



Crazy Monthly News

Clean & Crazy Group

Volume 5
November 2006

From the Editor

Our theme for this month is being of service to the fellowship. And given that, I have given a lot of thought as to why I put so much effort into my many service commitments. What I came up with is this:

I'm not looking to get my name on the who's who of Narcotics Anonymous, that's for certain. My comfort zone continues to be one of a background player, and being considered a leader is something I get squeamish about, even today. Yet, we all have the potential to be leaders, if we carry a clear message of recovery through Narcotics Anonymous to those addicts still searching for a way to break the chains of addiction, and that's what being of service to this fellowship is all about.

The program I work teaches me to care for myself, take ownership of my actions, and cherish those

things most important to me. NA as a whole is VERY important to me, because I consider it a gift from my Higher Power.

Honestly, being of service to the fellowship isn't easy for me. And the reason it isn't easy is because I have this disease, this monkey on my back, if you will, that fights me at every turn.

Every addict, even this addict, has something to give to this fellowship, regardless of what our disease may tell us ~ maybe it's giving a hug to that newcomer, knowing how important that hug was to us, (that's giving back from the heart!) ~ Maybe it's putting out the ash trays or making the coffee so that I feel more a part of, and others feel more welcome ~ Maybe it's talking on the phone to another addict about the "God things" that happen in my life, so that my disease can hear me ex-

press real gratitude to the power that took me out of its clutches ~ Maybe it's making a commitment to chair meetings, having the willingness to hold one of our service positions, or just suiting up, showing up and having a voice at Group Conscience. You see, my disease wants me to believe I don't have anything to give, my voice doesn't count, and no one could ever reasonably depend on me for squat. So, I fight back, and one of the ways I do that is with service work.

I'm still the same rebellious person I have always been, only today I'm fighting my disease, (that's caring for myself) not the world, (that's taking ownership of my actions) and by being there for you (that's cherishing what is most important to me) ~

My spiritual medication has NA written all over it.

Keep Coming Back

Jimmy F.

My recovery has been great to me for several years now. It all started when I hit a bottom with my life, just like many addicts before me.

I was living in Kentucky at the time when I got clean in March of 1989; I was twenty-nine years old.

I was one of those fortunate addicts able to go to a treatment center to get a jumpstart on that recovery thing that those other addicts in the rooms were talking about. I had no idea, at the time, what it was going to be like to live life without having to use drugs on a daily basis.

All I knew then was the drugs weren't working for me anymore and I needed a way to deal with the pain I was feeling on the inside of me. Later on I would learn how to accept life on its own terms.

I discovered a lot in treatment about this disease, about myself, about how this disease affected me and everyone I came in contact with, and how this disease controlled everything I did. I was in the grip of this disease with no way out of my misery!

All that changed for me when I surrendered to this disease and admitted that I was an addict. This disease whipped my ass good!

When I finally surrendered, I was willing to try whatever it took to stay clean. I realized that I had no where else to go to get the help I needed with this disease. So I stayed in treatment and made an honest attempt to tell the truth about me.

Because that is where the problem was in the first place. I just didn't know it yet.

My recovery started when I left that treatment center.

For me, treatment was a discovery process. Now it was time for me to participate in my own... recovery process! It was time for me to make some decisions about my life and about my recovery.

I started this recovery process by going to a meeting the first day I was out of treatment. I got a sponsor the first week and called him almost everyday. I also went with him every week to the aftercare program at the treatment center for about a year.

I didn't have him as a sponsor very long. I just couldn't get comfortable enough with him to share my deepest, darkest secrets with him. I was afraid that he wouldn't like me or accept me as I was. I didn't give him a chance to get to know me. I wasn't willing.

He was my sponsor for about three months.

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Serenity Prayer Another Look

*God grant me
the serenity to
accept the people
I cannot
change.*

*The Courage to
change the one I
can.*

*And the Wisdom
to know it's me.*



WARNING SIGNS OF RELAPSE

1. **Exhaustion**--becoming overly tired or in poor health.
2. **Dishonesty**--begins with little lies and deceits. Eventually these become rationalizations which make excuses for not doing what the individual knows he/she must do for his/her continued recovery
3. **Impatience**--may involve frustration with things not happening fast enough, or others not doing what is expected of them
4. **Frustration**--may be with people or events.
5. **Self-pity**--a feeling of not being appreciated or being a victim of circumstances.
6. **Cockiness**--involves a feeling of having made it, of being able to enter situations which are far too risky. The cockiness involves a lack of recognition of the degree of risk in the situation.
7. **Complacency**--happens when the program which has helped maintain recovery is taken for granted. It's often said that relapse occurs more often when things are going well rather than otherwise.
8. **Expecting too much from others**--"I've changed, why hasn't everybody else?"
9. **Letting up on Discipline**--prayer, meditation, daily inventory, NA attendance, and good health practices are all involved in a successful recovery.
10. **Wanting too much**--setting unrealistic goals is dangerous. Happiness is not having what you want; it is wanting what you have.
11. **Forgetting gratitude**--looking negatively n life or concentrating on problems instead of the progress, dismisses our gratitude.
12. **It can't happen to me**--this is related to denial or minimizing the problem. This results in carelessness.
13. Being in the presence of **People, Places, and things**.
14. **Boredom**.

Get Involved

Our next Group Conscience is scheduled for Friday, November 17.

- Chairperson—Maureen
- Secretary—Abbey
- Alt. Secretary—Lisa
- Treasurer—Teresa
- Alt. Treasurer—Jimmy
- GSR—Cheri
- Alternate GSR—Jimmy
- Activities—Cheri
- Literature—Jimmy
- **H&I - OPEN**
- **P.I. — OPEN**

- P&P—Maureen
- Phone-list—Cheri
- Cell phone—Teresa
- Newsletter—Cheri

Anyone interested in submitted the front page story (Keep Coming Back for the month of December, please let Cheri T. know)

Any NA member can be a leader, and every NA member has the right to serve the fellowship. Effective NA leadership knows not only how to serve, but when it will serve best to step aside and allow others to take over. An entrenched bu-

reaucacy inhibits our fellowship's growth, while a regular influx of new leadership, balanced by continuity, inspires NA growth. The effective leader also knows that, in order to maintain the distinction in service between principles and personalities, it is important to observe the practice of rotation.

~A Guide To Local Services In Narcotics Anonymous", Fourth Concept. Page 6



Member's Voice

Why should I get involved with service?

When I first came into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous I heard a lot of talk about service work. I had no idea what they were talking about.

I thought why should I get involved in service. How could I be of any service to anyone in my condition?

I soon discovered that dumping ash trays and making coffee was being of service. And, I could do that.

After staying around for a little while, my willingness grew and I started to

chair meetings. Chairing meetings is another form of service work. There are many forms of service work.

By being involved in service I felt more like I was a part of. It helped keep my mind on something that was constructive.

I took my first service position of GSR-A for the group at about 90 days clean. It was great for me to be involved. Very soon I became the group's GSR, with less than 6 months

clean. It's certainly not suggested, but it worked for me.

I have been doing service work in some form or another from that point on, and I can't express how important it has been to my recovery. I've been around for a few twenty-four hours now and I still do service work of some kind or another. It's good for me, and good for the group ~ Kenny H.

When I came into the rooms this time around, one of the first suggestions I was given was to get involved in service. I was told that could be as simple as making the coffee and setting out ashtrays. I immediately began doing those things. I found that when the meeting started, I felt a sense of being "a part of" that I hadn't felt before. By helping to set up for a meeting, I had become an active participant in the process.

As time went by, I volunteered to chair some meetings. This was huge for me. I found that on nights when I was complacent about my recovery, I made it to a meeting because I had to be there to chair. I can't speak for everyone else, but the times when I don't want to go to a meeting are frequently when I most need to be there.

Chairing meetings made me accountable for my meeting attendance. By getting involved in chairing meetings, I began meeting and developing relationships with people in the meetings. Other addicts recognized me and would greet me when they saw me and they asked about me when they didn't.

Most importantly for me, being involved in service gets me out of my head. When I am doing things for the group or for individual members, I quit focusing on my own drama. I often hear myself giving someone else suggestions that I can implement in the situations I am in.

We are told when we come into the rooms that we can only keep what we have by giving it away. My personal experience has shown this to be true.

When I forget just how bad things were when I was in active addiction, a newcomer comes into the meeting and reminds me. I quit focusing on my latest crisis by sharing my experience, strength, and hope with them. I've been where they are and by sharing that, I am reminded what it was like and find some gratitude for where I am today.

The bottom line is this – I'm involved in service because without people in service, we don't have a meeting and we don't have the fellowship of NA.

NA has changed my life, and it's my turn to give back to ensure that others are given the same opportunity for change that I was granted.

~ Abbey M.



AREA INQUIRER

The WANA ASC meeting for the month of September was held at the Dose of Hope group in Grand Ridge on October 22.

SUBCOMMITTEES:

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Absent.
- ◆ Subcommittee members are still needed.

H & I

- ◆ Absent—A letter of concern will be sent to the H&I chairperson.
- ◆ Those willing to commit are still needed for two H&I meetings, if interested please contact Cheri T.

P.I. & Phone line

- ◆ Absent
- ◆ Subcommittee members are still needed.

POLICY

- ◆ Updated policy booklets were distributed. If you are interested in a copy of the area policy, see the group's GSR.
- ◆ Chain of responsibility outlined.
- ◆ Starting in November the Policy chair will be vacant.

ASC:

OPEN FORUM:

- ◆ Vice-chair will be taking on the responsibilities of Treasurer due to the term of the current Treasurer's term being up and resigned.
- ◆ An Ad-hoc committee will be formed in an effort to audit past spending and a budget for the upcoming year produced.
- ◆ It was discussed that we might possibly set up a booth at the National Peanut Festival next year.

More will be revealed.

NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS:

- ◆ Cheri T. officially stepped down from the Alt. Secretary position, due to other service commitments.
- ◆ Lori P. officially stepped down from the Treasurer position, due to fulfilled commitment.

SCHEDULE NEXT ASC:

Deliverance Group will host the next ASC on November 19.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- ◆ Motion to develop a written budget was withdrawn.
- ◆ Motion for New Freedoms to host the Basic review workshop failed.

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Fifth Concept

For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

The Fifth Concept helps us responsibly delegate our authority for NA services. In exercising the Fifth Concept, we make a simple, straightforward contract with our trusted servants. Right from the start, they know what we are asking of them, what decisions they are expected to make themselves, and to what degree we will hold them accountable for the service work they do on our behalf. ~ *Twelve Concepts for NA Service, pg 12*

What's Going On?

Clean & Crazy
First Annual
Spiritual
Retreat

Journey to Serenity

November 10-12, 2006

Roland Cooper State Park

Do you just need to get away from it all and *Calgon* just isn't doing the trick?

Well, get out your camping gear and join us for Clean and Crazy's First Annual Spiritual Retreat "Journey to Serenity" November 10-12 at Roland Cooper State Park.

For more information see the posted flyer or ask any chairperson.

- ◆ To keep the cost down for everyone a Food Donation sign up sheet is posted.
- ◆ There will be an auction on Saturday night. If you have any donations of NA related items, they will be greatly appreciated.
- ◆ **No registration fee!!!!** Group donations and newcomer donations will be accepted. Newcomer donations will go toward the purchase of Basic Text, It Works How and Why and Step Working Guides.
- ◆ If you need a ride, ask you sponsor :-) This will be a great opportunity for one on one sponsee/sponsor get-togethers.

Tradition Five

"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."

"All our groups can do is plant the seed for recovery and bring addicts together so that the message of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work. The purpose of this tradition is to ensure that this atmosphere of recovery is maintained. This can only be achieved by keeping our groups recovery-oriented... 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." ~ *Basic Text, pg. 64—65*



12 QUALITIES OF SPONSORSHIP

1. I will not help you to stay and wallow in limbo.
2. I will help you to grow, to become more productive, by your definition.
3. I will help you become more autonomous, more loving of yourself, more excited, less sensitive, more free to become the authority for your own living.
4. I can not give you dreams or "fix you up" simply because I can not.
5. I can not give you growth, or grow for you. You must grow for yourself by facing reality, grim as it may be at times.
6. I can not take away your loneliness or your pain.
7. I can not sense your world for you, evaluate your goals for you, or tell you what is best for your world, because you have your own world you must live in.
8. I can not convince you of the necessity to make the vital decision of choosing the frightening uncertainty of growing over the safe misery of remaining static.
9. I want to be with you and know you as a rich and growing friend, yet I can not get close to you when you choose not to grow.
10. When I begin to take care of you out of pity, or when I begin to lose faith in you, then I am inhibiting for both you and me.
11. You must know and understand my help is conditional. I will be with you and "hang in there" with you so long as I continue to get even the slightest hint that you are still trying to grow.
12. If you can accept this, then perhaps we can help each other to become what God meant us to be, mature adults, leaving childishness forever to the children of the world.

- Author Unknown

DOES YOUR REPUTATION HAVE CHARACTER?

Regardless of the Twelfth Tradition, there are still some big personalities in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. You know who they are. They love to be the center of attention at every meeting and function they go to, and have their little entourage of recovering addicts who follow them wherever they go.

And, unfortunately, sometimes these "personalities" go back out, as any of us are susceptible to if we don't do what we have to for our recovery.

But when these people go back out, they leave a lot of bewildered recovering addicts stumbling around, wondering what went wrong.

How did this great recovery giant go back out? How can that be possible?

Well, I can go back out very easily, if my program is built on reputation without character.

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At about seven months clean, I met a lady in the treatment center in my town that I went into for the NA meetings. We became friends at first, then it became more than that. She is my wife today. She has just celebrated seventeen years clean in October. Yes, Miracles do happen in recovery!

So now I was seeking for another sponsor. I picked a guy that had the roughest, toughest recovery talk in the group I was attending. Since I was willing to let this guy

Let me explain. If I have a strong, likeable personality and the gift of gab, then I can become very popular at a lot of the NA meetings and functions I go to. Add to that a few years under my belt, and I can gain quite a reputation with those who are misinformed about the Traditions.

The truth is, reputation is fleeting. That's because it is nothing more than how others perceive me. And if anything occurs that causes them to change their perception of me, then my reputation is changed forever, and possibly at the cost of my recovery.

So how can I insure that I won't fall victim to the "reputation curse"?

By making sure I have something that's even more important than a good reputation, and that is character.

Don't get so caught up in my image - or how others see me - that I forget who I really am, or wish to be.

get to know me, I became willing to try to work the steps as well.

This sponsor showed me how to apply the first three steps in my life. We also worked on a small fourth step too.

After awhile it was time for me to find another sponsor. This time it was not because I wasn't willing, it was because I was outgrowing my sponsor. I needed more from him about the steps but he became unwilling to continue to work his own program and eventually went back to using.

Character comes from practicing the principles of this program in all my affairs, from living the life expected of a recovering addict.

Practice honesty. An honest person has nothing to lose because there are no lies or false facades to protect.

Have integrity. If you always do the right thing for the right reasons, others will trust you and have faith in you.

Learn anonymity. Remember that the most important person in NA is the one just walking in the door, and that the rest of us are here to serve, not to be catered to. Protect the recovery of others as much as you do your own and you will find friends who will stick with you even in the toughest times.

So work on building your character instead of a reputation. A true reputation will follow on it's own, and it will endure a lot longer. - *Anonymous*

He was my sponsor for about two years. I truly believe that the first year clean was a gift from my Higher Power. And the rest I have had to work for by living this program to the best of my ability.

I wanted more out of this recovery process than just staying clean. I wanted to get better ...spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically too. Again I was seeking another sponsor. I asked another guy in my NA home group that, not only talked the NA talk, but he

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Service Begins With Me

Service, an important aspect of my recovery, begins with me my willingness, my commitment, and my desire to stay clean.

Many times I have heard our trusted servants whine and complain that there is a lack of addicts willing to serve, then try to manipulate others into serving. True, there is a lack of addicts who are willing to commit and serve in our fellowship, but I believe we need to make service attractive. Whining, complaining, shaming, and manipulating are not very attractive to most people myself included.

I believe we need to make service attractive. Whining, complaining, shaming, and manipulating are not very attractive to most people myself included.

We need to talk positively about our service experiences to let addicts know of the opportunities for growth and recovery that exist within

service. Why not politely invite a spouse, a friend, or the person sitting next to us at our home group to attend the next group conscience/business meeting, or an area subcommittee meeting, or the area service committee meeting?

I have had the opportunity to work with addicts at every level of NAs service structure: group, area, region, zone, and world. The experience, knowledge, and spiritual growth I have received from this involvement have been immeasurable in my recovery. But you do not need to start off as co-facilitator of the World Service Conference to receive these benefits; just start, as I did, at your home group.

My involvement with my home group gave me (and still gives me) the opportunity to meet new people and really feel a part of Narcotics Anonymous, as does my work at all service levels. In

addition, I have learned to work with others, discovered some of my abilities and talents (one being the ability to disagree without being disagreeable), improved my self-esteem, become aware that I did not need to be right or have my way all the time, and developed some very strong, loving relationships.

I suggest that recovering addicts get involved in service. Anyone can attend a group conscience/business or subcommittee meeting and anyone can receive the benefits and personal growth that come with giving away what was so freely given. I have heard it said that service is gratitude in action.

So please show your gratitude today.

*A grateful addict in service, Mike B, Manitoba, Canada
The NA Way Magazine,
Oct 2004, Page 16)*

On Being a Coffee Maker

One of my sponsors always said that there were two things that would get a person into the steps faster than anything else: relationships and service. For me, it was service.

Being of service in Narcotics Anonymous has been an experience of joy and growth for me.

To feel the joy, there sometimes has been sadness; to grow, there sometimes has been pain. But it's all part of the process of recovery.

The pain has generally come from the battering my ego and pride have sometimes suffered, yet this has been the source of the greatest change that has taken place in me. My ego was so big to begin with, it had to be smashed; and the clash of personalities and principles that are so much a part of service and of the fellowship are just what I needed to learn how to live, work and socialize with other human beings.

One of the things I'm doing

in service now is something I am enjoying more than anything I've done in a long time. I'm making coffee again! And it's wonderful.

It gets me to the meeting regularly, and forces me to do what was suggested to me in the beginning: come early and stay late.

I have felt a strong need for the intimacy which can come from close involvement in a home group. I've had a lot of trouble with my disease isolating me from

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Top 10 Reasons to go to a Meeting

1. In order to feel the atmosphere of recovery. Nine times out of ten, I feel much better after attending a meeting, no matter how I felt before going.
2. To learn how to apply the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions in my daily life. Meetings are a good place to learn about practicing these principles in all my affairs.
3. To share my experience, strength, and hope. This is so I can help others, just as others shared their recovery to help me.
4. To watch others grow in their recovery and to grow in my own recovery. One of the most beautiful experiences life offers me today is the joy of watching a newcomer grow right before my eyes. A loving God, working through clean NA members brings about many miracles in all our lives. This is proof of the fact that NA works if you work it!
5. In order to spend time with other recovering men and women. I've found more caring and sharing people in my recovery than I, at one time, believed existed. I can recall very well a time in life (quite a long

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period of time) when I believed very few people cared about anyone but themselves. How wrong I was!

- 6. To be reminded of where I came from and what awaits me if I pick up that first drug. "If we use, we lose."
- 7. To be with men and women I truly love and who care about me—and show it.
- 8. To see many smiling faces and to return those smiles. Everyone needs to be with people who are happy.
- 9. To hear my Higher Power speak through recovering addicts. Since I haven't got a direct line to God, that is the way my HP works: through others and through me.
- 10. Just because I'm an addict. Attending NA meetings allows me and anyone else who wants to recover to feel very good about what we as a fellowship of men and women are doing: staying clean a day at a time, losing the desire to use, and learning a new way of life. I love Narcotics Anonymous.

~ Anonymous

SOWING SEEDS IN SERVICE

We hear a lot about apathy in service, and it is a big problem in NA. Ten percent of the people doing one hundred percent of the work. Others unwilling to get involved in service for whatever reason.

We know it all too well.

Well, this article isn't intended for those who don't do service work. I want to address those of us who do service. Before we start complaining too loud about others who won't get involved, let's take a good long look at ourselves.

When was the last time you talked to others about getting involved in service.

When was the last time you volunteered to give someone a ride to a service meeting, to help them learn a new service

position, or even offer to be their alternate if they were willing to take on a service position?

How many sponsees do you have? How many of them are actively involved in service? What about the ones who aren't?

My sponsor has a requirement: to be his sponsee you must be involved in service. "What? I can't put requirements like that on my sponsees!" Who says you can't? Your sponsees?

Service is more than just sitting on a chair and giving reports. It is also my duty as a service member to be proactive in searching for the person who will replace me when I leave the service position.

After all, who better to know

what characteristics will work best for the service position then the person who is currently filling it? Who better to train the next person to fill the position than the person who currently holds it?

Too often we see someone finish up a service position and leave their replacement clueless as to what to do - or even worse, leave the spot vacant without even attempting to help find a replacement.

As recovering addicts, we are here to carry the message and to sow seeds.

What better way to start than to do our best to make sure that service positions are in capable hands when we leave them, to insure that the message of NA will carry on. ~Anonymous

NA Bullshit Bingo

Issues	Inner-Child	Living Amends	Meaningful Relationships	Didn't mean to use
I'm stuck on Step ???	Couldn't find a meeting	Oh, The pain	Can't Change	Won't Change
Yeah, but...	Yeah, but...Don't you think	Rage	Misunderstood	Rational Recovery
Searching (As in, "for answers")	Dysfunctional	Never	Gonna (sometimes prefaces with I'm)	I've been thinking
She/He said	Recovering person	My sponsor has been out of town	I heard	I don't know much about this, but...

Do you keep falling asleep in meetings? What about those long and boring using stories?? Get tired of the same old slogan babble, or members who continue to deal with the same problems, same defects, and same painful relationships FOR YEARS?

Here's a way to change all that!

- 1. Check off the appropriate block when you hear one of the words or phrases above at a meeting.
- 2. When you get five blocks horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, stand up and shout "BULLSHIT."

TESTIMONIALS FROM SATISFIED "NA BULLSHIT BINGO" PLAYERS

"I had been in the meeting for only five minutes when I won" ~ Adam W., Atlanta

"My attention span at meetings has improved dramatically." ~ David T., Tampa

"The atmosphere was tense in the last "Gratitude" meeting as 14 of us waited for the fifth box." Ben G., Denver

"The speaker was stunned as 8 of us screamed out 'BULLSHIT' for the third time in 20 minutes." ~ C.J. ~ Miami



What did you do today?

So you've been around for many years, helping to spread NA.

You worked like hell when you first arrived, but what did you do today?

I heard your pitch, it was kind of long, you really told us how. You worked the steps in '96, but how are you working them now?

Do you still get up

from your soft comfy bed when someone is in trouble? Do you grab your hat and Basic Text and get there on the double?

Or have you forgotten the early times, when you were sort of new? Maybe you've been around so long that Recovery is old hat to you.

Maybe you're one of the senior saints, clean and satisfied. And you've forgotten

when you were sick, and when you damn dear died.

Maybe I shouldn't bring it up. Maybe you're just too blasé. But just for the hell of it, mister, what did you do today?

Have you been around so blasted long that you leave it to Mary or Sam?

Cause you've done your fair share and really don't give a damn.

Well, mister, you have a perfect right to work your own NA. And you know you'll do it your way, no matter what we say.

But tonight before you go to bed, just look in the mirror and pray that you and your God know the answer to:

What Did You Do Today??

~ Anonymous

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other addicts and from myself trouble with knowing a lot of people but being close to few. So, for me, it's back to basics.

What I want to share about being a coffeemaker is that I think it's the highest most prestigious position of service which exists in Narcotics Anonymous.

Most people think that service at the group, area, regional and world level is an uphill progression to greater glory, power, prestige and recognition. But, believe me, nothing could be farther from the truth. If anything, it's a downhill path of greater anonymity, self-sacrifice, hard work and responsibility.

I know most people think it's the other way around. If you're looking for applause and recognition, however, make coffee. Speakers, treasurers, group service representatives and secretaries all take a back seat to the *coffeemakers* in the applause department.

So, after five and a half years clean, I am basking in the glory of making coffee these days, allowing the love and respect of the fellowship to be heaped upon me. What a thrill!!!

Being a trusted servant has enhanced my membership and my recovery in Narcotics Anonymous forever. Today, my gratitude must be expressed in action.

I must give freely and gratefully that which was freely and gratefully given to me. I want what I have and am willing to do anything to keep it.

Anonymous, California

(Continued from page 4)

walked the NA walk in his life and in all his affairs. I liked how he lived his program and I wanted him to show me how to do it better than I was doing it before.

So I started working on me and my character defects with the help of a sponsor! We worked steps one, two and three...the best preparation for a fourth step. I started working the fourth step with my sponsor and I found out that I had a lot of liabilities and a lot of assets too. As well as resentments, anger and fear. Who would have thought that I would have had all this garbage stuffed down so deep that I had to use drugs just to deal with the feelings.

My sponsor helped me to sort through some of the findings in this fourth step. He was able to show me where I was self-centered, self-seeking, selfish, dishonest and inconsiderate of others. The pain of the truth about me, the reality of my past, and the feelings that I would have to feel to complete this fourth step convinced me to put it off for

about 5 years. Which left me with some unresolved anger, resentment and fear. I was still able to make amends to people, places and things, etc. whenever my Higher Power saw fit for me to do so, and when I was willing to do so.

But I also acted out in my character defects too because I still hadn't worked the remaining steps with my sponsor. I had to pay the consequences of my actions from time to time. Sometimes bad and sometimes not so bad. But it still didn't feel right in my gut. I was unwilling to talk about it with my sponsor or anyone else, including my wife. So I was miserable in my recovery for awhile.

My relationship with my Higher Power is what kept me from losing my mind. The desire to use has never come back into my life since I have been clean. For that I am truly grateful for.

My wife and I went to both Fellowships for about eight years. We decided that NA was our home. It covers everything...period!!!

My wife and I decided together to move to southeast Alabama where almost all of

my family lives here today. We made this choice in May of 2005. We moved here in June of 2005. We are a lot closer to my family now.

It has really been a struggle here. Finding work, a place to live within our means, medical issues without insurance, at times, etc. You know, life on its own terms.

Things are getting better now. When we first moved here we knew where some of the NA meetings were. We lived with my brother and my mother respectively, for about a year. My wife and I had jobs and a roof over our heads and our belongings in storage.

Now, we are in our own home just a few miles from our new NA home group...the best home group in the world ~ the Clean & Crazy group.

Once again I have a new sponsor. I like the way he lives his program, and I would like for him to show me how to do it better than the way I was doing it before.

We do recover; and I'm ready to continue the journey.!!!

