

# Volunteer Spirit

Spring 2024

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***What can I change (after I've frequently exhausted trying to change everyone else)? Me – my attitudes, thoughts, feelings.***

## Principles Before Personalities, Including In Service Work

*Lucy O, Primary Purpose, West Tennessee Area*

**T**he idea of Principles before Personalities, including in Service Work, can be found throughout our literature. I love “including in Service Work” because that is where I have gotten to practice principles before personalities the most throughout my recovery.

When first hearing this in meetings when I got clean - “principles before personalities” - it always felt like whoever was saying it was saying it in a judging way towards those they didn't think were practicing principles before personalities. Of course, that could have been (and still could be) my self-centeredness or my tendency towards judging others.

It's not all about me, but it is “what is my part in this?” So, when I look at the times that I've fallen short on practicing principles before personalities, it has been a process. Say



I'm feeling resentful, angry, in shock (*how could they?!*), sad, frustrated, anxious (I could go on) about something someone or some service body has done, I'm not able to immediately think of the Twelfth Tradition and immediately get over it and practice the principles of love, acceptance, surrender, open-mindedness, integrity. Oftentimes it involves talking to a friend or my sponsor about what is going on (at first about *them*) but it soon becomes (about *me*). Using the Serenity Prayer in these situations also helps. What can I change (after I've frequently exhausted trying to change everyone else)? *Me* - my attitudes, thoughts, feelings.

Another thing - I LOVE the Guiding Principles book.

After it came out and I was working through it... the same situation came up over and over as an example when answering the questions. I was answering the questions in the Friday Night Step Writing Meeting - a meeting where we wrote on steps (or in my case the traditions) for about 20 minutes and then shared for about 20 minutes. In my sharing one day I mentioned the fact about how similar this work was to when going through the steps - being able to see the patterns when the same situation(s) came up over and over. After the meeting, a friend asked - What exactly was the situation you were referring to? I said, my home group voted for it to be chair person's choice how to set up the room. I was furious. The chairs/tables should be set up in an "Atmosphere of Recovery" way - in a circle rather than everyone so spread out all over the place. Also, I had told my group: "If I come to the meeting and the chairs/tables aren't in a circle, I'M LEAVING." Mind

you, I had over 20 years when I was throwing this tantrum! And yes, I did leave one night (but I just went and sat down the hall). Well, the folks at the step writing meeting burst out laughing! So, when writing on the traditions and sharing about the incident I was able to see the value of the first tradition of Unity, and of the Twelfth Tradition - placing Principles Before Personalities. Did I immediately get over my annoyance of the tables/chairs not being in a circle? Not really. If I got to the meeting and no effort was made to arrange the tables and chairs, I don't walk out, but I do frequently sit at a table by myself (and always welcome others to sit with me).

**My ESH is study the traditions, use the Guiding Principles book, and think about having a workshop / learning day and include one of the Issue Discussion Topics on this and similar subjects:**

**Atmosphere of Recovery in Service**

<https://www.na.org/?ID=2016-IDT&ID=2016-IDT>

**Attracting Members to Service**

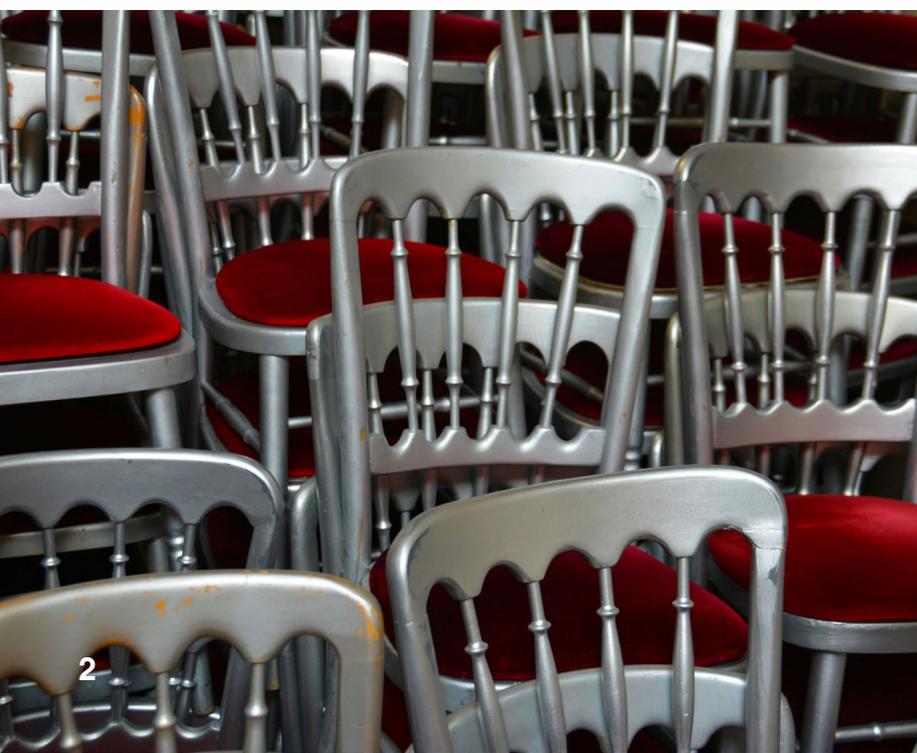
<https://www.na.org/?ID=2018-IDT>

**Atmosphere of Recovery**

[https://na.org/?ID=atmosphere\\_of\\_recovery](https://na.org/?ID=atmosphere_of_recovery)

**Carrying the NA Message and Making NA Attractive**

<https://www.na.org/?ID=2018-IDT>





## Principles Before Personalities, Including In Service Work

*Anonymous*

**prin·ci·ple: (noun)** *a personal or specific basis of conduct or management.*

**man·age: (verb)** *to bring about or succeed in accomplishing, sometimes despite difficulty or hardship.*

**per·son·al·i·ty: (noun)** *the visible aspect of one's character as it impresses others.*

**im·press: (verb)** *to affect deeply or strongly in mind or feelings; influence in opinion.*

**A**s with all other writing I do in recovery, I looked up the key words in this topic. When I wrote the definition of principles, the word that stuck out was management. When I looked up the definition of management, it clearly had a positive meaning. I then thought of the root word “manage,” and I tied it to “unmanageable” from Step One. It made me think about how unmanageable my life gets when I don’t succeed in accomplishing things while I’m diseased up and trying to exert power over something. It’s not until I admit my powerlessness that I begin to lose the overwhelming and needless suffering of unmanageability. In other words, it’s not until I begin to practice spiritual principles that I begin to experience relief.

When looking at the word personality, the first thing I think of is yours! *Ha!* As I read and reread that definition, I kept getting stuck on the word “impress,” and as most good addicts do, I was thinking of it in terms of what I thought impress meant rather than going to a confirmed resource! After I looked up “impress,” I connected personality to mean “the visible aspect of one’s character that deeply affects the mind or feelings of others.” At that point, I was directly looking at my personality and how I can affect others.

In active addiction I was never concerned with how I may have impacted others’ minds or feelings, so long as I got my way. Once I got clean and began getting involved in service, that didn’t just go away, although I thought it did! The Basic Text tells us “...information available to us came from misinformed people.” That doesn’t strictly

apply to active addiction! I think back to a couple of my earliest mentors in recovery, and I realize how true that is! One guy told me MY common welfare should come first, even though there's nothing about individuals in Tradition One. Another guy told me that if I wanted to run things, then I just needed to go to business meetings, and if I really wanted things to go my way, try to persuade "my people" to go to the business meeting as well and vote the way I was voting! Although it didn't take me long to see that way of service was not in line with our Traditions and Concepts, it still took some time to unlearn the misinformation and realize everyone in service doesn't operate with the above mentioned practices for service.

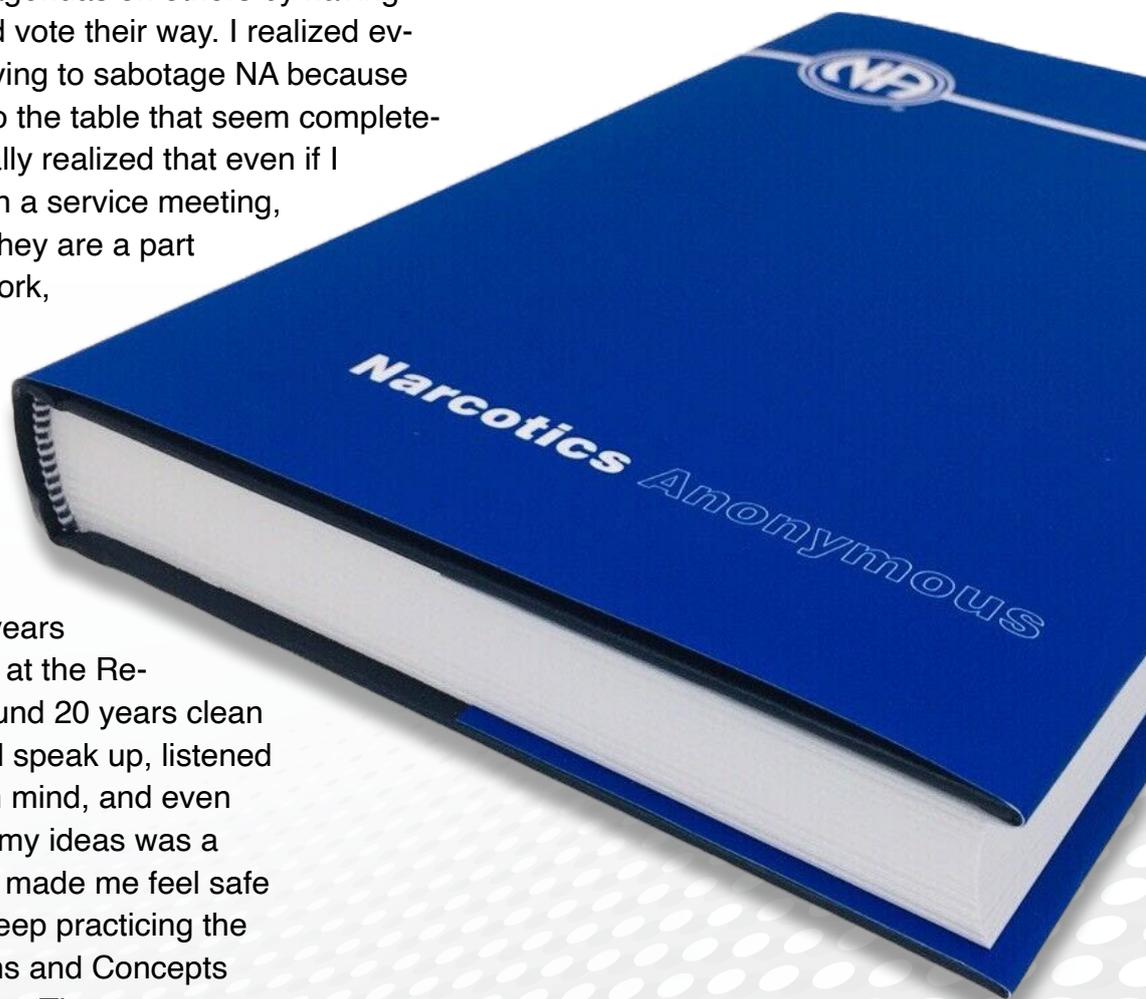
Most people involved in service have probably heard the saying along the lines of "10% of the people do 90% of the work." I would have to say the reality seems more like 5% of the people do 100% of the work. There are almost always service vacancies in Area, Regional, or Zonal service bodies, and I'd imagine most home groups have a small number of people helping clean up after a meeting.

After years involved in service, I finally realized everyone isn't trying to push their agendas on others by having their people show up and vote their way. I realized everyone isn't an idiot or trying to sabotage NA because they are bringing ideas to the table that seem completely opposite of mine. I finally realized that even if I disagree with someone in a service meeting, they are still my peers. They are a part of the 5% doing all the work, and unless I want it to be 4% doing the work, I might want to do my part to be mindful how my personality may impress upon them!

When I had a couple of years clean and began serving at the Region, a member with around 20 years clean made sure I knew I could speak up, listened to my ideas with an open mind, and even occasionally said one of my ideas was a good idea! That member made me feel safe and encouraged me to keep practicing the principles of the Traditions and Concepts in the service environment. They even

showed me that those ideals aren't some imagined fantasies and that kind of service environment talked about in our literature is indeed possible. That member impressed upon me the importance of treating others as equals, even when we disagree. Practicing principles before personalities takes a lot of unmanageability from my world, but practicing it in the service structure ensures other members get the same experience I was given and allows them a safe place to get to serve, so they may experience the spiritual benefits of service that I've had the opportunity to receive.

Thanks for allowing me to share,  
*A Changed Addict*





## What Is The Southern Zonal Forum?

The Southern Zone is located in the southern-central part of the United States covering over 900,000 square miles and meets three times per year in one of their member regions, or virtually, to discuss topics that affect Narcotics Anonymous.

By sharing experience, strength, and hope in the service area, the SZF can better fulfill our primary purpose.

The Southern Zonal Forum is a *solution-based* discussion forum dealing with topics from groups, areas, and regions.

The SZF is made up of the following regions:

- Arkansas
- Kentuckiana
- Lone Star
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- ShowMe
- Texas Bluebonnet
- Volunteer

Through FD & PR Workgroups that formed in 2018, the SZF began providing direct services to regions.

The following activities, events, and services are provided to regions by the SZF:

- Train regional delegates and others on presenting workshops
- Share ideas, support, and solutions to problems when asked
- Network with other conference participants and other zonal trusted servants
- Facilitate workshops for local fellowship in hosting region
- Support recovery meetings in local fellowship in hosting region
- CAR/CAT workshop preparation
- Public Relations and Fellowship Development training, projects, and events
- Zonal Delegate attends WSC
- Participate in the Multi Zonal Service Symposium: [mzssna.org](http://mzssna.org)
- Participate in the Collaboration of US Zones efforts: [usa-na.org](http://usa-na.org)

The Southern Zonal Forum typically facilitates 2-3 workshops at the zone in each region they meet in, and all are invited to attend.

These are a few of the workshops that have been presented over the years:

- Accountability, Apathy and Service
- Atmosphere of Recovery
- Atmosphere of Recovery in Service
- Attracting Members to Service
- Capture the Banner
- CAR & CAT Workshops
- Communications
- Concepts of Service
- DRT, MAT and NA
- Fourth Concept Presentation
- Guiding Principles
- Helpline Presentation for Phonelines
- History of the Southern Zonal Forum
- How to Chair a Meeting
- How to do a PR Presentation
- Implementing Project Based Services

- **In Times of Illness**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Making NA Attractive**
- **Mentorship in Service**
- **NA Funding**
- **Nationwide Phonenumber Concept**
- **Phonenumber Workshop**
- **Planning Basics**
- **PR Basics**
- **Predatory Behavior**
- **Train the Trainer**
- **Transition in Service**
- **Unity in Service**
- **What is the SZF**

The SZF offers direct Public Relations (PR) services to the regions they meet in and when requested.

**PR for Professionals events have been held in:**

- **Kansas City, Missouri**
- **Fort Smith, Arkansas**
- **New Orleans, Louisiana**
- **Dallas, Texas**
- **San Antonio, Texas**
- **Lexington, Kentucky**
- **Atlanta, Georgia**
- **Austin, Texas**
- **Jackson, Mississippi**
- **Murfreesboro, Tennessee**
- **Detroit, Michigan**

**Public Relations training workshops have been given have also been given when requested in the following regions and virtually:**

- **Red River Region**
- **Mississippi Region**
- **Two Virtual Training Workshops**
- **Show Me Region.**

The Zonal PR Subcommittee meets the 2nd Tuesday every month. Dozens of area and regional PR members have participated over the last couple of years.

The FD Subcommittee has been meeting since 2019. A couple of the projects they have spearheaded are Basic Text Project for Arkansas jails and they initiated the PR Workshop in Mississippi.

To learn more about zonal forums in general, watch this cool informative video created for the Northeast Zonal Forum Fellowship Development:  
<http://tinyurl.com/WhatisaZoneinNA>

**Make a difference!**

Fill out our volunteer form:  
[www.szfna.org/volunteer](http://www.szfna.org/volunteer)

Sign up for our email list and share with others:  
<http://eepurl.com/gcMJUL>

Spread the word on Social Media to help others find us:  
[www.facebook.com/NASouthUS](http://www.facebook.com/NASouthUS)

Attend SZF meetings when you are able - in person or virtually:  
[www.szfna.org/events](http://www.szfna.org/events).

The next SZF is happening in New Orleans, LA the last weekend in July.



## World Convention - WCNA 38

Registration is now open for our 38th World Convention, ***The Power of Love!*** The convention will be held August 29 through September 1, 2024, at the Walter Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC.

Details and links here: [na.org/wcna](http://na.org/wcna)

***See you there!***

## 2023 - 2026 Issue Discussion Topics

- Gender-Neutral and Inclusive Language in NA Literature
- Dealing with Disruptive and Predatory Behavior
- Reimagining & Revitalizing Service Committees
- DRT/MAT as It Relates to NA

All of these IDTs are connected to surveys. The survey links are at the bottom of the materials list. Please use the online survey as it helps us to collect your input.

Find these and more IDTs here: [na.org/idt](http://na.org/idt)

### What are Issue Discussion Topics?

Issue Discussion Topics are subjects that recovering addicts in NA communities around the world focus on in discussions and workshops throughout each two-year conference cycle. These conversations encourage us to think more deeply about relevant topics and help build unity within our groups and service bodies. In addition, sending the results of your discussions to the World Board can help shape Fellowshipwide resources and services.



## VRC 40 Memories

*James B, Little River Group, Knoxville Area*

**T**he 40th Volunteer Region Convention (VRC) was my first convention in November 2022, at about 11 months clean. You all didn't tell me that there are different flavors of pink clouds, I got my first taste of a convention pink cloud there that weekend. At one point, I tried to cook up a plan to convince my boss to send me around the country on business so that I could run around going to conventions on the weekend - I wanted to run away and join the circus. Thankfully, my sponsor talked some sense into me and I realized I was starting to think in manipulative ways and was beginning to miss the forest for the trees. I have to have daily affairs in order to practice these principles in them!

Somehow, I found myself chairing a workshop that weekend. I misunderstood who wanted to speak first, and ended up asking an addict who had prepared for the second half of the workshop to speak on the first half - they gracefully rolled with the punches instead of correcting me, without missing a beat! To my later horror, I realized I had messed up. But those addicts just powered through like spiritual champs - evidence to me that despite our planning, God says what God wants to say through willing addicts' mouths.

I had so many hugs that weekend that I developed anxiety after it was all over. I had to get my butt to extra meetings just to get my hug fix going on.

You all really sent me reeling with that cleantime countdown. So powerful, and then we draped the banner that had been signed by everyone across a newcomer on stage and gave it to them. You all do know that it doesn't take all that much to make me cry, right?

Something that uniquely carried the message to me was my first experience with an NA auction. I want you all to know, whoever wasn't there, that they ran up that VRC 1 t-shirt to something like \$300-400 and the winner ended up turning right around and giving it to the addict who designed that shirt (the main speaker). Addicts were battling each other in bids only to turn around and give their winnings to the addicts they were bidding against, there was laughter, there was excitement, and it was all raising funds while having a good time and being kind to one an-

other. That was not what it would have looked like in my old active addiction life - it would have been cruel and full of backstabbing involved. Even in auctions, y'all are showing me a new way to live.

This was also my first experience with a Volunteer Region Service Committee (VRSC) as Alternate RCM for Knoxville. What a kind and welcoming bunch. I fully expected to get scowled out of the room due to inexperience, but I felt so comfortable I went ahead and infodumped all my thoughts, questions, and opinions - and no one made me feel less than for doing so. In fact, from the get go, I was made to feel very much a part of things.

I hope to never forget VRC 40. It was my first of many conventions, and now I'm hooked.

In loving service,  
James B.

***Got a memory from a VRC or another convention from the past? We'd love to feature it!***

Send your memory to:  
[newsletter@natennessee.org](mailto:newsletter@natennessee.org)  
along with your first name, last initial, home group, and the area you are from.

**VOLUNTEER REGION CONVENTION OF NA**

**KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**NOV. 28 - DEC. 01, 2024**

**VRC**

**42**

**2024**

**W E B S I T E**

**2024.VRCNA.ORG**



**SIGN UP ONLINE**

**GET NOTIFIED**

**MORE INFO**

**RESOURCES**



**S C A N M E**

**VRC 42 CHAIR**

**AMBER M. | (865) 312-4749  
VRC42INFO@VRCNA.ORG**

**VRC 42 REGISTRATION**

**PRESTON W. | (423) 552-0880  
VRC42REGISTRATION@VRCNA.ORG**



**PRE-REGISTRATION:  
\$20 UNTIL 9/30/2024**

**HOTEL LOCATION: TBD**

**CHECK WEBSITE FOR UPDATED INFO ON BANQUET, ENTERTAINMENT,  
MERCH, AND OTHER ADD-ONS**

# Farewell Letter

*Vince B, RD Volunteer Region*

Greetings Family,

First let me start by saying that it is an honor to represent the Volunteer Region of NA in any capacity. I have had some amazing teachers along the way both past and present.

In my role of AD, it was difficult due to the COVID outbreak which caused a complete halt to everything. Learning how to persevere and continue the process of recovery and how to continue to do business wasn't fun but definitely a learning experience. Having made plans to attend WSC in person with Jim B. and then have everything change was heartbreaking to say the least. Having heard the experiences of the RD/RDA teams before me speak so highly of their experiences and gearing up emotionally to attend and then at the last minute have all my plans changed taught me the value of acceptance.

One of the greatest joys happened in May of 2023 when Greg V. and I were able to attend the WSC in person. To get the opportunity to meet others from across the world and to see this fellowship growing and flourishing was amazing. To be asked to read part of or all the mediation from the Spiritual Principle a Day at the beginning of the day on two different occasions was scary to say the least and I did as good as God allowed me to do.

We learned that the same struggles here in the Volunteer Region are the same struggles other Zones and Regions are experiencing. Also, to hear that other Zones and Regions have solutions to these and other issues was very encouraging. To see the rich history of our fellowship was breathtaking. Meeting and fellowshiping with other RD teams and building relationships with them are memories that will last a lifetime. Meeting the Board members and to see they are human and doing the best they can to serve the fellowship that I love was very inspiring. The most rewarding part of the WSC was the relationship that I was able to deepen with the RDA of the Volunteer Region, Greg V. To see Greg venture out on his own and develop his own relationships and to "work the room" was true poetry in motion.

I would not trade any of my experiences as part of the Delegate team for the Volunteer Region for anything in the world. The Delegate teams before me set the precedence for the expectations of what a Delegate team should be, and I truly hope that in being part of this Delegate team that we have been able to uphold the rich tradition that has been established before us.

It is with great honor and respect that I say thank you to all that I have had that chance to serve with and to be the voice for as during my time as a member of the Delegate team for the Volunteer Region of Narcotics Anonymous.

In loving service,

Vince B  
RD Volunteer Region

# February '24 VRSC Highlights

*James B, Little River Group, Knoxville Area*

February's Volunteer Region Service Committee (VRSC) uncovered a lot of reports and topics. This article features events around the region, key reports from the VRSC, nominations and motions going back to groups, reminders about the Regional Assembly and NAWS surveys, and a list of upcoming dates.

First, events around the region. Chattanooga reported that Surrender Under the Stars is gearing up for September, and that Unity Day, Field Day, a Chili Cookout, and other events are coming down the line. Greater Middle Tennessee Area reported a March 23rd Chili Cookoff, and their 45th anniversary is coming up - more will be revealed. Knoxville reported KACNA VI March 1-3 at Crowne Plaza in Knoxville, Tennessee. Midwest reported that their Experience, Strength, and Hope event will be May 17-19 at Camp LaJouie in Medon, TN. Mountain Area reported a Chili Cook-off March 9th. West Tennessee is hosting their NA in May May 3-5 at St Cumberland Retreat in Memphis, early registration closes in March. There were some other items reported by areas - full region reports will be attached in the region minutes for this quarter.

Next, some highlights from the region meeting. Our Treasurer is getting important documents filed, and will begin including a shortened version of the Treasurer report that is easier to read. The Regional Delegate team participated in the Southern Zonal Forum Winter Meeting which included a Zonal Inventory, and they are participating in several upcoming webinars at the world level. VRC 41 is wrapping up their final report but have stated it turned out to be very successful and they had over \$22k in the bank after all bills to be paid, with some final reconciliations left. VRC 42 asked RCMs to approve the Crowne Plaza for the winning bid, and it passed. The Financial and Legal Task Force is still working on retrieving and filing required documents. We are still looking at a way to get a group insurance policy that covers all NA events in the state. Regional Outreach, Alternate Secretary, and H&I positions are all vacant.

We also have nominations and a motion. We have a motion to add language to the guidelines that allows trusted servants to receive check signing authorization through

email. We have four nominations - James B from Knoxville for Alternate Secretary, Greg V for Regional Delegate, and then two outstanding nominees for Regional Delegate Alternate (RDA): Craig G and Emily S. Groups should vote for only one of these RDA nominations, not both.

Next, this Regional Assembly coming up will be May 4th at Murfreesboro Doubletree - RCMs as well as GSRs are strongly encouraged to attend. We may be doing virtual breakout sessions on Zoom, but we really need to find a way to get GSRs out there. This is a critical part of the service structure, and we haven't done one since the pandemic. We will be looking at Issue Discussion Topics, an open forum, and making service attractive.

Lastly, a reminder that some surveys are closing up in March. Go to [na.org/surveys](http://na.org/surveys) to get involved and help shape the future of NA around the world.

In loving service,  
James B

# New Meeting Finder

[www.na.org/meetingsearch](http://www.na.org/meetingsearch)



Narcotics Anonymous  
WORLD SERVICES



FOR THE PUBLIC



PERIODICALS



EVENTS



FOR OUR MEMB

[Home](#) > [For the public](#) > Meeting Search

## Meeting Search

Click here for local websites and phonedlines that list meetings

[In-Person Meetings](#)

Click here for a list of virtual meetings, shown in the time zone from which you're searching.

[Virtual Meetings](#)

## Reminder to update Meeting Finder app

### Meeting Finder Update

World Services has changed the way we help connect members to meetings. When you log on to [www.na.org/meetingsearch](http://www.na.org/meetingsearch), you can choose to look for either in-person or virtual (online or phone) meetings.

You'll need to update the mobile app to see the changes. Please note: we are no longer updating in-person meeting information, so if you do not update your app, you'll be seeing out-of-date information.

If you're looking for an in-person meeting, you can use the map or browse the location listings below the map to find local phonedlines and websites containing meeting information.

If you notice any map pins in the wrong place or have updates for website or phonedline information, let us know at [nadata@na.org](mailto:nadata@na.org). To add a virtual meeting to the list, use the link at the top of the virtual meeting page.

## Service Day

Every year on 1 May we celebrate Service Day.

Many NA communities hold a service-related event.

Email [worldboard@na.org](mailto:worldboard@na.org) and let us know if you are planning a celebration.

You can find flyers posted at: [www.na.org/nawsevents](http://www.na.org/nawsevents)

You can purchase "I SERVE" pins for \$5 from: [www.na.org/webstore](http://www.na.org/webstore) (item 9600).

**SERVICE DAY**

Good will is best exemplified in service; proper service is "Doing the right thing for the right reason."  
Basic Text, Our Symbol

Many communities plan a service learning day, or service-related speaker jam or workshop.  
How will your NA community celebrate?  
How will you be of service?

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

**WEDNESDAY, 1 MAY 2024**

## Upcoming Volunteer Region Events

- **VRC 42 Committee Meeting**

Second Thursday, Monthly,  
6pm EST

*Dunkin Donuts, Chapman  
Highway, Knoxville, TN*

- **Greater Middle TN  
Chili Cook-Off**

March 23

- **H&I Panel Webinar**

March 23, 11am PST

*[https://www.na.org/  
?ID=webinar-main](https://www.na.org/?ID=webinar-main)*

- **RCM Orientation**

To Be Determined

- **West TN's NA in May**

May 3 - 5

*St. Columba Retreat Center,  
Memphis, TN*

- **Regional Assembly**

May 4, 10am CST

*Doubletree, Murfreesboro, TN*

- **VRSC**

May 5, 9:30am CST

*Doubletree, Murfreesboro, TN*

- **Midwest Area ESH Event**

May 17 - 19

*Camp LeJoule, Medon, TN*

- **Southern Zonal  
Forum Meeting**

July 26 - 28

*New Orleans, LA*

- **World Convention in  
Washington, D.C.**

August 29 - September 1

- **VRC 42 Knoxville**

Nov 29 - Dec 1

*Crowne Plaza*

For more information and other  
events, please visit:

*[natennessee.org/calendar/](http://natennessee.org/calendar/)*

