



Cleansheet

Issue #5

Phila. Area Newsletter

May 1984

AREA NEWS

Phila. Area Service Meeting was held on Sunday, March 11, 1984. The Lit. Committee reports that they are doing fine with an abundant supply of literature. Lit. Review Committee reports that new literature needs to be reviewed. This literature and more information will be available at next Area Service Meeting. Hotline and H&I Committees are working towards becoming more effective. New Chairpeople were elected for Public Information. A few Groups came to the Area with a proposal to develop a new Area. There was lengthy discussion on this issue regarding Traditions and whether this would be the proper time to break off into two Areas. The next Area Service Meeting will be held on April 8, 1984 at 7:00 p.m., Harbison Ave. & Roosevelt Blvd.

REGIONAL NEWS

The next Regional Service Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 15th in the Locust Board Room at the Hershey Hotel in Philadelphia. In the April issue of The Cleansheet in the Regional News, it was stated that the Alt. A.S.R. has moved into the A.S.R. position and a new Alt. A.S.R. has been elected. This should read that the Alt. R.S.R. has moved into the R.S.R. position and a new Alt. R.S.R. has been elected. The positions of Treasurer and Co-chair are open and need to be filled. Anyone interested in these positions please attend the next Regional Service Meeting.

Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention April 13,14,15



"A Time To Come Together"

THE CLEANSHEET, P.O.Box 14541 Phila., Pa. 19115

The Cleansheet is a subcommittee of Philadelphia Area Service Committee. The primary purpose of The Cleansheet is to provide a written message of recovery to addicts seeking recovery, to provide our members with news, and to promote unity. The opinions expressed herein are from the individual member of NA and do not necessarily represent those of NA as a whole. All input is welcome and needed to carry the message. The Cleansheet is a monthly publication. Subscriptions are available at a cost of \$5.00 per year. Send name, address, and check or money order to:

The Cleansheet
P.O.Box-14541
Phila., Pa. 19115

Committee Dates: April 22, 1984
May 6, 1984

Contact for location of committee meetings:
Andy P. (215) 676-8784
Bob H. (215) 886-7233

Meetings in need of support

MONDAY-

"Came To Believe Group"
Tabernacle Presbyterian Church
37th & Chestnut Sts., Phila.
Step, 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY THRU FRIDAY-

"Reality Group" Afternoon Meeting
2205 Bridge St., Phila.
Speaker Discussion, 11:00 a.m.

TUESDAY-

"K.I.S.S. Group"
1502 Frankford Ave., Phila.
Open 1st Step, 6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY-

"Go For It Group"
Kensington & Haggard Sts., Phila.
Open Speaker Discussion, 8:00 p.m.

FRIDAY-

"Carry The Message Group"
Fairmount Farms, 7700 Ridge Ave.
Speaker Discussion, 8:00 p.m.

New meetings

"Reality Group" 2205 Bridge St.
No meeting on Monday night; Thurs.
meeting begins at 9:00 p.m.

"Gay's & Lesbian's Clean Together
Group" First Unitarian Church
2125 Chestnut St., Phila.
Open Spkr. Disc., 1st Tues. Step
Tues. 8:30 p.m.

"Interim House" Women's Group
250 West Tulpehocken St. (Germantown)
Spkr. Disc., Tues. 8:30 p.m.

"Men At Work Group" St. Joachim's
Church, Church & Griscom Sts.
Basic Text Meeting on 2nd Tues. of
each month, 8:00 p.m.

CONVENTIONS

1st G.P.R.C.N.A. - 1st GREATER PHILA-
DELPHIA REGIONAL CONVENTION OF N.A.

Date: April 13-15, 1984

Theme: "A Time To Come Together"

Place: Hershey Hotel

Broad & Locust Sts., Phila.

Cost: Registration \$13, Banquet \$22,
Room Fees \$50 single, \$50 dou-
ble, \$60 triple, \$70 quad.

Mail to: Greater Phila. Regional
C/O G.P.R.C.N.A.
P.O. Box 42629
Phila., PA 19101-2629

W.V.C.C.N.A. - WEST VIRGINIA CONV-
ENTION FOR N.A.

Date: April 20-22, 1984

Theme: "Almost Heaven '84"

Place: State 4-H Camp, Weston, WV.

For More Info Write:

W.V.C.C.N.A.

Route 7, Box 761

Morgantown, West Vir-
ginia, 26505

5th E.C.C.N.A. - 5th EAST COAST
CONVENTION OF N.A.

Date: June 22-24, 1984

Theme: "Reaching Out"

Place: Yale University
New Haven, Ct.

Events: Workshops, Marathon Meet-
ings, Dances, Swimming, Live
Music.

Cost: Registration \$10, Banquet-
Dance-Registration \$30 (doesn't
include rooms & meals), Total
Package \$75 (includes Registr-
ation, Rooms, Meals, Banquet,
and Dances)

Mail To: 5th E.C.C.N.A.
P.O. Box 611

Hartford, Ct. 06142-0611

S T E P F O U R

"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

The purpose of a searching and fearless moral inventory is to sort through the confusion and the contradiction of our lives so that we can find out who we really are. We are starting a new way or life and need to be rid of the burdens and traps which have controlled us and prevented our growth.

As we approach this step, most of us are afraid that there is a monster inside us that, if released, will destroy us. This fear can cause us to put off our inventory or may even prevent us from taking this crucial step at all. We have found that fear is lack of faith, and we have found a loving, personal God to whom we can turn. We no longer need to be afraid.

We have been experts at self-deception and rationalization; by writing our inventory, we can overcome these obstacles. A written inventory will unlock parts of our subconscious which remain hidden when we simply think about or talk about who we are. Once it is all down on paper, it is much easier to see, and much harder to deny our true nature. Honest self-assessment is one of the keys to our new way of life.

Let's face it; when we were using, we were not honest with ourselves. We are becoming honest with ourselves when we admit that addiction has defeated us and that we need help. It took a long time to admit that we were beaten. We found that we do not recover physically, mentally or spiritually overnight. Step Four will help us toward our recovery more than we imagine. Most of us find that we were neither as terrible, nor as wonderful, as we supposed. We are surprised to find that we have good points in our inventory. Anyone who has some time in the Program and has worked this step will tell you that the Fourth Step was a turning point in their life.

Some of us make the mistake of approaching the Fourth Step as if it were a confession of how horrible we are-what a bad person we have been. In this new way of life, a binge of emotional sorrow can be dangerous. This is not the purpose of the Fourth Step. We are trying to free ourselves of living in old, useless patterns. We take the Fourth Step to gain the necessary strength and insight which enables us to grow. We may approach the Fourth Step in a number of ways.

It is advisable that before we start, we go over the first three steps with a sponsor.

These steps are the preparation necessary to have the faith and courage to write a fearless inventory. We get comfortable with our understanding of these steps. We allow ourselves the privilege of feeling good about what we are doing. We have been thrashing about for a long time and have gotten nowhere. Now we are going to start this step, not letting it frighten us. We simply put it on paper, to the best of our present ability.

We must be done with the past, not cling to it. We want to look our past in the face, see it for what it really was and release it so we can live today. The past, for most of us, has been a ghost in the closet. We have been afraid to open that closet for fear of what that ghost may do to us. We do not have to do this alone. Our will and our life are now in the hands of our Higher Power.

Writing a thorough and honest inventory seemed impossible. It was, as long as we were operating under our own power. We take a few quiet moments before writing and ask for the strength to be fearless and thorough.

In Step Four, we begin to get in touch with ourselves. We write about our liabilities such as guilt, shame, remorse, self-pity, resentment, anger, depression, frustration, confusion, loneliness, anxiety, betrayal, hopelessness, failure, fear and denial.

We write on paper what is bothering us here and now. We have a tendency to think negatively, so putting it on paper gives us a chance to look more positively at what is happening.

Assets must also be considered if we are to get an accurate and complete picture of ourselves. This is very difficult for most of us because it is hard for us to accept that we have good qualities. However, we all have assets, many of them newly found in the Program, such as being clean, open-mindedness, God-awareness, honesty with others, acceptance, positive action, sharing, willingness, courage, faith, caring, gratitude, kindness and generosity. Also, our inventories usually include a lot of material on relationships.

We review our past performance and our present behavior to see what we want to keep and what we want to be rid of. No one is forcing us to give up our misery. This step has the reputation of being difficult; in reality, it is quite simple.

We write our inventory for ourselves without considering with whom we might share it. We work Step Four as if there were no Step Five. We can write alone or near other people; whatever is more comfortable to the writer is fine. We can write as long or as short as needed. Someone with experience can help with this. The important thing is to write a moral inventory. If the word "moral" bothers us, we may call it a positive/negative inventory.

The way to write an inventory is to write it! Thinking about an inventory, talking about it, theorizing about the inventory will not get it written. We sit down with a notebook, ask for guidance, pick up our pen and start writing. Anything we think about is inventory material. When we realize how little we have to lose, and how much we have to gain, we begin this step.

A basic rule of thumb is that we can write too little, yet we can never write too much. The inventory will fit the individual. Perhaps this seems difficult or painful. It may appear impossible. We may fear that being in touch with our feelings will trigger an overwhelming chain reaction of pain and panic. We may feel like avoiding an inventory because of a fear of failure. When we ignore our feelings, the tension becomes too much for us. The fear of impending doom is so great it overrides our fear of failure.

An inventory becomes a relief to do because the pain of doing it is less than the pain of not doing it. We learn that pain can be a motivating factor in recovery. Thus, facing it becomes unavoidable. Every topic of step meetings we attend seems to be on the Fourth Step or doing a daily inventory. Through the inventory process, we are able to deal with all the things that can build up. The more we live our Program, the more God seems to position us to have things surface, so we can write about them. We begin enjoying our recovery because we have a way to resolve the shame, guilt, or resentment.

We are also able to be rid of the stress trapped inside. Writing will lift the lid from our pressure cooker to see whether we want to serve it up, put the lid back on it, or throw it out. We no longer have to stew in it.

We sit down with paper and pen and ask for our God's help in revealing the defects that are causing pain and suffering. We pray for the courage to be fearless and thorough so that this inventory may help us to put our lives in order. When we pray and take action, it always goes better for us.

We are not going to be perfect. If we were perfect, we would not be human. The important thing is that we do our best. We use the tools available to us, and we develop the ability to survive our emotions. We do not want to lose any of what we have gained; we want to continue in the Program. It is our experience that no matter how searching and thorough, no inventory is of any lasting effect unless it is promptly followed by an equally thorough Fifth Step.

Taken from the Basic Text
of recovery for N.A.
1982 C.A.R.E.N.A.

EXPERIENCES ON THIS STEP...

4th STEP

"WE MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES"

After I experienced the first 3 steps, with the guidance of my sponsor, I was ready to take the 4th Step. My sponsor suggested I start on it immediately. It was a relief to know that I didn't have to wait until I had more 'time'...I wanted to be free of my past.

I read about the 4th Step in the literature, listened to others convey their experience with it at step meetings, and began to

write it. Each time I sat down with paper and pen to write, I asked God to guide me. I had a relationship with a God of my understanding, so I felt an inner-strength and courage to proceed. As my past unfolded before me on the paper, I became aware of many patterns and defects I never knew I had. I'd been told to write about my part in all situations-before, I had always blamed other people or the situation itself for all of my problems. In the process of writing, I felt God's strength with me more than I ever had.

When old feelings surfaced, I had no fear. I knew that it was the last time I would feel those feelings, as they were in the process of being removed from me. I kept in close contact with my sponsor the whole time I wrote. By the time I was finished, I felt like I knew myself for the first time in my life. I was now ready to begin on Step 5.

Anonymous.

4th STEP

Once I had experienced the first three steps, the fourth step came much easier. I had tried to take a fourth step earlier in my recovery but it just didn't seem to turn out right no matter what I wrote.

The second fourth step I did was actually quite simple. I had a sponsor by then whose experience in this step helped me tremendously. It was no longer confusing. More importantly, from experiencing the first three steps, I had a working relationship with a loving God who helped me to be searching and fearless in taking this step. When I tried to do it on my own I was only analytical and fearful. I was afraid of the "ghosts in the closet" that I knew would destroy me.

When I did write the fourth step with the help of God and my sponsor, I learned that I wasn't as bad or as good of a person as I had been walking around all these years thinking I was.

I see many people that try to jump right into the fourth step because it seems easier than all that "HIGHER POWER" stuff in steps two and three, thus the notorious reputation that the fourth step has. But with the help of an experienced sponsor and a loving God, it's as easy as one, two, three...

Anonymous

4th STEP

When I was first introduced to the fellowship of N.A., I wanted help. I took all of the suggestions, except for the steps, and I got loaded. I tried various things such as religion, clothes, school, money, people, the list goes on. None of them made me a whole human being.

One day I was in a real lot of pain and I finally asked God to help me. I asked him what I should do. Within that week I met some people who had experienced the steps. After fighting them for a short period of time, I got a new sponsor, one who had experienced the steps and whose life looked good.

She sat me down and she helped me to experience my first three steps. I was then ready for step 4. I had taken previous inventories

and they were vicious. This one was different. It wasn't a list of my assets and defects. It was an inventory. It did exactly what an inventory does. It told me what I had inside of me just as an inventory of a warehouse does. Each time before I sat down to write, I asked God for strength, knowledge of what to write, and to help me do it. After I finished writing for a while, I thanked him. For some reason this inventory wasn't vicious. It was exactly what it says to be—searching and fearless. I actually enjoyed doing it. I wasn't alone. God sat in with me the whole time and everything just flowed out. I had a warm feeling inside when I did it. I didn't know, nor understand, why this inventory was somewhat pleasant and easy. I just know that I prayed before, asking for help, and after, thanking him for that help and for some reason, it worked. I was then ready for the 5th step and I didn't stop. I continued to experience all 12 of them and practice 10, 11 and 12 on a daily basis.

Thank-you,

A member of the fellowship
of Narcotics Anonymous

OUR MEMBERS WRITE...

WAYS TO PROMOTE UNITY

1. SUPPORT A GROUP WHICH IS STRUGGLING

It's easy to go to a "strong" meeting all the time, where the message is always clear, the Steps are always emphasized, and there's lots of people with time.

It's easy to talk about how clouded the message is at another meeting.

It takes courage to support a meeting that is hurting. It also promotes unity, and strengthens one's own personal recovery.

2. GET INVOLVED IN SERVICE

It's easy to sit back and criticize the mistakes of those who are involved in service.

It takes a lot of guts to get involved and run the risk of being criticized yourself. It also helps N.A. to grow, opens the door for more newcomers, and takes the load off others who are doing service work. The result is more effective ways of carrying the message, fewer mistakes, and service becomes a lot of fun, instead of being a heavy load being carried by a few.

3. REACH OUT, OPEN-MINDEDLY, TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T LIKE OR DISAGREE WITH

It's easy to avoid certain people who think or act differently than you.

It takes courage to reach out to that person and get to know them.

The result is that you both grow from the experience, you both benefit from each other's experience, and one more link has been connected in the "ties that bind us together."

4. REMEMBER THAT THE NEWCOMER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON AT ANY MEETING

Without the newcomer, we as a fellowship, would grow stagnant and die. When we remember that our efforts in service of any form, are always to be directed towards carrying the message to the still-suffering addict, our various inflated and deflated egos go out the window as miracles happen.

DEAR CLEANSHEET,

I have been recovering in Narcotics Anonymous for nearly 4 marvelous years. I have grown through being active in service work, sharing with the newcomers, going to meetings, anniversaries and other social functions. I try my best to work this program in all my affairs. In every area there is the potential to grow along spiritual lines.

Of the many facets of N.A. the one I'd like to write about is "conscious contact". I have found a great richness in improving my contact with my Higher Power-God as I understand Him.

I recently realized the importance of giving thanks for just about everything. Good things and bad. Some of the good things are my cleanliness and serenity, this program for the 12 Steps and the fellowship, a clear conscience and good health. Thank God for a program that works and people I can love and can love me right back!

I Also show my thanks by helping other recovering addicts as well as other people. I try my best to be kind and pleasant to everyone I meet. When I go out of my way to help someone, it makes me feel good.

I have a formula that works very well for me. Upon rising up in the morning I give thanks and ask for guidance throughout the day. Then again in the afternoon I take a quiet time to meditate. Just before bed I thank God for helping me stay clean and for the program. This has added so much to improve my attitude and is a great "pick-me-up" in the middle of a busy day. I now know how important it is for me to be close to my Higher Power. By sharing this formula with cleansheet readers, maybe others will find that it works for them as well.

Sincerely,

John C.

UNITY

When addicts work together toward a common goal, miracles happen. New Groups form, new Areas and Regions form, literature gets written, and most importantly, an atmosphere of recovery becomes established into which an addict can come and surrender their active addiction. It's easy to talk about unity; putting it into practice, however, is not always easy. It requires practicing the principles of the 12 Steps at all levels of service. This includes; taking our own inventory, instead of everyone else's; remembering that we're trying to carry this message to the addict who still suffers, not trying to prove that our way is the right way to others on a service committee; and asking for God's guidance, through prayer and meditation, when things get chaotic in a committee meeting.

Our Area, just as our city, is very diverse. We truly have members from all walks of life here. As a result, our meetings tend to differ in style, depending on which section of the city the meeting is located. Provided the Traditions are being adhered to, they are all N.A. meetings. It's easy to fall into the habit of pointing at the way other meetings are being run and bad-mouthing them, believing that our own Home-Group is the best and strongest N.A. around. It's easy, but deadly! Who suffers? The newcomer suffers...N.A. itself suffers, as unity goes out the window. If we, instead, would each take our own inventory, and express an attitude of love and support towards all fellow members and groups, N.A. Unity will once again grow strong here in Philly, and we will grow. Who will benefit? We all will, but most importantly, that new member who walks through the doors to his first meeting, and a new way of life. Let's not criticize each other...let's reach out and help one another -TODAY.

A concerned addict

My gratitude speaks...
When I care
And when I share
With others
The N.A. way.