

## CASCNA HISTORY (PART II)

### Introduction

The way we started this part of our area's history was with three service "junkies" on their knees saying the prayer that is in introduction of our Basic Text Approval Form. Hopefully their work, and all the others involved in this history writing, were doing God's will not their own.

The first thing we did was to go through all of our old minutes. This wasn't easy because we had to combine three partial sets to get one complete set. The minutes were combed through, as well as addicts' memories, for any colorful notes. These colorful notes were taken and recorded on separate paper by dates. During this search it was discovered that some "colorful notes" were too important or lengthy to record simply. Any subjects which met those requirements were put on an "Extra Sheet." This took about 5 hours.

The next step we took was to make some sort of general categories for these notes. Any colorful notes that could be combined into an article we so combined.

An out line was formed and writing was started. What we have is not the finished product; there will be proof reading and a review text printed. It is hoped that the review text will stimulate memories and bring in even more colorful parts of our history. A review text might ALSO clarify facts, as well as change false information.

Throughout our efforts in uncovering Chicago's NA History, we have discovered many humorous aspects of things which have happened in the process of pulling our Area together, many of which we can now look back upon and laugh at!

Though our intentions were sincere then, we would like to humble ourselves to you at this time:

During our first A.S.C. meeting, on February 18, 1981, our first motion was made and approved. However, this motion was never carried out, or even spoken of again. In the same meeting, the second motion of C.A.S.C.'s history was made and approved. This motion, however, broke the Traditions!

Since the A.S.C. was new to Chicago's NA structure, and many did not understand or know the reason for it, many members who remained uninvolved in the A.S.C., copied attitudes, and referred to it as the "Directors' Meeting", and to the A.S.C. members as "Directors." As A.S.C. members emerged from the meeting, whispers of "here come the Directors" could be heard throughout the ongoing NA meeting, just outside the door of the A.S.C. meeting-place. These addicts must have done Fourth Steps, as this attitude has long since stopped.

Again, early in C.A.S.C.'s existence, (October, 1981), we decided that we wanted to form a region. We thought that this was a fantastic idea, and that it would greatly add to the growth of NA in the Chicago Area. However, we knew nothing of the "chain of command", or any process involved in forming a region, and we did not bother to look into it and find out. As a result, we voted Rockford, IL, and Northern Indiana into our "Region." We never bothered to contact either location or our "decision," or carry out with pay attention to our newly formed "region." Nothing else was ever said about it, until <sup>we</sup> officially joined the Mid-Coast Region in November of 1982.

As the fog lifted, and we got more honest with ourselves, we had to look at and admit the fact that we knew absolutely nothing of what was going on in NA, outside of our own Area (March, 1982).

Finally, we would like to conclude with the fact that the request to write up our history was brought up  $\frac{1}{2}$  a year ago. As a result of typical of typical addict procrastination, this history is finally being taken care of--a week before the deadline!!!!

Chicago Area Service Committee Narcotics Anonymous

The first Area Service Committee meeting of the Chicago Area Narcotics Anonymous (CANA) was held on February 18, 1981 with seven members present, representing seven different groups. It is interesting to note that all seven of the original G.S.R.'s are still clean today.

Meeting Growth

In February of 1981, the month when the Chicago Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.S.C.N.A.) was founded, there were seven meetings in the Chicago Area. Representatives from Northern Indiana and Rockford, Illinois, were also attending Chicago's Area Service meetings. They each reported having had two meetings.

By December of 1981, Chicago Area doubled to fourteen meetings a week in the first year since the C.A.S.C.N.A. was formed!

By the end of 1982, C.A.S.C.N.A. had lost contact with Rockford and Northern Indiana. At the last meeting that they attended, Northern Indiana reported having three NA meetings, and Rockford reported having two in existence.

By October of 1982, Chicago Area had seventeen meetings--only three new meetings having started since January, 1982. There was a sudden rise in the number of meetings in November, possibly attributed to the WONA #12, and the unity found there. In December of 1982, there were 26 meetings existing in the Chicago Area; a jump of 8 new meetings in two months! As a result of the efforts and organization of the C.A.S.C.N.A. in Chicago, the numbers of meetings more than tripled in the first two years of service!

Candlelight meetings:

February--April 1981

The second motion that our A.S.C. made was to distribute separate meeting lists with A.A. Candlelight meetings on them. There was a need for more meetings than NA had at that time. Addicts seeking recovery who needed additional meetings had no choice other than to attend A.A. meetings.

The Downtown office of A.A. was contacted about this possibility. They said that they would not approve of C.A.S.C.N.A. distributing these lists. The cover letter for this meeting list was never used, and the sixth tradition was followed.

Basic Text Review

We in the Chicago area were invited by the world Service Literature Committee to review the "Review Copy" of the book entitled Narcotics Anonymous, in March of 1981. They had asked that we make any corrections or comments pertaining to this new book. The G.S.R. for each meeting was given a copy to bring back to their group for review. We set a meeting to take place two weeks later, in one of our members' homes, to go over the comments and suggested changes that were received by the groups. This meeting was held one week before our review input was to be in Atlanta.

The lack of effort and interest shown in this historic matter was pitiful. There were only a handful of people at this meeting--mostly newcomers. It appeared that nobody read much past the first three or four chapters, and the list of recommended changes we sent in were those that a blind person would have noticed. As our first group effort as an Area of NA, it was a flop. A grateful note.....we've gotten better! (thanks, H.P.)

Troubled Times with The Treasury

In Chicago we have had an experience that serves to remind us of the importance of the traditions in carrying out our program. In this instance the first and twelfth traditions come into play.

Before our A.S.C. was established one of our NA members took on the responsibilities of our phone service, literature, inter-group communications, collection of money from groups, served as the California contact, and ~~virtually~~ <sup>virtually</sup> anything else that came up in Chicago.

We are most grateful for this members generous efforts and service. However, so much responsibility and work should never be placed on one person at our group, sub-committee, or A.S.C. levels or functions--because of the following:

In the early stages of the CASCNA growth, no one had any solid idea of what to do. After two months of no treasury reports, in April of 1981 the C.A.S.C.N.A. established a policy that made written reports mandatory for the treasury. Of course it was too late, hundreds of dollars too late. The phone answering service and the telephone company turned off our service from the last week of May 1981 through the end of June 1981. A new treasurer was elected at this time with the responsibility of trying to restore the phone service and having a written report prepared for each A.S.C. meeting.

In April of 1982 the C.A.S.C.N.A. was informed of a \$200.00 debt for literature which was sent to the same member who was taking on all of the responsibilities previously mentioned. The C.A.S.C.N.A. also paid this debt. We have tried several methods to collect the remainder of the debt money from this member. Everything from electing a member of the C.A.S.C.N.A. to keep in contact with this member to the present style of different members reminding this member of his remaining debt. The C.A.S.C.N.A. as a whole does not feel that we have any right to let go of this debt situation because it is not our money to let go of.

We ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> sharing this information with NA as a whole, not to put shame or guilt on this member, but rather to alert the Fellowship to the realities of what may result when too much responsibility is placed on one individual. Many positive steps

of growth have resulted from this experience: A treasurers audit is in our policy now along with a written report at each A.S.C. meeting; also we can see more clearly that NA unity is a must at all levels of service work and group level. This is not the only problem of imbalance in our area, and it is nice to know that without unity it doesn't work. Situations such as this are forever reminding us to place principles before personalities. Thank God that this member is still clean today and our Fellowship survived. Out of this situation has come growth unity, fellowship, and increasing awareness of what is going on around us.

### Phone Service

January 1976--January 1978

The third motion of the newly found A.S.C. made the phone service the responsibility of one group for one month. If no one from the group volunteered the G.S.R. was responsible to handle all calls and co-ordinate with the answering service. At this time the P.S. cost was approximately \$80 a month. Policy was established that each group bring \$12 to support the P.S. It was suggested that G.S.R.'s ask their groups for volunteers to give 12th step rides.

The Phone Service was rotated from G.S.R. to G.S.R. in our area. They were responsible when their groups didn't help with the P.S. Needless to say it didn't help the unity of the Fellowship, the serenity of the G.S.R., or the suffering addict. Up to ten calls a day was too much for one member to handle effectively; people became irresponsible because they were overworked. Our primary purpose--TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE ADDICT WHO STILL SUFFERS--was not achieved.

There were some other problems during this "phase" of our phone service. This vital service was disconnected for six weeks because A.S.C. unmanageability caused a failure to pay our bills. The answering service started to give out the emergency numbers to addicts instead of tele-patching the call through.

At the time of this highly unmanageable system, there were about 150 calls coming in a month, with an average monthly ~~cost~~ of \$90.00.   
cost

September 1982--January 1983

The system mentioned before worried the A.S.C. greatly. We did something right and asked for help. We received help from members in Milwaukee. They shared the system that they were using at that time. We adapted our present system from them.

C.A.S.C.N.A. formed a Phone Service committee, which now has a chairman, secretary, and many volunteers. These volunteers change from month to month with some members sticking with it.

The schedule is made into three eight-hour shifts each day which break down 24-hour periods into the following segments: 7 am--3 pm, 3 pm--11 pm, and 11 pm--7 am. Each volunteer calls in to the answering service of the beginning of the shift and then every two hours thereafter, picking up messages from suffering addicts, schools, hospitals, social service agencies, loved ones, press, media, and anyone else interested in NA. (One girl called seeking support for pot smoking in her school debate, and she was politely informed that we could not help. We offered to send a speaker to her school to inform them about NA) It is the responsibility of each volunteer to contact each caller or refer the call to the proper sub-committee. Each volunteer is supplied with a log to maintain record of PS usage, list of bylaws and traditions, twelfth-step list, meeting list, white book and list of treatment centers (which are referred on a personal basis so not to break the sixth tradition).

In case of emergency calls, from suffering addicts who refuse to leave their number or need to talk to a recovering addict immediately, the answering service can telepatch these calls to recovering addicts found on a provided referral list. This keeps the service operating efficiently, and volunteers have less chance of "burn out."

The main problem now is the service company. Members have called the hotline to check the operation, the following problems were discovered; it can take from 15-20 rings to answer, the service refers to recovering addicts as counselors, sometimes the operators are rude. Suffering addicts are referred to other agencies (i.e. White hotline, crisis intervention, and F.A.)

A letter was sent to the answering service stating that we are recovering addicts and not professionals, and also to inform callers that they have reached our answering service and a member of staff will contact them as soon as possible, and that all a suffering addict need leave is their first name and phone number. During emergency tele-patch calls, the service checks the line to see if the line is open, this causes a clicking that really annoys suffering addicts (they wonder who is tapping the line.) Another problem with tele-patching calls is that this ties up our line for the duration of the emergency call. Search for a new answering service is now under way.

We now average 300 calls a month with an average monthly bill of \$170.00. It appears that most of these callers do not come to meetings, we feel that this is due to the fact that many twelfth-step calls are made over the phone rather than in person. Another whole chapter could be written on attempts to compile twelfth-step lists.

A.S.C. volunteers have to have six months clean time in order to work the "hotline" and people who can give rides should have at least three months of clean time. This policy was passed after two months of discussion, which held up to PSC from operating smoothly. We later found out that all of this mess could have been avoided, this policy was established at our second A.S.C. meeting.

Through the Grace of God and a lot of dedicated people, things are starting to run smoothly.



### Sub-Committees

Many sub-committees were formed during the first two years. The formation of these sub-committees was necessary and very important as the Chicago Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.S.C.N.A.) grew. At the first A.S.C. meetings, there were no official sub-committees formed, but work was beginning to be done to build these committees and they were officially formed at a later date.

On May 6, 1981, Public Relations had a few speaking engagements coming up and the Recreation Sub-Committee was spreading the word about their first picnic. By October of 1982, the Recreation and Finance Sub-Committee was officially formed and starting to function. In May of 1982, the Institution Sub-Committee was formed. It was later changed to Hospitals and Institutions and started functioning in October of 1982. Beginners kits were sent to 110 hospitals in the area. Of these, only 1 out of 10 hospitals had ever heard of Narcotics Anonymous. In November of 1981, a Speaker Sub-Committee was formed and it later merged with the Public Information Sub-Committee. A California contact was appointed, instead of that being the responsibility of the Chairperson, for any questions C.A.N.A. needed answered or for any information. In December of 1982, a Bid Sub-Committee to try to bring the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous #14 to Chicago was formed and working. Also in December the Newsletter and Literature Committees were made sub-committees of the A.S.C. In June of 1981, the Public Information Sub-Committee had letters to send out and started having T.v. and radio announcements made to let people know about the existence of Narcotics Anonymous. All these committees are doing fine as they are, and we are very grateful to the people working in these sub-committees for our membership is growing and the need for more volunteers has grown, too. For a long time, many of these sub-committees consisted of one or two people. We are also very grateful to the people for sticking with it until the size of these groups

grew. We just hope that new and less involved members will see the huge importance of these sub-committees and help us to help NA.

### Events

The Recreation sub-committee of the Chicago Area Service Committee (C.A.S.C.N.A.), was functioning by May of 1982. The first event that the sub-committee planned, was a picnic; the idea behind it was to create more unity and fellowship in the Chicago area. The date of the picnic was July 11, 1981, and roughly 20-30 people attended.

The next event was the First Annual All Chicago Open of Narcotics Anonymous. This, too, was planned in the hopes of creating more unity and fellowship. The event was held in April of 1982, and was the first recreational success of C.A.S.C.N.A., with approximately 350 in attendance. The money obtained from the dance which immediately followed the Open meeting, was enough to cover all of the expenses of the C.A.S.C.N.A. for approximately six months.

Another significant event in the history of C.A.N.A., was our first retreat. The event was held in a retreat house during September of 1982, with approximately 30 members attending. This retreat helped members with their spirituality, and also helped tighten our fellowship. One of the unplanned occurrences of this retreat, was a late night game of "Capture the Flag," involving almost everyone who was there. The game lasted nearly two hours, and was an excellent opportunity for the members to get out of themselves.

On October 31, 1982, the South Side "Unity Fellowship" group hosted a Masquerade Ball. There were approximately 175 people who attended this event. The event was planned and created by the South Side "Unity Fellowship" group, which was concerned with

Decline in Number of Meetings

October 1981

During this time in our history we experienced something new and frightening. The number of meetings in our area changed from a slow but steady increase to a slight decline. There were meetings "dying" on nights where there were strong meetings in other parts of our area. This problem could have been eliminated by better communication between groups through G.S.R.'s.

Co-operation Rather Than Affiliation

November 1981

The Downtown A.A. office made us aware that we were affiliating our groups with the places that they were being held at. By not having a separate name for each group that did not include the name of the outside enterprise where it was being held, we broke the sixth tradition. (i.e. The Grant Hospital Group became Friday "ite Live.)

Communication with Alcoholics Anonymous

On December 2, 1981, it was announced that two (2) members of the Chicago Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.S.C.N.A.) would go to the Chicago downtown office of Alcoholics Anonymous, and seek guidance for Chicago Area Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.N.A.) growth. At the February 3, 1982 meeting, the two members reported to the C.A.S.C.N.A. about their communication with the A.A. office. The A.A. office gave sound advice to our members, some of which included:

1. Tighten up Phone Service
2. Improve communication between group, area, region, and world
3. Strengthen existing groups, before starting new ones.
4. Have G.S.R.'s try to get people involved.
5. Stick to Traditions (strongly emphasized)

6. Start a newsletter.
7. Establish weekly Open meetings.
8. Keep group literature separate. Each group have a separate pile of literature.
9. Establish a central office.

Of all of these suggestions, the C.A.N.A. and G.S.R.'s have been able to follow all of the first seven suggestions. We are grateful to the downtown A.A. office for their help.

### Help to Struggling Group

February 1982

One group in our Area had very little support and fell behind in rent. The officers changed and the G.S.R. asked C.A.S.C.N.A. to help out with \$50.00. The G.S.R. voted to support this struggling group and pay their rent. Today this group is strong and self-supporting.

### Meeting Recognition

March 1982

During one of the U.A.S.C.N.A. meetings it was brought to the committee's attention that there were some groups in the Chicago Area which were calling themselves Narcotics Anonymous meetings. By the suggestion of one of the C.A.S.C.N.A. members the A.S.C. decided that before any meeting was recognized by the U.A.S.C.N.A. as an NA meeting one of the G.S.R.'s of the C.A.S.C.N.A. would attend the meeting and report to the Area about the meeting. If the meeting did constitute an NA meeting and did adhere to the NA Traditions it was added to the C.A.S.C.N.A. meeting list of NA meetings in the Chicago area.

### A.S.C. Meeting Reminders

March 1982

One of the ideas that the U.A.S.C.N.A. had in order to gain more support was to mail a monthly reminder to each of the G.S.R.'s,

reminding them of the date, time, and location of the monthly A.S.C. meetings. Prior to this attempt, there were many meetings with only a few groups being represented by their respective G.S.R.'s.

### A.S.C. Meeting Growth

1982

As the meetings in Chicago increased and the number of representatives from the meetings increased the C.A.S.C.N.A. realized that there was a great need to find a new location for the A.S.C. meetings to be held at. One of the main concerns was to find a place which would be more central for the expanding size of our Area and also accommodate the size of the growing A.S.C. meeting. As it turned out we found a central location with temporarily large enough accommodations, but the neighborhood where the A.S.C. meetings were held was crime-ridden and resulted in several car windows being broken and many articles being stolen from the vehicles (among the many things stolen was the approval form for the Fourth-step guide). Once again by the end of 1982, the need for a larger meeting place and a safer neighborhood was evident, so at the January 1982 C.A.S.C.N.A. the committee approved yet another location.

### Bid Committee History

As of the printing of this text about the history of Narcotics Anonymous, the Chicago Area of Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.N.A.) has not yet hosted a convention. However, during the "World Convention of Narcotics anonymous #12 (W.C.N.A. #12) held in Milwaukee, several members of C.A.N.A. met to discuss the possibilities of hosting a convention in Chicago. At this first meeting it was informally decided that Chicago would make an effort to host the W.C.N.A. #14 in 1984.

Milwaukee Receives the Bid for W.C.N.A. #12 and Asks for Help

October--November 1981

Members from Milwaukee came down to Chicago to ask for help in their fundraising for W.C.N.A. #12. Our A.S.C. decided to help by throwing a Halloween party to benefit W.C.N.A. #12 Bid Committee. We have no records as to the amount of money raised, but all of the proceeds went to help W.C.N.A. #12.

These same members from Milwaukee asked us to pass a can around to get money raised. Nobody would take responsibility for this, so the can was tossed and all the change (less than a dollar) went to Milwaukee.

Newsletter Information of C.A.S.C.N.A.

The first Chicago Area Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter was published in December of 1982. For a long time, there had been talk of a newsletter in Chicago. On September 16, 1982, a handful of members from the South Side of Chicago met in order to try to recognize and solve some of the problems with the local groups. It was during the second meeting of this "Unity Fellowship" group that talk of the newsletter began. The idea of the newsletter was inspired by the Memphis Miracle Newsletter. On October 7, 1982, the first meeting of the Straight Times Newsletter met, and various members volunteered to staff the letter.

~~At one of the first meetings, the newsletter staff decided to gather sa~~

The first decision that the staff of the newsletter had to make, was what to call the newsletter. Two names were <sup>preferred,</sup> ~~perferred~~ "Straight Times" and "Straight News." Because of the easy confusion, the treasurer set up the checking account with the heading as "Straight News." However, the newsletter was officially established as the Straight Times newsletter at the December 2, 1982 meeting.

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At one of the first meetings, the newsletter staff decided to gather subscriptions and mail the first edition free of charge, to anyone interested. Later, however, it was discovered that, for financial reasons, this was not possible. The staff decided to distribute the first edition of the newsletter by hand, and began by selling them at the 1982--83 CASCNA New Years Eve party, and then gave the leftover issues to C.A.S.C.N.A. G.S.R.'s to sell to the groups throughout Chicagoland.

All of the material in the first edition of the newsletter were articles, poems, thoughts, etc., sent in by members of C.A.N.A. Before any articles were printed in the newsletter, the staff approved and sometimes edited the material. The staff of the newsletter recognizes that the newsletter is by the people, and for the people of C.A.N.A., and the newsletter is geared toward the positive aspects of recovery and the program.

As time went on, we lost the support of some staff members, and we also kept having to move our deadline date closer to the end of the year. On November 3, 1982, the Chicago Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (C.A.S.C.N.A.) lent \$50.00 to the newsletter staff, and on December 1, 1982, the newsletter officially became a Sub-Committee of the C.A.S.C.N.A. By the end of 1982, the handful of ambitious members who had stuck with the newsletter completed and published the first edition. The staff of the newsletter hopes to continue publishing more editions of Straight Times.

THANK GOD FOR THANKSGIVING II

On November 24, 1982, several members of Chicago Area Narcotics Anonymous attended the Thanksgiving II Consciousness Mid-Year Service Workshops. This was a very spiritual and inspiring experience for them and the Chicago Area. The message of recovery from the disease of addiction was unfolded and revealed to new meanings. Different perspectives of Narcotics Anonymous were exposed to us. A distinction was made clear and definite between NA and other twelve step fellowships.

Our identification as addicts is all inclusive in respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. "Alcoholism" is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called "addiction." The simplicity of having one disease, addiction came as a relief and a spiritual awakening. The realization that as addicts we have no need to go to other fellowships. The answers, and recovery is possible through going to only one fellowship, Narcotics Anonymous.

We learned the importance of our traditions and cooperation not affiliation. That NA groups not only stand on their own, but demand the right to do so.

We experienced unconditional love, sharing, and caring with addicts, but also with addicts' ideas, knowledge and wisdom.

Chicago Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous has been more informed, and as a result been able to further the message of recovery more productively and efficiently.

We have come to a greater understanding of the service structure and its importance. We have grown and are growing as a result of Mid-Year Service workshops. The member level; the disease is not the drugs, but addiction. On the group level: distinguishing between fellowships, the understanding and application



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Page 19 of the traditions. The Area Service Committee level: the communication and education of our trusted servant. The forming of new committees: FI, Literature, and Policy and the growth and development of our already existing committees.

We began to take a searching and fearless look into our past and compile our history.

The growth of our unity as a group as as an area, as a region, as Narcotics Anonymous as a whole has enriched our spiritual lives, program, and our fellowship.