



Recovery is free, but the rent isn't

An interview with Bob R

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IN THIS ISSUE

What do we as members of NA do when we have a problem and need a solution? We ask a more experienced member for help. Maybe it's our sponsor we turn to if we have a recovery problem. Maybe it's someone who's been through something similar. Maybe it's one of our area's old-timers.

In that spirit, we went looking for a solution to the most pressing problem facing NA as a whole today: How do we pay for the things we're doing to help addicts? We asked Bob R to share his thoughts on this topic. Bob served on the World Service Board of Trustees from 1983 to 1988, the last two years as chairperson. Prior to that he served as chairperson of the World Service Conference, as a member of the WSO Board of Directors, and as WSC Policy Committee chair. He is currently serving as RD-Alternate from the Southern California Region.

According to Bob, the answer to our dilemma of funding NA services will, in the end, be found in our members' willingness to practice the principle of self-support. Bob acknowledged that the whole idea of self-support is downright alien to the average NA member when he or she is first getting clean. "Most of us felt that we had something coming, and other people supported us," he said.

NA's money problems won't be solved by creating new fund flow structures. What NA really needs to do is create a culture of giving. Currently, we just don't view giving as an essential part of our personal recovery. Instead, we see it as a choice, and, in too many cases, we view our choice not to contribute as an expression of our freedom. We've heard over and over that recovery is freely given, and have somehow translated that into a belief that we only have to put money in the basket when we feel moved to do so.

To Bob, that thinking is dead wrong. It comes from "not understanding what participating in one's recovery is." There are many ways to participate in your own recovery: share at a meeting, be of service, rely on a Higher Power, and, of course, put some money in the Seventh Tradition collection.

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From the editor

It's hard to believe that we're already publishing the second issue of the *NA Way* in its new format. As I write this, I've been answering calls from many of you who have just received the first issue. While the response has been overwhelmingly positive, and I'm delighted that the magazine is meaningful to NA members, my goal is to make it even more so in the coming issues.

As is the case with everything else in NA, we can't do it alone. In order for the *NA Way Magazine* to be the international journal of the NA Fellowship, it needs the participation of our worldwide fellowship. We need to hear about your recovery. We need to hear about how you're doing service. We need to hear your opinions about any and all of the issues affecting NA as a whole. We need pictures of your meeting places. We need your ideas. And we need some of that wonderful NA humor so we can all have a laugh—even at our own expense.

Our mailing list is growing beyond anything we expected when we first began to explore the idea of a free publication for NA members. At last count, we were at about 29,000 addresses. Make no mistake, we couldn't be happier that this journal is reaching so many people; but the unexpected growth does present some problems for us. Our budget doesn't allow for infinite expansion of our mailing list, so we will be trimming it from time to time so we can eliminate the people who no longer wish to receive the magazine. Our "trimming" process may require people who do wish to continue receiving the magazine to confirm in writing, so be forewarned.

This is probably also a good time to mention back issues. We still have thousands of copies of the *NA Way* in its old format. You can purchase these issues for \$1.00 each if you buy 31 or more. Call me for an order form or to check on what we currently have available. Many issues are selling out, so hurry.

Cindy T, Editor ❖

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.

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."

"For me, putting money in the basket has a lot of significance because when I came into the rooms, I couldn't talk. The way I *could* participate was when that Seventh Tradition basket came around."

Many groups write a statement into their meeting format that asks newcomers not to contribute to the basket. Those who do so generally believe that we're making sure that newcomers know they're more important than anything they could put in the basket. It's an attempt to adhere to the part of our Basic Text that promises "no dues or fees."

Bob doesn't like such meeting formats. "I don't believe we're giving a good message to the newcomer by telling him not to put money in the basket." Yes, recovery is free, freely given to anyone with a desire to stop using, "but the rent isn't," he quipped.

When you get right down to it, not too many addicts object to paying the rent or buying coffee, keytags, and literature. The controversy seems to arise only when it comes to paying for services. We blindly believe that all the members putting money in the basket in our area should result in more than enough to buy H&I literature, pay the helpline bill, pay for the photocopying of committee reports, etc. If we think about it at all, we have a vision of thousands—no, more like millions—of dollars, all inching their way toward world services, a few dropping off along the way to pay for local services, and we wonder how they could possibly need more.

Now, with the new fund flow practice in place that calls for direct contributions to world services from groups, a lot of members are asking themselves, "Why should I support world services? What does it do for me? Or my group?"

Bob answered: "World services represents all of us in Narcotics Anonymous. It's not like it's a separate thing. It's there to further the message of recovery. I don't look at [supporting] world services as being any different than [supporting] a meeting. It all goes to help addicts. It all goes to further the message. And it helps in giving the message where they don't have the message yet.

"If we don't help support it, we don't own it. I've always believed that every group should participate in sending money to world services. That makes a group 'a part of.' It gives them a stake in what's going on."

So the same sense of ownership a member gets from supporting his or her home group can be had by a group from supporting NA as a whole? "That's right," said Bob, "because they do own it. And when there are decisions that need a conscience of the group, then of course they'll be a part of [the decision] because they've invested in it."

Often groups, areas, and regions use money as a weapon. Bob described it. "A meeting gets mad at an area, so they say, 'I'm going to punish them because I'm not getting what I want.' A lot of times it may be valid, but a lot of times they just use it as an excuse. They may have reason [to be upset], but there's another way of dealing with it."

What's that? "Going through the process, and having faith in a loving God. All my ideas aren't brilliant. We have to constantly surrender to a group conscience. If it's right, then it's right, and if it's wrong, it'll be changed."

Continued on page 4

The following article—written in the late sixties or early seventies—is one of the items discovered in the archive material which the WSO recently acquired from Jimmy K's estate. The anonymous author articulates solutions that are still applicable today—nearly thirty years later.

Yesterday and today

Despite the rumors, facts, and speculations that you may have heard recently, Narcotics Anonymous is alive and well. In fact, it seems to me that NA is doing better and growing more than ever.

At this point, you're probably thinking, "Where is this guy coming from? He must be naïve or uninformed. Doesn't he know about what's happening?"

Well, maybe you're right. I probably am naïve because I choose to live my life as positively as I can instead of focusing on the negative and becoming panicky like I used to. I probably am uninformed or misinformed. I've heard and read about problems in our WSO, our WSB, our WSC, and our conference committees. I've heard about regional problems, area problems, and groups problems. I've heard about service structure problems, unity problems, spin-off problems, problems with other programs, and problems caused by members off on some tangent or caught up in people, places, things, or self. I've heard bushel baskets full of problems from here, there, and everywhere. However, most of what I hear is second-, third-, fourth-, or tenth-hand information.

I'm not saying that we don't have problems or that the things I've heard are just paranoia or overactive imaginations. In fact, I believe that most of what I've heard is probably very real, and that there's probably a whole "shitload" of problems we're

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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, but we don't back away 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 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. ♦

A lot of our membership isn't aware of the role the World Service Office plays in keeping NA together as an organization. Bob recalled hearing about the point last year when WSO announced that its financial problems had become acute. "As soon as I heard that Narcotics Anonymous was having financial problems, I said, 'Oh my God, what's going to happen to NA?' We need Narcotics Anonymous exactly the way it is in terms of the World Service Office. The WSO is a symbol of Narcotics Anonymous and where Narcotics Anonymous is. If we didn't have [the office], what would we have? We'd have chaos, anarchy. We'd end up splintered off, and that would be the end of Narcotics Anonymous. When we support WSO, all we're doing is putting [a layer of] protection on ourselves."

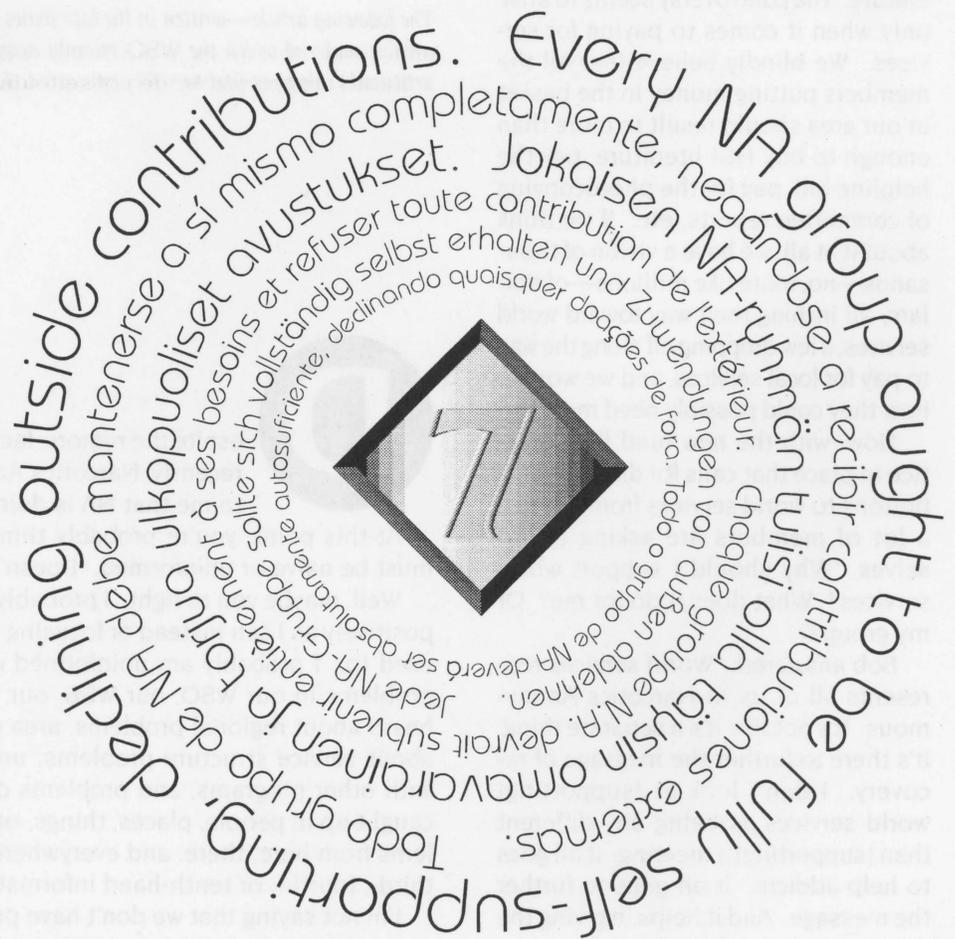
Right now, you can go anywhere in the world and NA is basically the same.

There may be cakes for birthday celebrations or not, singing or not, electric lights or candlelight, but the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions say the same thing—in any language. "That's all put together by the people [at WSO]. That's their job," Bob declared.

He went on to recall what NA was like in the early seventies. "When I came into NA, there was no NA of any significance. There might have been twenty meetings of NA when I got clean."

Was there a World Service Office then? "There was an office, but in the early days, you didn't even know it was there. There weren't any services. Nothing was organized. World services was a very vague thing. Just certain people were involved and nobody in the fellowship knew there was anything beyond the meetings they went to. Most meetings were using AA literature."

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SHARING

My life, my responsibility



I always wanted someone to take care of me. That was a reasonable expectation when I was growing up, but as I began to get close to adulthood, I started looking for ways to avoid taking responsibility for my own life.

Looking back, it's hard to understand what I was so terrified of. I was pretty smart, had decent grades, and had parents with enough money to finance a college education, all expenses paid. However, I also had a drug problem, and a violent antipathy to the whole idea of self-support (though I wasn't to hear it phrased that way till I came to NA).

I dropped out of high school with an almost perfect academic record and ran away from home. I had run away a few times before and knew I would be found if I went to any of my friends or even stayed in town. So I ran far away and joined other runaways on the streets of Hollywood. Though I couldn't face the idea of going to college, I had no fear of going into rooms with strangers who were much stronger than me, and I had no fear of injecting directly into my bloodstream something that I got from someone I had never seen before. I didn't mind finding myself a place to sleep at night, even if it was behind a bush in a park. I didn't mind finding myself a meal, even if I had to steal it or pay for it by degrading myself.

I didn't want any conventional commitments or responsibilities, yet all the ways I sought to avoid those things ended up requiring more than just getting a job and taking care of myself would have.

This is demonstrated by the ludicrous idea I had at one point. I decided that if I had a baby, I would qualify for welfare. No commitment or responsibility there. Oh no, none at all.

Of course, I had a rude awakening. It was the precursor to a spiritual awakening, but I didn't know that then. I took my son home from the hospital, and I found myself living in the kind of hell only another addict knows about. There's nothing quite like being poor, strung out, and simultaneously angry at and guilty about the presence of an innocent baby. My life was a nightmare of scrambling all day to get \$25 together, giving my poor baby the minimum attention required to sustain life, feeling sick, feeling guilty, and trying to hide it all from my parents (who graciously took me in despite the fact that my life was an affront to everything they believed in).

I got clean when my son was nine months old. The obsession to use was lifted and it has never come back. I got clean and stayed clean, but it took a long, long time for me to even begin to understand how to apply the principle of self-support to my life.

I went to a recovery house and got a job. Neither of these things was very difficult. I didn't much like the rules of the recovery house, but cleaning the bathtub at the specified time rather than at my own convenience was a small price to pay for having a roof over my head and a supportive environment for my early recovery. Even the crummy job I had wasn't a real heavy responsibility. I showed up. I worked at a mindless task. I went home. Once a week

busy while she studied. Another would break in, bursting with energy, and ask us all to sign up for an H&I commitment at the women's county jail. *How did people learn to do all this?* I thought to myself. I believed I had no more in common with these women than I had with another species. I couldn't see myself ever becoming anything like them. They didn't even realize how impressive they were. It was just too much.

Instead, things just got better little by little. I gained a little confidence and self-respect by showing up at work every day, applying for a better job when the opportunity came along, getting the job, and giving notice to my old employer. I realized that I could become like those women who had so intimidated me when I was new in recovery. I would take a lot of hard work, and perhaps that wasn't truly for me, but it was a possibility. Just realizing that was amazing.

I learned a lot about being self-supporting from sponsoring other women. When they chose destructive relationships to avoid taking responsibility for their own lives, I could spot it, and I could share with them because it was my experience.

Living life on life's terms, day after day, through years of recovery, taught me that in the final analysis, my recovery is my responsibility. And taking responsibility ultimately has wonderful rewards.

For instance, if I need to talk to my sponsor, it's my job to keep calling her until I've reached her. I've never understood why people get into a huff when their sponsor doesn't call them back in a certain time frame. I'd rather not have my recovery hinge on the functioning of my sponsor's answering machine or the reliability of her kids. I'll take that responsibility as part of being self-supporting.

If I need more money, it's my job to cut back on spending or find a way of earning more. If I take money from my parents, my self-esteem goes down, and I find myself tangled in all the strings that were attached to the money, anyway.

I'm a long way from being self-supporting in every area of my life, but I'm much better than I used to be. What I've given up in "freebies" from other people, I've gained in self-respect.

Barbara G, California ❖

"I'd rather not have my recovery hinge on the functioning of my sponsor's answering machine or the reliability of her kids."

they paid me (about as much as I had been getting from the government once a month).

So I had grasped the necessity of being self-supporting in the obvious ways. However, the more subtle ways of supporting myself were simply beyond my understanding. I wasn't consciously aware of what I was doing—or not doing. If I had been, I might have made different choices.

As it was, I was twenty-five and didn't know who I was. I knew instinctively that it would take a lot of work to find out. I had a toddler to care for. I was too old (I thought) to go back to school. I looked for differences between my situation and others'. I made excuses to avoid taking responsibility for my own life. They had money; I didn't. They had husbands or boyfriends sharing household responsibilities; I didn't. They had careers; I didn't. I felt so out of it when I tried to join a group of women after a meeting. One would talk about the difficulty of dealing with some hideous office politics and her demon of a boss, nonchalantly referring to her overwhelming (to me) duties. Another would talk about a game she had created to keep her kids

So I went looking for an easier way. I found a sponsor who seemed like she was very strong. I thought she might be willing to do more than sponsor me—for instance, make decisions about work, friends, and child-rearing for me. I also found a boyfriend who was willing to dictate the areas she didn't concern herself with, i.e., my weight, my eating habits.

As it turned out, my sponsor was only willing to help me work the steps so I could find my own answers. So I stopped calling her. I turned my will and my life over to the care of my boyfriend. I didn't have to make friends; he had enough for both of us. I didn't have to find a home group I liked; I just joined his. I didn't have to decide what I liked and didn't like; I just adopted as my likes and dislikes whatever his were. I had a vague sense that I was missing the point of recovery, but I was still too lost in the murk of my self-obsession and fear to do anything about it.

If you're waiting for me to tell you I just woke up one day, magically transformed into a productive member of society, sorry to disappoint. Nothing happens like that in recovery.

What the traditions teach us about self-support in recovery

We as individual addicts often overlook the spiritual principles found in the traditions, believing they are just for the NA group. Applying these principles in our own lives, however, provides us with the same freedom that is given to the group. An example of this is found in the Seventh Tradition: "each group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

A group learns that "everything has its price, regardless of the intent; whether the price is money, promises, concessions, special recognition, endorsements, or favors, it's too high for us. . . . We will not put our freedom on the line." (Basic Text, page 68)

A group also learns that the Seventh Tradition, while often called "the money tradition," means much more. It can mean speaking well of the group and its members lest the newcomer feel dissension instead of unity; finding and maintaining a clean and safe meeting place; ensuring that our conduct, language, and demeanor reflect our recovery; making coffee and setting out literature; taking H&I, PI, literature or other service commitments; taking part in service beyond the group level to ensure that our message is universally carried; or simply helping the addict who still suffers by listening. Groups that practice these principles maintain their autonomy, preserve their integrity, and carry an NA message of hope and freedom. We as individual addicts learn that self-support means accepting personal responsibility for our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

For many of us, dependency was a way of life. That fact did not change without our recognition of the problem, being open-minded about new

values, and willingness to change. Many of us came into the rooms of NA living on welfare, SSI, workmen's compensation, or some other government program to which our entitlement was questionable. We accepted the support of our parents or paramours in return for compliance or favors. Many of us failed to see that we were trapping ourselves in the feelings of insecurity and incompetence. We spent money we should have used on rent or food for

acceptance, thoroughly removing from my life people who had in the past exploited this weakness for their own purposes. I said good-bye to abusive relationships.

I was taught that self-support grew from knowing what kind of person I wanted to be and what kind of relationship with a higher power I needed in order to become that person. Pursuing the principle of self-support allowed me to look at all religions, faiths,

"I'll never forget my sponsor's reaction when I was living on welfare and left a huge tip for a pretty waitress just so I could show off."

clothes, jewelry, conventions, or travel, only to spend the rest of the month borrowing, stealing, or trying to get over. I'll never forget my sponsor's reaction when I was living on welfare and left a huge tip for a pretty waitress just so I could show off. He helped me to see that I was compensating for feelings of inadequacy.

Through working with a sponsor on becoming self-supporting, I learned the difference between what I wanted and what I needed. I learned the difference between instant gratification and lasting value, and I learned to choose wisely rather than react to my disease. Learning to set boundaries to become self-supporting was hard. However, the rewards were feelings of confidence, serenity, security, hope for the future, and freedom from my disease. Mentally, I learned that I was responsible for my feelings. It was the simple things, like learning to tell myself over and over that I *could* do it, that I was adequate and not constantly looking for others to validate me, that helped me develop some self-confidence. Through NA's and my sponsor's acceptance, I learned to accept myself, no longer needing to violate my boundaries of self-respect for

and ways of life openly and without fear. Choosing and changing my understanding was a process of growth. I came to believe that to support myself I had to support others. One of the most powerful things I learned to do to improve my spiritual outlook was to do something nice for someone without anyone finding out. I found it easy to do nice things—and very hard not to tell.

The rewards from practicing these principles have been beyond my expectations. I came to believe that spiritual self-support is not arrogance. It is knowing, however, that I can put my trust in the paradox of "giving it away to keep it," and that when I reach out, God and NA will reach back.

Bob McK, Pennsylvania ♦

Let's live by our own principles

After this morning's meeting of my home group, Lesbian and Gay NA, seven of us went to lunch. I sat next to J. so I could congratulate him again on his seventeen-year medallion. That he has been in recovery so long was a pleasant surprise to me. After all, he'd been coming to our home group for just a short time.

Asked if he'd recently moved to the area, J. told us he'd lived here for many years, attending AA meetings exclusively. Not too long ago, he'd felt the need for a Sunday meeting, but AA didn't offer a gay meeting on Sunday. He'd heard about our meeting, decided to check it out, and has been a member of NA ever since.

Another man, T., is visiting from Seattle. With fourteen years clean, he's here to interview for a performing arts job he's wanted all his life. T. repeatedly told us how glad he was to find our gay NA meeting. J. and a couple of others arranged to meet T. later in the week after his final interview to either celebrate with him or console him.

At least three of the seven of us were HIV-positive. They joked about how the dozens of pills they take each day affect their appetites. Trying to remember which pills need to be taken before a meal and which pills on a full stomach complicates something as simple as going out to lunch after a meeting, and we all shared a laugh about it. S. talked about how difficult it was to pay attention at the meeting because of the physical discomforts associated with having AIDS.

Filled with warmth from our morning meeting, amazed by the depth of our sharing at lunch, I can't help but be baffled by the overwhelming vote against Motion 26 at last year's World Service Conference.

Motion 26 asked the World Convention Corporation to make space available for common needs meetings at world conventions.

Our Basic Text and *It Works: How and Why* contain numerous references to the strength diversity brings to our fellowship. The resounding defeat of Motion 26 tells me that the vast majority of our members who participate in developing a group conscience don't support this principle. Paying lip service to the value of diversity is much different from putting it into action, isn't it?

The outcome of the WSC vote is more than a little confounding to me. Try as I might, I can't put my finger on how setting aside space at a world convention for common needs meetings would bring harm to a world convention.

My experience has been quite the opposite. While living in Poland, I took the ferry from Gdansk to Sweden to go to NA's Tenth Annual European Convention and Conference in Stockholm. Behind the registration table, a large sign greeted every participant, announcing the time and place of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender common needs meeting, which was to be held the very first evening.

This was the first ever GLBT meeting held in Sweden, and the first ever for many of the Europeans in attendance. For the first time, they felt safe enough to share from their hearts in an NA meeting. The meeting after the meeting, held outside under the midnight sun, was unforgettable. I can't understand how such a thing could be threatening if it were given an opportunity to take place at a world convention.

While I was sitting at lunch with members of my home group, I was saddened to realize that we could be considered a threat to NA unity. We have countless groups using the "Clarity Statement," which asserts that a certain vocabulary is vital to ensuring identification. So I guess identification is a good thing—unless it grows out of a common needs meeting.

Common needs meetings offer addicts a chance to experience NA recovery in an environment of safety and identification. As a gay man, I find that common needs meetings are the one place I'm not conscious of being "different" because they are the one place I'm not.

For anyone to pretend that all meetings feel equally safe to all addicts is, of course, preposterous. The spiritual principle of honesty invites us to own the fact that there's discrimination in our fellowship just like there's discrimination in society as a whole. My home group started as a result of myself and another addict being "queer-bashed" during an NA meeting by a fellow who had just received a thirty-day chip. I'm sure we all agree that no such thing should ever happen at an NA meeting. The unvarnished truth is that it does.

Bulletin #18, from the World Service Board of Trustees, concludes: "There does not appear to be anything in the Twelve Traditions which cautions groups against holding special interest [aka common needs] meetings, provided that the group has no requirement for membership other than the desire to stop using."

Furthermore, one of our information papers directed to mental health professionals describes the variety of meetings their clients may encounter: speaker meetings, topic meetings, call-up meetings, question and answer meetings, and common needs meetings.

Just don't try to attend one of the latter at a world convention. It seems that NA's leadership (conference participants) somehow draw a distinction between common needs meetings and every other kind of meeting.

We're told not to try to change NA, but to let NA change us. I accept that. As chair of my region, I'll serve my term of office. I'll continue to attend my home group and be there for the newcomer. I'll try to live life on life's terms by accepting that NA has chosen to deny that different cultures within our fellowship have different needs.

Nonetheless, I will also, in the future, focus my financial support and volunteer energy on organizations that don't consider gays and lesbians a threat, organizations that truly embrace and celebrate humanity in all its splendor, organizations that aren't afraid to be guided by their own spiritual principles.

Christopher E, Minnesota ❖



Meeting the challenge

B

y now it should be no secret that NA world services and the World Service Office fell on hard times last year. Donations to the conference were down. Literature sales were down. And, unfortunately, services to the fellowship had to be curtailed as a result.

So how did we get into such a mess? What are we doing to get out of it? For an answer to both questions we asked Bob Stewart, who has recently been named Marketing Manager for the World Service Office. Bob began working at the office in 1984 as the H&I Coordinator. In 1986 he took over management of the Shipping and Receiving Department and many of the production functions. His tenure as S&H manager and acting production coordinator occurred during a time when WSO was going from a mom-and-pop operation with one primary product to an international service organization with an average of \$1,000,000 in inventory. So Bob has seen a lot of growth—and, unfortunately, decline. He's had a front-row seat for the events that have had a profound impact on an organization that prides itself on its independence.

The events that led to the crisis had their roots in the rise of managed care. Around 1991 or 1992, most insurance companies restructured their policies to prohibit lengthy inpatient treatment and went to shorter detoxes. "So when that happened, our sales plummeted," Bob recalled. He recounted those months in the early nineties when the staff was downsized through attrition rather than layoffs, and how the remaining employees just kept trying to do more until finally, some things just weren't getting done. Letters went unanswered for weeks sometimes, and activities that had long been routine tasks at WSO were put aside in favor of the immediacy of a ringing telephone and the need to staff World Service Conference projects such as new handbooks and new literature. "We didn't get as far down as we were then, but we were pretty close," Bob said.

Hazelden has been our largest customer for many years, but its purchases have declined almost thirty-five percent over the past two years. Bob pointed out that it was possible this decline was deliberate. "We haven't read [Hazelden's interoffice] memos or anything, but from all indications, they've shifted their focus."

They're not getting out of the treatment business, but they're putting more emphasis on materials they've developed themselves. "They're going to make more money selling their own stuff than they would selling AA's or our stuff." It was NA's belief at the time a business relationship with Hazelden was set up that Hazelden would be a distributor of NA recovery literature to addicts, and so we made an agreement that we would offer Hazelden a discount as long as our book was sold at the same price we sold it to addicts. We believed that Hazelden would get our literature into the hands of addicts we couldn't otherwise reach.

Why is that? Why can't we reach those addicts? Many oldtimers in NA have been yelling for years that we need to take back our Twelfth Step and stop letting treatment centers do it for us. "Nowadays, a Twelfth Step call is made by a TC bus or van that pulls up to a meeting," said Bob.

"Where we've failed is that we've stopped doing that, and we don't do as much PI work as we could or should. Let's face it: If you don't get the public information people in there at the staff level to pave the way, [H&I or other direct Twelfth Step calls aren't going to be possible]. There's nobody doing anything. Whether it's lack of funds, lack of bodies, lack of interest, or whatever, there's never been a conscious effort to say, 'This is our target, this is our game plan. Let's stick to it and get them.'"

There's a fellowship-wide lack of understanding about why such aggressive steps need to be taken. Bob was obviously very familiar with the fellowship's aversion to anything that smacks of "promotion." "For lack of a better term, we have to use the term 'marketing.' But we're not selling the program. We're selling the product.

"One of the reasons we decided to go after the correctional institutional market is that addicts find it more pal-

atable. These addicts are locked in institutions. [The institutions] are already buying books from these other folks; in fact, they're buying *our* books from these other folks. Why shouldn't we sell our books to them?

"[Some members] ask us, 'How can you do that [aggressively market NA literature to institutions]?' It's simple: If we don't, we don't survive," Bob predicted.

Plus, marketing our literature simply does not conflict with NA's Twelve Traditions. No one is going out and pulling addicts off the street and making promises about recovery coupled with a sales pitch for NA literature. As Bob pointed out, "We're simply making it possible for an addict who is already in a different type of treatment modality to get a book."

NA as a whole has always been willing to adapt itself—within the parameters of the traditions—to whatever circumstances exist in the outside world. In some NA communities, it is legally forbidden for addicts to congregate. In others, NA can only rent meeting space with government approval. The decline of long-term treatment centers and the need to find a new way to distribute our literature are simply two new challenges facing our fellowship. We're confident that we can meet those challenges head-on. ❖

Recovery behind the walls

by Craig R,
WSC H&I Committee Chairperson

NA meetings or groups in prisons and correctional institutions—recent phenomenon or old news? I say both. Incarcerated addicts as NA members? I say yes. Can they become part of our service structure? I have seen it happen and seen it work. Should we help? I say not should, but how.

In some NA communities there have been NA meetings in correctional facilities for many years, while in others NA meetings are something brand-

new. Some facilities have no meetings at all. I think that in years to come, we will begin seeing more and more correctional facilities with NA meetings. There are several factors that make me believe that. First of all, our increased PI and H&I efforts are bound to result in correctional officials viewing NA as a viable resource for the addicts in their charge. Also, it is obvious to me that some incarcerated addicts will begin to want more than H&I can offer.

The Institutional Group Guide (expected to be in the 1998 *Conference Agenda Report*), if approved, will provide an additional tool for starting and maintaining NA meetings in settings such as prison. Just imagine being isolated in some way from regular contact with NA members. What would be the next best thing to have? A how-to guide. The idea for the *Institutional Group Guide* came about when we thought about how some correctional facilities might never have any personal contact with NA members on the outside, but the members in those facilities were entitled to NA recovery.

Some members have expressed concern that these meetings can't abide by our Twelve Traditions. Specifically, they worry about a possible conflict with the Third Tradition because of the fact that not anyone can just "show up" at a prison and attend the meeting. However, an institution restricting attendance at one specific meeting does not negate the addict's right to be a member when he or she says so. There are many cases where we have to respect the policy of the facilities from which we rent meeting space. Also, the incarcerated member is free to attend meetings in his or her "community."

Other members have expressed concerns about the Seventh Tradition because these meetings generally do not pay rent or collect money from group members. However, I believe that the spirit of self-support extends beyond financial support. Members in prisons support the meeting by setting up and cleaning up the meeting room.

So how can we help? I believe we can all help by becoming a little more open-minded, willing, and honest.

There are no second-class addicts, and there is a branch of our fellowship that is growing behind the walls. It's NA's job to make sure that branch doesn't become separated from the rest of the tree. I have seen area and regional committees, outreach committees, and H&I and PI committees all working together to bridge the gap that exists between recovering on the inside and those recovering on the outside. Wherever possible, they have provided experience, strength, hope, and NA literature that have all provided a sense of belonging to our incarcerated members. Some of these meetings have even joined their local ASC and participate in those meetings by mail or by sending an "outside" member who represents the group.

So what do you think? I think NA is big enough, caring enough, and loving enough to reach out and help fulfill our legacy as a fellowship: to make recovery so available that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction. ❖

H&I— the agony and the ecstasy

by Steve L.,
former WSO H&I Coordinator

When I was new in recovery, I believed that H&I service, "pure" service directly to the suffering addict, was the best kind of service. Now, more than fourteen years later, I still believe H&I is a great form of service, but I am saddened by what I have seen in the interval. I remember getting into another member's car and traveling to a correctional facility in Northern California to carry the message, and leaving, far more often than not, with a feeling of joy, accomplishment, and a sense of having partially fulfilled what the Twelfth Step talks about. I contracted the burning fever that seems to be contagious in H&I circles.

The fever compelled me to get involved in H&I service at the area, regional, and world levels. I was never sure why I was asked to serve at all these levels, but I believed in the old adage: When NA asks, you do. Everyone I sponsored was involved in H&I in one way or another—it was one of my “rules.” I was aware that there was a great deal of apathy and indifference to following through on commitments within my area, but I believed that as our fellowship grew and matured, those problems would fade. Well, it seems that I was wrong.

I had the most incredible privilege of working at the WSO for some time as the H&I Coordinator. It was a dream come true. I had dreamt of being able to help many more addicts find the hope and recovery they were searching for. I had dreamt of being able to help H&I committees get inside facilities where we had been considered less than human for many years. I had dreamt of seeing H&I help addicts take responsibility for their own lives. Lofty dreams, yes, but they were within our reach.

One day during my time at WSO, we were contacted by an agency of the California Department of Corrections. The CDC had a good relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous and wanted to start a relationship with NA, too. We set up a meeting with the director of the CDC, his staff, the chairperson of the WSC H&I Committee, and myself as the H&I Coordinator. The CDC representatives let us know that while each facility within California was autonomous with regard to allowing groups such as NA into their facilities, they would be willing to send out an administrative letter from the director asking all facilities to provide the utmost in cooperation to NA. We were of course overjoyed by this offer, but we delayed telling the CDC to go ahead until we could speak with all the regional H&I committees in California.

Two weeks later, we met with representatives from all the California regions and described the opportunity we had. To make a long story short, it is now seven years since we missed this opportunity. We don't have the kind

of access we could have had to these institutions—not because they were unwilling to work with us, but because there aren't enough people willing to do H&I service. I remember sadly the many times I received calls from wardens, counselors, psychologists, etc., asking if we could do anything about ensuring that the H&I panel in their facility happened consistently.

I am no longer the H&I Coordinator, but I still do H&I service whenever I am asked. It's still one of the most rewarding forms of service I know—besides being a coffeemaker. But I also wonder. When I know that our fellowship has

grown a thousandfold since I entered the rooms, why do we still have such a problem fulfilling our commitments? Why do we have such a problem answering the needs of addicts who can't go to regular meetings? Why do we not flock to them and talk about the miracles that have happened to us in recovery? Why?

It's my belief that if every NA member did an H&I panel once a year, our problems would be solved. It's a small enough request from an individual—a few hours a year—but the combined impact of those few hours from each of us on our H&I efforts would be beyond our wildest imaginings. ❖

Almost every day we receive communications and questions addressing a host of technical and philosophical concerns about NA conventions. In the next several issues of the NA Way, we will feature a series of articles on some of the more prominent issues facing our fellowship. Some articles will cover issues in the convention industry that will provide new challenges for our convention committees. Other articles will examine philosophical concerns about convention-related issues that require us to examine our collective conscience. We hope that these articles will be beneficial to members by raising awareness of how these issues affect convention committees and convention attendees.

Convention corner

Hotel rates for NA conventions on the rise

Attention, all you convention junkies! Start saving your pennies—the price for hotel rooms is going up. Is your convention held in a major convention city, vacation destination, or in the prime travel season for your location? Does your convention attract a lot of local members who commute to the convention instead of staying in the hotel? Are you someone who enjoys sharing your room with three or more other addicts? Does your convention give away lots of free coffee? If you can answer yes to any of the above questions, chances are that the price of your hotel room will increase up to twenty-five percent over the next few years, according to a survey conducted by the Professional Convention Management Association.

The major factor contributing to the rise in hotel rates is the robust economy and the resulting change in the hotel industry's customer profile. As the economy has improved over the past five years, the hotel industry has seen a major shift in its customer profile. Through the early nineties, vacation and individual business travel was sparse. Hotels needed convention business to be successful and offered bargain room rates, free meeting space, and other giveaways like thousands of gallons of coffee to groups like NA.

Today, individual business travelers and families on vacation make up the bulk of the hotels' business. These customers are willing to pay rates that are fifty to one hundred percent higher than the typical convention rate. In addition, 1997/98 hotel rates are expected to rise about thirty percent for the business and leisure traveler as opposed to an anticipated fourteen percent rise in convention rates. These increases substantiate the degree to which the hotel industry is benefiting from a good economy, as these rate increases amount to five times the rate of inflation.

So what do all these percentages and information about customer demographics actually mean to NA members? In short, hotels at which we hold conventions have more customers than they can serve, so they no longer need to compete so heavily for our business.

In spite of this boom in the travel business, the hotel industry has not really increased the number of available hotel rooms through new construction. Thus a shortage of available rooms has been created in many destinations. In order to make more rooms available to higher-paying business and leisure travelers, hotels are making fewer rooms available for convention business. As a result, it is becoming more difficult and more expensive for our convention committees to block the number of rooms needed. This fact is especially true for larger conventions—those with more than 1,500 people. This challenge will impact our convention committees for the next several years. Hotel rates will continue to increase through the end of the century.

The state of the economy will continue to produce individual travelers willing to pay rates as much as twice the average convention rate.

There are also several factors specific to NA conventions that will result in higher prices. We utilize tremendous amounts of meeting space. Hotels calculate appropriate use of meeting space based on potential food and beverage sales, and the number of hotel rooms used by a group. While we offer some food and beverage revenue to the hotel, most of our meeting space needs have no food revenue attached to them. This problem is further complicated by the large number of people who commute to the convention, especially on Saturday, and don't book a room. This occurrence greatly increases the convention's meeting space needs without offering the hotel any additional revenue. To compensate, hotels will probably begin to ensure their profit by raising room rates.

Many of our members stay three to four people in a room, which also accounts for less room utilization. Hotels expect room bookings based on one or two people in a room, which is the average for conventions. At the same time, many hotels have dramatically reduced the number of two-bedded rooms, which makes it more difficult to block those rooms for a convention. Some convention committees are finding that one way to curtail some of the increase is to negotiate one room rate for single and double occupancy, and a higher rate for triple and quadruple occupancy.

Finally, our convention committees ask for a lot of complimentary items in our contracts with hotels, particularly free meeting space and lots of coffee. Getting these concessions helps us to keep the registration fee affordable. In the eighties and early nineties, hotels were glad to oblige, but this is no longer the case. Hotels are becoming increasingly unwilling to consider requests for lots of giveaways; and when they do "include" such requests in contracts, the result is often higher room rates.

The changes in the hotel industry will continue to challenge our conven-

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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: _____

tion committees. We will need to become better planners if we are to succeed in the hotel industry where the "seller" is king—or queen, if you will. The larger the convention, the more flexible and skilled its negotiators will need to be. As members, we may continue to find ourselves needing more money to attend the celebrations of recovery that so many of us have come to love. ♦

A home group's experience with public information

by Jim G,
Voting Member, WSC PI Committee

Our Basic Text intimates throughout its pages that there is no greater weapon for recovery than a recovering addict. It also says that we are responsible for ourselves, our groups, and the atmosphere of recovery in our groups. We've all experienced feeling good after spending one extra minute, explaining a step one extra time, or giving one extra hug to help someone achieve freedom from the bondage of active addiction. We feel good about our recovery when we take the time to listen and share our experience with those who want to hear it.

These are some very basic truths about recovery. When we share our recovery, we are, in essence, getting out of ourselves in a healthy and productive way. So how do all these truths apply to PI service? Let me share an experience that a group in our region had.

It was a small group in a remote corner of our region. It was doing well keeping its doors open, providing literature and hospitality, and following an NA meeting format. The group was

enjoying the fruits of its labors, with a good response from the people attending the meeting, and it believed it was providing a safe and principled environment for recovery as we experience it in our meetings. But because of its physical location and the limited resources the area service committee had to work with, the group wasn't getting a lot of support. Area PI efforts were limited to keeping updated meeting lists available.

There comes a time for many of us when what we are doing just isn't enough anymore. It feels as though something is missing, but we're not sure what it is. If you have been in recovery for any length of time, you have probably experienced this feeling. It is like a void. There is a reference to this in our Basic Text, which suggests that at some point we will want to do more because we want more of what the NA program has to offer.

What can we do?

At a group business meeting one night, someone brought up the topic of public information and the services that the area PI committee was providing. After most had commented and shared their experience, the conversation became directed toward answering the question, "What can we do?" Someone suggested that everyone think about it for a while, pray, consult their sponsors and friends, and come back with some ideas for letting folks in their little town know that the group was there and recovery, as we experience it in NA, was available. At that moment, a process was begun in the hearts and spirits of a few members that would ultimately help the group become known in the community.

What we thought about doing

We talked and thought about doing a lot of things. We thought about making presentations, posting a billboard, making and distributing posters, creating and managing our own phonenumber, and everything in between.

From our readers

Thanks to the WSC

The membership of our group would like to express our gratitude for your decision to send us future issues of the *NA Way* free of charge.

We are thankful that you provide our small group with the means to participate in the events that affect NA members and groups throughout the world. We very much enjoy the sense of connection that we get from the *NA Way* and would hate to be without it.

Accordingly, we have taken a vote and decided that whenever our treasury allows it, we will be sending whatever we can to help you continue publishing the magazine. We hope to be able to send you our first donation in December.

Another Day Free Group

No, we're not unique

A friend recently showed me a copy of a letter from the editor of the *AA Grapevine* that was almost an exact repeat of some of the communication from the editor of the *NA Way* last year. There was mention of a dwindling subscriber base, a plea to have each subscriber sign up one more, and a list of the reasons why a non-advertising-driven magazine can't make ends meet without other income.

If the *Grapevine* is unable to survive even with the massive subscription base it has (compared to the *NA Way's* numbers before the change in format), then we obviously made the correct decision by not throwing good money after bad in a continuously losing proposition.

I'll miss the old *NA Way*, but I'm glad that we as a fellowship had the foresight and the fortitude to stop wasting money on sentimentality.

Jeff S, Minnesota

Our deja is vuing. Seriously, we're sorry AA is having problems, too, and hope that things work out. It seems as if the "recovery business" isn't doing too well overall right now. This phenomenon's adverse effect on NA as a whole shines the spotlight on what would normally be an outside issue. For more on this, see the story on page 9 Ed.

We were on fire with the idea that more would come to our home group and benefit from the things that NA has to offer. Thankfully, before we got wound up and went spinning out of control, someone in the group reminded us of the cost and human resources needed to do some of the projects we talked about doing. So...

What we did

After looking at all our resources, both human and financial, we all agreed that we could support placing an ad in the local newspaper telling folks about our group. It was cost-effective, simple, and would not require a great deal of resources to accomplish. We found out that for a reasonable amount of money, we could inform the community about our group and also serve as a link to the ASC for people who wanted to know about other meetings in surrounding counties. After contacting the newspaper for specific details of word count, size, etc., we all agreed that a simple message just informing the community of our existence was best. This is what we came up with.

Drug Problem? We Can Help!

We Have Been There
NA Meeting
Wednesdays at 8:00 PM
Fellowship Hall
First Church, West Maple Street

There it was, in all its glory! We were all very excited about seeing our little ad in the newspaper. In fact, the first week it came out, we all brought copies of the newspaper to the meeting and were all reveling in our little PI effort. Now, we thought, if someone reads the ad, comes to our meeting, and begins the process of recovery, our work will have been worth the effort.

How we felt

Several days after the ad appeared, an addict came to our meeting and found recovery. Our Basic Text says that no matter how small the effort, if it helps another addict stay clean one

more day, it's worth it. That's what all our services are about—carrying the message of existence and availability to the still-suffering addict.

Had you roped us and tied us to chairs that were nailed to the floor, you still wouldn't have been able to bring us down off the natural high that comes when, as a group, we became selfless. Our group PI effort encouraged and uplifted all of us. No words in any language can describe the feeling of freedom and goodwill that comes when we reach out and touch the lives of still-suffering addicts and bring them to the threshold of freedom we all start from in Narcotics Anonymous.

Just for today, we will keep our little ad in the paper and trust that God as we understand God will keep pointing the eyes of the suffering addict to the little glimmer of hope in our local newspaper. For our experience and the loving spirit found in the rooms of NA, we are eternally grateful. ❖

To metro or not to metro

by Lib E, Chairperson
WSC Policy Committee

During the 1997 World Service Conference, voting participants approved *A Guide to Local Service in Narcotics Anonymous*. This is the first book-length service manual focusing on the provision of local services. It is based on the Twelve Concepts and the Twelve Traditions.

As a result of the approval of GTLS, groups, areas, and regions will find themselves faced with questions such as:

- How will groups, areas, and regions begin to utilize GTLS?
- How will we all benefit from the models outlined in GTLS?

These questions may be answered by holding a workshop on GTLS in your lo-

cal NA community. An area or regional inventory may help measure the effectiveness of a service committee in carrying out its primary purpose. An inventory can also assist with identifying area and regional needs as well as setting priorities.

Many large metropolitan NA communities find that the first question to answer is whether or not to set up "metro" services as outlined in GTLS. It is my hope that conveying the experience of the NA community in Sydney, Australia, will help others who need to answer the question: To metro or not to metro?

Narcotics Anonymous meetings have been taking place throughout the city of Sydney for the past eighteen years. The city is divided into four ASCs: North, South, East, and West. The combined areas hold more than eighty meetings per week. Over the years, there have been many difficulties in maintaining the provision of basic services and reducing the amount of overlapping services. GTLS tells us that an NA community "can organize its services in any way that seems fit."

Approximately four years ago, the four area service representatives—now referred to as regional committee members—from within Sydney and a number of other interested members met to discuss the development of a new service model that would:

- Meet the needs of the NA community in Sydney
- Support H&I and PI work
- Update and distribute the four Sydney areas' meetings lists each month
- Maintain the phonenumber
- Ensure payment of the regional cost-equalization bill
- Coordinate the annual areas' conventions
- Ensure that funds were forwarded to the RSC.

Following the meeting, all the groups in the Sydney areas were asked to vote for one of the following options:

- Maintain the current system
- Dissolve the four separate areas and become one combined area
- Create a metro services committee
- Form a new regional service committee

After rigorous discussion, groups from the four areas voted to create a metro services committee. GTLS states, "Metro committees are usually formed in larger metropolitan communities served by more than one ASC."

The Sydney Metro Services Committee has been meeting on a regular basis since it was formed. Establishment of the committee has provided a forum where the fellowship can oversee the finances of the combined areas' annual convention, meeting lists, and phonline.

The MSC also coordinates the provision of H&I and PI services throughout the city. The MSC meets monthly and is attended by its administrative committee, representatives from the four areas, representatives from the H&I and PI committees, and the convention chairperson.

Twice a year, the four ASCs and participants meet within the same facility to deal separately with their area business and then come together to conduct a metro meeting. This provides a wonderful opportunity for addicts involved in area service to get together and discuss common issues. It is also a very positive experience to see so many addicts in the same room discussing local service issues.

After meeting its financial commitments, each area passes on funds to the MSC. This ensures that the necessary services can be coordinated and maintained. The MSC pays for the phonline, the meeting lists, and the regional cost-equalization expenses, and provides the float for the annual convention. The MSC makes donations to the RSC on behalf of the four areas (this is a little different from the fund flow diagram shown on page 88 of GTLS).

So far, so good?

The MSC has had a unifying impact on the fellowship in Sydney. The MSC means there are enough addicts to provide the basic services needed to ensure that the message of recovery is carried throughout the city. Another interesting result has been the MSC's effect on GSRs. Many have shared that they've not only learned a great deal from participation in the MSC, but that this participation has also had a great benefit on their personal recovery.

Regional committee members have the opportunity to work together before attending RSC meetings. They provide support to one another during meetings and have an increased understanding of the issues affecting the Sydney areas. The MSC has provided a forum for Sydney issues to be dealt

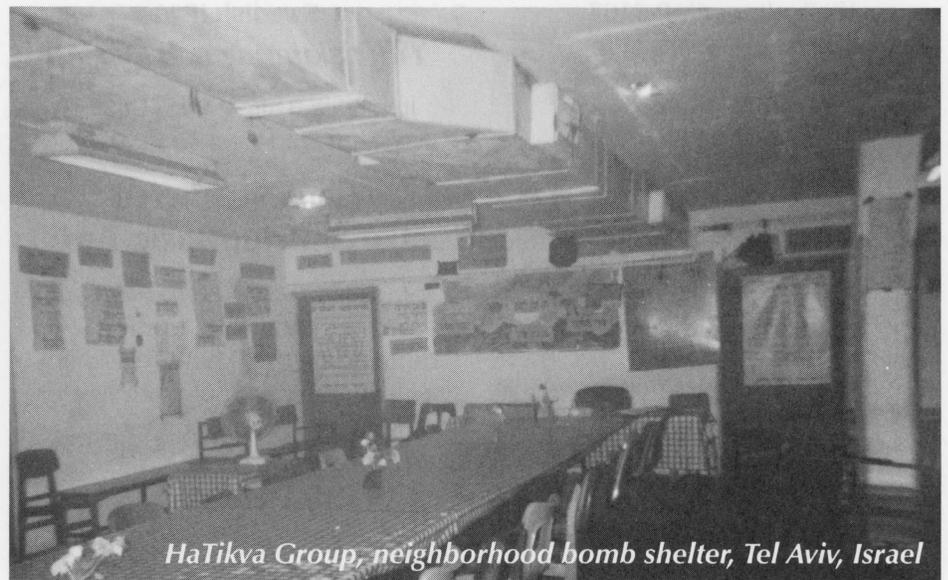
with at a local level and reduced the amount of time devoted to those issues during regional meetings. Time allocated to the discussion of issues affecting Sydney—at the expense of the rest of the region—had been a problem in the past. There had been many complaints from RCMs from all over Australia that the RSC was very Sydney-centered. The RSC meetings continuously taking place in Sydney may have contributed to the problem.

The WSC Policy Committee is planning on a series of articles about how various NA communities are implementing GTLS. Please write and let us know how GTLS is working in your community so members throughout our worldwide fellowship can gain insight from your experience. Direct your correspondence to the WSC Policy Committee in care of the World Service Office. ♦

Picture this

Ever been away from your home area and visited an NA meeting? The posters on the wall, the place where the coffeepot sits, the tables, the chairs, the literature—it all adds up to an atmosphere of recovery. And you thought NA meetings were only held in church basements!

This is the first of a regular feature in which we'll publish pictures of your home group's meeting place. We will not consider photos that identify NA members. Tell us your group's name, the meeting location, city, and state and/or country. Send photos to: *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA.



HaTikva Group, neighborhood bomb shelter, Tel Aviv, Israel

"NA, when I came in, was like an auxiliary to AA, just a place to go to be around other addicts. We didn't have our own philosophy; everything was based on AA's philosophy. Most of the money that was turned in [in the basket] went to support the meeting. NA was very poor. The only helpline was one that Chuck S had in his machine shop, then I think they transferred it to his house. Finding meetings was done through word of mouth. If you didn't know anybody who was going to NA, you wouldn't know where the meetings were.

"When NA started growing, it was all based upon finances. If it wasn't for finances, we wouldn't have what we have. Now we have 22,000 meetings and everybody's moaning. I just laugh and say, what are you moaning about? [They say], well, they're doing this with the money; they're doing that with the money. I say, well, I hear you, but there's something wrong with the picture you're

giving. How did we get 22,000 meetings? Who coordinated all this? WSO!"

There are some who assert that the office is incompetent and could be doing a much better job. They accuse special workers of "ripping off the fellowship," and claim that everything could be done better, cheaper, and faster. Bob scoffed at these assertions. "They'd probably like everybody to work for \$5.00 an hour. And volunteer. Now volunteers are wonderful. The problem is when it's a sunny day, and it's either going to the beach or it's going to the office to pack literature, they're going to the beach. There's always somebody who thinks they can do it better. I've seen more good than I've seen negative with the money.

"The office has looked at [itself] and done a lot of changing. I don't think the changing has been negative. I think we're in the process of learning a lot, but who isn't? When I first walked into

the office, it was a storefront with nobody working there [as paid staff]. We used to come in and volunteer once a week to pack literature. But that was after putting in 40 hours during the week earning a living somewhere else. NA has very few independently wealthy saints who would be willing to volunteer the amount of time it would take to keep the operation going.

"The WSO is like any other business. It should constantly be looking for ways to improve," Bob allowed. It's operating on the fellowship's money, and that money is given in the belief that it is going to help an addict somewhere, somehow. "I believe we should be in constant vigilance of that, no matter if it's world services, an area, or a group," Bob continued.

One thing is certain: If NA is to continue growing, its members need to begin practicing the principle of self-support. ♦

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

NEW ITEMS

Manipuri IPs

IP#1 Item #MP-3101

কনাবুনো, কারবুনো,
করয়া. অমসং করিগীদমক

IP#7 Item #MP-3107

ঐহাক্ এদিক্ অমরা ?

IP#16 Item #MP-3116

নৌনা লাক্‌পা অদুগীদমজা

Price US\$0.20

In quantity of 100 or more, US\$0.18

Swedish Introductory Guide,

*En inledande guide till
Anonyma Narkomaner*

Item #SW-1200 Price US\$1.60

Swedish IP#6

Tillfrisknande och återfall

Item #SW-3106 Price US\$0.20
In quantity of 100 or more, US\$0.18

Line-Numbered Large Print Basic Text

Specially designed to help our members with reading difficulties, this Basic Text is not only large print, but each line of text is numbered.

Item #LN-1101 Price US\$9.25

Turkish IPs

IP#1 Item #TU-3101

Kim, Ne, Nasil ve Neden

IP#9 Item #TU-3109

Programı Yaşamak

IP#16 Item #TU-3116

Yenigelen İçin

IP#19 Item #TU-3119

Kendini Kabullenmek

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not even aware of yet. What I am saying is that maybe I don't look at these problems the same way some of the people I've talked to lately seem to do. *I am grateful for our problems.*

When we have problems in our fellowship, I don't get upset the way I used to. I'm actually more concerned when everything seems to be going too smoothly. My big concern about our problems is that they so often cause panic and blind our members (new and old) to the hope and joy of recovery.

For me, problems have usually motivated or accompanied growth. I'm an addict, and problems seem to be a part of addiction. Whenever I'm put in a situation with another human being, I've automatically got a problem: my inability to cope with, deal with, accept, trust, and communicate with others. I see these same problems within our fellowship and services, but

I also see them growing the same way we grow as individuals: slowly and with a lot of faltering steps, but growing still.

When I came to this program, there were probably less than 20 NA meetings in the world, and maybe 100 or 200 NA members. Today, there are probably 20 local NA fellowships this size or larger. When I was new, our service structure consisted of two or three committees and whoever had the literature in the trunk of his car. Today, there are literally hundreds of service committees working to help make our fellowship better. No wonder it sometimes seems that we have so many more problems today; after all, we've only grown by a hundred times or so in the last ten years. Things seem bigger and more complicated because there are a lot more people. Communication is a lot harder because three-quarters of the

members of NA don't see each other and share with each other in meetings on a daily or at least weekly basis. Many of the things that we see only as problems may really be symptoms of our fantastic growth.

There is one more thing that convinces me that NA is alive and well, and that I need have no fear about our fellowship: NA is a spiritual program, and ultimately very personal in nature; our program is principles and people. Spiritual principles are indestructible, and attacks on spiritual principles are futile. Narcotics Anonymous is something that each of us carries within. So long as any of us are clean and living life based on our principles, Narcotics Anonymous will be alive and flourishing. It can't be any other way; the success and growth of our program is built into the principles upon which it is based ♦

Home Group





CALENDAR

CANADA

Ontario: 22-24 May 1998; Ontario Regional Convention; Waterloo Inn, Waterloo; rsvns: (800) 361-4708; info: (519) 766-4346; ORCNA-11, 170 University Avenue West, Suite 12-267, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3E9
website: www.sentex.net/~orcna11/
email: orcna11@sentex.net

INDIA

Calcutta: 31 Jan. - 2 Feb. 1998; India Regional Forum; West Bengal; info. fax 91/33/4408528 or 91/33/2454748 or
email: kalibab@ginasla.vsnl.net.in

2) 3-4 Feb 1998; Asia-Pacific Forum; West Bengal; fax. 91/33/4408528 or 91/33/2454748; email: kalibab@ginasla.vsnl.net.in

3) 6-8 Feb. 1998; India Regional Convention; West Bengal; fax. 91/33/4408528 or 91/33/2454748;
email: kalibab@ginasla.vsnl.net.in

MEXICO

Federal District: 19-22 Mar. 1998; 1st Mexico Regional Convention; Hotel Benidorm, Mexico City; info: 52/5/2087086 or 52/5/5315022; fax: 52/5/2084580;
email: ysacal@enter.net.mx or atovilla@data.net.mx
or clausnamex@compuserve.com.mx

PHILIPPINES

Manila: 16-18 Jan. 1998; 3rd Philippine Regional Convention; Santuario de San Antonio; Forbes Park, Makati City; info. 63/8401629 or 63/8232135 or 63/5262821; fax. 63/8100279 or 63/8212513

UNITED STATES

Alabama: 23-25 Jan. 1998; Central Alabama Area Convention; Holiday Inn and Suites, Montgomery; rsvns: (800) 611-5868; send speaker tapes to: 4740 S. Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36105; email: nvralne@aol.com; info: CAANA, Box 230311, Montgomery, AL 36125

2) 6-8 Feb. 1998; North Alabama Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Decatur; info: (205) 351-2986; NAACNA, Box 3432, Florence, AL 35630

3) 20-22 Mar. 1998; Greater Mobile Area Convention; Clarion Hotel, Mobile; rsvns: (800) 982-9822; info: (334) 471-9723; GMACNA, Box 9622, Mobile, AL 36691

California: 31 Dec. 1997; Southern California Regional New Year's Eve Gala Extravaganza II; Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, Santa Monica; info: (818) 359-0084 or (310) 823-3330

2) 30 Jan. - 1 Feb. 1998; 3rd Annual San Fernando Valley Area Convention; Burbank Hilton; rsvns: (800) 445-8667; email: sallysalley@juno.com; website: <http://www.pcificnet.net/~claireo/sfvacna.html>; info: (818) 779-7982 or (818) 990-8140 or (818) 506-5216 or (818) 990-5548; SFVACNA-3, Box 1806, Burbank, CA 91501

3) 6-8 Feb. 1998; Central California Regional Convention; Embassy Suites, San Luis Obispo; rsvns: (800) 864-6000 or (805) 549-0800; info: (805) 581-4891 or (805) 736-1757; email: kfactor@aol.com; CCRCNA-6, Box 3908, Simi Valley, CA 93063

4) 10-12 Apr. 1998; 7th Annual Southern California Regional Spring Gathering; Marriott, Manhattan Beach; rsvns: (310) 546-7511; info: (714) 639-1022 or (310) 438-8191; send speaker tapes to: Spring Gathering, Box 2783, Orange, CA 92859-0783

Connecticut: 2-4 Jan. 1998; 13th Connecticut Regional Convention; Marriott Hotel, Farmington; rsvns: (800) 678-1000; info: (203) 234-8390 or (860) 298-8856 or (860) 667-8215; CTCNA, Box 159, North Haven, CT 06473

District of Columbia: 31 Dec. 1997 - 2 Jan. 1998; East of the River Area's Bringing It in Clean and Straight for 1998 Convention; Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC; rsvns: (800) 424-1140; info: (202) 399-2075 or (202) 388-5298; EORANA-1, Box 4542, Washington, DC 20017

Florida: 22-25 Jan 1998; Palm Coast Area Spiritual Retreat; info: (651) 641-4390

2) 24-26 Apr. 1998; 6th Recovery in Paradise; info: (305) 294-6435; Retreat, 713 Elizabeth Street, #2, Key West, FL 33040

3) 2-5 July 1998; Florida Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency, Tampa City Center; rsvns: (813) 225-1234

Georgia: 26 Feb. - 1 Mar. 1998; 17th Georgia Regional Convention; Renaissance Atlanta Hotel; rsvns: (404) 209-9999; info: (770) 229-8963 or (770) 991-3612 or (770) 907-7076; GRCNA, Box 2478, Decatur, GA 30031

Idaho: 3-5 Apr. 1998; Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Best Western Burley Inn, Burley; rsvns: (208) 678-3601; info: (208) 862-3447; please write for information and send speaker tapes to: SIRCNA, Box 421, Burley, ID 83318

Illinois: 5-8 Feb. 1998; Chicagoland Regional Convention; Sheraton Chicago; rsvns: (312) 329-7000 or (800) 233-4100; info: (773) 745-6757 or (708) 841-9821; CSO, 212 S. Marion, Oak Park, IL 60302

Indiana: 6-8 Mar. 1998; Indiana State Convention; Radisson Hotel Roberts, Muncie; rsvns: (765) 741-7777; info: (765) 664-2316 or (765) 644-2044; ISNAC-5, Box 501481, Indianapolis, IN 46250

Kansas: 3-6 July 1998; Mid-America Region's 20th Annual Free Campout; Milford Lake; info: (785) 825-6892; email: imna2@midusa.net or sharon.hill@greatbend.com

Kentucky: 16-18 Jan. 1998; Louisville Area Convention; Holiday Inn Select Downtown; rsvns: (800) 465-4329; info: (502) 935-1663; email: rhall@pop.jcc.uky.edu

Louisiana: 22-24 May 1998; 16th Louisiana Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Alexandria; info: (318) 449-1778 or (318) 443-1500; LRCNA, Box 442, Alexandria, LA 71309

Maryland: 27-29 Mar. 1998; Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center, Ocean City; info: Metric@tmn.com

Massachusetts: 24-25 Jan. 1998; Recovery Celebration Retreat; Pleasant View Motor Lodge, Sutton; info: (508) 987-2133 or (508) 791-0600; email: Direct147@aol.com or Recover98@aol.com

Missouri: 20-22 Feb. 1998; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake of the Ozarks; rsvns: (800) 843-5253; info: (573) 874-4193

Nevada: 9-12 April 1998; 12th Southern Nevada Regional Convention; Riveria Hotel, Las Vegas; rsvns: (800) 634-3414 or (702) 734-5110; info: (702) 360-8635; email: mcstyle829@aol.com or duckman21@aol.com; SNRCNA-12, 4542 E. Tropicana Ave., Ste. 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

New Jersey: 31 Dec. 1997 - 1 Jan. 1998; Bergen Area New Year's Eve Convention; Radisson Fairfield, East Fairfield; rsvns: (201) 227-9200; info: (201) 342-7084; BASC, Box 738, Little Ferry, NJ 07843

2) 6-8 Mar. 1998; Cape-Atlantic Area Convention; Flanders Hotel, Ocean City; rsvns: (800) 345-0211; info: (609) 348-9292; Convention, Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

3) 12-14 June 1998; United Area Convention; Governor Morris Inn, Morristown; info: IBreisblat@aol.com

New Mexico: 20-22 Mar. 1998; Rio Grande Regional Convention; Santa Fe; info: (505) 471-4026; email: pslm@dsrt.com; RGRCA-9, 1153-D Calle Amanda, Santa Fe, NM 87505

North Carolina: 6-8 Mar. 1998; 11th Carolina Freedom Express; North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh; rsvns: (919) 872-2323 or (800) HILTONS; info: (919) 834-8394 or (919) 832-5204; NCCAFRCA, 609-A Peter Court, Raleigh, NC 27610

Ohio: 2-4 Jan. 1998; Central Ohio Area Convention; Radisson Hotel Columbus North; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (614) 846-0300; info: (614) 237-9445 or (614) 274-6418 or (614) 337-2782 or (614) 268-8710 or (614) 252-1700; COACNA, Box 83286, Columbus, OH 43203

2) 27 Feb. - 1 Mar. 1998; Toledo Area Convention; Clarion Hotel, Toledo; info: (419) 242-2534 or (409) 244-2768; email: u4444@primenet.com

Oklahoma: 3-5 Apr. 1998; Oklahoma Regional Convention; Adams Mark Hotel, Tulsa; info: (405) 947-3757; email: a&modell@busprod.com; OKRCNA-12, Box 94, Sand Springs, OK 74063

Pennsylvania: 13-15 Feb. 1998; Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference; Holiday Inn Lancaster Host, Lancaster; rsvns: (717) 299-5500; info: (610) 370-2516 or (717) 484-0436 or (610) 373-2158 or (717) 646-2952; MARLCNA-14, Box 4655, Reading, PA 19606

South Carolina: 23-25 Jan. 1998; Upper South Carolina Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Greenville; info: (864) 271-3580 or (864) 242-6824

2) 13-16 Feb. 1998; Just For Today Convention; Hilton Head Island Crowne Plaza Resort, Hilton Head; info: (803) 419-0060 or (803) 790-0608; CCANA, Box 23534, Columbia, SC 29224

Texas: 10-12 Apr. 1998; Lone Star Regional Convention; The Harvey Hotel, Irving; rsvns: (972) 929-4500; info: (972) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; LSRCA, 1510 Randolph #205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Wisconsin: 2-4 Jan 1998; Greater Milwaukee Unity Convention; Grand Milwaukee Hotel; rsvns: (800) 558-3862; info: (414) 933-2991 or (414) 265-3398; email: robn@execpc.com; GMUCNA-3, Box 340587, Milwaukee, WI 53234

Wyoming: 2-4 July 1998; Western States Unity Convention; Casper; info: (307) 638-1144; send speaker tapes to: WSUC-13, Program Committee, 900 Morningside Drive, Cheyenne, WY 82001

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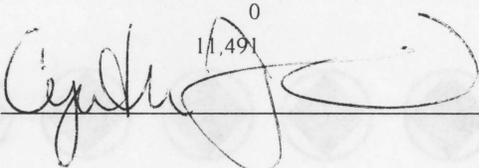
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