



NEWSLETTER

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From The Chairmans Seat. '67-'68

My view from here can only be expressed as interesting. Many things are changing, the people and groups are busying themselves with activities in this thing called living. N.A. has grown since my first introduction. The growth in the people has been something to behold. Seeing these things has given me strength and hope in a program that at first I couldn't see working for me. Today I know why.

It was conceivable, in my addictive thinking, that something would work for me without any work on my part, how wrong I was. It has been my experience that the program works as long as I work it, one day at a time to the best of my ability and that is ever changing.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has become a part of my life today. May I never forget where I came from in my quest for where I want to go.

Forever Grateful
Your Chairman and Servant.

Bob B.

I'M SEEKING.

Every attempt I have made to stay clean and out of prison has failed. Looking back over the past I find that these failures have caused me to spend 18 years of my life in prison. At this moment, anyone looking at my future would have to say it is a hopeless one. I actually felt and believed this to be true too; that is, until I found "Pathway" and started going to meetings. I found that there is something intangible here that brings me back each week. I am seeking solutions to my problems which will keep me clean and out of prison.

Four months ago I had the privilege of listening to Beth R. speak on The Miracle of working in the Pathway and the programs of N.A. and A.A. This inspired me to continue my efforts to find and keep sobriety and freedom. Here was the type of girl I knew in the jungle. It was a shock for me to hear her tell how she is working the program with the 'Key' that keeps her clean and free. After speaking to her and others I realized that, tho' many have been clean for years, it is not always an easy matter. I find it requires full time participation in this program. I believe them.

and because I do- this is my first major step towards actually helping myself.

Prior to hearing this Pitch I would sit up close to the table at every meeting, not once did I really keep an open mind or try to find serenity or even extend myself in any way. It won't be that way anymore. I have sought and am still seeking-but WOW-! at last hope -that's a fix 'Hope for the future' With the continued help of all members willing to aid me in this bag, I can't see, why I, like all the others, can't stay clean and out of prison.

George P. San Jose.

No matter where or how you have failed, the desire within to rise again is the power to help you rise.

Anon.

Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands,
When Spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.

'As A Man Thinketh'

TO LEARN AND LISTEN.

I am an addict and alcoholic and have been clean and sober for what seems an impossible amount of time. I got this thru' Narcotics Anonymous and A.A. and it has been one of the biggest breaks I have ever had in my life. I used for about 12 to 13 yrs and I used everything that was around during that time. I come from an environment of drugs and alcohol and I started about eleven years old.

I would like to say something regarding my recovery up to today. Really all that N.A. and A.A. promises me is a program of Recovery. Today I'm sitting in my back room listening to some music, which next to this program, I love very much. Music has been an out for me as long as I can remember. I was wondering about myself and having an anxiety attack-not feeling bad-not feeling overly happy-just caught up in a bag thinking of myself too much. I started reading something called 'A Little Red Book' and then I decided to write something for our newsletter.

I didn't really care about doing this, mainly because I am not a writer and at times even find it hard to read; but since I have had this way of life I've learned to do both to save my own butt. I also had to learn to talk to people. I'm not too good at these things yet but I'M much better than I was when I first came on the program. At first I hadn't too much to say-well I really

had a lot to say but it wasn't anything too good. I had a lot of crying to do, but I came to meetings and I had to 'Learn to Listen' and then 'Listen to Learn'. I heard one guy ask another "How many meetings do I have to go to a week?" the older member said "If you used once a week then go once, if twice, then go twice and so on" I thought about that and said "Hell, I used every day." so I went to a meeting every day.

Back to what I was saying about Listening, Talking, Writing and reading- I guess I make this sound like some kind of school where we come to learn; well if it sounds like that I guess that's what it is for me. I came here to learn how to live and believe me it was hard to realize how much I didn't know or even to realize what I did know, but due to my sickness I couldn't put to work and apply it in my life.

Before I was able to take anything from the people here I had to come to grips with myself. I had to admit, and little by little accept the First Step of our program-- That I was and am powerless over my addictions and my life is unmanageable. In my opinion this is the only step I have been able to work 100%. It will be that way as long as I don't put anything into my system to change my head, to this day I have been able to that and many a day sobriety was all I had. I knew that if I wasn't clean I couldn't work this program.

Although I have been clean over three years, I'm still trying to 'Learn How To Live'. I have learned that time is nothing but that-Time. I think the important thing is what I do with Time. I use this program which to me is the Twelve Steps and they work in my daily life.

Using was a way of life to me until it became the biggest threat to my survival. Then thru' pain and suffering I had to make a decision, then act on it and follow directions and take the help the way it was offered. My first sponsor (who is up in Northern Cal. and doing well) told me one day "If you aren't ready to take help the way it is offered, you haven't any business asking for help." Thank God I have remembered that, because there have been days I have wished I could change things to fit me, rather than try to change myself and my attitudes and be willing to give in and surrender my judgement.

I guess to me the message of N.A. is this-I have been given a way to go, and for a guy who had no way to go, it's a Miracle. A Miracle that depends on my daily maintenance of this spiritual way. I have a life today, Thank God and the principles of this program. I've got a way to go on the bricks and it's good for me.

Hank M. No. Hollywood. Cal.

NOT SO INSTANT RECALL:-----

REMEMBER WHEN: Newcomers would drive around the block, where the meeting was held, four or five times to make sure it wasn't a stake-out.

REMEMBER WHEN: All we had was a 'RABBIT CIRCUIT' we hopped from one house or apt. to another every week to hold our meetings.

REMEMBER WHEN: We almost scared a family and a sick addict out of their wits, when seven of us drove to Long Beach on a late Twelve Step call.

REMEMBER WHEN: Near midnight, most of the gang serenaded Russ C. on the porch of his Burbank Apt.

AND REMEMBER: The after meeting laughs we had at Dupars and Johnny's on Friday nites.

BUT WHO REMEMBERS: The three characters who lay across the railroad tracks on Chandler at midnight, their heads on the rail, watching, for hours (five to be exact) for the first Russian Sputnik in the California sky?

A L L I S N O W.

Let your journey start now--

Thrust into the new environment

By whatever means - necessity - desire -

Look onto your star - your very own.

Day by day, gratitude will increase

The brillianca. Correction perhaps

At appointed times, lest it's light

Blind you to the sheen of others on their journey;

Or hide from view, flickering, survival sparks

Dying in the darkness. Awareness of the larger scheme,

Recognition of the microcosm, and vistas in between,

All fruitful in the present scene.

J.P. Los Angeles.

TRADITION ONE.

Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on N.A. Unity.

Maintenance of recovery is based on a spiritual foundation whose main aspect is service to others. Haphazard methods can bring no lasting results. Lack of a unified group purpose for our common welfare could soon end in individual effort with self-seeking reward as its goal. Our experience and observation have pointed to this grave defect in the past. It is not our policy to try to ameliorate this condition by rules or regulations, (We could not enforce them anyway) but to show the desirability of group effort, and its healing influence through unity of purpose at both the personal and group levels. There is not the slightest indication in our policy of authoritarian control or a powerful hierarchy; we have no need of either. Knowing our type of personality it might be feared that our society would become a form of anarchy. In anarchy self-determination is license not liberty, we know this destructive force from the past and all the problems it presents. In anarchy there would be no real freedom and without freedom no recovery, one is the foundation for the other. Responsibility as a corollary of freedom is the cohesive constructive force that eliminates self-willed anarchy.

There are two aspects of our past that makes a new approach imperative, they are stronger than any rule or law that we might lay down for ourselves.

- #1 The progressive destructive pattern of an unmanageable life, controlled by drugs.
- #2 The inability to form satisfactory relationships with other human beings which results in lasting happiness of any kind.

In setting ourselves to a common purpose and action, we are willing to submerge our own personal wishes and desires so that others may be given a better opportunity to recover. In practicing our personal programs we become more aware of our impulsive and addictive nature. Through the living problems and difficulties we encounter, we realize the deep need to surrender to spiritual principles. Unseen principles are the roots of our society, stronger than any visible power; our seen leadership rotates and is the servant of our fellowship. The invisible power is the real ruler of our actions.

If we do not alter or modify our thinking and actions in accord to these, we again face total destruction; here the decision is ours alone to make. When we honestly face this alternative, make our decision and find a more desirable way of life we realize that to keep what we have, we must share it by offering it to others.

Since no man can be truly free alone but only in some kind of fellowship, group activity becomes a necessity. Lone ego-centric activity, seldom if ever removes the bars that imprison us. We need something and somebody else to care about in order to find balance. Fellowship provides both. We inspire and are inspired by group efforts and common goals. Unity springs and grows in this kind of action.

Spontaneity in freedom we should encourage at all levels in our society. Let what restrictions we ask of ourselves be in this spirit, guided by our individual and group conscience. We can withstand any pressures from without or within if we remain realistically flexible. Only in responsible freedom can we grow to maturity. Any rules or restrictions imposed by others will only limit our usefulness and bring about rigidity in our attitudes. This we should try to avoid for our common welfare.

Time and time again history has revealed mistakes and weaknesses, from which mankind as a whole has drawn few lasting lessons. If they have learned so little from the authoritarian organizations and governments that comprise their societies that they perpetuate their errors, then what, we might ask, are our chances for survival. Our answer is really simple, we are guided neither by their rules nor their goals. Our Steps and Traditions are means to a different end.

Self-seeking, power hungry, prestige collecting, status conscious, wealth accumulating humanity has another side we have either seen or heard about. It is not as well publicised perhaps or as well thought of, but it is always there between the lines of history.

When disaster strikes in its myriad forms, we will always find men and women who will, in the face of calamity and distress, give comfort, solace and help to each other; they will give freely of whatever they have to each other. Recently we saw this, when tragedy, at the hands of an assassin, struck down a wealthy young presidential candidate. A Mexican American porter cradled the bleeding head above the floor in his right hand, with his left he gave a prized possession, his crucifix, to the dying Robert F. Kennedy. No rewards sought, no prestige hoped for. In the adjoining hall, people from all economic backgrounds, religious affiliations and racial sources, clasped each others hands and exchanged tears of grief on each others shoulders. Honest emotion, the remover of barriers; a goal to be sought. We know this basic need for another human being from the depths of our own fear and isolation. Here is the area for our answers, not the weakness of one, but the strength of many acting according to their inherent nature; a coming together in honest and decent emotion.

An old story of service and love for another is told regarding the starving beggar in old China. This man crawled to the door of a rude hut where lived an old man and woman. In all the world they had only enough rice left for that day. The wife looked to the husband for an answer, he said, "If we give him our rice we may die tomorrow" she replied, "If we don't, he will die today".

What are we willing to give or give up that will have meaning in life or living? Our pride of self in accomplishment? Our bias that says I'm different? Our closed mind that says, Mine is the right and only way? Are we willing to give others the right to their voice and opinion and see if experience proves them one way or the other? Are we willing to try new ideas wholeheartedly? Are we willing to apply to others and the group, the same tolerance and patience we show ourselves when we fall short of our personal ideals? Are we willing to do in concerted effort what we cannot do alone? When things do not go well, even when we have tried well, do we scatter to lick our wounds and nurse our grudges, or can we pick up the pieces and with more understanding build in a better way?

We are neither saints nor geniuses, but if we pool those talents we all do possess, great and small, we can change the course of our history and the lives of many we have yet to meet.

Without a dream a man is only half a man, without a vision a fellowship is a farce, with both all things are possible.

T O A L L M E M B E R S .

This is your opportunity to add your voice and support to this newsletter, to Narcotics Anonymous and to the newcomer who wants what we have to offer, it is your publication. To keep it going we need your stories, anecdotes, jokes, poems, cartoons if you can draw, your ideas, opinions, your gripes and your gratitudes. We will try to find space for everything you have to offer. So, group secretaries, ask your members for material and forward it to our P.O. Box 622 Sun Valley, Calif. We would like to hear more from Northern Cal. also from those new groups in Ventura and Palm Springs. How about it? This issue talks about Unity, let's see it in action. Ed.

We wish to extend a sincere thank you to our retiring N.A. Chairman of the past two years, Bob R. This is a job that is often more controversial than comfortable, so again our thanks Bob.

Our new '68-'69 Chairman is George M. Best Wishes to George.
