in Treatment*

For de i behandling

- Item #NR-3117 Price US\$0.25 In quantity of 100 or more, US\$0.23

Norwegian

12 Steps Poster

- (Item #NR-9073)

12 Traditions Poster

- (Item #NR-9074) Price US\$2.30 each

Castilian Spanish It Works Funciona: *Cómo y Por Qué*

- Item #CS-1140 Hardcover Price US\$7.30

REVISED ITEMS

The Group Booklet, Revised

- reflects the changes approved at WSC'97. Item #1600 Price US\$0.60

A Guide to Local Services in NA,

- which was approved at WSC'97, is available. Item #2111 Price US\$5.80

ITEMS TO BE DISCONTINUED

Due to consistently low sales, the WSO Board of Directors decided to discontinue sales of the *NA Way* mug (Item #9417) and the Slugg mug (Item #9416) once our stock is depleted.