



NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS™

YOUTH AND RECOVERY

Narcotics Anonymo

I.P. No. 16
For the Newcome



Narcotics Anonymous.

I.P. No. 5
Another Look

THE TIES THAT BIND US TOGETHER:
A HISTORY OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA

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I.P. No. 8
Recovery



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Jennifer R. Zelnick
History 406
Professor Davis

By the time George R. attended his first Narcotics Anonymous meeting in the spring of 1977, NA had already been in existence for 25 years. Yet when George left the rehabilitation center there were no meetings in the area to attend. One had to travel from Bristol to Philadelphia or Norristown in order to attend NA. George found himself in a situation peculiar to the many co-founders of NA. He had to initiate the meetings which he wanted to attend. Al R. put this point most clearly at a history workshop at the 1986 Greater Philadelphia Region convention of Narcotics Anonymous. "The old-timers in Narcotics Anonymous were truly crazy. They put their faith and commitment into a fellowship that didn't even exist!".

Today there are ²¹⁵ 2 meetings in the meeting list for the Philadelphia area alone. Each meeting has it's own particular history. Each has it's own co-founders and it's own process of gaining support and commitment from its members. The story of NA, both in the Philadelphia Area and in the world, is a combination of all these smaller histories. How did NA grow? It began as an intuition on the part of certain addicts that there were others out there who needed them (and who they needed) in order to stay abstinent and recover from the use of drugs. Today NA is a world wide fellowship with a consistent message of hope, and a service structure which unifies the various areas, groups and individuals.

The story of NA in the Philadelphia area mirrors the story

of the fellowship as a whole. At the core of both are the stories of how the struggles of individuals come to be translated into a social movement. At the same time, there are limits to the effects that such movements can have outside of the boundaries of the worlds which they create. I am interested both in the successes of such attempts and their limitations.

Narcotics Anonymous has its roots in Alcoholics Anonymous, which was founded in 1934. AA, in turn, drew from many traditions. Its closest relative was an organization called The Oxford Group. This group was committed to the rehabilitation of Alcoholics through religious means. The basic tenets of the program were a system of absolutes, absolute honesty, purity and commitment to God. The group held meetings which consisted of hymns, prayers and sermons. There was also time set aside at the end of the meeting for alcoholics to give 'testimonials'. The Oxford Group treated alcoholism as a moral issue which could be overcome by a complete re-vamping of spiritual values. They aimed their program at important men, heads of communities and businesses. The philosophy in this was to gain viability through the legitimacy of their membership. The key figures who they attracted would serve to become moral leaders, heroes of a sort and in turn to attract the right kind of people.

The Oxford Group was born out of a tradition in America of reform movements built around particular issues. In their evangelistic techniques, they resembled some of the temperance movements of the 1840's, which preached against the evils of alcohol

and indoctrinated followers often through fear into a life of abstinence. One group of this period which departed from these methods were the Washingtonians. The Washingtonians grew in just three years to an estimated 600,000 members. Unlike the revivalists and later The Oxford Group, the Washingtonians aimed themselves at the masses of unemployed victims of the depression of the 1840's. Instead of focusing their groups around religious functions, they concentrated on picnics and gatherings to encourage membership. Unlike other temperance movements, they did not characterize Alcoholism as a kind of moral deficiency, instead they treated it as an illness whose victims had the option to recover from it.

The single most important contribution made by the oxford Group to the program of AA was the tradition of the spoken testimonials of Alcoholics. It is through this relationship, 'one drunk to another', that Bill W., co-founder of AA, derived the strength and conviction which he needed to commit to total abstinence. Yet the group had some draw backs for Bill W., which had proven to be drawbacks for other alcoholics as well. For one thing, the Oxford group preached a kind of Moral perfectionism. For the alcoholic who sees every failure as a reason to drink, this proved too strict a regimen. Also, the stresses on God and Christianity were questionable to Bill, and something which potentially excluded many who badly needed help. Finally, the appeal of the group to certain 'kinds' of people also excluded many who needed a program the most, namely, the drunk on the street whom nobody in the world cared about.

Bill W., meanwhile, drew from another important source which

supplemented his experience in the Oxford group. This source was Doctor William D. Silkworth. Doctor Silkworth, like the Washingtonians, treated alcoholism as a disease. His philosophy in treatment was to direct the alcoholic away from focusing on the past, and onto the future. This meant giving up the search for the reasons for alcoholism in the individual. As a disease, the alcoholic was not responsible for his/her behavior and the alcoholism not a moral deficiency to be exorcised. Treating alcoholism as an illness helped to alleviate the incredible guilt which so often led the alcoholic right back to a drink.

Like the temperance movements of the 1840's, AA began at a time when the world felt out of control to many. These were the depression years, and self reliance was key to survival. Abstinence from alcohol was a means of regaining control over ones life in an unsure world.

The history of Narcotics Anonymous can be divided into three phases. The first of these is the phase which runs from 1953 to 1970. These years mark the emergence of NA in Sun Valley CA., after which progress was slow, and the program almost folded during the sixties. The second phase of NAs history is the period from 1970-1982. These years were marked by a renewal of interest in the program which was sparked by the increase in drug use among white middle class youth. Up until this time, drugs had been relegated to a marginalized portion of society. Rehabilitation centers were rare. Most heroin addicts who sought treatment

wound up in the U.S. public Health Service Hospital at Lexington Kentucky. This hospital was famous among addicts, many of whom used it as a place to get healthy before embarking on another 'run' of drug use. This place was also an alternative form of prison to criminals with drug habits. By the late 60s-early 70s rehabilitation centers had begun to spring up in hospitals all over the country. The political and social movements of the 1960s had an impact on the types of therapy which were practiced in these places. Emphasis began to be placed on expressing feelings and regaining self-esteem as measures towards empowerment. NA meetings and rehabilitation centers had subtle influences on one another. Meetings began to be encouraged in rehabs, while the lessons taught in rehabs became subtly incorporated into NA by members who began their recovery in them. This period witnessed a steady increase in the number of NA members and NA groups.

The period from 1982-the present represents the formal establishment of the NA program. In 1982 the NA Basic Text was published, and with this event the traditions of NA were made 'concrete'. In this period NA has struggled to establish its own identity separate from that of AA. It has also seen increasing membership from portions of society which h were absent in its meetings during the 1970's. Most notable of these is the rise in inner-city black membership, prompted by the crack phenomenon and increasing economic hardship, and the increasing availability of NA.

The history of NA in the Philadelphia area begins during

this second phase of NA history. The first Philadelphia area NA meeting, held in norristown at eagleville hospital, was also the first NA meeting on the east coast. The failure of NA to begin in New York City, which undeniably had the largest percentage of addicts is often attributed to the 'Rockefeller Laws', under which it was illegal for addicts to congregate. Another reason for this failure is suggested in the fact that NA has historically taken hold most strongly in small to middle size cities (such as Columbus Ohio), and in suburban communities (such as Bucks County in the Philadelphia area). The reasons for this are unclear, but it may have something to do with the pre-existing communities of addicts in these smaller areas. Those who use drugs together are more apt to 'get clean' together.

NA was brought from Sun Valley CA to Norristown by an addict named Roy P.. Roy went through the rehabilitation program at Eagleville Hospital. Shortly after his 'graduation', Roy went out to California to visit his father. Roy obtained a copy of 'The White Booklet'. This pamphlet had been published in the mid-sixties by an addict named Jimmy K.

Jimmy K. is controversially regarded by some as the founder of NA. It was he who was responsible for starting the first NA meeting in the Sun Valley area. Jimmy was also instrumental in establishing the World Service Office of NA, located originally in his house. In fact, this office began as more of an idea, composed of only the trunk of Jimmy's car, and a P.O. Box.

At the time of his death in 1985, Jimmy K. was virtually forgotten by or unknown to the new generation of addicts. This

is at least in part due to the divergent paths taken by NA and AA.

In the old days, the ties between AA and NA were stronger. In a 1954 Article in the Saturday Evening Post, NA is referred to as AAs younger brother. This relationship persisted throughout the early years of NA. Jimmy K. co-founded NA meetings because, while attending AA meetings he was not allowed to speak about his drug habit. Although he was able to stay abstinent from drugs through the AA 12 steps, he was unable to recover because he was denied the basic principle of the anonymous programs: Therapeutic communication with those that share your problem. Still, Jimmy carried on a tradition which was fairly lax at drawing the distinction between alcoholism and addiction.

Another reason for Jimmy's lack of credit in the founding of NA stems from a tension that has existed historically between California NA and East Coast NA. Californians held the attitude that, since it had started there California was the natural nation-wide center for NA. This has been contested at different times in NAs history. Around the time of the first Philadelphia area service meeting the 'Philadelphia Plan' was developed. This was a plan to get the world service office moved from the West to the East coast. This plot failed, but it did serve to draw attention to the strength and numbers in NA on the east coast. This seemingly trivial issue has recently taken on a larger meaning as NA expands into a world wide fellowship. The WSO (World Service Office) remains the center of NA, yet NA has branched out to other continents (There is NA in most of western Europe, and last year meetings began in the Soviet Union). The

centrality of NA in America may no longer serve the fellowship most efficiently as it expands internationally.

The main reason for Jimmy K. not being handed the role of founder of NA is probably attributable simply to personality. Many of the NA old-timers were particularly strong willed and ego-centric. These were important qualities, particularly in making a commitment to a non-existent fellowship while encouraging others to follow your lead. But as the fellowship gained legitimacy of its own accord, such a personality proved to be more of a hindrance than a help. In the late 1970's, when the WSO moved to its current head-quarters in Van Nuys CA., Jimmy K. was quietly fired as a trustee.

The meeting that Roy P. Started at Eagleville Hospital was to fold after two years running, when Roy P. 'picked up' drugs again. Yet the meeting was to have lasting effects. Six graduates of the Eagleville program were exposed to NA through the hospital meeting, and upon their release in April of 1972 they started a meeting on Green St. in Norristown. This is the longest running meeting in Philadelphia area history, and is still in existence today in a new location.

The early years of NA in Philadelphia are marked by enormous commitments of small numbers of addicts to a fledgling fellowship. At this time the Philadelphia area was part of NA's mid-atlantic region which included Virginia Beach, Washington, Harrisburg, New Jersey, New York City, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Allentown. Addicts would regularly drive hours simply to attend a meeting which needed support. One addict I spoke to described

traveling every Thursday night from Washington DC to Jersey City to help a friend get a meeting off the ground. And then there are the meetings which were not so well attended. Bob B., speaking last march at the 9th Greater Philadelphia Region Convention of NA describes spending 6 months alone with a pot of coffee every Wednesday night, keeping a meeting open where he was the only one in attendance.

In those first years, NA was a full time commitment for many addicts. Meetings included informal gatherings both before and after the event. Many addicts lived together. Stories of the early days convey the impression of people hanging on for dear life. There are also many tragic stories of the early days. One man, the clown of the group, hung himself in jail after being arrested after he 'picked up'. Events such as these served to give old-timers the first taste of the lesson of 'keeping it green'. Today this phrase is used often in recovery to indicate the benefit of contact with a new-comer to the program or with someone who has 'relapsed'. An integral idea in the program is that recovering addicts can learn from each others failures as well as successes.

John F.'s story of the early days of NA offers a somewhat different perspective on these years. There is a saying in NA which goes: We come from Yale and Jail. This slogan seems to have been conceived of ^{by} for John, who is the only recovering addict I have ever met who is both a Yale graduate and a University professor. John also had the distinction of being the first Gay man to be involved in NA in the area. The fact that John not only managed to stay 'a part of' (NA) in those early years, but

to be an integral part of the area says a lot for the ability of people to put personal prejudices aside. At the first NA meeting which John attended he wore a suit and tie and no socks. Upon walking in the door he was welcomed by a very large man dressed in motor-cycle gear, decorated with tattoos. The man approached John, said welcome, and proceeded to give him a giant hug! John whispered into his ear, 'if you don't put me down, I'll bite your ear", to which the biker responded, 'what-ever keeps you clean'.

John describes early NA as 'the junior division of AA, where the kids get to talk about dope.' At this point in time, John like many others attended both AA and NA meetings. In the late 1970's John's job took him to London. There he was able to only attend AA meetings, since NA had yet to be founded in England. Much to his surprise, John found that going to AA alone was not helping him to recover. Upon his return to the states John made a complete commitment to NA. John became active in NA service, first on the local level as chairman of the area, and next on the world level where he served on the board of trustees.

John's identity as a homosexual also left its mark on the fellowship. When the white Booklet was re-written in the late 1970s, it was John who contributed the sentence : 'Anyone may join us, (in NA) regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion'. Recently John ^{John} related to me that the sexual identity part of this sentence was fought by many people, particularly in the Philadelphia area. One addict named J.R. exclaimed, 'If we allow sentences like this, where will it all end'.

John recently has had to rethink his commitment to the fellowship. When I began this paper John was a prime influence upon me. He had promised to be of any service he could, so when he stopped returning my phone calls I became a bit alarmed. Finally I reached him, and he explained the reason for his detachment.

After years of commitment to the NA way of life John has reached a point where his identity as an individual is in conflict with his identity as an NA member. John spent many years focusing on the addict part of himself and keeping the society of other addicts. The Gay population in NA is notable small. John feels at some level like he has sold out his sexual politics. ^{HIS} John's assessment of other addicts in NA has changed over the years. In a recent phone conversation he described many addicts as 'Ex-con's with no teeth who at heart are tremendous traditionalists, who at heart have 'family values' as strong as those of Jerry Falwell'. Given, these words were spoken in anger, yet John did make a few points about NA which I found interesting.

'NA is great', he observed, 'if you are a white, blue collar hetero-sexual male'. Although acceptance of difference is promoted in the words of the NA literature, these words often have the effect that the concept of 'color-blindness' has on race relations. Although a 'color-blind' society where race simply makes no difference may be seen as ideal, this concept can be a hindrance in a society where inequalities based on race exist. The NA literature says that 'addiction makes us one of a kind'. This language has created a huge movement in NA to resist acknowledgement of difference which would divide the fellowship. Yet NA reflects society as a whole, and racial and sexual identi-

ty issues in particular remain as tension areas.

Although the literature of NA expounds equality and acceptance, these goals are not always realized. John pointed out to me that there are written and unwritten codes of behavior that are followed in NA. The unwritten codes are those which gain their authority through tradition, usually handed down by particularly vocal people in the fellowship. In 1981 John was instrumental in starting the first Gay and Lesbian Meeting in the Philadelphia area. Shortly after its inception, John abandoned this meeting because too many AA people attended it. In 1988 controversy was raised around this meeting when a motion came from a group in the Philadelphia area to abolish 'special interest meetings'. Indeed, this motion came from a group comprised mainly of 'white, blue collar, hetero-sexual males'. Their intent in making this motion was to uphold the 3rd tradition which states, 'the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using'. They attested that by designating groups for special interest purposes, another requirement for membership is added. This motion never passed in the area, but it reflected the opinion of many in the majority who have little understanding of the conflicts and special needs of minority factions. John unable to participate in the uproar which ensued to protect this group, because of his earlier abandonment of it on ideological grounds. . Today John, like many old-timers, has returned to AA meetings.

On February 26th, 1977 at the age of 17 George R. used drugs

for the last time. He spent his first 40 days in rehab hallucinating. As a result of this, he was considered by those at the County Line Rehab center as too 'messed up' to be allowed to talk or listened to. The thing that impressed George first about NA was that he was allowed to talk. People listened to him, nodded with empathy, and told him to 'keep coming back'. When George got out of rehab there were no regular meetings in the Bristol area where he lived. ^{He} George had to start his own NA meeting before he had a regular meeting to attend. George started this meeting together with his girlfriend whose therapist suggested this as a way to stay clean. Shortly thereafter, George's girlfriend 'picked-up', and George was left alone.

George describes the one unifying factor among addicts who made commitments to serving NA in the early days as loneliness. Since he no longer used, he could no longer associate with the people he used to know. Once his girlfriend left, he was quite literally alone. George kept the meeting going. Weekly, he would drive by his old rehab, pick up a carload of patients, and take them to 'his' meeting. By doing this he was guaranteed attendance.

When George had two years clean in 1979 there were 14 meetings on the NA meeting list. Different types of meetings began to develop. Meetings began to be held which focused on the 12 steps. NA still had little literature of its own, so it used the 12 steps as promulgated by AA. The word 'drugs' was substituted for the word 'alcohol'. Once a month, on Sunday night, addicts from George's area would pile into 3 cars and head up to the area service meeting which was held in Norristown. Today, it is often

difficult to find members in a group who are willing to become involved in area service. The assumption is that someone else will take care of it. But in those days, George tells me, everybody wanted to be involved. They would fight over the little tasks, such as who got to take notes, and who got to make coffee. At one area service meeting George was elected as chair of the area public information committee. It was in this position that George's commitment to service took off.

As chair of the PI committee George was in charge of letting the public know about NA. He was in charge of having people contact schools, radio stations and television stations. In 1980, between innings in the sixth game of the world series between the Phillies and the Royals an NA public service message appeared which read, 'If you want to keep using drugs, that's your business, if you want to stop, that's ours. Call the NA hotline'.

George also arranged for himself and another addict named Cindy to appear on channel 48 on the Maury Jacobs show. Their faces were to be shaded, and they were to arrive 1 hour before the show to go over questions with Maury Jacobs. Unfortunately, the shows star never showed up that day. 5 minutes before air time a substitute host was ushered in. George and Cindy were forced to respond to question such as 'How does NA feel about the government spraying paraquat on the marijuana fields in Mexico?'. The only constructive point George felt he made was in this response to the question, 'what would you say to a 12 year-old who is thinking of doing drugs?': 'Based on my experience, you can say

anything you like, but a couple of years later , if he has a problem, tell him to call us'.

The first East coast convention was held in 1980 in Louis-berg which is near Scranton PA. Many addicts I have spoken to cite this weekend-long event as the turning point in their recovery. For many this was the first contact that they had with addicts outside of their immediate area. Addicts who came from all over the country were amazed, not only at the sheer numbers (which at 200 were quite small in comparison to the thousands who attend conventions today), but also at the fact that people were experiencing the same things that they were. Up until then George had thought of NA as a social club, a way to alleviate his loneliness. Yet at this convention it dawned on him that he was involved with something which was destined to be much bigger than he imagined.

At the convention George had been elected to 'share' at the closing meeting. During his speech George suggested that if everyone went home and started an NA meeting in their area NA could grow beyond comprehension. Shortly after the convention George's area alone went from 12 to 30 meetings. At 20 years old, George was already an old-timer in his area.

It was also at the East Coast Convention that George met Bo S.. A problem had arisen in George's area concerning NAs use of AAs literature. In order to solve this problem, George and some friends had begun to write their own NA literature. He mentioned this to someone who got him in touch with BO S., who was rumored to be working on A Basic Text for NA-- an addictions analog to the AA 'Big Book', which was written by Bill W. in 1939.

The publication of the basic text has probably been the single most important event in the history of NA. The actual writing of the book is a story in itself, and one of the few documented events in NA history. A book was written in the mid-eighties by Bo S., former chair of the World Literature Committee, which describes the process. Bo had been a social worker in the sixties, he had also been involved with beatnik poets and was steeped in the concept of stream-of-consciousness writing. He is responsible for forming a vision of the basic text of NA.

The book was taken directly from the written testimonies of addicts. Material had been collected at the world service office. Much of it was simply short essays from addicts describing their experiences of using and the process of their recovery. Some material came from people like George and his friends, who would tape record meetings which they held on particular topics, and then transcribe the tapes onto paper. The first step in writing the book was developing an outline. The outline for the text was taken from the white Booklet. Next came the long and strenuous process of fitting the material that they had into the outline they had developed. Armed with many type-writers and copy machines, Bo and company held a series of conferences which took place all over the country over a six year period between 1977 and 1982. The material collected from addicts was actually cut apart sentence by sentence. New paragraphs were formed out of these cut and paste sentences, and the pages were then copied and distributed. Next the paragraphs were sorted into the appropriate place for them in the outline. Many impasses were

reached. Often whole boxes of material were lost or stolen between conferences. Lengthy philosophical discussions were held, concerning the ramifications of using certain words. One discussion which George in particular remembers concerned the use of the word 'terminal' in the description of the 'disease of addiction'. If the word terminal was used, some argued, why bother to come to NA.?

Often the members worked for weeks on end with little or no sleep. This had its consequences. When an approval form of the book was finally released, parts of it made absolutely no sense. But Bo had made his point. A book had been written for addicts, by addicts themselves. In the tradition of NA, 'the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel'. The book was revised yet again, and finally published in 1982.

The NA Basic Text has gone through 6 different editions since its publication. Currently there is a movement in NA to revert back to the third edition revised. The matter has become so serious that certain members of NA recently published their own boot-leg edition of the basic text. This matter ended up in court for copyright infringement. How could one book cause so much controversy?

With the publication of the basic text, the third phase of NA history had begun. Meanwhile George had been involved with PI, area service, the literature committee and he had also chaired the committee for the 2nd east coast convention. At the end of this chairing commitment George came to realize that he was totally burned out. Not only this, but he himself was not

living the same program that he tried to carry word of to newcomers. While 'carrying the message' that one ought to 'get a sponsor, work the steps, attend meetings and keep it simple' George's life was a whirlwind, and he did none of those things himself. An old friend pointed out to George that by not practicing what he preached, his actions undermined the things that he endorsed. Shortly after the second East Coast convention George withdrew from service. Recently George has started to attend meetings again on a regular basis, as a normal member of NA. With 14 years clean, George is one of the few old-timers in the area who still attend NA meetings.

With the publication of the basic text, NA began to develop an identity separate from that of AA. This separation can be seen most clearly in the language that developed in NA which was distinct from that in AA. The concept of addiction, which had floated about, became the key thing which separated NA from AA. While AAs spoke of being powerless over alcohol, a single substance, NAs spoke of being powerless over addiction, something internal to the self. By defining themselves thus, NA was able to encompass the many different drugs which addicts used. On the NA model addiction itself is the disease, and use of drugs is only one of many symptoms. According to NA, alcohol is a drug. In this sense the NA philosophy expands on and incorporates AAs.

While in AA they say 'One day at a time', in NA the equivalent is 'Just for Today'. In AA one slogan goes 'Think, Think, Think', in NA it is just the opposite. Addicts are encouraged to 'stay out of their heads', since 'an addict alone is in bad

company.' AA professes to be a 'selfish' program, while NA claims itself as a 'selfless' one. The AA symbol is a triangle within a circle, the sides of which represent unity, service, and recovery. The NA symbol is a square inside of a circle meant to represent the base of a pyramid. The sides of the base represent Self, Service, Society, and God. The point of the pyramid represents freedom, which is the goal toward which the program strives.

The alliteration of the principles of NA in black and white has done much to legitimate the program. It has also served to create a kind of radical faction committed to those principles. On the positive side, the book has been cited by one addict I spoke to as a contributing factor in the rise of inner city black involvement in NA.

Duane attended his first NA meeting in 1971. At this point in time he was literally the only black person to attend NA meetings. This role was one that Duane was used to playing, having grown up in the suburbs of Westchester he was used to being the 'only'. At a certain point, however, Duane found it impossible to truly open up to the people at meetings. Much as he loved them and respected their recovery, he found that basic cultural differences kept him from becoming truly honest. As a result of this, Duane picked up drugs again and continued to use until 1988. In that year Duane decided that he had 'had it' again. Prompted by the drug-death of his brother, Duane sought out NA once again. He arrived at a meeting at 38th and chestnut, a little late. He almost walked out again, assuming that he had come to the wrong place. The meeting was almost entirely black.

In the 10 years that Duane was away the fellowship had gone through a radical transformation. Duane has remained clean since that meeting. NA is a force in the black community, and in this way NA has succeeded where AA never did.

There do remain problems of race relations in NA. These problems, like those of Gays and Lesbians are reflective of society at large. A telling example of involves the GPRCNA (Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous). Although the attendance at this convention is at least 3 quarters black, the entire convention committee is white and comes out of northeast Philadelphia. This state of affairs is a result of the fact that the convention committee has always been rooted in that particular area. This year the conventions theme was "The ties that bind us together". The black/ white issue was directly addressed by many speakers, albeit in an often awkward manner.

While the book has served to tie the Fellowship together, it has also stirred up controversy. A strict reading of the book has given rise to a philosophy in NA called 'Purism'. Purists believe, as their name suggests, in a pure NA message of recovery. What this essentially refers to is a rejection of any remnants of AA terminology and sentiment. NA purists believe that NA members need only attend the NA fellowship, attending therapy and other self-help groups is also discouraged. The purists have been a mainly East Coast Phenomena, and perhaps they represent the last vestiges of the East coast/ West coast controversy. Unfortunately, Purists tend to hold a fairly narrow view

of what recovery means. They often seem more interested in being exclusive than in being open-minded. They tend to hold to a 'shake and bake' theory of recovery. If you do X,Y, and Z, then you will get the desired effect. To many others, and particularly for those who feel the need to attend special interest meetings, such recipes for recovery seem to deny the basis of freedom which the program attests to

I attended my first NA meeting in October of 1988, and I have been 'clean' since November 27 of that year. When I first came into NA I was struck immediately by the variety of people which came together under a common goal. Since the goals of people in recovery are to become more open-minded, honest and caring, I was quickly excited by what I took to be an important kind of social movement. After some time in the program I have come to realize that people do not tend to make such leaps of reasoning, from individual to societal goals. Also, I am not so sure that programs geared toward change on an individual level are fitted to become vehicles of social change. At the same time, it is partially what first attracted me to NA that keeps me coming back. An important part of growing up is realizing that the world just might not meet your ideals, and deciding to continue on anyway.

We feel that our approach to the disease of addiction is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. We believe that the sooner we face our problems within our society, in everyday living, just that much faster do we become acceptable, responsible, and productive members of that society.

The only way to keep from returning to active addiction is not to take that first drug. If you are like us you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. We put great emphasis on this, for we know that when we use drugs in any form, or substitute one for another, we release our addiction all over again.

Thinking of alcohol as different from other drugs has caused a great many addicts to relapse. Before we came to N.A., many of us viewed alcohol separately, but we cannot afford to be confused about this. Alcohol is a drug. We are people with the disease of addiction who must abstain from all drugs in order to recover.

The Twelve Traditions of N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.


1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
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Who, What, How and Why

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WHO, WHAT, HOW AND WHY

Who is an Addict?

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another—the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We lived to use and used to live. Very simply, an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program?

N.A. is a nonprofit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work*.

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The

newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

Why are We Here?

Before coming to the Fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives. We could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized that in our addiction we were slowly committing suicide, but addiction is such a cunning enemy of life that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Many of us ended up in jail, or sought help through medicine, religion and psychiatry. None of these methods was sufficient for us. Our disease always resurfaced or continued to progress until in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people. We suffered from a disease from which there is no known cure. It can, however, be arrested at some point, and recovery is then possible.

How It Works

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we *understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once. We didn't become addicted in one day, so remember—*easy does it*.

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Three of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. With these we are well on our way.

OLDEST MEETINGS LIST

from N.A. History Workshop WCNA - 12

<u>Group Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Year and Month Started</u> - <u>Comments</u>
Always Addicts	Princeton NJ	summer of 1980 (Dec'79)
Ash Street Group	Wichita KS	1976-1977 group started in P.O.'s office with P.O. there. "Rabbit meetings" here and there at churches by 1978. Established clubhouse 1977.
Hearts 1	Columbus OH	1979-80 second meeting one month later. Now have seventeen meetings with 200 members
Candlelight	Richmond VA	1979 Two others started within one year Now have six.
Tuesday Night	Fond du Lac WI	1980 Only meeting at this time - about twenty-twenty five members. One other meeting tried but folded. Need a different day.
Unkown	Tulsa OK	Don't know exact date but have article out of local paper. Current group started Nov. 1979
Tuesday	Lincoln NE	First meeting May 1975 - still going.
Rubber City Recovery	Akron OH	1980 August Now four meetings per week.
No Name	Port Washington WI	1980 (not sure of month)
Mother Group	Nashville TN	April 1979
Barrodck Group	Pittsburg PA	First meeting in greater Pittsburg area 1979.
Youngstown Group	Youngstown OH	July 1979 Original N.A. Group
Day by Day Group	Allentown PA	Little Apple Area March 31, 1979
Friday Night Group	Divine Providence Hospital	September 1972
10th & Roosevelt	Philadelphia PA	September 1970
Freedom Group	Montgomery AL	September 1981
VA Hospital	East Orange NJ	1978
Tuesday Night	16 & OTOE Lincoln NE	May 1975
Cleveland Bridge Group	Cleveland OH	February 1980 Now 14 meetings per week.
Ann R.'s	Milwaukee WI	September 1976

OLDEST MEETINGS LIST

Sunday Night	Chicago IL	August 1975
Tuesday Night	Dallas TX	October 1978
Friday Night Candle Light	Baton Rouge LA	1978
Key West	unknown	1969
W. Palm Beach	CARP T.C.	1972
Miami Little River Club		1974
Ft. Lauderdale	St. Francis Mission	1977
Friday Night A's	Ann Arbor MI	1982
Friday Night N.A.	Williamsport PA	September 18, 1972
Boulder #1	Boulder CO	2020 21st 1978-1979?
unknown	Bay City MI	1975
S.O.S. Group	Steubenville OH	October 6, 1980
Wheeling WV		1980

LET THIS LIST BE A BEGINING. PLEASE ADD TO IT BY SENDING YOUR ARCHIVES INFORMATION TO: PETE B. 75 MacFarland Avenue, Iveyland PA 18974

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Tel. 212 429-4998
718'

This is being submitted to the PURIST..:

JIMMY KINNON: FOUNDER OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Jimmy died on 7/9/85 of lung cancer at the age of 74. Out of those 74 years, 35 were clean and dedicated to helping addicts recover from the disease of addiction. Jimmy began holding meetings in his home. Jimmy was the one who got people involved in the first meeting that was to grow into what we now know as the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

The fellowship grew from that one meeting to over 6,000 meetings in 30 countries, which are helping addicts to recover from our disease. Jimmy's dream was to have 5,000 members when they started. Well, his dream was fulfilled ten times over in his lifetime. Jimmy left us a legacy that will never die as long as there is one addict alive to carry the message of recovery to another sick and suffering addict.

The World Service Office was Jimmy's house until the early 1970's. He would spend hours in that house packing and sending out literature orders and writing letters, day in and day out. He was the one who pushed to have our fellowship develop its own literature and stand on our own as a fellowship of recovering addicts... our own fellowship, our own home, so we wouldn't have to go anywhere else to recover.

Jimmy, for years, was the unpaid manager of the World Service Office, and he lived next to poverty in the furtherance of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Jimmy always had time to help the newcomer, help addicts start meetings, and give advice to addicts from coast to coast and overseas; either by phone or writing letters. Those of us who were privileged to know and love him and know what he was about, knew that Jimmy didn't want any glory or to be a big shot in N.A...he was one spiritual being.

You see, Jimmy is not gone. He is still with us in spirit anywhere there is a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous and the spirit of recovery prevails.

He loved the fellowship, and it is a shame that most of our fellowship does not know about him and what he did for every one of us. It's a shame that when he did die, the World Service Office did not have enough respect to call the regions and let them know that Jimmy passed on. You see, Jimmy was treated very badly by certain individuals in this fellowship, and they never said they were sorry. I really don't want to get into that and sink to their level. What I would like to see is that Jimmy gets the recognition that is due him as the one and only founder of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous...

and if enough of us raise our voices, maybe, one day, Jimmy's story will be told.

In Love and Service,

Terry R.
New York City