

HISTORY OF THE GREATER SMOKEY MTN. ARE OF N.A.

THE FIRST N.A. MEETING FOR THIS AREA WAS HELD ON A TUESDAY EVENING, IN EARLY JUNE, 1980. THIS MEETING WAS HELD AT THE FOUNTAIN CITY METHODIST CHURCH. ABOUT 6 PEOPLE ATTENDED THIS INITIAL MEETING. THIS WAS STARTED BY ADDICTS WHO HAD BEEN TOLD NOT TO TALK ABOUT THEIR ADDICTION IN AN AA GROUP THEY HAD ATTENDED. THIS MEETING WAS CALLED THE "FRIENDSHIP GROUP". IT WAS AN N.A. MEETING, BUT THESE ADDICTS WERE NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE WSO OR ANY OTHER ARM OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS. THERE WAS NO LITERATURE AVAILABLE TO THEM, BUT THEY MET AS RECOVERING ADDICTS. SOME OF THESE FOUNDERS OF N.A. IN THE KNOXVILLE AREA WERE PHIL D.(WHO HAD A LITTLE WHITE BOOK) AND SARA G. THE CURRENT TUESDAY NIGHT MEETING IS A CONTINUATION OF THIS INITIAL NA MEETING.

FROM THIS MEETING, A NUMBER OF OTHER MEETINGS BEGAN TO DEVELOP. THE MONDAY NIGHT MEETING WAS STARTED AT THE ST MARY'S SCHOOL OF NURSING STARTED IN 1981. THERE WAS ALSO AN H & I MEETING ON SATURDAY NIGHTS AT THE AT ST MARY'S HOSPITAL. THEN ANOTHER NA MEETING WAS STARTED IN ROCKFORD, NEAR MARYVILLE, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING. BY THIS TIME N.A. HAD A CORE GROUP OF ABOUT 12 ADDICTS SEEKING RECOVERY, BUT, STILL, NO REAL N.A.

IN FEBRUARY, 1982 BOB K., AN ADDICT FROM KNOXVILLE WHO HAD BEEN IN A TREATMENT CENTER IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, ATTENDED THE 1st GEORGIA REGIONAL CONVENTION OF N.A. IT WAS HERE THAT SOME COPIES OF THE PROPOSED BASIC TEXT WERE OBTAINED AND RETURNED TO KNOXVILLE. THIS WAS OUR FIRST INSPIRATION TO START COMMUNICATING WITH THE WSO, AND TO OBTAIN FURTHER N.A. LITERATURE. ALTHOUGH IT SEEM TO TAKE MONTHS, SOME LITERATURE WAS OBTAINED FORM THE WSO.

IN DECEMBER, 1982, A KNOXVILLE GROUP OF NA MEMBERS MET WITH OTHER NA MEMBERS FROM NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA, AND MEMPHIS TO FORM THE VOLUNTEER REGION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS. OFFICERS WERE ELECTED AND IT WAS DECIDED THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE AT THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS AND BE A PART OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS. THIS IS WHEN OUR GROWTH BEGAN TO REALLY TAKE OFF. WE HAD AN AREA THAT WAS INITIALLY JUST KNOXVILLE MEETINGS, BUT THROUGH OUR OUTREACH AND OTHER ADDICTS INITIATIVE, OTHER MEETINGS WERE STARTED IN EAST TENNESSEE.

IN THE SPRING OF 1983, THE VOLUNTEER REGION WAS REPRESENTED AT WSCNA AND WAS RECOGNIZED AS A REGION. TWO ADDICTS FROM THE KNOXVILLE AREA (BOB K. AND RICK W.) ATTENDED. IT WAS AT THIS MEETING THE FIRST EDITION OF OUR BASIC TEXT WAS RELEASED. ALSO, AT THIS MEETING THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE WAS REORGANIZED AND SET UP POLICIES FOR LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION.

IN 1983, MEETINGS BEGAN SPRINGING UP ALL OVER OUR AREA. WE WERE INVITED TO TREATMENT CENTERS AND SCHOOLS TO CARRY OUR MESSAGE OF RECOVERY. THERE WAS A REAL FEELING OF UNITY AMONG NA AND THE AREA COMMITTEES BEGAN TO BECOME VERY ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY. THE H&I COMMITTEE STARTED HAVING H&I MEETINGS AT SOME OF THE LOCAL A&D UNITS AND ALSO ESTABLISHED SOME CONTACTS WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND SPOKE TO INTERESTED GROUPS. THE PI COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED THE NA HELPLINE AND THIS WAS ONE OF THE BEST VEHICLES OF HELP AND GROWTH FOR OUR LOCAL FELLOWSHIP.

BY THE END OF 1983, WE HAD AT LEAST ONE NA MEETING EVERY NIGHT OF THE WEEK AND A MID-DAY MEETING KNOWN AS "NOON-THIRTY" WHICH MET 5

DAYS A WEEK. ALTHOUGH THINGS WERE MOVING WELL FOR NA, THERE WERE STILL OBSTACLES AND PROBLEMS WE HAD TO OVERCOME, OR JUST ACCEPT.

DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS, NA CONTINUED TO GROW AND BE ACCEPTED BY THE COMMUNITY AS BEING A POSITIVE SOURCE OF RECOVERY FROM DRUG ADDICTION. THE KNOXVILLE AREA WAS VERY ACTIVE IN THIS REGARD. WE WERE AVAILABLE AND MET WITH GROUPS OUTSIDE OF THE RECOVERING COMMUNITY, WE PARTICIPATED ON LOCAL TALK SHOWS AND NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWS AND THIS WAS ALL DONE ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE GOOD OF NA AND RECOVERY.

BY THIS TIME, THIS AREA HAD A LOT OF PEOPLE ACTIVE AS REGIONAL OFFICERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS. WE WERE EVEN REPRESENTED ON WORLD SERVICE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. IN THE WINTER OF 1984, DUE TO THE EFFORTS OF MAINLY ONE PERSON (RICK W.), KNOXVILLE HOSTED A WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFTING OF THE TRADITIONS. THIS WAS HELD AT THE WESLEY HOUSE ON UT CAMPUS AND ABOUT 20 MEMBERS OUTSIDE THIS REGION PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP ALONG WITH ABOUT 5 MEMBERS OF THIS REGION. THIS WAS THE INITIAL DRAFT OF TRADITIONS 10, 11, AND 12 WHICH ARE NOW INCLUDED IN THE NEW PUBLICATION OF "IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY - THE TRADITIONS"

ABOUT THIS TIME TWO MEMBERS (BOB K. AND BILL J.) FROM THE AREA HAD HEARD A RUMOR THAT THERE WERE SOME ADDICTS IN OAK RIDGE. THEY SET UP A MEETING ON SUNDAY NIGHT IN OAK RIDGE. THIS FIRST MEETING WAS HELD AT THE OLD YWCA BUILDING WHICH HAS SINCE BEEN TORN DOWN. AT THIS MEETING THERE WERE 5 PEOPLE AND TWO OF THE FIVE WERE STILL USING AT THE TIME. OF THOSE FIVE PEOPLE AT THAT FIRST MEETING THREE ARE STILL CLEAN ONE IS DEAD AND THE OTHER IS IN PRISON. JUST A FEW MONTHS LATER THE MEETING MOVED TO THE OLD MANHATTAN AVE. LOCATION AND A SECOND MEETING WAS SORTED ON FRIDAY NIGHTS. NOW OAK RIDGE HAS AT LEAST ONE N.A. MEETING A DAY.

BY 1985, WE HAD MEETINGS SPRINGING UP ALL OVER. AN "OUTREACH COMMITTEE" WAS FORMED AND THEY HELPED ESTABLISH MEETINGS IN OTHER CITIES SURROUNDING KNOXVILLE. THIS WAS DONE BY INVITATION AND ON OUR OWN. WE LOCATED ADDICTS TRYING TO RECOVER WITHOUT MEETINGS AVAILABLE TO THEM AND TOOK MEETINGS TO THEM. ONCE ESTABLISHED THE MEETINGS TOOK CARE OF THEMSELVES.

AT THIS TIME THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP WAS PHENOMENAL. THE PARTICIPATION IN THE IN SERVICE WAS GREAT. NA WAS SHOWING GOOD RECOVERY AND SOME OF OUR MEMBERS HAD EVEN BECOME "RESPONSIBLE AND PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY" (THIS MAY BE STRETCHING IT).

WE HAD FORMED A CLUBHOUSE FOR RECOVERING PEOPLE AND A LOT MEETINGS WERE HELD THERE, BUT IT WAS BECOMING MORE OF A "HANGOUT". GROUPS NOTICING THE ATTENDANCE LESSENING OPTED TO MOVE FROM THE CLUB HOUSE LOCATION AND RELOCATED THEIR MEETINGS AT TRADITIONAL MEETING PLACES SUCH AS CHURCHES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

BY 1987, N.A. WAS DOING WELL AND HAD A LOT OF STEAM GOING FOR IT. DUE TO THE TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN THE AREAS SURROUNDING KNOXVILLE, THE KNOXVILLE AREA CHANGED ITS NAME TO THE GREATER SMOKY MOUNTAIN AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF ADDICTS WITH MORE THAN A YEAR CLEAN AND THIS ALONE WAS KILLING THE LIE "ONCE AN ADDICT, ALWAYS AN ADDICT". THE RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION THROUGH THE 12 STEPS CONTINUES IN THIS AREA STRONGER THAN EVER AND THE MESSAGE IS CARRIED TODAY IN ALL FACETS OF LIFE IN OUR AREA FROM THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY.