

# The Messenger

## NA Literature - A Worldwide Process



NARCOTICS  
ANONYMOUS  
CHINA

Literature is a key component of the NA fellowship. Narcotics Anonymous books and information pamphlets are currently available in 36 languages, with translations in process for 16 languages. The following interview with Suzanne W. highlights her involvement on the NA Literature Committee and projects she has worked on. Interview edited for length and clarity.

### How did you get involved in the Literature committee and what was the first piece of literature you worked on:

I got clean in 1996 and was looking for a sponsor. Within the first month or two this woman who'd been around forever said "Well why don't you go to the Area Service meeting because that's where people with a lot of clean time are going, and maybe it'll help you to narrow down your sponsor search." I thought it was a great suggestion, so I went. During the Area meeting the Area Service Literature chair made an announcement that their subcommittee was meeting at her house to review and contribute to a draft of a Step Working Guide. I asked if I could join them, and they seemed excited to have me participate. We met regularly for several months.

In 1996 your sponsor would pass on a couple questions to you that her sponsor passed on to her. These were typed pieces of paper with like 10 to 12 questions. Before that, people were just reading the Basic Text and writing about the paragraphs and then they would share that with their sponsor. Before that they would read the Basic Text and talk to their sponsors about it. So, the whole step working process had evolved to a point where sponsors were creating questions for each step. When all of our members voted that they wanted a formal step working guide, sponsors from around the world sent their questions into the World Service Literature committee. All of those questions were compiled into a draft of that book. Those drafts were then sent to every Area for editing suggestions. We truly have literature written by addicts for addicts.

### Describe working with the subcommittee to create the Step Working Guide:

In the 90s there weren't personal computers. Everything was sent by mail. The Area Literature chair for our Area would get a packet from the World Service Office, and it would be like one Step at a time of the evolving Step Working Guide and we would get together at her house to edit the draft. There were probably five people at each meeting and we sat down with our paper and pencil and we passed around whatever step the WSO was working on and, as a group we would pencil in our suggestion for each step. Our goal was to create a guide that most people could relate to. Then we'd send back our edited draft to the World Service Office where they were combining all of the submissions from around the world.

### How are new ideas for literature submitted? How does a new book get started?

How it works is everybody all over the world brainstorms on what literature would help us to stay clean and these ideas are made into motions and sent to the World Service Office (WSO). Then the whole fellowship votes on what piece of literature we think needs to be developed next. GSR's get these motions at the CAR workshop once a year. The workshop is called our Regional Assembly and our GSR's from around the Region come and hear about each motion. The GSR's take the motions back to their groups to be voted on. So our focus on writing literature really comes from the groups suggestions. This past year we finished the Spiritual Principal a Day book and every area helped to write that. The process now is even more inclusive because we send our suggestions in by computer on na.org.

How did you get started working on the Basic Text In Chinese? You had a pretty big part of that piece of literatures development.

I was in Tucson, and I was taking Mandarin Chinese and I got to thinking "I wonder if there's NA in China?". So I went on to their website and there were three meetings in Shanghai and these guys' names and emails were listed on their website. So I emailed them and said "Hey what's going on with NA in China?" and they said "Oh my gosh it's so good to hear from you. We're trying to translate the Basic Text into Chinese". They had a woman in Beijing who is in prison for drug addiction and her counselor gave her one of our Basic Texts. She sat in prison for five years and she translated the Basic Text from English to Chinese. So she had done a large amount of it. Then she sent that to the guys in Shanghai.

They asked me to proofread the Traditions portion of the Basic Text from Tucson. Traditions are something you really have to study and do a lot of service to get a feel for. I think that the guys [in China] just didn't feel like they could correct it and make sure that it said what the traditions were intended to say. I had a Chinese teacher and asked if we could meet regularly, and he agreed. We would sit together, and I would tell him what that traditions spiritual principles in our English Basic Text said. He would look for errors in the Chinese language. And then I'd send it back to the guys in China and then the Shanghai guys would email me another tradition.

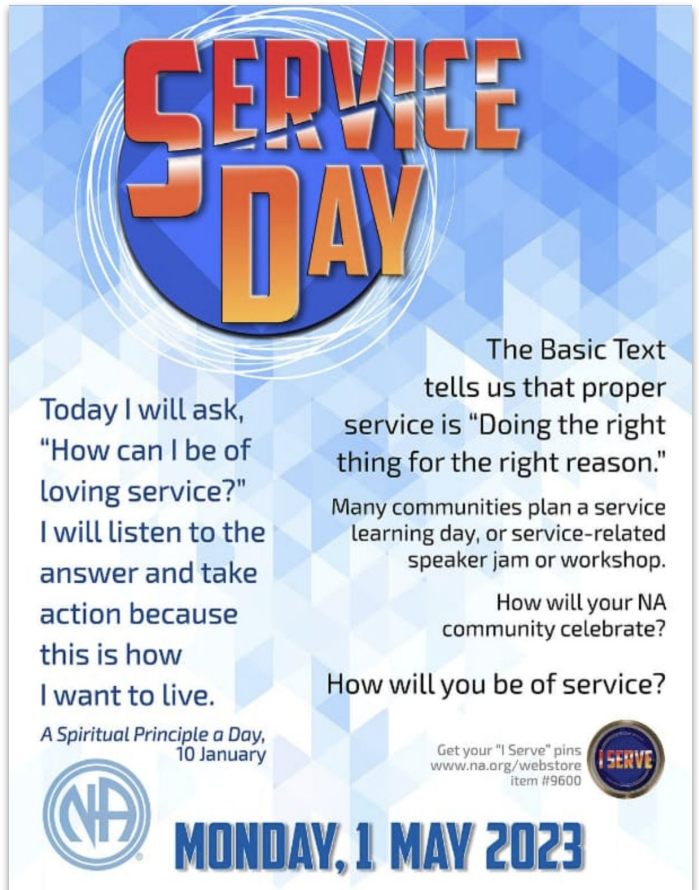
In 2008 I was finished taking Mandarin classes. I started thinking, "you know maybe I should go there and help finish up the book and maybe I would learn more about the language at the same time". So, I moved to Shanghai. The NA men there had the book pretty much done. I had an officemate who was Chinese, and she helped me with a final editing of the book because my ability to read Chinese is very limited. We had the book copied off (at a black-market printer – but that's a whole other story). I took our completed draft of the Chinese Basic Text to the Asian Pacific Forum meeting in Malaysia. Several NA World Board members were there and said they would take it to the World Service literature committee for another editing by professionals who spoke fluent Chinese. The next year, in 2009, I went to the next Asian Pacific Forum (APF) in Manila to follow up on the progress of the book. The World Board Members had returned to that NA APF and explained that the proof reading was done, and the appropriate changes were made to the text. They gave me the newer copy of the Basic Text and said the draft had been approved. The World Board members told me our group in Shanghai could print and distribute copies of the book to the local Chinese as long as it still had the "draft" watermark on it. We had 30 books printed at first and took all of them to a Chinese prison for Heroin addicts in Wuhan. For 4 days we talked to the inmates about NA and handed out all of the books. I call it the Mother of all H & I panels.

The fellowship often will explode in a country once they have their own translated book. That's been true for Japan, Iran, Germany, and anywhere in the world. Look at their timeline, once they get a book then meetings spread.

**What is the Grey book Basic Text?** You might hear people say the Grey Book is controversial, but what that means is it was one of the versions of the editing process [of the Basic Text] that the whole Fellowship did not approve; the Grey Book is a book that hasn't been approved by everybody in the fellowship. Whoever it was, decided to edit it on their own and make their own Basic Text and start selling it. If you buy a Grey Basic Text the money you're giving them is not helping our whole fellowship. We have a process so our money can help foster more of this literature development around the world. So I don't agree with supporting something that hasn't been approved by everybody. We don't sell unapproved literature and we don't arbitrarily change the wording of our formats. Everything we read goes through the whole voting process before it is distributed. I am currently our Regional Literature Chairperson and love going to Areas and homegroups to discuss our literature. I hope this article will encourage groups to invite me sometime.

## Southern Idaho Regional NA General Assembly 2023

The five areas that make up our region of Southern Idaho met in Hayburn, ID on February 18, 2023, to review the NA World Service Conference Agenda Report. Group Service Representatives from Treasure Valley, High Desert, Mini Cassia, Snake River Valley, and Magic Valley Area were all present either virtually or in person. The purpose of the assembly was to review the 2023 Conference Agenda Report (CAR) and the Conference Agenda Track (CAT). This year's CAR includes 25 motions (12 from World Board and 13 from regions or zones around the world). The CAR also includes a survey asking questions that will help delegate select Issue Discussion Topics and prioritize Informational Pamphlets and service materials to work on in the cycles ahead. There are also essays to help delve into the motions. The outcomes from the 25 motions in the CAR, which is determined from the votes of homegroups worldwide, will ultimately influence the choices made in the project plans listed in the CAT.



**SERVICE DAY**

The Basic Text tells us that proper service is "Doing the right thing for the right reason."

Today I will ask, "How can I be of loving service?"

Many communities plan a service learning day, or service-related speaker jam or workshop.

I will listen to the answer and take action because this is how I want to live.

How will your NA community celebrate?

How will you be of service?

A Spiritual Principle a Day, 10 January

Get your "I Serve" pins [www.na.org/webstore](http://www.na.org/webstore) Item #9600

**MONDAY, 1 MAY 2023**



The outcomes from the 25 motions in the CAR, which is determined from the votes of homegroups worldwide, will ultimately influence the choices made in the project plans listed in the CAT.

Each GSR will take the information from this general assembly back to their home groups. Then, obtain a group conscious and vote for each motion. These results will then be taken to their designated Area Service Meeting. Once presented at Area, the Regional Committee Member (RCM) will take the votes to the Region Service Meeting. After each Area's RCM presents the results at the Region Service Committee meeting our Regional Delegate (RD) will take the results to the World Service Conference. The WSC will occur on April 30 to May 6, 2023.



## FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE MIRACLE

*A Short-Short Story by Thom G.*

The summer heat seemed to bake the brains of recovering addicts. We had been graced upon by one member who had triple decades clean, and who was around when the NA Crescent Valley Area was just in its infantile stages, when addicts I knew were so young it felt unbelievable. Our home group had been transformed by Cecil V. in a matter of months between June and August of 2013.

I pondered how him and others were aiding our recovery by their experience, wisdom, and the growth they had over the years, sitting, waiting for my sponsee. Trinity Lutheran was my spiritual home. The NA meeting gathered in their basement. They were angels of charity who offered alms to those suffering from behavioral flaws, forgiving us for our transgressions, and praying that we would lead ourselves to a spiritual destiny.

“Matt,” said Corey as he surprised me turning the corner beside the sanctuary.

“My man, have a seat,” I said.

“We need to talk.” Corey began, “Everybody at work uses during their breaks. Should I rat them out?”

“Can you?” I asked. “That’s usually a ritual on breaks at fast food restaurants. How many people do you think have to face the same triggers at construction jobs? When people and things come into your life as a result of recovery, triggers not only sometimes emerge, but are always there surrounding you.”

“What can I do when they come up?”

“I can think of a lot of practices, like the Serenity Prayer, or step work,” I told him. “Speaking of which, did you do that gratitude list I suggested?”

Corey recited me a page of things he felt grateful for on a crumpled piece of loose leaf written with a purple pen that was slowly wearing out. I started going on about how writing alone was therapeutic, but that step work was just that, only recovery-focused; so the more you expressed yourself in writing, the more free your NA experience became.

The NA members had been mulling about, forming, gathering in solidarity. I had been opening up my home group on Saturdays for the noon meeting for several months, and always suggested to other addicts while sharing during meetings, and with my sponsees, that a commitment was key to keeping clean.

Then out of left field, Corey asked, “How did you stay clean all these years?”

“I just followed what my predecessors had done, how they did it. Like what you are doing now by asking questions about my recovery, and then to learn from those who have made recovery work. My personal story varies, and in fact all personal stories do. We all confide and share in a nature where substance dependency makes our lives unmanageable, which is a common denominator, a weave that links each and every one of us.”

For a brief moment we just sat there, letting my thoughts ruminate, absorbing the notions like two sponges whose water was knowledge to our spirits.

“Just don’t cop out five minutes before the miracle,” I told him. “Give it a chance in you life. You can only do that. Something we can’t quite explain must have brought all of us here to the rooms, something more powerful than we are, so if we stay and listen to the message, then we have found a place at meetings: sharing, being of service, spreading our message to the public, sponsoring, but most of all not picking up and using, and making it to meetings.”

Once again after my speech we both fell silent. I was like a fisherman casting a net into a sea of addiction as a sponsor, and I knew my catch was Corey K. I wasn’t certain the young man would suddenly respond or acknowledge my words of the program with instantaneous success, but I did know it would set in and be reflected in the abundant years he had ahead of him.

## NewsLetter Announcements:

For questions on email subscription, service on the newsletter committee or for submissions on upcoming content please email [TVANAnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:TVANAnewsletter@gmail.com). Digital copies of the newsletter will be available on [www.sirna.org](http://www.sirna.org)