

# The Serenity Connection



Nar-Anon Family Groups Newsletter

Volume 29 Issue 1 Mar 2013

## Announcing ... the *Nar-Anon 36!*

It is with great pleasure that the Nar-Anon World Service Literature Committee announces the first volume of the *Nar-Anon 36* is now available for purchase from the World Service Office at <http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/store>

In April, 2012, the Nar-Anon World Service Conference voted to approve the Introduction with Step One, Step Two, and Step Three of the *Nar-Anon 36*. It was also decided the need was so great, it would be appropriate to release portions of

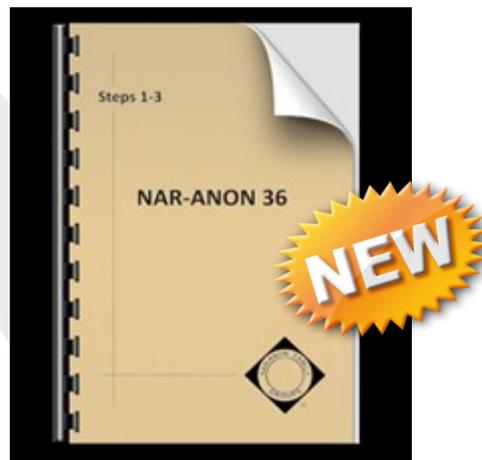
this book as they are approved by the World Service Conference.

The World Service Literature Committee continues to work diligently to prepare further sections for fellowship review, followed by WSC approval. Once approved, more sections will be added until all thirty-six are complete. The next version will be available following the WSC 2014.

If your group, area, or region would like to assist in the rewarding task of creating, editing, and/or reviewing the sections as they become available, please contact the World Service Literature Committee via email ([LitCom@nar-anon.org](mailto:LitCom@nar-anon.org)).

We thank all of you who are already participating.

*World Service Literature Committee*



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## Keep Meeting Info Up-To-Date

Groups, areas, and regions can now update their information on the [Nar-Anon World Service Website](http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/Meetings/On-line%20Forms).

Concept 8 states:

“Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.”

The Nar-Anon World Service website has a new page for member ser-

vices, which will help facilitate our communications. Please visit [www.nar-anon.org/naranon/Meetings/On-line Forms](http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/Meetings/On-line%20Forms)

From here, you can add a meeting, edit an existing meeting, disband a meeting, or update the region's contact information.

Why not give it a try!

**“With the help of my Higher Power, I can change myself — others I can only love.”**

*“Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope,”*  
Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, July 3

# Letter from the Executive Director...

Little did I know of the journey I would be traveling when I attended my first Nar-Anon meeting. I have often compared my journey to a roller coaster ride. When I used the tools of the program, the ride was smooth. When I veered off track, the ride became frightening, with twists and turns, ups and downs. When it was finally over, I was exhausted and angry with myself and others around me.

The gratitude I have for those who gave back so freely what had been given to them, their experience, strength, and hope guided me. Another important asset of the program turned out to be service, which my sponsor so eloquently said was another part of my journey. I started by being the group key carrier. I would open the doors and set up weekly. This commitment kept me coming back. I then served my group as secretary, treasurer, literature person, and group service representative (GSR). While serving in my region, I began volunteering at the Nar-Anon World Service Office (**WSO** - Nar-Anon headquarters). There I met Louise, a co-founder of Nar-Anon. I never realized that the vision she had for Nar-Anon would one day be passed on to me.

Throughout my Nar-Anon journey, I have been fortunate to make new

friends and many have become like family members to me. The vision Louise had for Nar-Anon needed help and support from the fellowship, and sadly, she passed away before seeing her vision become a reality. When I became executive director, I could have easily been overwhelmed with the task at hand. But, thanks to the support of those who showed willingness, patience, and dedication, Nar-Anon is well on its way to being recognized around the world. No longer are we the best kept secret! Nar-Anon is no longer



an “I” program, but a “We” program. Most members of Nar-Anon also see the changes and know we are moving forward.

When 2013 began, I, like many others, took stock of what I hoped to accomplish during the year. For Nar-Anon, expanding our literature has been a part of history in the making. The members who submitted their stories of experience, strength, and hope have contributed significantly to the success of our daily reader (*SESH*). No profession-

al writers were/are used.

Through our Guides to Local and World Services, the unity of Nar-Anon has become stronger. These guidelines unite us in our principles and traditions and give us a clear direction for moving forward.

It is my hope the fellowship as a whole will be united through trust in the World Service Conference process. The hard work required to fulfill the needs of Nar-Anon can be and is being accomplished at these conferences. I honestly feel many issues will easily be resolved as more members – new and old – familiarize themselves with Nar-Anon by reading the literature, asking questions, and working together in the unity of the program. Our fellowship, based on the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, will continue to gain strength as we move forward.

In closing, I want to thank the Nar-Anon Fellowship for their continued help and support. Serving as executive director is a privilege I do not take lightly. With Nar-Anon unity and awareness growing and with the help of the Board of Trustees, WS committees, and the Nar-Anon Fellowship, I will continue striving to move the organization forward.

In Loving Service,  
*Cathy K.*  
Executive Director

**“For me, giving back to the Nar-Anon Fellowship is an expression of unconditional love and part of the healing process. When I give freely, without expectations, I help create a healing environment for others and myself.”**

**“Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope,” Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, May 13**

# Our Members Share...

## Dancing with the Gorilla

One of the things I learned some time ago,  
was that living with addiction was like dancing with a gorilla.  
My aim was to teach that gorilla to waltz, a slow, graceful dance.  
But each time I tried to control the gorilla's moves, I was tossed around  
like a doll.

The harder I tried to slow the dance, the more the gorilla was dancing  
with dips and slides, twirling me around.

I was out of breath.

I was exhausted.

I was bruised.

Through attending meetings, I found a whole group  
of people who were exhausted from that same dance.  
It was wonderful to feel the fellowship of other desperate dancers.

Through working the steps with a sponsor,  
I have learned why I kept engaging in that dance.  
I have learned how to keep from engaging in that dance.  
Now, I am learning how to do a different dance.

There are lessons I still needed to learn.  
There is nothing like having a test of my program.  
Although I still get caught up in a spin, I can find my balance.  
Although I still get caught in a twist, I can look at my role in that dance.  
Although I still get angry, I have learned that my anger covers my fears.

I have a program, and each day I can choose to use it, or return to my  
old dance.  
I have a Higher Power, and each day I can choose to stay connected or  
fail to ask for help.  
I have a fellowship. I can dance alone with the gorilla, or I can dance in  
harmony with others doing a different dance.

**When one person changes the way they dance, the whole dance  
changes!**

*Luanne*

## Inner Peace and Serenity

Before entering the rooms of  
Nar-Anon, I unknowingly gratified my-  
self with material items. I strived to  
feel good and could not understand  
why instant material gratification was  
short-lived.

I was introduced to the Nar-Anon  
Twelve Step program when my son  
became a drug addict. Working the  
program has helped me to achieve se-  
renity and God-centered inner peace.  
With the help of my Higher Power,  
meetings, sponsorship, and the  
Nar-Anon Twelve Steps, I am now  
able to deal with life on life's terms. I  
accept the good and bad times as  
they come. I no longer find it neces-  
sary to strive to feel good by way of  
external gratification.



Just for today and with the help of my  
Higher Power, I will accept the reality  
of life on life's terms. I will strive for  
"feel good" gratification through God-  
centered inner peace and serenity.  
Today I am grateful for the realization  
that my only possessions of true value  
are not material.

*Anonymous*

**"Through Step Eleven, I have a conscious contact with my Higher Power. By calming  
my thoughts, I am able to interpret my path in a peaceful way. Serenity is often my reward."  
"Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope," Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, November 4**

## A Loving Higher Power of Recovery

Tradition Two states:

“For our group purpose there is but one authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants — they do not govern.”

In recovery, I have heard that a Higher Power is loving, caring, and greater than ourselves.

I see that love, care, and compassion reflected in the members of my fellowship.

When I reflect on my relationship with my Higher Power, I realize that I too am learning to slow down, be at peace and ....

Breathe.

Oh, my god,  
To choose the nestle  
when I have been living in the  
wrestle.

The gift of seeing my choices and  
learning to let go.

The absolute relief of having a Higher  
Power,  
who holds me as I struggle,

And NEVER lets go...  
Destination unknown,  
Companion on the trail.

Learning to trust  
Learning to lean  
Learning to cling  
Learning I am loved  
Learning to be cared for  
Learning to choose  
Learning to breathe  
Learning to believe  
Learning to be free  
Learning to be *ME*

*Anonymous*

## Practicing These Principles in all Our Affairs

May 31, 2012, 8:30 pm, my cell phone rings. It is my physician with the biopsy results from my right breast: *Cancer*.

*Acceptance:* Now I will have to tell my husband which will make cancer real. I have been a healthy person with few physical issues. This is new territory with new questions to answer. How and when to tell my kids, my Mom and Dad, my huge extended family? What about work and all those friends? What about my privacy? These are concerns I share and decisions I make with my husband.

*Faith/Trust:* Doubt and fear crept in and tried to roost. With the tools of my recovery, I replaced fear and doubt with trust and faith in powers greater than myself, my physicians, and the scientific community.

*Patience/Forgiveness/Gratitude:* Although family, friends, and virtual strangers pledged love and support, many gave unrequested opin-



ions. Were they trying to instill fear and doubt? No. Everyone's intentions were good. I received hundreds of encouraging cards, letters, emails, and text-messages. From these experiences I learned how I can be with others who may endure serious life situations and how to respond when someone falls ill.

*Guilt and Shame:* Obsessive thinking barged in and settled. How did I cause this? I must have done something wrong. Am I responsible for my family's suffering?

*Surrender:* During meditation, I observed old behavior — an over-developed sense of responsibility which led to self-blame and guilt. With the help of my Twelve Step recovery tools, I was able to turn obsessive thinking over and re-establish sane thinking and serenity. Sanity during this difficult time was essential for good decision-making.

*Courage and Willingness:* My doctors and nurses told me that my willingness and positive attitude would continue to help me sail through the treatments ahead. I'm really not sure if I possessed courage. Maybe courage is a natural outcome of willingness, faith, and trust.

*Humility:* Acceptance of the support provided by the family and friends who cared for me seemed to have the principle of humility woven through it. My spiritual relationship with the god of my understanding was strengthened and renewed.

*Freedom:* As I struggled with an extreme crisis of identity, my daughter said, “Mom, you must accept that during this time you do not have to DO anything.” Because I was able to hear this option, I was free to just BE.

*Paula L.*  
December 2, 2012

# Giving Back...

## Quarterly Appeal

*Please read this message at your business meetings during the Quarter*

Have you ever wondered where funding for the Nar-Anon World Service Office (WSO) comes from? It's no secret! The WSO, which houses and prints most of our literature, relies on literature orders and donations from groups, areas, regions and individuals to pay rent, utilities, equipment costs, salaries, etc. We have a staff of eight. Two are full-time positions and the others work part-time morning and afternoon shifts.

Nar-Anon does not receive any outside funding from grants, governments, or private companies.

Over this past year, we have been crippled by price increases for paper, supplies, equipment, rent, and under-funding of the World Service Conference. I can honestly speak for the staff and myself that it is for the love of this program we do what we do. Therefore, I am making an appeal to all members to please help.

By sending a donation, you contribute to carrying our message of help and hope. Another way to say thanks to Nar-Anon is to contribute a dollar amount for each year of your recovery, using the attendance at

your first meeting as your birthday.

On behalf of the Nar-Anon World Service Office, I would like to thank the entire Nar-Anon Fellowship for their continued support.

*Cathy K.*  
Executive Director

PS If you would like to make an individual tax-deductible donation, please submit a check payable to Nar-Anon World Service Office Headquarters Inc. or go online and click on the purple DONATE button at [http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/About\\_Nar-Anon](http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/About_Nar-Anon)

# Members' Reflections...

## Mini Convention in South Africa

It has become traditional for the Western Cape Area of South Africa to hold a mini-convention in November each year. This year it was held on Saturday, November 3, 2012, at The Mountain Road Primary School in the suburb of Woodstock, Cape Town, South Africa.

The day was comprised of three 90-minute sessions with tea and lunch breaks between sessions. During each session, three mem-

bers shared on the topic "Nothing changes, if nothing changes." These nine members represented nine different groups in the Western Cape.

Each and every person who shared delivered an eloquent message of recovery, and they all spoke from the heart. At the end of each session, the audience was given an opportunity to share their thoughts and there was much positive feedback.

Our area events coordinator and her sub-committee hosted a great event at the end of a very successful 2012 Nar-Anon year.

The Western Cape Area of the Region of South Africa continues to go from strength to strength and the Nar-Anon Fellowship continues to provide a beacon of hope to hundreds of family members affected by the disease of addiction.

*Anonymous*

# What Worked for You?

## Last Issue's Question

*In my group, one person always chairs the meeting and closes the meeting with words of advice on what members should and shouldn't do. I am not comfortable with this level of control. How can I bring up this issue without upsetting this person or other members of the group?*

### Suggestion 1

- Hold a group conscience on how often the chairperson's role should rotate: for example, weekly or monthly.
- Suggest a workshop on *Keeping Our Meetings Healthy*.
- Read the section from the *Guide to Local Services* on Conference Approved Literature (CAL) during the opening of the meeting.

Carol B.



### Suggestion 2

Chances are that if one member is not comfortable with this practice of "should" and "should not" that other members are not comfortable with it either. Using the form *Taking the Group Inventory*, available from WSO, may help. It gives everyone a chance to inventory the pros and cons of their group. This inventory can be done anonymously. A summary of the results can be presented and discussed at a group business meeting. In this way, all suggestions are equal and the concept of "principles above personalities" is practiced.

Anonymous

### Suggestion 3

First, I would volunteer to chair a few meetings and close by saying we do not give advice; rather we share our experience, strength, and hope, and perhaps mention that the words we hear might not click immediately but will come to us when we need them.

I might also speak directly to the person in private and remind her we don't give advice, and her closing statement not only makes you uncomfortable; it sends the wrong message.

If after a few meetings this doesn't work, I would ask for a group conscience.

Carol R

## This Issue's Question

*What do you do when a newcomer shares for a large portion of the meeting? I don't get any Nar-Anon hope and I leave feeling worse than when I arrived.*

Please email your responses to [newsletters@nar-anon.org](mailto:newsletters@nar-anon.org) Watch for solutions in the June 2013 newsletter!

# Did You Know ...?



...how much literature WSO distributed over the past year? Here are the top five items and the number of copies of each that were delivered in 2012:

- |                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| • Small Blue Book          | 19,825 |
| • Newcomer Packets         | 19,167 |
| • Questions on Sponsorship | 13,544 |
| • SESH                     | 8,258  |
| • Large Blue Book          | 7,933  |



Kudos to the WSO staff for keeping track of so many orders and for helping unite Nar-Anon members around the world with the Nar-Anon message.

that over the last six months, 36 new group packets were ordered, and 25 resulted in new meetings.

Congratulations to everyone who had the courage to take this big step!

# Upcoming Events... 2013

## Nar-Anon East Coast Convention (EEC) 5

Will be held in Florida in 2014

We need YOU!

*First committee meeting:*  
Mar. 23, 11:30 AM EST on Skype

Please e-mail your Skype name to  
Chair Lynne K.  
[ECC5CHAIR@gmail.com](mailto:ECC5CHAIR@gmail.com)

## *Attending a Nar-Anon Event?*

Drop us a line and share your experience with other Nar-Anon members.

We'll post your article in the **Members' Reflections** section of the next newsletter.

## Waves of Serenity

Thu. March 21 - Sun. March 24

Nar-Anon @ GRCNA (Georgia Regional Convention of NA)

Jekyll Island Convention Center  
145 Old Plantation Road  
Jekyll Island, GA

Info: [ganaranon@gmail.com](mailto:ganaranon@gmail.com)

## Recovery Changes Everything!

Sat, March 30 9 am – 6 pm

N. California Regional Convention

Santa Clara Convention Center  
5001 Great America Parkway  
Santa Clara, CA

Paula at [pkcloud@yahoo.com](mailto:pkcloud@yahoo.com)

## Embrace The Journey

Fri. April 19 - Sun. April 21

Nar-Anon Convention 2013  
Connecticut, Massachusetts &  
New Hampshire

Courtyard by Marriott  
63 Grand Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702

Info: 203-641-9380

## The Freedom of Recovery: Nar-Anon World Convention

Thur. Aug 29 - Sun. Sept. 1

In cooperation with WCNA-35

Philadelphia Convention Center  
1101 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Early bird registration: March 31

## ***Trust in the Spirit of Unity*** **2012 - 2014 World Service Conference Cycle**

The World Service Conference Committee would like to remind the groups, areas, and regions that it's time to think about preparing motions to be submitted for the *Conference Agenda Report* (CAR). Please email the committee for interactive motion forms ([wscconference@nar-anon.org](mailto:wscconference@nar-anon.org)). If your region did not receive the invitation by email, please see the 2014 conference page on the website (<http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/node/964>). The conference cycle for 2012-2014 is also posted on the website.

- **June 30, 2013** - WSC Committee informs each region of equalized expense amounts.
- **September 4, 2013** - Deadline to submit regional motions in draft form.
- **October 14, 2013** - Deadline for all motions to be in final form.
- **December 3, 2013** - CAR available and distributed to regions.
- **December 31, 2013** - Deadline to inform WSC Committee of region's intention to participate in WSC 2014 and submissions by each regional treasurer of equalized expense sum.  
Deadline for BOT members and world service committee chairs to inform the WSC Committee of their intent to attend the conference.
- **February 1, 2014** - Conference approval track (CAT) material available and distributed to regions.
- **March 3, 2014** - Deadline for regional reports and minutes showing election or continued endorsement of delegate or alternate delegate.
- **April 2, 2014** - Agenda for WSC 2014 distributed to all attendees
- **May 1, 2014** - Pre-conference orientation - Torrance, California
- **May 2 – 5, 2014 - World Service Conference 2014** - Torrance, California

# Committee Corner...

## Outreach Committee

### Share your Outreach success stories...

The purpose of the World Service Outreach Committee is to increase public awareness of the Nar-Anon Family Groups and facilitate growth of the membership through outreach. This is accomplished by creating and distributing literature and tools that support outreach at all levels of the fellowship. The launch of the new website and electronic access to *The Serenity Connection* provide a dynamic opportunity for this effort. The outreach page on the new website - [www.nar-anon.org/naranon/About\\_Nar-Anon/Outreach](http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/About_Nar-Anon/Outreach) - provides information and downloadable outreach tools. Check it out.

Outreach is key to sustaining and growing the Nar-Anon Fellowship. What is your home group, area, or region doing? Tell us your outreach success story so it can be shared with the fellowship. Have an idea or story to share? Send it to [Outreach@nar-anon.org](mailto:Outreach@nar-anon.org)

Watch this newsletter space and visit the Outreach page on the WSO website for new ideas and ways to improve your outreach efforts.

## Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcome from all Nar-Anon members.\*

Please keep your focus on the Nar-Anon program at all times and share your *experience, strength, and hope (ESH)* from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member.

Please submit your articles to:  
[newsletters@nar-anon.org](mailto:newsletters@nar-anon.org)

Remember, submissions must have a signed release form before publication.

## Newsletter Committee

### eSubscriptions Now Available!

Sign up for your **FREE** e-subscription to *The Serenity Connection*, at [www.nar-anon.org/naranon/Member\\_Services/Serenity\\_Connection](http://www.nar-anon.org/naranon/Member_Services/Serenity_Connection)

Subscriptions to date: 529

## World Pool Committee

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO JUMP INTO THE WORLD POOL?

Have you ever asked yourself, World Pool, what is that? The World Pool is made up of qualified Nar-Anon members elected at the World Service Conference (WSC) to be eligible to serve on the Board of Trustees. Members actively involved in service work at the area/region/world level for at least 4 continuous years may be considered to serve as trustees of Nar-Anon.

Trustees are responsible for instituting the decisions made at WSC and for overseeing the World Service Office (WSO). Trustees are active members of our world service committees and attend the biennial WSC.

Five or six positions will be opening up in 2014. Interested in applying? Please contact the World Pool Committee at [worldpool@nar-anon.org](mailto:worldpool@nar-anon.org). Application deadline is **October 31, 2013**.

## New Literature

Some new literature from the Nar-Anon [Webstore](#):

- 3 poster set- 12 Steps, Traditions, & Concepts - 2x3
- Guide to Local Services - changes from conference
- Guide to World Services - approved at conference
- Outreach Poster - 2'x3'
- Journal - new price and new binding design
- Reading Cards - 11 separate cards (12x12x12+8)

Thanks to all who make *The Serenity Connection* a success with your submissions!