



Cleansheet

Issue # 9

Phila. Area Newsletter

Sept. 1984

Our Members Write...

After surrendering to my addiction and asking for help, my sponsor's Home Group became mine. I didn't realize the importance of this until much later, but important it was and is. A Home Group did more for me than anything else in helping me fit into society again. All my life I never had friends. Yes, I knew many people and many of them called me a friend. They were honest with me, but I could never be honest with them. I was always knotted up with lies and was always maneuvering to protect myself. I surrendered and told these people in my Home Group about me. The real me! The things I could never before share with anyone, not myself, my folks, my wife, my kids, my employers, my doctors, my friends and God, I all at once talked about. Openly and freely I talked with these people that I was seeing on a regular basis, and they were accepting me not for what I wasn't but for what I really was. I didn't have to impress them; I didn't have to kid them; I only had to be me as I really was.

With the steps, my sponsor, my Home Group, and God, I started to live again without being anything but me. I went back into the world no longer afraid.

Anonymous

HOME GROUP

Narcotics Anonymous is a program of spiritual principals; 12 Steps which we take and practice to recover. We as a Group of recovered addicts have accepted the 12 Steps into our lives will not have any problems accepting the 12 Traditions into our Group. When practicing the 12th Step, "... we tried to carry this message to addicts and practice these principals in all our affairs" the word "we" means I don't carry this message alone. We have group meetings to carry the message.

Our First Tradition states "Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on N.A. unity." We cannot do this alone. We need others to help keep us on the right path. When my homegroup is Twelve Stepping a newcomer, I am keeping in contact with what I need in my life. The rest of the 12 Traditions are for the Group and come together just fine as long as we don't have an attitude of indifference or intolerance towards the 12 Steps. I surrendered to this program of recovery because nothing I had ever tried worked for me. Ever since I surrendered to the spiritual principals of this program, I lost the obsession and compulsion to use, and I gained some kind of peace of mind and serenity, not to mention I gained the desire to live.

In Loving Service

When I first came to N.A., I just wanted to stop getting loaded. Every attempt I made on my own had failed. As my addiction progressed, isolation increased as I pushed my family, friends, and loved ones away. In the end I was alone. In my head I blamed everyone else for the way I was. I was incapable of seeing my own part in the broken relationships, shattered plans, and the miserable life I was leading. There was no belief in God left in me; how could there be a God behind such a mess? When I

got to N.A., I found comfort in knowing I wasn't alone. I found acceptance and understanding from others who were just like me... miserable, confused, and crazy. So I stayed sick, but not alone. We were all sick together! I dove head first into the fellowship, surrounding myself with meetings, service work, conventions, and conferences. I just didn't want to get loaded anymore... I'd had enough. I figured the more I got involved in N.A., just that much more protection I would have from that next fix, pill, or drink. I read literature, wrote literature, and got to know clean addicts all over the country and the world. I wanted the best protection there was 'cause I just didn't want to get high again. I saw anything and everything that was not directly associated with N.A. as a threat to my so called "Recovery". As a result, I had a very hard time of it in the "real" world. I couldn't hang on to a job, 'cause I would get so burned out on all my service work and daily meetings that there was no energy left for living and working. I stayed away from relationships because they were a threat to my serenity. I lived in houses full of clean addicts. I mean, I was surrounded by N.A. in every way. After three years, I was still miserable, sick, and empty inside. I was living off the praise and credit that people gave me for doing so much good for the program... I needed to hear those things to keep me going. When no one else said them to me, I said them to myself. I resented those who weren't doing as much as I was, but who seemed to be getting well. I strongly urged others to get involved in service, and to surround themselves as I had with lots of protection. I knew that addiction was deadly... I just didn't realize that it was still alive and cooking inside of me. After three and a half years of living like this, it all fell apart. I still didn't get high, but I was now stealing from friends, the program, and from work. I was using everyone and everything I could lay my hands on just to feel good and alive, but it wasn't working. People stopped believing what I said in meetings. They could see how sick I was, but I knew that they were the ones that were sick... I was going to stay clean no matter what!!! Once again, I found myself alone and scared as I pushed everyone away from me and went into hiding. There was no honesty left in me... there was no open mind... no willingness... no God in my life. There never was. Stripped of everything, I asked God to help me. I was beaten; Then it happened. I went to a meeting, and heard members share about their experience with the Twelve Steps. They were happy. They did not fear their addiction, because it had been removed. I surrendered and asked them to help me. They said, "If you let me." I no longer had a choice, so I let them. They asked me if I believed that what worked for them could work for me. I told them I did, and I really only had a flicker of belief, but it was enough. They suggested I make a decision to let a loving and forgiving God run my life. Just a decision, no more, no less. I made the decision. I was cautioned that if I made the decision sincerely, and if I said this prayer, I would never have to fight addiction again. I didn't believe then, but I made the decision anyway. I let them take me through the rest of the steps...there was very little work involved. My sponsors told me to just live my life, and God would take care of all the little things. I tried it, and it worked. When I got to the Eighth Step, all that was involved was making a list of those that I had harmed. The list was very long, because I had harmed a lot of people both in my active addiction, and during the period where I had been clean but still sick. The list was not hard to make. It was just writing down the names of everyone who had ever been close to me, because they had all gotten hurt in one way or another, as a direct result of my addiction. As I wrote down the names, some I was willing to make amends to immediately, some I was not. For those I was not willing to make amends to, I had to pray to see beyond whatever resentment I still had, and I had to forgive them in my heart for whatever harm they had done to me. In most cases where harm had been done to me, it was done only after I had done harm to them. I couldn't see that until after my resentment was removed. After this, my sponsors suggested that I was ready for the Ninth Step.

I took the Ninth, and am now taking Ten, Eleven and Twelve daily. I no longer have to fight anything or anyone, and my life is better than it ever was. My only protection today is God, and that's enough.

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 promote unity, and to provide our members with news. The opinions expressed herein are from the individual member of N.A. and do not necessarily represent those of N.A. 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

Cleansheet committee meets on Sunday, August 19 and September 2nd, 1984. Everyone is welcome. For location call: Andy P. 676-8784; Bob H. 886-7233; or Jeff W. 947-5455.

New Meetings

Wednesday-"K.I.S.S. Group" 1:00 p.m.
1502 Frankford Ave.

Sunday - "Freedom Group" 4:00 p.m.
2205 Bridge St.

NAR-ANON

Anyone interested in Nar-Anon, which is for the friends and families of addicts, there is now a Thursday night meeting in Philadelphia at 8:00 p.m.

For further information call Beth at (215) 389-7359.

Changes

H&I Commitments

PRISON COMMITMENTS

House Of Correction - Wed., 7:30 - 9 p.m.
(Men) Host - Butch M. (535-3195)

Laurel Hall - Tues., 7:30 - 9 p.m.
Host - Paul N. (634-7261)

Homesburg - Tues., 8 - 9:30 p.m.
Host - Paul K. (456-0613)

House Of Correction - Sat., 9:30 - 11 a.m.
(Max. Sec. Woman) Host - Diane W.
(426-7074)

House Of Correction - Mon., 8 - 9:30 p.m.
(Min. Sec. Woman) Host - Mary Mc.
(769-7665)

Detention Center - Thu., 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Host - John S. (332-2209)

Requirements: need I.D.; 6 months cleantime to Chair; 3 months cleantime to speak. Call host of commitment desired. H&I Committee meets every 1st Sunday of the Month, 7 p.m., call Diane W. 426-7074.

GROUP CHANGES

Tues.-Fri.-Sun. - "South Phila. Group" 8:30 p.m.
"Dixon House" on 20th St. between
McKean St. & Mifflin St.

Conventions & Announcements

14TH WORLD CONVENTION OF N.A.

Date: August 30 - September 2, 1984

Theme: "Miracles Happen"

Place: The Hotel Continental
505 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

Cost: Registration \$20 - \$25
Banquet \$25 - \$30
Sunday Brunch \$12 - \$15
Single & Double \$35 per night

For more information write to:
WCNA - 14
Box 24, 1744 W. Devon
Chicago, Illinois 60660

DANCES

3RD ANNUAL VIRGINIA CONVENTION

Date: January 4-6, 1985
Theme: "Spirit of Unity - Foundation
for the Future"
Place: New Marriot Hotel
Richmond, Virginia
Events: Speakers, Meetings, Pool,
Jacuzzi, Banquet, Dance
Cost: Registration \$15; Registration,
Banquet, Dance \$40; Registration,
Banquet, Dance, Meals \$70
Mail to: 3RD A.V.C.N.A.
P.O. Box 25285
Richmond, Virginia 23260
Call: Tracie S. (804) 264 - 3910

Fundraiser For Reality Group

Date: Fri., August 17, 1984
Time: 9 - 1 p.m.
Place: Knights Of Columbus Hall
Roland & Knorr Sts., Phila.
Cost: \$5.00

Fundraiser For Shore-Coastal Area Service

Date: Sat., Aug. 25, 1984
Time: 10 p.m. - ???
Place: 6th & Atlantic Aves.
Youth Center, Ocean City, NJ
Cost: \$3.00

Area News

The Philadelphia Area Service Committee met on July 10th, 1984. The following are highlights of that meeting:

There was long discussion on the Tradition deletions vote that was asked for by the W.S.C. and the letter of protest from the Phila. Area Service Committee. After much deliberation it was decided to vote to leave the sentences in question in and also to protest about the violation of procedures by the W.S.C. Lit. Review committee reminds the Groups to review the literature handed out at the meeting. H&I committee needs people to get involved and they meet the 1st Sunday of each month. For more info, call Diane at 426-7074. All other committies are doing O.K. The next Area Service Meeting will be held on Sunday, August 12th, at 7:00 p.m. at Harbison Ave. & Roosevelt Blvd. All are welcome to attend.

Regional News

There was a Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Meeting on July 21st in Montgomery County. The new system of moving the Regional Meeting around and having it in conjunction with a dinner and dance seemed to work real well, as there was about three times the normal attendance. A new Area, the Shore-Coastal A.S.C., was accepted into the region. There was a new chairman and P.I. co-chairpeople elected for the region. There is an opening for a Convention Committee chairperson, H&I Committee chairperson, Treasurer and R.S.R.-Alt. Philadelphia Area is getting stronger support, 22 Groups, doing well. Bucks County A.S.C. is faltering, in strong need of people willing to take service commitments on the Group and Area levels. Tri-County is back to reconstruction of the Area. South Jersey has 3 new meetings and are talking of possibly forming a New Jersey State Region. Montgomery County is doing well. The Shore-Coastal Area is still in forming stages and are moving along well.

The regional Lit. Review Committee has established a working committee and will be having monthly meetings, call Bob at: 215-886-7233 for information. A reminder to review and submit input on pamphlets that were distributed to the Areas. The next Regional Meeting will be held in Bucks County on September 15th. They need your support, let's get up there and give it away.

Experiences On This Step...

EIGHT STEP

My 12-step sponsors showed me how easy this step is. First, I made a list of all persons I had harmed. This was a continuation of the seven steps beforehand, for I had learned the nature of my harms, and the damage I caused that I hadn't even been aware of. For example, when I carried a resentment, I couldn't be of maximum helpfulness to that person. In short, this list included everyone I had come in contact with. In the second part of this step, my sponsors suggested that I go through the list, and see if I was ready to make amends TO EVERYONE. It didn't matter who or what; I was beaten into submission, and today I am enjoying a new way of life.

Anonymous

EIGHTH STEP

I became ready for this Step a while after my Seventh Step. I realized that for God to remove my shortcomings, I had to stop working on myself the way I knew how and instead follow my sponsor's direction. I was honestly sick and tired of the pain in my life. I needed to do this step to prove to God how willing I was for a desperate change in my life. After writing a list of persons whom I have harmed and became willing to make amends, I felt the great relief of self. This step had put my seventh step into action, as the ninth step has done with my eighth.

An addict in ongoing recovery



EIGHTH STEP

Unlike my previous experience in another 12-Step program when I attempted the Steps in any order at my convenience without direction, I experienced this Step again. I had taken my Seventh Step and my sponsor told me to make a list of everyone I ever hurt and also of everyone I had resentments against. In true junkie fashion I rebelled against the latter. Why should my ex-husband who broke my nose be on that list? How did I harm him? What about the babysitter who ripped me off? What did I do to hurt her? In her calm and patient way, my sponsor explained that the chances are we wished these people dead, or worse we badmouthed them to anyone who would listen. She also explained that this is how people who recovered before us did it. It was logic I couldn't refute and reluctantly added another 10 or so names to the list. It was absolutely true that everyone, including the token seller on the "El" knew what kind of S.O.B. I was married to. Likewise, my bigmouth made a lot of people mistrust my babysitter, so I had harmed them after all. If prayer helps people (which I know it does) then what can I do to people by mentally cursing them or holding a grudge? I became willing to forgive these people and even to admit that I harmed them.

I easily added many people to this list, my neglected daughter, my frantic mother, friends I exploited, etc. As a result of my 6th & 7th Steps, I miraculously became more honest and added the institutions that I had ripped off.

My sponsor explained that to "become willing to make amends..." didn't mean that I had to run up to the banks in New York and give them my first paycheck. All that was required was to acknowledge I had harmed them and God would take care of the rest.

Anonymous



EIGHTH STEP

I live with an addict. I spent five long years trying to find a way to make him better. I thought that if I could only love him enough or in just the right way that he could get better. I took on the responsibility of his addiction. The result of this is that I became very bitter and resentful.

Why wouldn't he stop using drugs? This became my obsession. I would stop at nothing trying to control this drug addiction; the checking up, the searching for drugs, looking for needle marks, looking at his eyes, trying to catch him in those inevitable lies... The living with the daily anxiety that goes on and on... the not knowing if I will ever see him alive again or even if I want to.

In all this I became sick too, this is truly a family disease. I realized that I needed help too. I found a 12-Step program for me (Nar-anon), through these steps my life has changed, but more importantly through my close contact with my Higher Power, I've changed inside. The hurt and pain I carried for years is now gone forever. Peace of mind is mine at last.

After doing my first seven steps, I came to the Eighth Step, which is simply to make a list of all people we had harmed, and to become willing to make amends to them all. After doing this I realized how many people I had hurt on my own without any help from the addict.

As I go on in my steps, each day becomes better than the last. Joy and happiness are mine and they can be yours too. If you are tired of living with pain, there is help for you too!!!

Anonymous

If You want to use DRUGS; That's Your business
If You WANT TO STOP. That's Ours
Call NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS At
1-800-232-HOPE
for someone to talk to, and meetings in
your local area.