



Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups

The Serenity Connection

Watch the Nar-Anon Family Groups Website for:

- A new Nar-Anon website experience coming September 1!
- Nar-Anon (PSA)
- *Nar-Anon 36: Steps 1 to 9* now available
- Group codes
- Board bulletins
- Nar-Anon eBooks
- Archived copies of *The Serenity Connection*



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Letter from the Chair

It was a great honour to be elected to the position of Board of Trustees Chair in May. To take over from Karen M. after her nine years of service in this position is a daunting task. Working with such a talented, knowledgeable, and well-rounded team of trustees will make this task a lot easier.

My personal mission as chair is to continue to create more unity within our fellowship and the world services available to us. It is not a coincidence that unity is the principle behind our First Tradition. We have already accomplished so much. At this past World Service Conference (WSC 2014), we had a record seven countries participating and two others observing. The number of attending delegates continues to rise. Each conference, we learn more and more from each other. We all hear great ideas that we try to incorporate into our

service to the fellowship. The more delegates who attend, the better the group conscience.

At WSC 2014, it became clear that we needed to allocate more resources to literature translations. Our international fellowship is relying on guidance from our world services. A new subcommittee has been formed to answer that need but, as with all new things, we need plenty of help. It takes a lot of effort to ensure that what is translated accurately reflects the original content. So if you are multilingual, please consider this service work.

Another way we have continued to improve unity is through our newsletter. With our quarterly *Serenity Connection* hitting over 3000 e-subscriptions, we get to share more and more with each other. Be sure to send in articles and pose questions. Tell us about successful events in

your region. Honour that one purpose that we speak of in Tradition Five, "to help families of addicts," by sharing how you used a tool of the program to get through a tough time or how you used a tradition or principle to improve your home life, group, area, or region.

In closing, I would like to ask all of you to help improve unity by submitting questions and thoughts to the Board of Trustees. What ideas do you have? What concerns do you have? What areas do you feel need more attention? How can we help you grow your groups, areas, and regions? Let's get talking!! You can use the email for the board, BOT@nar-anon.org, or contact me directly at Rhenda@nar-anon.org.

Rhenda R
Chair, NFG Board of Trustees
Toronto, ON, Canada

EXCITING NEWS! Nar-Anon Public Service Announcement!

The new Nar-Anon PSA (Public Service Announcement) is now available to use in your outreach efforts. To see and hear the PSA on the world wide web, go to [Outreach Tools](#) on the Nar-Anon website and click on "Video PSA." For questions or assistance, please contact outreach@nar-anon.org

Our Members Share

“Nar-Anon encourages me not to hold onto resentment. I can simply ask for peace and serenity.”

Thirty-One Days in Nar-Anon, Day 3



Devil’s Alley

I remember as a boy in rural Kansas being out for a Sunday drive and coming across what my aunt and uncle called a “devil’s alley.” It was very simple, really; an alley between two fences. I asked why they called it a “devil’s alley.” My aunt said that the farmers long ago had an argument about who was doing their share in building the fence between their farms, so each decided to build his own. My uncle laughed and said he could just imagine the two of them out there, working in parallel but not together, twice as hard, to achieve the same purpose, just because they didn’t trust each other. And so there was this alley of mistrust, a dead zone that grew nothing. It was nothing but a reminder of how uncooperative human beings can be.

Before I came to Nar-Anon, I seemed to be building a lot of useless fences and doing a lot of hard work that got me nowhere. Since I couldn’t get the addict, or even others who were involved with the addict, to agree with me, I created my own devil’s alleys between me and others. I felt increasingly lonely, miserable, and alienated.

Human relationships are tricky in the best of circumstances. How much more so when drugs are in the picture! I exhausted myself with my own plans and ideas as to how things should be. Thus I stopped really living. I accumulated more and more evidence of just how untrustworthy other people were, even the world itself!

Gradually, through the fellowship and principles of the program, I began to be gently drawn in another direction. At first, I thought the steps were harsh and demanding. As I worked them, I discovered they were gentle and forgiving. I wondered, in contrast, how I had come across to others in my insanity. I began to slowly, almost imperceptibly, move toward a gentler path. I was especially surprised that no one gave me advice. I wondered why, since I had been so ready with it myself, even though nothing I had tried actually worked. I thought maybe they didn’t offer any advice because I already knew it all. In my vanity, I assumed that they needed my thoughts, not the other way around.

The irony, of course, was that I was a know-it-all who couldn’t

hear any advice anyway. It was a hard lesson. But not everything was amenable to my need for answers and clarity. I had to learn to trust in NOT knowing.

Our paths ought not to divide us, but allow us to walk together. A path should lead somewhere, not be a pointless barren waste. How silly those farmers were, long ago, unable to see what they had in common. To build an alley to nowhere, a mere symbol of human distrust, is truly a “devil’s alley.” It is even a waste of an alley!

I found a path finally, and began to tear down some of the fences I had erected. I now share a journey, a path, a direction with thousands of others, who have gained spiritual freedom through the generous and gentle principles handed down to us through Nar-Anon. We don’t tell each other what to do, nor do we even adopt the same solutions, but we are on a shared path, and we know we are going in the direction of something new.

David R.

“Remember all people are always changing. When we judge them, we judge on what we believe we know of them, failing to realize that there is much we do not know, and that they are constantly changing as they try for better or worse to cope with life.”

Nar-Anon Blue Booklet, p. 14.

Helping Families of Addicts: Encouragement vs Gossip

Recently I was at a convention talking with another member about an issue we had both run into in our regions. It occurred to me that I had heard this same topic in other regions. Some members use the term “addict update meetings.” This is not a formal term but rather slang to describe meetings where members share about what the addict has done or needs to do; their using, stealing, court dates, lawyers, probation, jail, prison terms, release dates, treatment centers, recommended treatment programs, and so on. At many of these meetings, members spend the entire time sharing stories of the addict.

Throughout that day at the convention, we continued our discussion and agreed that this type of meeting is not healthy. We both admitted we had left such meetings feeling worse than when we had arrived.

The following week I attended my ongoing tradition study group. My Higher Power must have been at work because through the study process, rather than through my own interpretation of the traditions, the answer became clear. Tradition Five says “Each Nar-Anon family group has but one purpose; to help families of addicts.” This tradition goes on to tell us how to carry out that purpose, by practicing

the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon. When members share only about the addict, we don’t learn how to practice the twelve steps for ourselves or even why we should practice the steps. We don’t learn how to set boundaries or how to detach from the addict. Members who practice the steps for themselves learn a different way to live. Working the steps helps each of us to recover and deal with addiction in our daily life.

Tradition Five also tells us to encourage and understand our addicted relative (s). How

do we do this? It seems confusing. This part of the tradition does not tell us to continue trying to fix or save the addict, nor does it tell us to gossip about the addict.

“Encouraging” is defined as “giving support, confidence or hope to (someone).” We have to ask ourselves how we can encourage the addicts without continuing to enable them. Sponsors and other group members, along with our Higher Power, can guide us towards accomplishing the task of encouragement. As a group, we must ask ourselves: Does updating on the addicts’ activities lend itself to encourage-

ment? Do we leave our meeting with a new perspective or tools to manage ourselves between meetings?

Finally, this tradition tells us to welcome and give comfort to families of addicts. How do we welcome families? How do we give comfort? Many members do not find comfort in hearing what the addicts are doing week after week. Many of us came to meetings thinking our

primary purpose was to get the addict to stop using. It is up to the chair and seasoned Nar-Anon members to keep

the focus on Nar-Anon. These members can remind the group that outside sharing after the meeting is welcome. Keeping the meeting focused on recovery helps foster unity, thus supporting our first tradition. It is important for us to give more to others than we allow them to take from us. What does this mean? Often a group will reserve the last ten minutes of the meeting for open shares.

How does updating what the addict is doing comfort other family members still suffering? Is this helping Nar-Anon members grow in recovery? Is sharing treatment center infor-



Our Members Share

“Detachment with love brings me serenity and growth ... I keep the person I love separated from the disease which I hate.”

Thirty-One Days in Nar-Anon, Day 16

mation helping families or can that be shared after a meeting? Is gossiping about the addict helping? “Gossip about others, including the addict, will defeat our purpose” (*Nar-Anon Blue Booklet* p. 12). Are addict updates gossip?

Sometimes it seems easier to stay in the storm than to step out of it. We get so engulfed in the disease we cannot see any other way to live. Only when we become willing to try something new do we learn tools that can change our lives... beyond our wildest dreams!

The Nar-Anon Program

REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETINGS VS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

There are two types of regional meetings listed in *The Nar-Anon Family Groups Guide to Local Services* (GLS): Regional Service Committee (RSC) meetings (p. 6-3) and Regional Assembly meetings (p. 6-8).

RSC meetings are held to discuss the business of regional and area matters as described below. These meetings are attended by officers, Area Service Representatives (ASRs), regional subcommittee chairs, and the delegate and alternate delegate. All Nar-Anon members are welcome to attend. At the discretion of the chair, speaking by non-voting members may be limited.

The voting members are the officers (chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer); ASRs; subcommittee chairs; and others as the region may deem appropriate. The delegate and alternate delegate are not voting members of the RSC.

The Regional Service Committee

- Hears and discusses region and area reports
- Hears subcommittees' reports and reviews their activities
- Hears and discusses the delegate's report
- Reviews ways of keeping the groups informed and unified
- Establishes subcommittees
- Develops policies for assembly approval
- Develops the region's budget
- Raises funds for the delegate's equalized travel expenses to attend the World Service Conference (WSC)
- Drafts a slate of nominees eligible for election at the Assembly

An **Assembly** is an event held at least once a year. The Assembly is attended by officers of the RSC, the delegate and alternate delegate, the region's Group Service Representatives (GSRs), ASRs, and subcommittee chairs. The assembly is a vital link between groups and the region where members conduct the following business:

- Set policies for the region
- Receive, discuss, and vote on proposed motions from groups to be submitted to the World Service Conference (WSC) committee
- Review and vote on the *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)*
- Give a vote of confidence to the delegate to vote his/her conscience at the WSC on items not in the *CAR*
- Hear area and subcommittee reports
- Hear the delegate's report
- Elect officers of the RSC, the delegate, alternate delegate, and subcommittee chairs
- Approve the region's budget developed by the RSC

The only voting members of the Assembly are GSRs, or in their absence, alternate GSRs. This is consistent with one vote per group. To conduct business, a quorum of the region's GSRs voting their group's conscience will be necessary.

For more information, refer to [The Nar-Anon Family Groups Guide to Local Services](#) (GLS). Questions? Contact the Policy and Guidelines Committee at pandgcommittee@nar-anon.org.

Regional Meetings: RSC vs Assembly

In short:

- Regional Service Committees discuss, review, and plan
- Regional Assemblies discuss, listen, and VOTE



What's Worked for You?

Last Issue's Question

In the meetings I attend, I keep hearing that it's different when the addict is your child; that if the addict is your spouse, you can always divorce them. This hurts and makes me feel unwelcome. Has anyone else experienced this? How have you handled the situation?

Answer 1: I once visited the addict in my life when she was living in a group home. I walked into the house while they were discussing, or may I say arguing about, who was worse, the "crack-heads" or the "dope-fiends." This insanity reminds me of a Nar-Anon meeting when the topic gets around to which is worse; having a child or a spouse as an addict.

Each person's pain is their pain and has nothing to do with whether the addict is a spouse or a child. Once I set myself apart as "different," the program is no longer a "we" program but me against you. I need to refocus on my program. I really don't know what you need to do.

As our first tradition says, "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity." Separating ourselves based on who the addict is does not promote unity. Rather than giving advice, I choose to practice the traditions in all my affairs. When I hear the phrase "thus we became sick, too,"* I remember why I need meetings.

Barry

**Nar-Anon Blue Booklet*, p 4.

Answer 2: In a lot of meetings, I hear that it's different when the addict is your child. I usually hear this from a new hurting parent who does not understand that my spouse is someone's child. What I hear is that I don't belong because at least I can divorce the addict; a parent cannot divorce their child. This hurts and makes me feel very unwelcome. Whether I am here for a child, spouse, or friend is irrelevant.

I went to a meeting once at which we introduced ourselves by first name only and were asked to say what our relationship was to the addict. At first, I thought that was kind of neat but then, as we went around the room and there were no other spouses, I soon felt like I didn't belong. Again my shares were irrelevant because "I did not carry the addict for nine months."

I did eventually divorce the addict six years ago. I still attend meetings. I keep coming back because recovery for me was never about the addict. Steps Two through Twelve don't speak of the addict; those steps are about me and changing me. I keep coming back because I was once affected by someone else's addiction. Step Twelve tells me to keep coming back to carry this message to others. If I keep coming back, I am giving back what was so freely given to me. I keep coming back because it does not matter who the addict is; it matters who I am.

This Issue's Question

What is the most powerful gift you have been given as a result of sponsorship ?

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[The Serenity Connection](#)

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Just for Today

Just for today I will recognize that being attached to those I love is not healthy. A loving step back gives me room to grow and discover my choices, my path, and myself.

When I first heard it said that detachment in my relationships was necessary to recover from this family disease of addiction, my immediate reaction was alarm and fear. I mistakenly equated detachment with not caring, with building walls of rejection, and with deserting those I love.

I have learned that detachment is truly a matter of allowing others the freedom to see themselves, make their own choices,

and experience the consequences of those choices. When I practice not being attached, I am able to see that I have choices. I can step out of the despair of being captive to the “shoulds,” the shame, and the blame of this disease. I ask my Higher Power for the wisdom to change myself and release others with love to their Higher Powers’ care. I have come to believe it is in this new space between us that our Higher Powers are at work in our lives.

By practicing my new unattached thinking, I begin to discover myself and my responsibilities. I start to see my part in relationships and no longer feel solely responsible for everyone. I practice under-

standing, compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness (release). I let go of my non-reality-based expectations and the resulting resentments. I have learned to give myself a break, stop taking everything personally, and stop feeling hurt emotionally by others’ words, choices, and behaviors.

Just for today, I will practice healthy loving detachment, which sets me free to grow and be myself. I learn to simply be there for others. I accept that I am only able to find my own answers; it is OK. Others’ answers are theirs to discover with the help of their Higher Powers. Others I can only love; that is more than enough.

Board Appeal

Whose Responsibility Is It?

World Service Board of Trustees’ Mission Statement:

The World Service Board of Trustees is dedicated to the growth and financial stability of Nar-Anon Family Groups. In cooperation with the world service committees and World Service Office, we will support the worldwide fellowship by developing services necessary to carry the message of Nar-Anon.

One of the Board of Trustees’ main responsibilities is to ensure Nar-Anon has adequate financial resources to fulfill the mission of carrying its message around the world. We envision a future of always being available to those in need. Remember the first time you came to a meeting? Remember the first time you found serenity? How about the first time you realized you were no longer alone? What about all the friends you made in the fellowship, who walked by your side on this journey through the good times and bad? Would-

Please read this message at your business meetings during this quarter

n’t you want those who have yet to find Nar-Anon to be able to receive the gifts our program has to offer?

Tradition Six states, “Our Family Groups ought never to endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.”

Where do funds come from to operate our World Service Office (WSO)? Nar-Anon does not take money from outside entities. We are supported by member donations and from the sale of literature. In recent years, all businesses and organizations have had to tighten their budgets and deal with cutbacks while material costs continue to rise. We too have felt this economic impact, as our donations have decreased over the past three years.

Our Seventh Tradition states, “Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

How does Nar-Anon keep itself fully self-supporting? Just as the group’s Seventh

Tradition basket serves to support the group, this same basket also serves to support every level of service beyond the group. These funds help to provide services on behalf of all members through the WSO. Without group support, phones at WSO may not be answered, utilities and salaries may not be paid, and literature may not be published.

While WSO generates income from literature sales, it is not enough, and more funds are needed. Currently, Seventh Tradition contributions only account for approximately 12% of our operating income. This is clearly out of balance.

Concept 2 states, “The final responsibility and authority for Nar-Anon services rests with the Nar-Anon Family Groups.”

What does this mean? It takes every member, every group, every area, and every region to keep our world services functioning, and it is our collective responsibility. Our groups make decisions



Board Appeal ...continued from page 6

for our fellowship through the World Service Conference, but what does that responsibility encompass? We authorize our world service committees and WSO to perform services on behalf of all our groups. Prior to executing any service, funds are needed. What else does WSO need to perform those services?

- Rent, utilities, insurance, salaries
- Phone and internet services
- Computers, copiers, printers, paper, and ink
- Outreach

World service committees provide other services that require funds:

- Literature production and software

- Website upkeep and associated fees
- Newsletter and subscription provider fees
- Outreach
- Narateen

We are making an appeal to all groups, areas, and regions to discuss at your next group conscience business meeting the financial requirements for providing world services to the fellowship. Once the prudent reserve (See GLS pg 8-2) has been met, we ask all members to support area, region, and world services so we can continue to carry the message to those in need.

Donations can be made to WSO online at www.nar-anon.org or by mail to: 22527 Crenshaw Blvd, Suite 200B Torrance, CA 90505

Click here to donate:



Committee Corner

Literature Committee

Priority List

The following priority list is the result of a survey presented to World Service Conference 2014 participants by the Literature Committee:

Priority One

- Steps Ten - Twelve
- Traditions One - Twelve
- How to Deal with the Death of a Loved One
- Narateen – 31 Days
- Boundaries

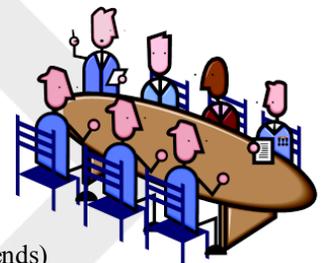
Priority Two

- Concepts One - Twelve
- Parents of Addicted Minors
- Why CAL?

- Seventh Tradition pamphlet
- Fourth Step Workbook

Priority Three

- Adult Children of Addicts
- What Now? (When active addiction ends)
- Why Are We Here?
- Pamphlet for Men
- Addiction in Marriage



The World Service and Regional Literature Committees have begun working on the Priority One list.

We encourage members to submit writings. Regions interested in forming literature committees to write and/or edit literature are asked to contact the World Service Literature Committee at LitCom@nar-anon.org. Together we can.

Outreach Committee

Look for the latest outreach challenge by clicking on [OUTREACH CHALLENGE #4](#) on the “Outreach Tools” page of the Nar-Anon Family Groups website.

Life's Rewards

The reward of unmanageability is motivation
The reward of listening is hope
The reward of change is trust
The reward of letting go is being held
The reward of open mindedness and honesty is

understanding and compassion
The reward of prayer is awareness of your presence
The reward of asking for help is guidance
The reward of guidance is learning to choose mindfully
The reward of seeking through prayer and meditation is that I am found.

Don't Let Your 'BUTs' Get in the Way

I would do something about his using,
BUT...

I don't know what to do
I don't know what my family or
friends would say
I don't know what he would do
I don't know where he would go
I don't want him to get hurt
I don't want him to sleep on the street
I don't want him to suffer

I don't know where he would eat
He doesn't have any money
He might get angry
He might threaten to kill himself
He could lose his job
He might end up in jail
He might say he doesn't love me
He might die

I thought that if something happened
to him, I couldn't live with myself.

However, the simple truth was that I al-
ready couldn't live with myself.

I thought that I didn't like what he was
doing to me, when actually what I didn't
like was what I was doing to myself!

Nar-Anon has taught me that I cannot con-
trol my addict's life; all I can do is live the
best life I can for myself.

Nar -Anon – keep coming back.

Upcoming Events

Click on event titles for details or go to the WSO website

[Nar-Anon Pacific Northwest Region Spiritual Weekend](#)

September 5th - 7th, 2014
"On the Path: Step by Step"
Contact: Viki W. 360-275-5616
Falls Creek Retreat Center
Raymond, WA 98577

[Nar-Anon Spirituality Breakfast](#)

September 13th, 2014
"Feed the Spirit"
Contact: Sue A. 610-432-3374
The Brass Rail Restaurant
Allentown, PA 18104

[Nar-Anon East Coast Convention \(ECC5\)](#)

September 19th - 21st, 2014
"Hidden Treasures of Recovery"
Contact: ECC5chair@gmail.com
Crowne Plaza—Tampa Westshore
Tampa, FL 33609

[Southern California Region Narathon 2014](#)

September 20th, 2014
"Seeking Serenity"
Shoreline Baptist Church
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

[Nar-Anon en la 9a Convencion Hispana de NA](#)

September 26th - 28th, 2014
Contact: Maria 562-298-6932
Hotel Airtel
Van Nuys, CA 91406

[Nar-Anon Midwest Region 5th Annual Assembly](#)

October 18th, 2014
"Hope/Recovery in the Ozarks"
Contact: Christine Z. 417-598-7500
Barrington Hotel & Suites
Branson, MO 65616

[Nar-Anon PNW Convention #10](#)

October 24th - 26th, 2014

"Freedom for Families of Addicts"
Contact: Laura V. lfvincent3@gmail.com
Valley River Inn, Eugene, OR 97401

[Nar-Anon New York Region Convention \(25th Anniversary\)](#)

November 7th - 9th, 2014
"The Joy is in the Journey XXV"
Contact: Ron L 516-622-0336
Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center
Callicoon, NY 12723

[W Pennsylvania Regional Conv.](#)

November 14th - 16th, 2014
"Celebrate the Journey: Serenity XXVIII"
Seven Springs Mountain Resort
Campion, PA 15622



Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcomed from all Nar-Anon members. Please focus on the Nar-Anon program and share your experience, strength, and hope (ESH) from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed [Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission Deadline: October 20, 2014 ****

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