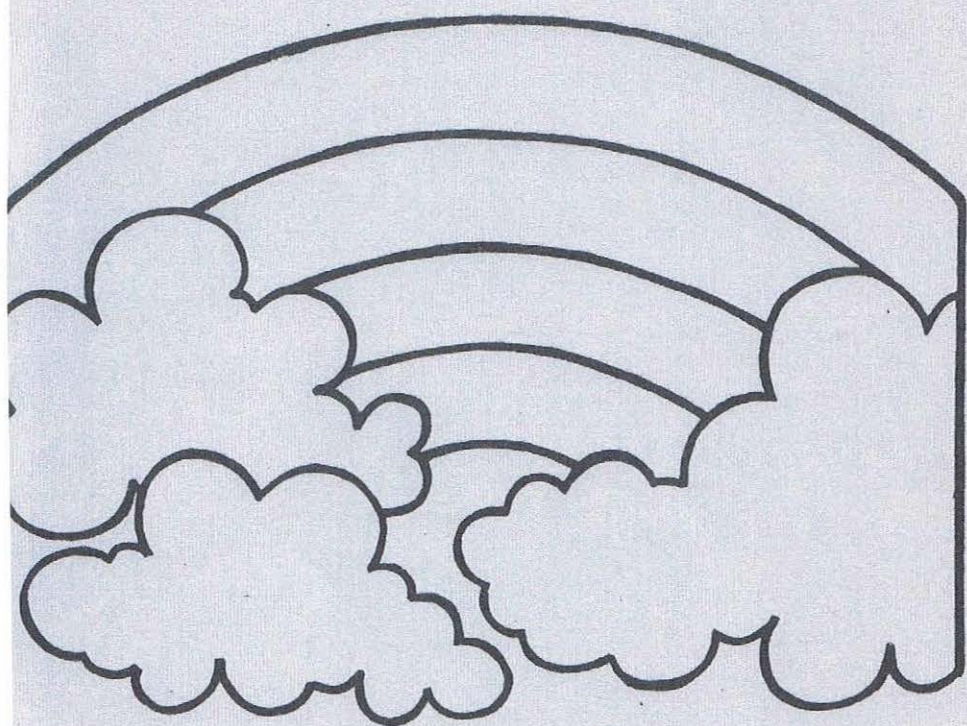


The Rainbow Connection



February 1984



The Rainbow Connection

" ... caring and sharing the N.A. way ... "

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Another Day	p. 2
Benefits and Joy	p. 3
The Unspoken Thing	p. 4
A Big Difference	p. 5
History	p. 7
Single-Handed Sailor	p. 8
Answer	p. 11
Recovery Tools	p. 12
A Spiritual Experience	p. 13
Cycles of Recovery and Service	p. 15
Desire	p. 16
Service Workshops	p. 17
News & Coming Events	p. 18

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ANOTHER DAY

To the people at work, today was just another day. They punched in, put in their 10 hours, and punched out. To me, it was another day, clean. Another miracle. There were a lot of little miracles throughout the day. Many new opportunities to apply the steps to my life, to practice these principles in all my affairs. An old feeling of inadequacy landed in my gut - it was an old, familiar feeling. The same feeling that paralyzed me so many times before. It used to be one of my favorite feelings to "use" over. This time, my first impulse was to run. A voice inside said, "Try the Steps on this one." I admitted I was powerless over that feeling. It was still there, but it was recognized and accepted, and I was able to do the job that was expected of me. I could never do it before, and I knew that this was a miracle, indeed, that I could now. I gave thanks and moved on to the next job. Another miracle happened...I noticed that I didn't feel "different" from the others at work. I felt no better than, nor worse than my co-workers just because I'm an addict. I felt fortunate for the gift of the 12 Steps and a program which guided me through my day. I enjoyed the ability to see the little, unnoticed miracles that happened around me. The miracle of being

PAGE THREE

able to keep my concentration on the job at hand was a real mind-blower. It means a lot to me to be able to be a productive, responsible member of socety without the need of drugs to do it. When I punched out I felt fulfilled and useful. No, it wasn't just another day - it was another day, clean!

Pete B.

BENEFITS AND JOY

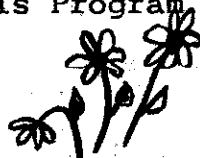
By listening and believing what we hear in this program, we replace the broken foundation of our lives with a firm foundation on which we can build a new life.

When we take the risk and try something that is suggested to us, even though we're not sure it will work, we begin to let go of the old thinking.

When we stop finding excuses for the Program not to work and start seeing that it just might work for us, we can see the beginning of some good the Program has in store for us.

When we hold back our feelings and are afraid to trust and believe in our fellow addicts that have traveled the path before us, we cheat ourselves out of a lot of the benefits and joy this Program has to offer.

ANONYMOUS



THE UNSPOKEN THING

"That wordless language of recognition, belief, and faith, which we call empathy, created the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality, and recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us."

---Narcotics Anonymous

And there's something happening here
But you don't know what it is.
Do you, Mister Jones?

---Bob Dylan

Right from the start, I never did have to say anything. Neither did anyone else. I knew, and so did they. I vaguely recall saying some nonsense, which was nothing but denial, and I suppose they just smiled to themselves, and invited me to keep coming back. And I did. Why? Because I belonged. Deep down inside, I knew it, in spite of whatever my head had to say in denial. We just sort of knew each other and we fit together.

Our self-will and insanity often work together to make some apparent surface divisions between us, but they don't go deep. I often sit quietly at a meeting, and a deep warm sense of belonging pervades my soul. I don't have to listen. I don't have to think. The identification is total, at the level of emotions and feelings, and somehow at the level of spirituality.

Recently I spent some time with an old friend. For several days we were close together on a backpacking trip, yet in all of that time I never felt the kinship that I feel with other clean addicts; some

cold feeling of blocked emotions was there at a gut level between me and my friend, which I had not really been aware of before coming to Narcotics Anonymous. Before I got here, I had no real idea of the meaning of closeness in any relationship. The walls were up at all times. The drugs allowed me to relax because they held up the walls for me, seeming to cause no strain, But I was dying behind the walls, and the longer I hid out behind them, the less capable I became of dealing with the world, on ANY terms. Life did become impossible, either with or without drugs, because they left me incapable, then they stopped working.

Somehow, the people in N.A. managed to break right through my walls, without making any effort, and so my healing began, I was able to identify, and so to listen, and to learn. Today I can live, because of your unspoken love.



A BIG DIFFERENCE

Often, we get impatient with habitual relapsers. We become tired of telling them the same things over and over again, only to watch them come back and pick up one white chip after another. We get angry with them when they tell us "I want to get clean, but I just don't seem to have the capacity."

For a long time, I had my problems tolerating these people. I felt in my heart, and often told them, that they truly did not want to get clean. However, it has

dawned upon me lately that there is a big difference in "wanting to get clean" and "willing to get clean." The former is the "honest desire" referred to in our literature. The latter is a commitment to take the necessary action required to insure bona-fide NA recovery.

The commitment involves several sacrifices and steps. For me the following did the job:

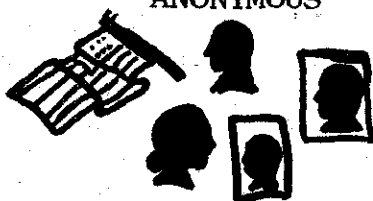
- *making 90 meetings in 90 days
- *sharing my agony of early recovery at meetings
- *getting a sponsor
- *reading program literature religiously
- *staying away from all my old using buddies and stomping grounds
- *getting phone numbers and using them
- *showing a willingness to make my recovery the foremost priority in my life, placing it ahead of my job, family, and friends
- *making a decision to sincerely give the 12 Steps a fair shot (at least a year)
- *showing a willingness to start praying to a Higher Power, regardless of how much or how little faith I truly had

Sometimes it is difficult to make this type of commitment right off the bat. Even though the price for refusal might be constant relapse and consequent further degradation, many of us--given our stubborn nature--have to learn the hard way. It is part of the disease, and all we could do is be patient with these addicts, showing compassion for them when they return from the streets.

I know that life and recovery has got-

ten a lot easier for me since I adopted this posture. I would also venture to say that it has gotten easier for the habitual relapser who had to put up with my intolerance for over three years.

ANONYMOUS



HISTORY

Did you ever stop to think about this - each day that you are clean, you are making history. That's right. I assume, if you're reading this, that you are an addict - a clean addict. A what? A clean addict? That's not natural. Why, that defies a basic law of nature, "Once an addict, always an addict." And, you say that you are happy? Come on! Not only is that not natural - that's unheard of! Why, that's history! Dig it! And, as you stay clean your recovery touches others. It's very contagious, this recovery stuff. As you spread it around to other addicts, meetings grow. They grow so fast that new meetings get started. As new meetings get started, Areas form. Then as Area Service Committee meetings become too large, they split into several areas, and Regions form where there once were Areas. And, N.A. grows at a pace that is staggering, ..impossible to keep up with. Fast enough to give headaches, on a regular basis to those of us whose responsibility it is to make the meeting list

And it all stems from another day clean. When you feel bored, restless or are just looking for something different to do, sit down and write about what things you've seen occur in N.A. since you first got clean. Your experience is valuable. This is History. What you haven't written and sent in yet is one of the many missing links in our HISTORY OF N.A. You can write it down now, send it in, and be counted as a part of our History or you can be one of the hundreds, thousands, of those who will be saying, years from now, "But they forgot about what happened here, - they missed us." Don't be one of them. They'll be a dime a dozen. Be one of those who can point to a page in the History books and say, "That's us. We did that. See - right there, in black and white." Do it today.

Send to:
 N.A. HISTORY
 69 Washington Blvd.
 Williamsport, PA



SINGLE-HANDED SAILOR

Somehow, it always seemed like I was the beauty and the beast, both in the same person. I was capable of the most loving thoughts and actions, but I spent so much of my time reacting. I was constantly seeing myself as attacked for being myself, and I began at first to defend then to attack in my own right. At first I made allies among the other people like me, but the real ally was the dope. I came to be-

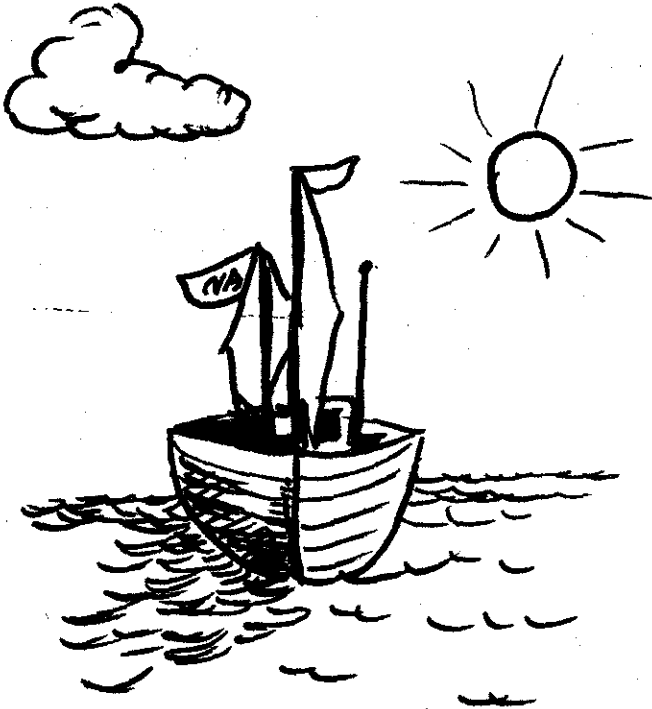
lieve more and more that it was the only ally I needed, and that other people just got in the way. Finally, even my closest friends could not get near me. Addiction had turned my ally into my master.

Like a single-handed sailor I cast my boat upon the waves, confident in myself and my boat, believing we could brave any storm. And we did brave the storm--whipped by the wind, beaten by the waves; the brave adventurer I set out as became a wild-eyed survivor, desperately struggling to keep afloat. The call of adventure was more than I had ever bargained for; isolation and terror were not what I had gone seeking, but somehow I had found only these, and I was trapped with them. Finally, even my hope began to fade. My boat was sinking, and I was going down along with it. Death was closing the door on me, and in desperation I cried out for help. I didn't know what could come, and I was almost as afraid of the rescuers as I was of drowning, but not quite...and the help came when I asked.

The last thing I expected to find was a loving God reaching out to me through a bunch of dope fiends, survivors like myself of the same storms. But that is exactly what I found in the fellowship of N.A. I was saved by the only people who could have done the job--the people just like me. I had never known it before. I found peace through the God of my understanding, and direction through the 12 Steps, and purpose in caring and sharing with other addicts.

My boat of self-will has sunk, and is gone. I am no longer a single-handed sailor trying to guide myself on a trackless sea. Today I am one of a crew, on board

a ship called N.A. It is guided by a power greater than ourselves, and it can sail effortlessly through the stormy seas in which our tiny boats of self-will floundered and were lost. Each of us has a place on this ship, and we each contribute to its running in a way perfectly and uniquely suited to us. Together on our ship, working with each other, we will make the journey home, and God will reveal the way.



???

ANSWER

???

I have told myself so many times, this is going to be my last shot. I'm not gonna do any more dope after this, fully intending to stop. I've had periods of abstinence, substituting booze and reefer, but narcotics always got me back. The way they call me is so subtle and seductive I always thought I could handle a shot - just this one time. Then it was always the same - one more, then one more, then a little habit, then a gorilla on my back jumping up and down with his teeth in my neck. That subtle, seductive calling, turning, once again, into a horrifying reality

Is this fun? No. Is this a pattern in my life, since I was 15 years old? Yes. Can an honest to God heroin addict possibly recover from his lonely, miserable disease and stop using?

The answer is yes. Yeah, narcotics still call me from time to time, but now I have a way to deal with my disease. God created a life-saving, life-giving program of recovery known as Narcotics Anonymous. Why empathy, understanding, love, the Twelve Steps and surrender can keep a dope fiend from using dope, I don't know. I'm just very grateful that God gave us a solution for a disease for which medicine, with all of its tools, has no solution.

I don't know why I wrote this. Maybe if an addict somewhere picks up this RAINBOW, reads this, and says, "Hey, I might try this N.A.," then I will know why I wrote it.

ANONYMOUS

RECOVERY TOOLS



One of the greatest freedoms I've discovered in N.A. is the freedom to develop my own spiritual life. I cherish this gift, freely given through the unconditional love and acceptance I found here. I looked for this freedom in many other places - religions, books, people, the woods, the highway, isolation - you name it, I looked there. Nobody handed me a book and said, "Stay clean and go to meetings, and be yourself." This worked where nothing before had. I've noticed that people are beginning to do this with the Basic Text, treating it like a bible or something. It's not. At least, not to me it isn't. It's simply the shared experience of a large number of addicts on how to stay clean and grow along spiritual lines. In that, it has unparalleled value. It's a tool to use in my recovery. It's one of many tools I have in my "Recovery Toolbox," however, I don't limit myself. I try to remain open-minded and willing to learn from any source that will aid my spiritual development. The Basic Text tends to be a good guide for my spirit. But, being and addict I need more. I need to reach out and try new and different things in order to continue growing and developing my spirit. My toolbox just keeps getting bigger and more effective as I add new tools to it, and consequently, I'm better equipped to deal with a wide range of life's many challenges.

Pete B.

A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Before 1953, addicts except in rare instances, did not recover. When they did recover it was because of a profound spiritual experience. A very lucky few stumbled on to this spiritual experience.

I was talking with a friend. He said, "The First Step is just one sentence, how long can it take to work it?" That made me share an experience with him. The words in the First Step did me no good until I experienced them. They were just symbols until I began to experience their depth. Now the best way I can explain Step One is a dead certainty beyond a shadow of a doubt that for me to use is to die. Period. That is final. I am at peace with my experience of the First Step - it is like a solid, to the core foundation.

What really are the Steps to me? Again, just a set of principles and then when I sincerely applied them to my life, each one gave me an inside experience. Earlier in life I tried other spiritual and religious methods to bring about desired results in my life. They were not for me; no way! The 12 Steps, however, seem custom-designed for me as an addict. They are what will work for me to give me that spiritual experience. Our experience shows that we cannot stay clean unless we eventually have a spiritual awakening. This is what working and living the Steps is doing for me.

I do not experience the Steps for myself by reading articles like this one. I do not experience the Steps by hearing about them. These two would bore and irritate me unless I was into following the instructions outlined in the reading and talking. Only then would I have the experience. Then I found myself talking about my ex-

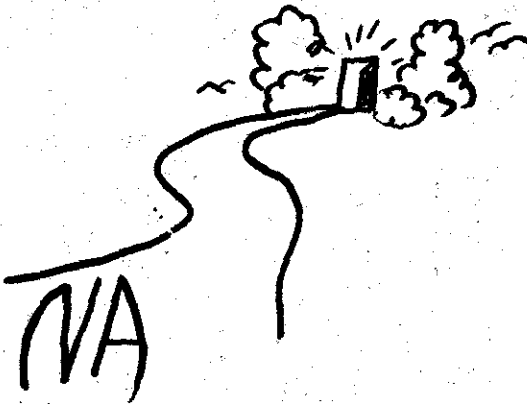
perience, strength, and hope.

Personally, I feel that the Steps are in a specific order for a reason (work them as you will, I'll stick to the numbers). I say that nobody can experience a meeting until they have been to one; nobody can experience working with a newcomer unless they work with one, and the Steps are meaningless to addicts that just read and talk about them.

I need to have these experiences each day, just for today, because I have a disease which causes me to forget. I forget that I get results. So I need to find out again and again. I never have it together. I need to stick to the same basics of calling my sponsor, sharing at meetings, reading the literature, and putting in to practice in the 12 Steps, which are custom-designed as my path for my very own spiritual awakening.

All the other people have a path to God as they understand God. Now, addicts do too. Thank-you, God!

ANONYMOUS



CYCLES OF RECOVERY AND SERVICE

As a member grows in recovery, their desire to carry the message grows. Service is a result of recovery. The carrying of the message, by one member or a group of members creates a cycle. As the message is carried new members come. As a result of their recovery, they again carry the message and new members come.

The service structure at group, area, region, and world levels is one of the binding links of this cycle. For example, an addict in a hospital attends an N.A. meeting there which is supported by an H & I sub-committee. He finds a message of hope for himself at that meeting. Upon his release he is given a meeting schedule and begins to attend meetings outside the hospital. Through those groups members he is given phone numbers, finds a sponsor, and continues to stay clean through those member's support. As his recovery progresses he begins to attend an H & I meeting. He carries the message to newcomers there and the cycle begins again.

Again, the newcomer is the most important person at any time. We keep what we have only by giving it away.

The newcomer, by allowing us to carry the message to him helps us stay clean. By the member working with the newcomer he is able to attain recovery from addiction. It is a two way street. The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. No one understands an addict like another addict.

DESIRE

It began with a desire. A desire to die. For death seemed the only way out of that lonely, empty, numb hell that had been a constant companion for as long as I could remember. That desire became so strong that death drew near, as near as it could possibly come...near enough to see it, to feel it. It felt free. But, fear of the unknown accompanied that "free" feeling. Fear so strong, it drove death away. In its place came a desire to live. This was a brand new feeling. It, too, was accompanied by fear. But this fear could not drive life away. The desire to live was stronger than the fear to live. It grew each day. It slowly lifted me out of my addiction. It brought a revulsion to drugs, and an awareness that drugs were death's accomplice. This desire attracted me to people who also had a desire to live. It brought me into contact with other recovering addicts. They brought me to N.A. Life began that day. The desire to live grew into a desire to recover. The desire to recover brought me to the 12 Steps of N.A. There were no written experiences of how addicts applied these steps to their lives. A desire to recover, a desire stronger than any previous desire I'd ever known, led me to addicts who were willing to share their experiences applying these Steps to their lives. It led me to a pen, and to a typewriter, and to a telephone. It led me to a convention, and then to a conference, and to another and the pen and typewriter became extensions of my desire. A book, a basic text, resulted in the combined desires of many. That same desire is still

With me. It is my constant companion. No human power has the strength to alter it. No self-will can destroy it. No character defects can weaken it. It springs from within, and it leads me to life, and to the living. I call it God, but it's commonly known, simply, as desire. I trust it... it hasn't let me down, yet. I see it in others. Not in what they say, for words water something like desire down, but I see it in their actions; I see it in their eyes. I know I'm not alone. As long as I have a desire, it will keep me alive. My desire has grown, daily, into ongoing recovery. The day it dies will be the day I die.

Pete B.

SERVICE WORKSHOPS

SERVICE WORKSHOPS FOR GROUP AND AREAS -
Birmingham NA, February 26, 1984 12:00 p.m.
8721 Division Avenue (1st Avenue North)
Call: Susie - (205) 252-7570 or Donna -
(205) 988-9136. "THAT NO ADDICT SEEKING
RECOVERY NEED EVER DIE"

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE - Monday April
23 to Friday, April 27 at the Retail Clerk
Union Hall, 1410 Second Street, Santa
Monica, CA. CALL: Bob R. (213) 553-7499 or
Carol K. (213) 452-7791. MAIL: 9710 Cashio
Street, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

News & Coming Events



MISSISSIPPS REGIONAL CONVENTION 1984 - Feb 11 & 12, 1984 in Jackson MS at the Holiday Inn North HWY. 55. Registration starts Sat the 11th at 9:00 a.m. \$15.00 per person covers banquet and dance. Room prices - \$44.00 per room. Mail reservation to: Central Mississippi Area, 750 Popular Blvd. Apt. C-1, Jackson, MS 39202.

LOUISIANA "L.R.C.N.A. II" - March 2, 3, & 4 in Lafayette, LA. Registration and dance \$10.00, Banquet \$12.00. Rooms vary from \$42. to \$48. Mail to: L.R.C.N.A. II, P.O. BOX 90845 Lafayette, LA 70509. Call: (318) 234-5626.

CHICAGO WORLD CONVENTION WCNA 14 - Labor Day weekend in September - Details forth coming. Mail to: WCNA 14, 1744 W. Devon Box 24, Chicago, IL 60660.

SECOND ANNUAL N.A. WOMEN'S RETREAT - Camp Menucha, April 20-22, 1984 in Corbett, Oregon. "SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN" Contact Marianna W. 695-1291. Cost: \$23.00

2ND OHIO REGIONAL CONVENTION - May 25-28, 1984. "OUR COMMON BOND" (More will be revealed).

1ST GPRCNA - FIRST GREATER PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL CONVENTION OF N.A. - April 13-15, 1984. "A TIME TO COME TOGETHER" Hershey Hotel at Broad and Locust St., Philadelphia PA. Reg: \$13.00, Banquet: \$22, Room fees: \$50 single, \$50. double, \$60 triple, \$70 Quad. MAIL: GREATER PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL

PAGE NINETEEN

C/O GPRCNA, P.O. BOX 42629, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2629.

WEST VIRGINIA CONVENTION OF N.A. - "...ALMOST HEAVEN '84" April 20-22 1984 at State 4-H camp, Weston, WV. Basic Package - Dorm rooms \$60.00, includes meals, lodging and all activities. Register by April 13, 1984 to guarantee special packages available. MAIL: WVCCNA, Route 7, Box 761, Morgantown WV 26505.

3RD FLORIDA REGIONAL CONVENTION - "Believing in Miracles" July 4th to July 8th at the Hyatt regency, Tampa. Registration is \$15.00, Banquet \$12.00, Pre-registration \$20.00 (before 2-15-84, including banquet). Hotel: \$35 per room/per night (single, double, or more) MAIL: 3RD FRCNA P.O. Box 2325, Largo, FL 34294. Phone: Sam (813) 595-2722.

SECOND ANNUAL MID-AMERICA CONVENTION - April 20-22, 1984 Lodge of the Four Seasons Lake Ozarks, Missouri. Special Convention rates: Single-- \$41.50/night, Double - \$21.50/night, Triple - \$17.00/night, Quad- \$14.75/night per person. Registration: \$12.00 (\$15.00 after 4/1/84). Sat. Night cookout: \$10.50. MAIL: M.A.C., 418 N. Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801. CALL Robert: (417) 781-6770.

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The back page...

Yes it has been a while for us, but once again we have high hopes that this will be the first of a good, long, and unbroken series of our favorite N.A. newsletter. Thanks for this issue go to all of our contributor and to Rick, Sheryl, Bo, Bryant, Anita, Jaye and the Higher Power who makes it all happen for all of us. We hope you like the results of everyone's efforts, and look forward to hearing from you for the next time!

A SPECIAL NOTE: The W.S.C. Policy Subcommittee is meeting this weekend in Ft. Lauderdale, FLA, to work on the service manual of N.A. Let's all pray for their guidance!