

NorCal Nar-Anon Messenger

1

APRIL 2021
Volume 2, Issue 1

*Being active in Nar-Anon
Meetings and Service has
given me Hope, Peace, &
Serenity!
SESH p 40*

SERVICE Letter from The Editor

Hello all,

In this issue of the Messenger, we focus on **SERVICE** in our program. You will read stories written by several different members. They share their different service experiences at the Group, Regional or World Service levels. Each of these are an important part of our program. Giving back to our program is a way to help others. We cannot keep

what we have unless we give it away.

You will read stories of their journey on Shared Experience Strength and Hope [SESH]:

- The newcomer's journey
- Member's journey to date
- The loss of a loved one
- Being part of a convention or assembly

Thank you
NCR Literature Coordinator
Tracy C

Inside this issue:

Letter from the Editor	1
Members' Service Articles	1-3
PESH (Personal Experience, Strength, Hope)	3
Spotlight on Meetings	3
WRCNFG Wrap-up	4
ASSEMBLY Wrap-up	5
Region's Service Opportunities	6
Spotlight on Guidelines	7

Service Article #1 "Being of Service," Central Valley, By: Michele S.

I have attended Nar Anon meetings now for about 3 years. As I sat in the small room when I first began I had no clue that the program was run by members. I soon learned that they too had been where I had been. I was a parent of a child who was an addict. We were certainly in this all together. It wasn't until I was asked if I wanted to chair a meeting one night when it finally clicked for me. I then realized what truly the program was about. As my heart started to beat faster and faster, my palms were sweaty. WHAT IN THE WORLD was I going to do? At first I felt uncomfortable, I had only been coming for 6 months. There was NO way that I could chair a meeting. But as I was sitting there with the clipboard in my hand and getting ready to read our outline.

I began to feel a calmness surround me. As the meeting continued, I began to understand the saying BEING OF SERVICE - I felt different. It felt good. I was giving back to those that had given to me for so long. When an opening came up to be secretary, I truly looked to my higher power and knew the right thing for me to do, was to give back. Being of service has been such a fulfilling way of working my program. I now am a Group Service Representative, GSR. I am slowing learning and will continue to give back. I had heard once that giving back boosts your happiness, health, and sense of well-being. This is very true!

Service Article #2 “Service in Nar-Anon,” By: Karen J.

2

When I first came to Nar-Anon, I was told that if I wanted to feel better, I would need to get into service. I did not understand why this was so important. I was so broken and upset because my loved one had been using drugs under my nose for 10 years. I had no clue what I needed to do in order to feel better. I was distraught and as a Newcomer I was told to “Keep Coming Back.”

After a few weeks of attending, I asked again, ‘how am I going to feel better?’ Again, I was told to keep coming back and attend meetings on a regular basis. Members said, I would learn about the program and soon I would feel better. It worked, I did feel better! I could look at myself in the mirror and know I did not cause addiction, I could not cure addiction, I could not control addiction and it was not my fault.

They needed a secretary at my meeting. I was asked to set the chairs up, make coffee, and help clean up after the meeting. I wanted to feel better as I was so embarrassed that

I had an addict in my life. I took it personally. So, I made a commitment for one year and became secretary.

I was then told I needed to pass the service job on to another Newcomer so they could experience recovery as I had. My sponsor told me that I had to look for another service opportunity in Nar-Anon. My sponsor had been such a good example for me and other members as she was always in service. I became treasurer for the meeting for 1 year and then I became a Group Service Representative, GSR, for 3 years. Later on, I was an Area Secretary and Area Chair.

Today I do service as a sponsor in order to give back to this fellowship all that which was freely given to me when I came through the doors. With the pandemic, I am so grateful for all the secretaries who run the virtual meetings and workshops throughout the United States and the World. I am forever a grateful member of Nar-Anon.

Service Article #3 “What Service Means To Me,” By: Tracy C.

I have been in service with Nar-Anon ever since I can remember. To me, being in service is the ultimate way to give back to others what was so freely given to me. When I first got to the program, I felt so much compassion, love, and acceptance from the people in the room. I felt an overwhelming feeling of acceptance without judgement, which was something I had not experienced in my past. All of these gifts that were so freely given were difficult for me to adjust to it. After all, these people did not know me. I had to learn how to accept as well as to give this type of unconditional affection without judgement. As I look back now, the friendships I have acquired over the years are precious to me.

I tried other fellowships and just could not find that ‘open arms welcome’ feeling that I had felt in so many NA meetings. Then, I found Nar-Anon. My first meeting was at the Chemical Dependency Recovery Program, CDRP building at Watt and Marconi in Sacramento. When I walked through the door of that meeting it was the ‘open arms greeting’ I had been searching for. I knew I was home. This is where I belonged.

I began to work my steps with my sponsor. As time went on, I planned that I would start a new meeting in

a second location, thus the Roseville meeting was born. When the Roseville meeting started, I wanted to be of service. I wanted to welcome everyone through the doors with open arms, in the same way I had been greeted my first time. I was beginning to understand the importance of service and the gift of giving back. The Roseville meeting is now 12 years strong and growing

Today, as our Region’s Literature Committee Coordinator, ‘being of service’ has taken on a whole new meaning. It is one of the most rewarding things I have ever been a part of. When I became the L.C. Coordinator, I had no idea how to start this committee. However, I had made a commitment and I was determined to publish a newsletter. This has been challenging for me mentally, emotionally and timewise. I am very grateful for an incredible group of volunteers who have joined our committee and work to publish this newsletter. I look forward to seeing the exciting new aspects that the Literature Coordinator position brings to me as the group grows and take on new projects in its horizon.

Today, If I am asked to be of service, I will never say no, because I understand the rewards it brings to me and my Nar-Anon Family.

Thank you!

NCR Literature Coordinator,

Tracy C

“Walking My Path” By: Samantha K. S.

Every so often, articles are written about Yellowstone National Park’s volcanic thermals and people who fail to stay on the paths that were built to safeguard visitors. Each year, many people try to get a little closer to the dangerous sites without thinking about the consequences of their actions. They ignore the explicit warning signs for many reasons and are severely injured and/or killed. For some reason, I am fascinated by this behavior.

I note some similarities in how I deal with the addict in my life. I have learned that we do not have specific warning signs posted of what we must accept or not accept. The Nar-Anon Program, through sharing at meetings, and the literature suggests that some behaviors we continue to do could be enabling. We learn that if both of us continue our same behaviors, the chaos will remain, nothing changes.

I have also learned that as we continue to grow in our programs, we can carve a safe path for ourselves. We learn that we can step back and not involve ourselves in the addict’s actions. We begin to learn about setting boundaries for ourselves of what we will and will not accept. We learn that we can only change our behaviors and unless we do so the chaos will continue. We make changes when we are ready. We become aware of some of the addict behaviors i.e., signs of using, things missing, not showing up and not being honest.

We learn that we have choices we can make such as: asking them to leave, changing the locks and hiding valuables. In sticking with our new boundaries, we learn to keep calm while walking our path.

We learn that we can relapse like the addict can.

Sometimes, we yearn to see the danger up close, and we can get burned. We think it will be different this time.

We allow boundaries to be broken, allow addiction back at our home. We lose our calmness, are vindictive, argue, cry, yell, allow ourselves to feel like a victim again. We fall back into our poor behaviors.

Part of my recovery has been building a path to keep me safe, made from materials found in the SESH book, meetings and recovery experiences. Currently, my plan is not burn proof. I am learning that I must stop taking the addict’s words personally, contacting him when I know he is using, and screaming at him to get help. None of these work for me. I am learning that I must take care of myself by getting at least 7 hours of sleep so that I can function at work.

Above all, I must always keep hope for myself and others without enabling. Therefore, I will pick up my feet from outside of the path, step back on it, center myself and continue to practice my program!

Meeting Spotlight “The Healing Power of Fellowship after Loss,” by Marion

Hope After Loss meeting has become a growing and evolving part of Nar-Anon. Our virtual group is about healing after having lost a loved one through addiction. Started in April 2020, we have grown significantly and now have over 80 members. With addiction and the mental health crisis, the need for grief support groups has intensified. New groups will be needed as time goes on. Through outreach and virtual gatherings, members join us from all over the world, including but not limited to the U.S., England, Canada, and other parts of Europe.

We have lived through the loss of our loved ones. “Hope After Loss” virtual meetings provide an important lifeline. Those who have found us express a sense of relief as there is a lack of grief support groups that focus on addiction.

Our group shines the light on barriers that keep us from healing. Stigma, denial, shame, and silence are reasons why grief support groups are few. Hope after Loss provides a safe place to be seen, heard, and supported, without judgment. As a result, we are able to develop self-awareness of the impact of having lived with active addiction. Each of us understands each other’s pain (like no other could) and we have a genuine love and compassion for each other.

“I feel at home when arriving at the meeting. Seeing all the familiar faces and knowing I am not alone in this painful place of having lost my son. It is a relief to enter the virtual room and land amongst my Nar-Anon Family. I bow down to each of these amazing beings who are part of a community they never wanted to be a part of. Sharing grief is such an essential

healing tool in order to move forward in life. Hope After Loss provides that tool.”

It is exciting to expand our world fellowship and reach out to each other with fewer barriers. The virtual world, with all its limitations, has brought the Nar-Anon family closer together. We have recently started a 12-step study group and Nar-Anon Buddies for those who wish to go further on our healing path. Steps are being taken to establish new Hope After Loss groups. Hope After Loss has brought fellowship, a sense of belonging, love and most of all **Hope**.

Hope After Loss website:
<https://naranonhopeafterloss.org>

Purpose for the Western Regions Convention of Nar-Anon Family Groups (WRCNFG)

The WRCNFG was started in 2013 as an opportunity for Nar-Anon members to gather in participation with a large NA Convention. In that first year, only a few Nar-Anon members participated. The event has since expanded, is now disconnected from NA, and has moved online. Planning for the 2021 event was done collaboratively by members from the Central California, High Desert, Northern California, Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain and Southern California Regions. Members from around the world are invited to attend.

The Vision Statement: for this annual event is to provide:

- Service training based on the Nar-Anon Principles;

- Opportunities to learn and share about common challenges;
- A multi-regional business meeting to facilitate cooperation between regions;
- A collaborative environment for all regions;
- Opportunities for members to connect with members from other regions.”

While the first focus of the WRCNFG committee was the annual convention, the collaboration and communication between regions is helpful in many ways. For more information about the Western Regions collaborative effort, check the website at bit.ly/WRCNFG.
By: Robert P.

Western Regions of Nar-Anon Family Group (WRCNFG) Convention, February 20, 2021, Via Zoom

Mission Statement: “This committee, Western Regions Convention planning committee, will be responsible for an annual event, scheduled for February. It will be held on a virtual platform to encourage a global appeal. Programming will be arranged by the member regions: Central California, High Desert, Northern California, Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain and Southern California.”

Regions shared on the topics below:

1. Northern California: Panel on the Twelve Concepts of Service and its principles
2. High Desert Region: Common Challenges

3. Central CA: Cooperation Between Regions
4. Rocky Mountain Region: Collaboration
5. Southern CA Region: Connections
6. Pacific Northwest Region: Contributions

Topics of Business Meeting are listed below:

1. Service training based on Nar-Anon Principles
2. Opportunities to learn and share about common challenges-NorCal Report given
3. Facilitate cooperation between regions
4. Collaborative environment for all
5. Opportunity for members to connect with other members from other regions

By: Paula L

Assembly Wrap-Up

Northern California Region Group Conscience Unanimously Empowers Delegates to Act for Approval of Screen-Sharing Electronic Literature & WSC Floor Motions.

Region's CAR Assembly met on Saturday March 27, 2021, to gather Northern California's group conscience for our Delegate Paula L. and Alternate Delegate Ed H. to take to the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC).

Motions to approve Screen-sharing and electronic literature as Fellowship priorities were unanimously recognized. These are not in the 2019 Conference Agenda Report (as it was not updated for 2021).

By group conscience, delegates were authorized (to support at the World Service Conference) approval of new Conference-Approved Literature: Traditions Booklet, Grandparents' Stories, Narateen 12 Steps Workbook and We've Been There.

Fourteen groups (out of 23 currently meeting) sent their Group Service Representatives to this Assembly. With alternate group reps, Regional Service Committee members, Delegate, Alternate and observers, 22 persons participated. Exceedingly well-organized to handle 53 motions, the Fellowship appreciates the service and skills of Michael S., Chair, Linda T., stepping up to become Acting Chairperson, Karen S., stepping up to become Acting Secretary, Paula and Ed, our delegate and alternate. The Assembly was able to gather all of the groups' conscience on approval or revision of literature and Guides to World and Local Services.

Region's groups prioritized their future literature needs (what should be written first, the order for working on new literature during the next 2 years), guiding the World Service Literature Committee in what should be finished first (Note: we need many more editors and writers so we can produce new literature more quickly).

Motions with amendments as well as some of those without clear agreement and needing further discussion were continued to April 10, from 1-3 pm. Michael S. reconvened Assembly on April 10 with Twelve GSRs handling motion discussion or amendment.

Groups wanted to audio record meetings with group conscience, but not to video record, amending #29. The assembly accepted an amendment clarifying that either groups or members could make decisions, including committee formation.

Including the right of guardians, as well as parents, to consent for Narateen participation, and to contribute to Narateen literature was approved. Where addict parents refuse to agree to legal guardianship for their children, a legal consent restriction to "parent & legal guardian" would exclude some teens from Narateen and require that their writings be rejected; our Region proposed amending the motions to include the consent of the responsible adult as Nar-Anon encourages all teens in their recovery. To clarify that within the guidance of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, the whole program is merely suggested, Motion 50 was amended.

With ample discussion on amendments, the delegate and alternate gathered the group conscience of Northern California Region, efficiently concluding in just over 2 hours. Our Region is fortunate to have so many dedicated GSR's as trusted servants for their groups. Echoing our Delegate: "Thank you for helping to sustain our life affirming program. Although service cannot be measured, it is appreciated by all, especially those who may not have found us yet."
Wendy A.

In The Meantime By: Jamie J. Oakland, Saturday Night

In the Meantime, with the help of a caring sister, I found my NAR-ANON family. There is an accepting environment in our meetings which makes it easy to deposit my new challenges as they occur. No matter if I consider them trifling or major in scope, they are met with the same peaceful consideration.

The meetings consist of compassionate members with courageous stories of standing up and facing the difficulties presented to them by their qualifiers. We also share the problems we created for

ourselves. We laugh together at our mistakes and share genuine concern with those who are struggling. Most always, I identify with those who share, and I am thankful for the opportunity to be there to listen just as others were/are for me.

At the conclusion of our meetings, our signature-fellowship gesture is giving each other a hug. Such a gesture of acceptance and act of kindness. But I remember (as a new member) leaving just as the meetings ended so that I did not have to participate in hugging. At first, I

thought that I didn't really like the members of the group. Then I reminded myself that I was just protecting my anonymity because of my line of work. But I also thought that it was just plain silly.

Oh my, have I grown over the years and no longer need to over-analyze something that is meant to comfort: *a gesture of genuine kindness*. Because of my NAR-ANON family, I continue to grow and expand my life in spite of myself and of others.

Thank you, NAR-ANON family.

Spotlight on Guidelines

Can we use speakers from other fellowships?

Tradition 6, the Guidelines for Local Services (GLS) and the pamphlet Guide for Healthy Meetings agree that it is not recommended to invite speakers from outside Nar-Anon or NA. (*all available and downloadable from Nar-Anon.org, Members, Service Literature*)

GLS Page 3-2, Sample Meeting Format-last sentence, "We ask that you speak only as a member of Nar-Anon unless you were invited as a speaker from NA."

The GLS, 13-1. "Outside speakers at Nar-Anon and Narateen meetings may divert the focus from our recovery. Our Sixth Tradition 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..."

The GLS, 13-3. "At Nar- Anon/Narateen meetings and our groups do not announce or discuss activities of other anonymous groups which follow the Twelve Step program."

Guide to Healthy Meetings (Pamphlet) - Outside speakers – "The purpose of Nar-Anon is personal growth through applying the Twelve Steps and sharing our experience, strength and hope. It is from Nar-Anon and Narateen members that we hear the ideas and experiences that put us on the road to recovery. Outside speakers, other than invited NA speakers, at Nar-Anon and Narateen meetings may divert the focus from our recovery."

Just For Today

"I will do someone a good turn and not be found out about it. If anybody knows of it, it will not count."

A member asked me, "why can't I talk about it? Why won't it count?" I have been thinking and writing about their question/concern.

I thought to myself ..."*it will not count?*" Count for what? For me, the reading is suggesting that I "practice" some new behaviors. I hold faith that this practice might be good for me by helping me get beyond self-pride and discover humility.

I may need practice keeping my good behavior just between me and my Higher Power.

Some thoughts for my self-inventory: When I talk about my good behavior, am I trying to get "credit" for behavior I should be doing anyway? If I need to call out attention, I may not be doing someone a "*good turn*" often enough or for the right reasons. Telling others about it may be an attention getter. Am I trying to get an expectation met? Or hold an obligation over another?

-anonymous

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUTS

March 5, 2020 Wyndham Nar-Anon Family Group Sacramento 1 year 2021

Congratulations on another year!

For meeting updates and to find virtual meetings, go to www.naranonnorcal.org/meetings

YOUR NORTHERN CA REGION (NCR) SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

Treasurer, see page 6-2 Guide To local Service: ...”custodian of the region’s finances and bank account. The recommended experience for this position is two (2) years’ service.” Those interested in learning more about this position are encouraged to email the Chair, Michael at chair@naranonnorcal.org

Vice-Chair, see page 6-1 Guide To local Service ...”be willing to become chair at the end of the chairs term. The recommended experience for this position is three (3) years’ service in Nar-Anon. Act as parliamentarian during meetings.” Those interested in learning more about this position are encouraged to email the Chair, Michael at chair@naranonnorcal.org

Convention Subcommittee - NCR members interested in helping to plan conventions, workshops, roundtables and new service learning please contact the Coordinator, Sara, at Email: convcoord@naranonnorcal.org

Literature Subcommittee – Newsletter – NCR members interested in helping to gather articles, edit, and work with a dedicated team to publish relevant articles and news of the region and world service are encouraged to email the coordinator Tracy at litcoord@naranonnorcal.org

Literature Subcommittee – New Literature – NCR members interested in helping to create, edit and share new literature for our region and/or for the world-wide fellowship are encouraged to email the coordinator Tracy at litcoord@naranonnorcal.org

Outreach Subcommittee- NCR members interested in outreach, done by developing and compiling outreach literature and materials to raise public awareness about the Nar-Anon program. Interested members are encouraged to email the coordinator, Karen S., at Email: outreachcoord@naranonnorcal.org

Technology and Web Presence Subcommittee - NCR members with interest in the NCR website and other forms of regional communication are encouraged to email the coordinator Creig at webcoord@naranonnorcal.org to participate. Technical expertise is welcome but not necessary.

If you would like to contribute a story or inform our community of an upcoming event, please email litcoord@naranonnorcal.org