

NEWSLETTER

April/May 2014



Misogyny is Not a Spiritual Principle

by Naomi L. • illustration by Heather A.

mi-sog-y-ny [mi-soj-uh-nee] *noun* : hatred, dislike, or mistrust of women.

When I came to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, my first home group elected a key tag guy who liked to do the fun little sayings for each color. “Duct tape gray! Stick and stay!” and such. The one-year key tag “glows in the dark, so you don’t have to” is how it often goes, but he was fond of saying it “glows in the dark so you can find your keys on the newcomer’s floor.” He, like a lot of men in the fellowship, didn’t seem to understand how offensive that statement is, especially in a room full of women who had statistically experienced greater levels of physical and sexual violence before coming into the rooms than even their non-addict counterparts. A staggering 75% of women in treatment programs for drug and alcohol abuse report having been sexually abused.

These women come in broken and traumatized, and treating them as sexual conquests becomes a big joke or a game. I’ve witnessed and heard plenty of stories of men with enough clean time to “know better” prey upon these women as if they showed up in the rooms just for the enjoyment of the men. It breaks my heart to think of how many of those women went back out and never made it back to the rooms after being used like any other drug and tossed aside when they became attached or were too “crazy” or a fresher piece of newcomer meat came along. Is this the message we want to give to women about what recovery is all about?

I will concede that is a blatant example that isn’t necessarily representative of the most common type of disdain for women that comes up on a regular basis. More often than not, it’s a more subtly insidious devaluing of the feminine that I hear and see in the rooms. Our literature tells us we need to “grow up, or die.” Nowhere does it say we need to “man up” or “grow a pair,” but I hear those phrases all the time in the rooms. Recently, a sister in recovery was in a meeting where a gentleman was sharing about his feelings and then said, “I sound like I have a pussy in my pocket.” Let that one sink in for a minute. That word gets used a LOT to imply weakness or to dismiss feelings, which are clearly implied here to be undesirably feminine qualities that no “real man” should have.

Nowhere have I found in our literature where it states that having feelings or talking about them makes one less of a man. Feelings are a human reality, not a female defect. As members of this fellowship we all have a responsibility to create an atmosphere of recovery, one that is inclusive, supportive and non-discriminatory. This isn’t about being politically correct, but about being sensitive to our fellow recovering addicts and self-aware enough to recognize when our words and actions affect other people. The reality is this is just as problematic for the men in the fellowship as it is for the women. It sends a message to our male fellows that their feelings are invalid and they need to shove those down and away, lest they look or sound like a girl. Isn’t that what kept us loaded in the first place? *(Continued on page 3)*

24-Hour Helpline
206-790-8888
Call before you use!

Seattle Area NA Website
www.seattlena.org
NA World Services
www.na.org

IN THIS ISSUE:

If Not the Service System, Then What? • Artwork • Haiku • Remembering Andy W. • 28 Days • Events & Announcements • Message From the Activities Chair • Clean Time Birthdays

If Not the Service System, Then What? *by Anonymous*

I have heard it said that, “you cannot fight something with nothing.” If the service system (SS) is not to your liking, then what would you suggest? The process to offer alternatives has been eliminated from the current service structure.

The way I remember things before the establishment of the World Board (WB) in 1998 was that things worked more openly. For one thing, the reporting was regularly distributed and the author of the report was named. Second, *The NA Way* was a recovery magazine — not a propaganda tool. Third, the *Newsline* was a regularly published report about what was happening in NA. And, finally, the *Fellowship Report* was a standard publication that helped everyone stay informed about what was happening in our Service Structure.

Since the WB took the helm of all of our service efforts, information has been harder to obtain. This brings to mind an old saying, “Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.” The WB wants to simply tell us everything; it appears that they have no interest in involving us. Perhaps this is why very few members know how draconian the SS project really is or that the WB has so far spent \$500,000 (and wants to spend more) telling us what they want us to hear. If more members knew these things, the outcry would be even more deafening.

We are told that the SS is something that was requested by the NA Fellowship. When I did some research, I found that it was from a motion made and seconded by WB members at the World Service Conference (WSC) in 2008. Motion #32, “To approve the Service System project plan for inclusion in the 2008 – 2010 Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. budget.” The NA Groups did not get a voice on this decision nor was it published in the Conference Agenda Report (CAR). It has also been suggested that the motion arose out of responses to Issue

Discussion Topics (IDTs) that are selected at every WSC. In 2002 the process for selecting IDTs was re-established by a motion from the WB. Motion #2; “To remove the selection of Issue Discussion Topics from future Conference Agenda Reports.” This insured that the IDTs would be proposed, discussed, and decided upon primarily by the WB at each WSC. In the 2008 CAR/IDT essay, the WB claimed, “Repeatedly over the course of these four years — back to when the WB began primarily deciding the IDTs — we have heard that we need better communication, less duplication of efforts, more training, and more effective delegation, among many other responses. We need to find a way to make service more attractive, more accessible, and more supportive.” The WB continued on and made a very revealing proclamation. “We’re not suggesting that local service bodies should cease all but essential services for a years-long inventory process, but we are thinking that we need to re-examine our service structure in a broad sense. Perhaps some of our chronic problems mentioned above can be alleviated through restructuring local services in some way.” Therefore the “chronic problems” that have been plaguing our Service Structure since 1976 can be availed by implementing the following three Motions proposed by the WB at WSC 2014:

Motion 4: To agree in principle to move in the direction of a service system that contains group support forums: discussion-oriented gatherings focused on the needs of the group.

Motion 5: To agree in principle to move in the direction of a service system that contains local service conferences: strategic service-oriented planning conferences.

Motion 6: To agree in principle to move in the direction of a service system that contains local service boards: a body overseen by the local service conference that administers the work prioritized by the LSC.

Additionally, the “chronic problems” can be significantly alleviated by implementing the following two Motions proposed by the WB at WSC 2014:

Motion 2: To adopt the following as WSC policy: “Seating at the biennial meeting of the WSC is limited to one delegate per region.”

Motion 3: To adopt the following as WSC policy: “The World Service Conference does not automatically fund attendance of delegates. Delegates from regions that are unable to fully fund themselves may request funding from the World Board.”

Note: Who do you suppose will qualify to receive this funding, and why?

After six years and \$500,000, this is what they have come up with. Wow, is a word that does not come to mind. What does come to mind is, what did they spend \$500,000 on? Well, I asked, and I was told, “We are not able to provide a more detailed breakdown of the expenses related to the service system project. One important factor to consider is that we cannot assign expenses to an individual task in the way that would be needed to provide such a breakdown. For example we may travel to an event and hold a session related to the SSP, while also facilitating several others on different topics, making it impossible to determine which costs associated with the workshop are applicable to the project.” What? Accountability? I was given a single vague attempt at specific dollar amounts. From, “July 2010 to July 2011, \$146,348 was assigned as being the expenses for the five service system workshops in the US.” I then had to ask, “How on earth can five workshops average close to \$30,000 each?” The response to that question came with much more detail. “While we aren’t able to provide a detailed breakdown for the cost for each of the service system workshops we can say in a general sense that the expense for an event of that type is somewhere close to \$20,000 to \$30,000. When considering the cost and possibly comparing it to something like a local convention it is important to consider that there is no registration fee charged for an event of this type, and no room

Artwork *by Taylor W.*



block to offset the cost of the meeting space.” I can’t find any information about where or when these “workshops” were held, or how many people attended from the Fellowship. I did find a report about a “workshop” in Baltimore, Maryland from October 29 – 31, 2010 on the New England Regional website. The report identified as, “Present from the World Board and NA World Services (NAWS) are: Ron B (WB) from Australia, Piet (WB) from Sweden, Tonia (WB) from Greece, Craig (former WB, now SS Workgroup), from Philadelphia, Jane N (NAWS) Public Relations, from California, Irene (NAWS) from California.” The author of the report estimated that the attendance was, “maybe 75 – 100 people.” Therefore, registration for the Baltimore “workshop” should have been \$300 per participant to “offset the cost of the meeting space.”

Here is my idea: let’s stash the next \$500,000 we think about spending on this project in the bank. Ask the Fellowship for input on ways to develop a template on how every Area Service Committee (ASC) can implement an agenda that starts with a process that focuses on group issues and concerns before moving into the tried and true protocol of today’s ASC. After that segment of the ASC is over every Group Service Representative (GSR) that wants to take part stays, and every GSR that would rather not participate leaves, and they can all read about the proceedings when the minutes are distributed.

Another of the WB’s assertions is that the “professionals” can’t find us, to refer their addict clients to us. Therefore, let’s ask the Fellowship for input on ways to develop a web site that would allow a “professional” and us a way to click on a map and get the contact information for NA, be it in Timbuktu or Katmandu. Then let’s take the \$500,000 out of the bank and pay a professional — hopefully one of us — to produce such a web site and fund it for years and years.

Then we need to take back our Fellowship to insure this type of nonsense stops. We were a Fellowship that had an office; we’ve become an Office that has a fellowship. Why is the electronic version of our Basic Text sold by outside enterprises and costs over eight dollars? Why does it take almost every dollar passed on from every United States Group, Area and Region to pay three people’s salaries at the corporation? We need to move the office to a site that is not located in one of the highest rent locations in the country. We need to make ALL of our literature available at cost; our primary purpose does not seem to align with the purpose of the corporation. We need to go back to having our WSC run by Trusted Servants, which could be easily done by returning to the 1981 green service manual. Beginning in 2015, a reinvigorated WSC could be held someplace outside of the expensive Los Angeles vicinity. The flyer for next year’s WSC could be distributed at this year’s WSC, which will be the final one controlled by the corporation. This would solve all of the “chronic problems” mentioned in the 2008 WSC minutes by the WB, because it would be returning our Service Structure to the Fellowship and the open participatory service structure could begin again.

When you are on the pro side you are half way to victory, especially when there is not a con side. This is why I began my letter with the following, “you cannot fight something with nothing.” I am proposing something to fight against the nothing that is the SS project.

Challenges today

**Do not define who you are
Dealing with them will**

– haiku by Chris M.

Remembering Andy W.

by Jeannie E.

A member of our NA family passed away — Andy W. We met at an ANA dance, 27 years ago, and have been good friends since, as he was with so many. His service to the fellowship was long standing. He will be missed by those who knew him.

28 Days by David N.

I’m writing this 28 days shy of my five-year clean date. So many things have changed in my life due to the program, both good and bad. However, the good does outweigh the bad. This is not to say that I have the perfect life. I still struggle with so many things: job, housing, DOC, PTSD, and a few others. Sometimes it seems that life is one battle after another. I know the struggles I’m facing are mostly due to the wreckage of my past life. I have spent way too much of my life incarcerated — which is my own fault. Because of the time I spent in prison, I have a hard time doing some of the everyday things many people take for granted, like being employable, having good credit, being able to rent an apartment, talking to people, and smiling. Yes, that’s right; I have a hard time smiling. I had to be the tough guy for so long that I forgot how to smile. I’m really not that tough, but I guess that’s why I had to have the facade. Getting a place to live has been hard for me. People don’t want to rent to a felon. It took me a while but I found some good people in the program who were willing to share a place with me. I’m making some headway with the job situation as well; I see an employment specialist (who would have thought there was such a thing?!). I get treatment for the PTSD and I seem to be doing better. I still have times I just want to go home, go in my room, stay there and hide from the world. As a matter of fact, I had one today. What can I say about DOC? They’re not there to help me; they’re there to put me back in jail if I mess up. Or maybe that’s just the PTSD talking but I don’t think so.

With all this going on in my life, I seem to make it anyway. I get help outside of NA when I need it. However, I get plenty of help from the program. Without NA, I would not be doing anything for myself. Most likely, I would be back in prison. With almost five years clean, I still struggle but I don’t give up. I’m sure a lot of people are facing the same problems that I do. I just want you to know that you’re not alone, so don’t give up! Talk to someone, go to a meeting, get a sponsor and work with them. That’s what I did and still do. Having a connection with a Higher Power has gotten me through the hardest times. And no matter what, I don’t use! No matter what!

Misogyny is Not a Spiritual Principle

(continued from page 1)

I hear often that these are just words; words don’t matter. Narcotics Anonymous, on the other hand, places a high value on our words. We contend that our language is what sets us apart from other fellowships. We have collectively spent countless hours to craft our literature with just the right words to convey our message in a way that is accessible to any addict. Just as it is our responsibility to carry the message of NA to the newcomer, it is also our responsibility to be an example of what it means to respect our NA family with our words and actions.

I love Narcotics Anonymous. I have truly found a home here and am grateful for this program of recovery. It’s an unfortunate reality, however, that it is not always as comfortable of a place for women to recover as it is for men. My hope is that our true spiritual principles will guide us to grow to become an even more inclusive place to get clean and stay clean.

Events & Announcements

First Thought Wrong presents "A Taste of Recovery"
5th Anniversary Potluck and Meeting Celebration
Wednesday, April 16th, 6:00 PM
Life Community Church, 17418 108th Ave SE, Renton

Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 19th
Carkeek Park, 950 NW Carkeek Park Rd, Seattle

SKCAMR 29th Annual Men's Retreat "No Hiding Allowed"

Friday, May 2nd – Sunday, May 4th
SKIBACS Lodge, Crystal Mountain Ski Area
Cost: \$75.00 pp
More info: Chris S. (206) 786-7952, email bigchriss.cs@gmail.com or
Rodney W. (206) 794-1866, email rodney7493@gmail.com


Relationship Workshop

Saturday, May 17th
Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, 1729 Harvard Ave, Seattle

WNIRCNA XXIX: A Lifelong Journey

29th Washington Northern Idaho Regional Convention of NA
Friday, May 23rd – Sunday, May 25th
Red Lion Hotel at the Park
303 West North River Drive, Spokane
Online pre-registration is OPEN until April 18th at wnirna-reg.org

7th Annual Sisters In Spirit Women's Retreat

Friday, May 30th – Sunday, June 1st
Camp Burton, Vashon Island
\$156.75 for the whole weekend!
See Jen B. or Articia H. for more info
 facebook.com/events/1381438622120669/

SINAC 2014

Seattle International NA Convention
Friday, July 25th – Sunday, July 27th
3711 196th St SW, Lynnwood
For more information or to register, visit seattlenaconvention.org

Message From the Activities

Chair *by Yvette C.*

Hello everyone! I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for voting me in as the new Chair for the Activities Committee 2014. I am having a lot of fun in this position so far and I am learning a lot. I really appreciate the opportunity to serve as your Chair and I look forward to a great year of activities!

A big thank-you to everyone on the committee thus far for all of your help and hard work. Everyone's ideas and contributions have been great and much appreciated.

Our next event is the Egg Hunt on April 19th at Carkeek Park. GSRs, please ask your home groups if they can donate any small toys and/or gifts for the kids. Please contact me if your group is able to donate anything. You can email me at activities-chair@seattlena.org, or call or text me at (206) 834-5569.

May 17th is the Relationship Workshop. It will be held at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church in Seattle. I would like to ask all GSRs to go back to your home groups and ask about specific topics and speakers you would like to hear at the workshop. Please make a list and send it to me no later than April 24th. You can also text any topics to Valentina T. at (425) 273-4470. We will meet at the church every Thursday in April at 6:30 PM to prepare for the Workshop. All are welcome!

The Activities Committee will no longer meet at the Lake City Community Center. We will now meet at our new location every first and third Thursday of the month, 6:30 PM at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, 1729 Harvard Avenue in Seattle. Anyone who would like their voice heard for any activity is encouraged to attend.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our events. Please come and show your support for Seattle Area NA Activities. Let's do this and have some fun in recovery!

Thank you again for this opportunity to be of service!

With Love and Gratitude,

Yvette C.
(Your 2014 Activities Chair)

Clean Time Birthdays

Rhonda D..... 05/01/91 (23 years)	Angie P. 04/14/08 (6 years)	Kevin R. 05/22/11 (3 years)
Dallarie 05/11/91 (23 years)	Dawn L..... 05/17/08 (6 years)	Chris G..... 04/17/12 (2 years)
Johnnie..... 05/22/92 (22 years)	Virág (V.) H..... 05/23/08 (6 years)	Christopher G..... 04/30/12 (2 years)
David E. 04/09/97 (17 years)	Bob R. 05/29/09 (5 years)	Kayla P..... 05/04/12 (2 years)
Norma C. 05/20/00 (14 years)	Henry P. 04/02/10 (4 years)	Jeff H. 04/20/13 (1 year)
Ray W. 04/17/05 (9 years)	Jenny L. 04/08/10 (4 years)	Jamie S. 04/26/13 (1 year)
Katie E..... 04/30/05 (9 years)	Travis B.H. 05/23/10 (4 years)	Chris M. 05/07/13 (1 year)
Robert V..... 04/08/08 (6 years)	Trina M. 04/13/11 (3 years)	
Shanna M..... 04/13/08 (6 years)	Nik J. 05/07/11 (3 years)	

If you would like to have your NA birthday included in this publication, please email the Newsletter Coordinator at newsletter@seattlena.org. If you do not have access to a computer, feel free to call or text (206) 234-2125. **The cutoff for the June/July issue is Sunday, May 25th.**

Congratulations!