



EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, HOPE

Western Reserve Area Service Committee of
Narcotics Anonymous

October/November 2016

CARRYING THE MESSAGE THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD: WRASCNA NEWSLETTER

What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give. (From the NA Basic Text)

Hi Family! I'm an addict named Lisa V., and I'm your new area newsletter chairperson. It has been 2 years since I held a position as an area subcommittee chair, and I knew this would be a very different experience than my last. As Activities Chair, I loved seeing addicts attending and enjoying our events. I was able to work with others to combine fundraising with FUN-raising. One of the most important things I learned was the importance of recognizing the strengths of the addicts around me.

That is the best part of being elected newsletter chair. Narcotics Anonymous is full of interesting, creative, talented people. Many of you have already expressed interest in participating! In this issue, both John P. and Samantha H.

wrote thoughtful, honest pieces that will help newcomers and old-timers alike. Lauren D. gave me the information necessary to step into this position (although I did have to ask my sons for help with the newsletter template on my computer!) I really appreciate the help and **encouragement I've received.**

I look forward to this newsletter being a vehicle for us to carry the message. **We'll celebrate our recovery in these pages, and we'll share our hope and the promise of freedom.**

In Loving Service,
Lisa V.



Do you want to contribute to the WRASCNA newsletter?

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Do you have a talent for writing or creating recovery-related art? The Newsletter Subcommittee is looking for submissions!

We welcome personal stories; writings on our literature, spiritual principles, and areas of service; suggestions to help the newcomer; recovery-oriented poetry; original artwork; and any other expression of your gratitude for our program and way of life.

Please submit items with a clear NA message and NA language to:

newsletter.wrascna@gmail.com

Note: Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, or compliance with our Traditions.

FROM THE ASK-IT BASKET

TOPIC:

Making meetings a priority is hard for me. Please share your experience.

RESPONSE:

Whenever I consider a topic like this, I very quickly run through the reasons I can empathize with this point of view. It would be very easy for me to look at the fullness of my life and tell myself that there is always another meeting I can get to. **What's crazy and what I sometimes don't notice is that in that thought is the idea that other things in my life can't wait...but maybe...just maybe my recovery can.**

However, I try really hard not to live my life in a way where I do things that are good for me **because I'm fearful of what may happen if I don't do those things.** Just like focusing on not doing drugs never worked for me – because I was the real **issue not the drugs...focusing on not missing meetings doesn't help me all that much.** I can beat myself up for not **being as 'around' as I think I should be,** and that can lead to shame and guilt which leads to **isolation...and that's never an actively healthy place for me to be.**

The thoughts that actually allow me to handle it in a way where I **am being 'loving' to myself are much different.** **Instead of 'why can't I miss meetings'...the question needs to be 'why do I go to meetings.'**

I strongly believe that the minute I start to think that I may **not 'need' meetings is the moment I start to let myself believe that drugs were the issue again.** **To think that I'm**

'okay' means that I'm pointing at something else outside myself and telling myself that 'I've got that under control'. But, what I've learned from being an active member of NA is that using was a symptom of a bigger issue...my disease of addiction.

I've come to believe that self-obsession is never something I will fully conquer. I'm an individual with very distinct qualities that make me. As much as in my heart I believe that we are all really the same, the circumstances of my life and my first-person point of view make seeing things from a self-centered point of view an inevitability. That is something that will always have an ebb and flow in my life. There will be times where I have more freedom than others, but it will always be something I have to work through. Recovery has taught me that the one of the most valuable changes possible is how much time I spend/waste working through it. **So...why do I still believe that making meetings is a priority...**

1) I got healthier and found some semblance of serenity while I was an active member of Narcotics Anonymous. The reason I found that serenity was because of the accountability and value of the fellowship in helping me see myself and life more clearly, along with the gifts that the steps bring when we work them with a sponsor. Is there a way to find that serenity elsewhere? Maybe. **I can't unequivocally say no...but I have something in my life that works and I see no reason to try and figure out another way all on my own when I have you fine people in my life.**

2) My life is so incredibly full and wonderful. I am grateful for it. But I know that the life I get to have today is a direct result of being an active member of NA. **If I'm truly grateful and humbled to live the life I have today...I can't imagine not honoring the program that helped give me this life by not taking it for granted and thinking I can do it on my own.**

3) **I'd love to think I have this thing figured out.** But I know I **don't.** I know that life is ever-changing and there's always opportunities to grow and find new levels of the H.O.W. our program depends upon. **It's not something to get figured out.** We never stop growing and having new opportunities to grow and learn and I have very clear experience that tells me it **all goes better when I'm engaged in the fellowship – service, meetings, sponsorship, steps, etc.**

4) The newcomer. Who am I to take what was so freely given to me and keep it entirely for myself? I can never know the impact that I may or may not have on another addict, but there were people here when I showed up and I am grateful that they kept the doors open. I pray that I never find my way back to a place of such self-obsession that I forget that lesson. Gratitude is an action word and I show it by showing up, continuing to ask for help from you people who I trust in a way I once thought was unimaginable, and being there for others if and when they need me.

-John P.

PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES

I had to learn the difference between the "Program of Narcotics Anonymous" and the "Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous", for they are not the same thing. The program of NA is the lifesaving way of life some of us have chosen to live free of our obsession and compulsion to use drugs, even when we knew they were destroying our lives. The program is working and incorporating the 12 steps and 12 traditions into our lives, through study, through application, through trial and error, and yes, success. The program is easy, but hard... funny huh? The program is as hard as I make it. But for me the more I open my mind, the more I surrender to the fact I never, ever, ever want to use drugs and live the way was, the more I put into the "program", the easier it gets. The "program" has worked for hundreds of thousands, if not millions since 1953, as it is. Not what I think it should be. Then there is the "Fellowship" of NA. This one isn't so concrete. It is an offshoot of the "program". The fellowship is the group of people, members, who have chosen to accept and live, or at least give the "program" a shot. As this is a "we" program, and as "the therapeutic value of one addict, helping another is without parallel" is a big reason our program has had, and still has miraculous results, the "fellowship" is extremely important. It can also be a proving ground for tolerance, acceptance, surrender of control, putting "principles before personalities". A testing place for our ability to function as

mature, rational adults in all sorts of interpersonal relationships. It would be nice to say that once we all decide to try the "program", and become part of the "fellowship" that it is smooth sailing from there. Nothing can be farther from the truth. There has always been, and always will be conflict of varying levels, differences of opinion, hurt feelings from time to time. But many notice, that after being around for a while, after making the 12 steps and 12 traditions an integral part of their daily lives, that being able to navigate the ups and downs of the waves of the fellowship get easier, the more our bonding gels. In the beginning of recovery, and even sometimes with longer levels of clean time the thoughts of "**** you, **** the fellowship, **** the program, I don't agree with you, that person pissed me off, that other person isn't living the program like I think they should, that person there did me wrong, so I am out of here" and the idea that walking away is the option that seems best. Personal choice it is, this is a voluntary program, "if you want what we have to offer..." and all. But rarely does that ever work out for the walker, and in reality, the fellowship suffers too. We lose a valuable part, a different perspective, and important voice when any walk away. Skipping meetings becomes a choice, but again, not only does the skipper miss out, so do many addicts still suffering at the tables who may well have heard just the right thing at the right time if the absent addict was there and sharing. Then comes the rest of the sentence..." if you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the EFFORT to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps." This is exactly

how I learned to live and react in a way that gets me through the fellowship ups and downs. There are always going to be unchecked Ego's, there are always going to be self-centered people, and this one hurts but is true, there are always going to be people in the fellowship who are here for different reasons, and have different motives than us. But by living and using our steps and traditions, by sticking it out and experiencing all the varieties of situations, and how to get through them maturely and sanely, not only do I grow, and learn how to do such things out in the "real world", but also the fellowship is strengthened, and itself grows. "We only keep what we have by giving it away...", and how can I give it, if I am not here. NA up north here is a challenge, distance, and few numbers makes it trying at times, but until we all choose to stay, choose to grow, choose to give it away, we will continue to falter and struggle. The NA fellowship is what WE, all of us, make it, and if we are not here, it does not grow, it does not change, and all addicts suffer. Today I decide to be part of the solution, for WE are the SOLUTION. No one else is going to do it for us but us. . A bunch of people who have little clue, but are trying, and not giving up. For we know what our lives will be without this program, and building the new frontier, together, ups and downs included, we shall thrive and become a strong place for the addict who stills suffer to turn to. But only if WE all do our part.

Love and hugs to us all. -
Samantha H.

**MEETINGS IN NEED
OF SUPPORT:**

Friday Night Recovery

When Fridays 6pm
Where 525 Vernon Odom
Blvd, Akron, OH 44307

Drawn to Recovery

When Saturdays 7:30pm
Where Reimer Road Baptist
Church, 1055 Reimer Rd,
Wadsworth, OH 44281

NEW MEETING:

When Fridays 7:30pm
Where Nordonia Middle
School, 73 Leonard Ave
Northfield, Ohio 44067

**LET'S CELEBRATE
CLEAN TIME!**

One of the best ways to
show that this program
works is to recognize
clean time! We want to
celebrate your clean-
date anniversary with
you!

Please email your name,
clean date, and phone
number to:

newsletter.wrascna@gmail.com

Or text your info to:

Lisa V. @ 330-612-8678

WRASCNA AREA

NEWSLETTER

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Contributors: John P.,
Samantha H.

Area Website:

www.wrascna.org

Ohio Hopeline:

1-888-438-4673



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES IN OUR AREA

Saturday October 22, 2016: **90s Dance** Hosted By: OCNA 35 Fundraising & Entertainment
7 pm-11 pm at Emmanuel United Church of Christ, 1480 Eastwood Ave. Akron, OH 44305

*BEST DRESSED CONTEST!! *Adults \$5 *Kids (12 & Under) Free *Serving Your Favorite 90s Snacks!

--Contacts: Cerissa Q. 330-801-6493 & Emily S. 561-403-7786

Saturday November 5, 2016: **WRASCNA Extended Halloween After-Party** 7 pm

*Costume Contest! *Coloring Contest! *Prizes!!! 754 Kenmore Blvd. Akron, OH 44314

--Contacts: Dustin H. 330-571-2961 Abigail C. 330-354-2766 Paul B. 440-539-0726

Thursday November 24, 2016: **Steps & Traditions Thanksgiving Marathon** 9am-Midnight

754 Kenmore Blvd. Akron, OH 44314 (Please use 7th Street door)

Covered Dishes Appreciated --Contact: Andy C. 330-419-3384