Many of us may have heard the phrase, “Atmosphere of Recovery,” over the last several months and some of us have wondered exactly what it means. “What does atmosphere have to do with recovery?!” we pondered. If we consider atmosphere as the “air we breathe in our groups” we can look around and see if our groups have a loving, welcoming recovery atmosphere. We then may ask ourselves, “How do we create and maintain an atmosphere of recovery? What actions do members need to take to provide the love, warmth and safety so essential to a recovery environment in our groups?” As we may expect, it takes more than “desire.” If each of us is willing to take a step back and look at our group environment like someone who is attending a meeting for the first time, perhaps we will understand what creates an atmosphere of recovery. So, in the position of observer, what will we see? As we approach the meeting entrance, will we see addicts standing outside the group who appear welcoming? Is there a member or two at the front door to welcome everyone to the meeting – whether they are addicts or visitors? Will we see those new to the group introduced to members and offered informational pamphlets and a meeting schedule? Often, we see groups of addicts talking outside, laughing and having fun, enjoying their recovery and friendships. This is one of the benefits of recovery and something that may be attractive to the newcomer, but sometimes we can get carried away with this activity and not even notice who is walking toward the group. At times, do addicts seem more consumed with their socializing than with actively carrying the message of recovery? At the entrance to the meeting facility, we may see an addict give a hug, say “Welcome,” and return immediately to their conversation with a friend. Do we think the addict who was hugged honestly felt welcomed and will have a desire to come back? Once inside the meeting room, do we see another kind of camaraderie—addicts working together to set up the meeting, laughing together, and also welcoming those sitting alone? continued on page 3
gratitude noun [grat-i-tood, -tyood]
:the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful
(Tell us what you are grateful for)

“Being clean”
–Caitlin P

“My fiancé, new job, new apartment”
–Kimmy S

“Being clean today and having good friends”
–Jim G

“To be alive”
–Ben F

“Having a safe place to live”
–Kevin

“The recognition that I’m an addict and don’t have to live like I did”
–Nick G

“Time spent with Peanut (my wife) before she died!”
–John M.

“The ability to be a father”
–Chris T

“Family”
–Tim S

“Life”
–Bill K

“To be alive”
–Ben F

“Having a roof over my head”
–Ron J

“Having a safe place to live”
–Kevin

Share your gratitude. Send us something that you are grateful for and we will print it.

Email: npn@northpittsburghna.org
or
North Pittsburgh News
PO BOX 10
Glenshaw, PA 15116-0010
As we extend this welcoming hand, are we mindful and respectful of the new members’ personal space? Then again, we might see members who have chosen to remain outside the meeting room until the group readings have been read. These members then shuffle into the meeting, still murmuring to each other, bumping into chairs and creating a distraction. These addicts appear to be totally oblivious to the disruptive wave they send through the meeting. Does this sound familiar? Has any group experienced the “loud late comers” or the “constant chatterers” during group readings or sharing? Is this behavior addressed by group members or does the group membership. Even though we are members of NA when we say we are, belonging to a group is like making an investment in recovery. How often have we heard members refer to meetings and NA as “coming home”? Most homes need ongoing maintenance and a loving atmosphere. Chaos, clutter, and a leaky roof do not provide for an inviting and welcoming atmosphere. Groups that thoughtfully and carefully choose trusted servants and help newer trusted servants learn how to serve, say, as a leader or chairperson, tend to maintain their atmosphere of recovery. These groups have members who lead by example who “walk what they talk.” Their actions demonstrate that they value their recovery and desire to keep their group thriving. These may be the members who offer that welcoming smile and knowing nod as newcomers share. Or they may be the ones who stay after the meeting and invite new attendees out for coffee. There are many ways to start building a recovery atmosphere. We simply need to be willing to start. It is members who create and maintain the atmosphere of recovery within our groups. Each of us has been given the gift of recovery and we can demonstrate our gratitude by reaching out to every person who walks into an NA meeting. As one newcomer said to a member who gave him a smile and hug, “It’s been a long time since anyone offered me a hug.”

--July 2005 NA Way
Poetry Corner

Walk into a strange room
Don’t know any of
these blank faces
Who are they?
Where am I?
I just want to curl up
in a ball in my bed
But I know I must stay!

They all smile, and now the hugs
What do they know that I don’t?
How are they feeling so good?
I’m so confused,
I want to go
But I really must stay!

Now the readings,
what does it mean?
How can this help, this can’t work
You want me to stand
and say who I am
I feel sick, am I ready for this
But here I must stay

They are all sharing
Wait that’s how I feel, how do they
know?
What’s that, it does get better?
You say you’ve been there too
Now I know why I had to stay

I am an addict
We talk, we pray, we share
The only way to
recover is to change
As long as we stick around,
and don’t pick up
I know in the rooms I must stay

Phil D.

The Newcomer

I don’t feel good
My stomach hurts
I’m shaking and
my skin is crawling
I’m hot,
no I’m cold,
no wait I’m hot
How do I make it all stop?

Missi M.

Submit your poems and edible thoughts to us. See the contact information on the last page and make sure to tell us if it’s a poem or a thought.
Clarity Statement Dilemma ???

“In Narcotics Anonymous, we are presented with a dilemma. When NA members identify themselves as “addicts and alcoholics,” “cross-addicted,” or talk about living “clean and sober,” the clarity of the NA message is blurred. To speak in this manner suggests that there are two diseases; that one drug is separate from the rest. Narcotics Anonymous makes no distinction between drugs. Our identification as addicts is all-inclusive, allowing us to concentrate on our similarities, not our differences.”

Not NA approved

When I hear “dilemma” I think of what a newcomer may think…. “Dilemma? There’s a problem here?? What the F#@k are they talking about??

(Also, when I hear “dilemma” I think, there is no dilemma in NA, only problem is folks going outside the literature and trying to change a perfect program.

Thank God nobody told me how to speak when I got here. Built-in rebellion would have chased me out had I heard a statement like this, or, I would have purposely identified myself as something off the wall

The “group” showed me how to speak, pray, ask for help, get a sponsor, work the steps and participate in service. “The group is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying the message.”

If a new person is in our meetings, it is not our business to tell them how to identify themselves. They may not even be an addict, (yet), or never be. Nobody can tell anyone their an addict. It’s an admission an individual needs to make for themselves……

Are we that insecure as a fellowship, that we are threatened by a word? How many times have we really heard consistent mis-identification?

If groups are strong and focused on the primary purpose, the group power is the guiding force, showing the newcomer how to identify in NA.

What happened to gently and lovingly speaking with a newcomer after the mtg if needed?

This can be a sponsorship discussion, also.

Last, but not least…..

THERE ARE NO MUSTS IN NA……..?

--Roberta S.
Growing Pains

I will never forget the time I first walked into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I had my beautiful little boy on my hip. It was a whole new world for me to come into these rooms and what made it even harder was that I had no choice but to bring the little guy. During that time he was a toddler, and could not sit still no matter how hard I tried. Although I was a little embarrassed to be there with my child, it was a great way for a good conversation with strangers. I always tried my hardest to keep my son as quiet as possible but it didn’t always work. When people would turn around to look at me because he was being disruptive it made me want to run out the door. This was my excuse I used to not come around, because I felt unwelcome with my child. Needless to say I would relapse and come back for a few months and go back out, all because of my son. I decided to leave my sons father and go into a halfway house for women with children, here I learned a lot about being a mother in recovery, which ultimately I believe was when I really wanted this, or so I thought.

When I was released from the program I attended the first thing I did was hit a Friday night meeting, We Is the Key. It felt so good to see familiar faces and they welcomed me and my son BOTH back with opened arms. That evening I had went out to eat with everyone after the meeting; there is where I spotted this man. You know being locked in one building with 13 women for 6 months and no man is tough. Needless to say he was pretty good looking, and I just couldn’t listen to my sponsor about staying out of a relationship for a year like she had suggested. He later on asked me to marry him. After using and getting clean with him many times I know found out I was pregnant with my 2nd son. At this point I had enough I had to get it right this time, I was just so sick of living this way. I used against my own will since I had my 1st son and I just knew that I didn’t have another run in me. He left and went to rehab, and my oldest boy and I went to meetings while he was away.

I had got a new sponsor, with a good amount of time and from what I heard was working a great program. I also got a home group, which just was always my favorite meeting and that’s why I picked it. My now fiancé came home from rehab and he was in this totally with me. I continued to go to these meetings with my son, my fiancé and my now big old belly. I remember picking up a 90day key tag with “big old belly” being totally embarrassed, because I felt like such a piece of crap that I had done this yet again with another child on the way.

My 2nd son was born the day before my 6month anniversary, I remember how bad I just wanted to go get my key tag after I got home, but I had not slept in days and my sponsor suggested for me to get rest, which wasn’t a hard suggestion to take. So now here I was with a week old baby and a 4 year old heading to a meeting. Now just so you understand it’s not easy to get out of the door to go to a meeting, I can’t just pick up and go. I have to pick my fiancé up from work, come home, make dinner, pack a diaper bag, make bottles and pack something for my now 5 year old to do. It’s a lot of rushing around and in none of that do I get to do for myself. Now with a year clean this is my life.

I almost always have went to the same meetings, because they are very welcoming to both me and my children. I have gone to meetings where I do feel unwelcome with my children so therefor I just don’t go there anymore. My children are one of the biggest parts of my recovery, this is a family thing for us. It can at times be very overwhelming and I just can’t catch a break but I have a great WE and these people offer to help me so I can have time to myself. When I do have time to myself the last thing I want to do is step work, but I make time. If I want a better life for me and my family,

“These meetings have not only saved my life, but also my family.”

--Alicia L.
Upcoming Events

NEASCNA Learning Day
November 16, 2013 - Saturday 12-5PM
H&I Workshop 1PM
PI Workshop 2PM
Activities 3PM
Literature 4PM
Speakers on Various Service Positions
St. Thomas Church
4th Street and Delaware
Oakmont

12 Traditions Workshop
November 30th Sunday 12PM-5PM
St. Marks Lutheran Church
126 W. Pennsylvania Ave
New Stanton, PA
(Before Cracker Barrel)

Events to look for later this year
More Will be revealed

North Pittsburgh Holiday Dance - December 2013
Bowling! - March 2013

North Pittsburgh Area Service Committee Meeting
Dates are listed below There is always a need for people to help out. See your GSR for more information on how to give back.

December 7th
3:30PM H&I 4:00PM Activities Committee, 4:30PM GSR Orientation and 5:00PM Area Service
Berkeley Hills Lutheran • Church 517 Sangree Road • Pittsburgh PA 15237

Bergen Area Convention
Monday December 30, 2013 - Wednesday January 1, 2014
New Year, New Life 20 Believe The Unseen 2014
Hanover Marriott
1401 Route 10 East
Whippany, NJ
Book your room $99/night, call 800-242-8681 and mention code BASCNA to get the discounted group rate.

Start To Live XXXI Convention
November 21-24, 2013
NEW - Four days this year!
NEW! - Online registration at www.starttolive31.com
St. Thomas Church
4th Street and Delaware
Oakmont
Free coffee at these meetings that need support!

**Free Coffee!**
All you can drink

**Talking Text**
Friday, 6:40PM
Nativity Lutheran Church
4518 Mount Royal Boulevard
Allison Park, 15101

Donation is optional, but suggested.

**Free Coffee!**
All you can drink

**Vets And Friends**
Thursday 7:30PM
Veterans Service Center
945 Washington Blvd Pittsburgh
Larimer, 15206

Donation is optional, but suggested.

**Free Coffee!**
All you can drink

**Chapter 7: Relapse & Recovery**
Friday, 12:00PM
Door of Hope Church
5225 Holmes Street
Lawrenceville, 15201

Donation is optional, but suggested.

**Free Coffee!**
All you can drink

**Staying Clean For Dummies**
Tuesday 7:30PM
Ingomar Methodist Church
1501 West Ingomar Road
Ingomar, 15237

Donation is optional, but suggested.

---

**What is Public Information?**
Public Information is a committee that informs the public about recovery from the disease of addiction through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

We provide community awareness of what NA is, as well as how, when and where we are available. We accomplish this through presentations, our website, newsletter, and responding to requests for speakers and/or information about NA from the community.

To get involved in the North Pittsburgh Area Public Information Subcommittee you only need 24 hours clean and the willingness to help. We meet at:

**Emmanuel Christian Church**
1427 Davis Ave
Brighton Heights, 15212

At 6PM on the last Thursday of every month. Please join us and remember:

“If you’re not giving back, you’re stealing!”

---

North Pittsburgh News is brought to you by the Public Information subcommittee of the North Pittsburgh Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous. We are always looking for your contributions and wisdom to print in our newsletter. If you have something to share, please send it to:

Email: npn@northpittsburghna.org
or
North Pittsburgh News
PO BOX 10
Glenshaw, PA 15116-0010