

NEW ATTITUDES

THAT NO ADDICT SEEKING RECOVERY NEED EVER DIE

NORVANA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011

CONUNDRUMS IN SERVICE

Merriam-Webster online defines conundrum as “something hard to understand or explain.” Since coming to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous I’ve come across many conundrums. The first one for me was, if NA was a spiritual, not religious program, why was there so much talk about God?

Other conundrums that have given me pause are: NA was adapted from AA, so why do some people get upset when AA is mentioned by name instead of “the other Fellowship”? Why do we include “and are under no surveillance at any time” when reading *What Is The Narcotics Anonymous Program* in a prison meeting? If

trusted servants are truly trusted, why aren’t they trusted to govern? “Principles before personalities”.... Aren’t principles part of my personality? “We can only keep what we have by giving it away.” *Say what?* There are others but I think you get my point.

I started using, continued to use, then got clean in Northern Virginia before moving to Southeastern Pennsylvania with less than two years in the program. My sponsor believed that getting into service would not only help me in my recovery, it would give me the opportunity to meet people in a new Area. She knew something I’d wanted a long time was to be “a part



of.” Most of my pre-using life had been spent as a loner and the idea of being a part of something was very appealing. Service work seemed to be the answer, and throughout the years, being in service has saved my ass on more than one occasion.

Being in service brings me to my all-time favorite conundrum: Area Circus. The first time I ever heard those words was after a

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

- *Essays*
- *Artwork*
- *Poetry*
- *October is the tenth month, so in our next issue, we’ll look at the 10th Step. Please share your experience, strength, and hope.*

Email your submissions to norvananewsletter12@gmail.com

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PARTING WAYS

I have given a great deal of thought to this letter. I’ve started it over and over, never finding a way to bring it to a close. Truth is, I don’t want to write it – like a bad tummy ache, I just want to go to sleep and wake up and have it gone. I have

to write it, I have to say out loud that I have clearly fallen short as your sponsor. It is evident that I am unable to give you whatever it is you seek....you see no growth, no change, no improvement in your life and your beliefs about

yourself and for that I am truly sorry.

I start first with the wondering – how did I get here, what did I think I could offer, why did I accept the challenge when even in the beginning it was fraught with



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CONUNDRUM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE:

meeting in Haverton, PA, while talking to a GSR about how to get involved. He suggested I go to Area Circus and check it out. *Area Circus?* When he finished laughing at the confused look on my face, he said he really meant Area Service, a place where GSRs meet to discuss Group and Area issues and needs. Then he gave me a meeting list, which listed the day, time, and place.

The closer it got to the next ASC meeting, the more I looked forward to going. I've only been to three, maybe four circuses in my life and remember how I couldn't wait to go and how much I enjoyed it once I got there. While waiting for the day of Area Service to begin, I felt

like a kid all over again... the way the days leading up to it seemed to drag on f-o-r-e-v-e-r, the anticipation of everything I'd see, the uncertainty of something new. I knew a circus was exciting, amazing, and fun-filled, so I figured the ASC meeting would be much the same...without the popcorn, cotton candy, and clowns.

A circus follows a schedule, is organized, and more often than not, is a safe place. It can even be a learning experience. Those involved have a mindset "outsiders" probably wouldn't understand and they work together to keep the circus from folding. Sound at all familiar? My first ASC meeting *was* just like a circus and I had a ball! Think about it. When is the last time you

went to a circus and *didn't* have fun?

Most of my conundrums have been explained, although I'm fairly certain I'll find more. I'm truly grateful for the people who are in my life because of this program. They give me the opportunity to learn and grow, in my time, not theirs. They don't laugh at my questions or concerns. They simply share the things they didn't understand when they were newcomers and assure me understanding will come...as long as I stay, and stay involved.

By the way, I was wrong about the clowns.

*My gratitude speaks when I care and when I share
with others the NA way*

PARTING WAYS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE:

chaos and insanity. I am sure that I was arrogant, thought I might make a difference – and I followed the same path that I had with all my sponsees - same steps, same information, same process, tailored a bit here and there as time went on to suit a sponsee's needs and direction – but in this case it

was like giving too much water to a man dying of thirst and then watching him wretch and vomit. The base line honesty is that I said yes when I should have said no. And that was my failing.

I believed that in working together you would discover that glimmer of hope

that things could change, that you could be at ease with your past and your future. I thought you might learn to love yourself and to trust a higher power to know your dreams and guide you to them. And, as it should be, I stood and watched as you chose your own path.



WRITTEN BY AN ADDICT WITH 1 YEAR CLEAN

I feel my story is no different than many other addict's; I came to NA in a toxic relationship, hoping that if I got clean or if I at least made an attempt that would fix things. I had that void inside that we all had and indeed, I sought help through psychiatry, religion, drugs, medications, relationships. Nothing would fix that void.

I needed constant validation. I had always believed in a power greater than myself but had little faith, and my prayers were different then. "Foxhole prayers", as "they" say. I believe my connection

with the universe and with others was weak; my connection with myself was weaker. I could not stop using despite the fact I was not even getting high anymore. I wasn't showing up for my life. I couldn't make appointments for therapy, I was unemployable, and I was missing in action. Despite all this, I had the desire enough for some change. I knew something had to change. I went to meetings here and there even when I was using. My therapist suggested treatment and I took the out-patient route. I didn't stop using in treatment

either and in treatment was threatened with detox. I straighten up enough to leave and shortly after was arrested as a result of my using. Little did I know that this was one of the best things that would ever happen to me so far.

I spent 3 months in jail which gave me some time to clean up physically. When I got out I had nowhere to go so to speak, so I returned to NA. I still had friends in the fellowship that stayed by me despite of my using, they had faith in me when I did not.

After a few months of coming

began working steps with my sponsor, feeling better about myself, and learning new behaviors. I began working steps with my sponsor, feeling better about myself, and learning new behaviors.

Today I can have relationships with people. I can be hurt without hurting others back out of spite. I can control my emotions better. I don't have to use when things don't feel good. I can let my self be in pain and know that it will make me stronger. I learned all this through you. All of you have taught me this. Thank you.

PARTING WAYS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO:

back around I got a new sponsor, one who I admired and worked a good program. I

I have used up and destroyed all the tricks in my bag to get your attention and none have worked. I can no longer participate in the charade. It is the classic definition of insanity and it is not you, but I who kept expecting a different result. The arrogance of believing that I could make a difference, even in the face of evidence that has, again and again, proven me wrong was my failing.

It is obvious that your way works for you and you have stayed clean. I am the one who perceives your life as full of contra-

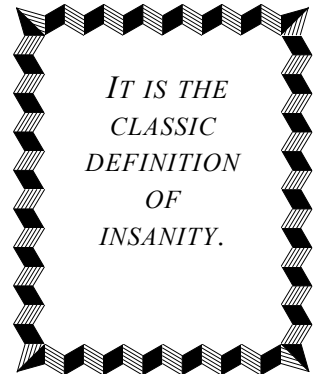
dictions and confusion and that is my shortcoming and it is clear that I need to work on my acceptance of others and their choices.....who am I to judge that what I want for someone else is better than what they are willing to accept for themselves.

I am not the one who decides what is right or good for you or anyone else – I do respond when someone asks for help, I believe they actually think I might have something to give. I have watched you struggle to hold on to old patterns and then lying about it or keeping it hidden in a shame that binds you to old beliefs and behaviors and self hatred. I no long-

er choose to fight what seems a losing battle with someone who I care about.....it is time for me to stop.

I do want to acknowledge you for what you have contributed to my life. Most importantly, I think, you have taught me to recognize my own limitations. You have been a mirror to reflect my fear and denial. You have given me new ground to cover with my sponsor and a huge opportunity to explore myself and my own patterns of caretaking and codependency. You have brought home exactly how human I am.

I do care about you ...Do



NA Sponsorship IP



HAVE FUN in recovery!

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL C&P REGIONAL "FREE BBQ PICNIC"

Saturday, Sept. 17

2:30pm - 7:30pm

Speaker/Open Meeting@5:30
pm

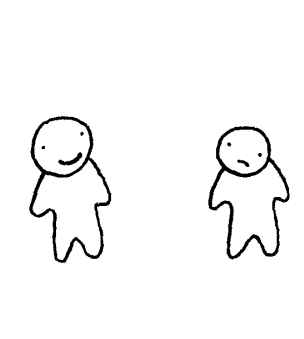
Chinquapin Center Park
3210 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Unity Weekend

NORVANA Area Annual Cabin
Campout

Friday Afternoon - Sunday
Morning, Sept. 23-25

Prince William Forest Park
Cabin Camp #3
Triangle, VA



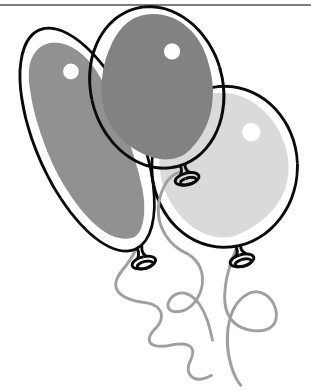
Do YOU have recovery cartoons or other artwork you'd like to share? See it featured here!

See more regional events at www.cprna.org

Also, get meeting lists, convention information, service information, hotline phone numbers, and more

NORVANA AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Suellen R	2 years
Jessica M	1 year
Randy T	24 years
Debbie E	6 years
Shaela L	6 years
Brad M	15 years
Harold H	21 years
Ryan H	10 years
Latrice	5 years
Norman P	14 years
Ed M	4 years



Please submit September and October anniversaries to

norvananewsletter12@gmail.com