

The Group Conscience

DCANA
2005

NOV

Please Take Note:

Sorry!! The email address, GROUPCONSCIENCE@HOTMAIL.COM, was not activated, but it is now. Please share your experience, strength, & hope with others in our area!

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

THEME for December's newsletter will be: Lessons learned in RECOVERY 2004

"Recovery as experienced through our Twelve Steps is our goal, not mere physical abstinence."

-NA White Booklet, *Narcotics Anonymous*

Remembering Where NA Comes From

I have heard a lot of people talk about how important it is for them to remember where they came from in order for them to be grateful for today. I wanted to make the theme of this month's newsletter gratitude, and as I ran across this history and reflected on my own story, I was once again struck by the power of addicts helping other addicts. The following are excerpts of an NA history workshop from 1999 specifically regarding one of the first members, Jimmy K.

Jimmy and others used to go down to skid row, and meet addicts there who couldn't identify with the alcoholic in AA Jimmy believed in the steps, and was three years clean when he and some others began to have preliminary

discussions about a fellowship for addicts. Around July of 1953, they actually started getting serious about it, and on August 17th, 1953, the first formation meeting for the NA as we now know it was held.

Here are Jimmy's words describing the first meetings:

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"It was very hard to find a place to meet; after we got together and agreed what we were going to do. You couldn't find a hall to meet in. Nobody would allow us in. They didn't trust us in any way, shape, or form. And it's pretty sad when you go from one place to another after you've got something real good going and nobody will let you use their hall. You know! Eventually we did find a Salvation Army hall and they allowed us to use it for five dollars a month. You know, that's pretty good, but there were no facilities there. There was one little restroom with a hand basin and a bowl in there, and that was it."

"It wasn't that we who were getting into the program then were so afraid of the law but the newcomers were scared to death. I made a sign and we put it outside of the front door of the church there (about twice the size of this - three times the size of that) that said NA Meeting tonight at 8:30. And then we opened the door for business and we'd get about a dozen alcoholics in there who came to help us. And then a car would pull down around the corner slowly and they'd look at the sign and then they'd split. Nobody trusted nobody - you know they thought it was staked out. They wouldn't believe us when we told them there was no surveillance. And we weren't just too sure in the beginning ourselves."

As Jimmy described, the first meetings were not attended by many newcomers, as they were afraid of being arrested. At that time, there were laws in effect that would criminalize addicts merely by association. The Rockefeller Laws, as they were called, made it illegal for two or more addicts to be in one place at any time. The founders' solution was to go have a face to face discussion with the police department, and here, in Jimmy's words, is what happened:

"Because as a group we decided we were going to get right with the law at least and we went down to the Narcotics Division. And we told them, we didn't ask them, we told them we were going to have a meeting of addicts. And they raised their eyebrows a little bit when we first mentioned it. But there were 5 of us down there. A Miller, I forget if he was a Lieutenant or a Captain then, he listened and he said: "It's about time something like this happened, I've been trying to help addicts for years and with no success; I can't help anybody". And so he called in a lieutenant to listen in on our conversation and see what he thought. And he was a hard-nosed, old style, hope-to-die cop who knew for sure (who knew for sure) that none of us could recover, you know. And he listened and Miller was saying: "I like that idea", "I'll go along with that idea", "I buy what you have to say", "I'll do everything I can to help you". All the way down the line he was all for us. He kept his word, by the way. And he said to this lieutenant "what do you think?" (lieutenant): "Ain't gonna work, once a Junkie always a Junkie, you know that, God Damnit. There's never any of them gonna get any better. I don't care what you say, I don't care what these people say, it ain't gonna work." So he looked back at us and I didn't know what the Hell to say, you know I'm only one of the group. I looked at Doris and she didn't know what

to say. And Frank didn't know what to say. And old Pat, who was sitting back there with his mouth shut all this time and never opened his mouth says: "Lieutenant, my name is so-and-so, I was born and raised in such-and-such a place, I got arrested the first time for such-and-such a thing, and I was sentenced such-and -such a time for so many years; and starting there I want you to go back and check my record all the way through. I've been in every God Damned Federal Pen., except Danamora, in the country. I'm the last of the Petermen, and I haven't had a bit of Junk for 18 years. I haven't been in Jail for 18 years; and this program works for me. Now you look it up and prove it to yourself because I was never out of jail from the time I was a kid until the time I found this program." And the guy didn't know what to say. Pat said: "Now I mean it, check it out."

"Whether the guy ever checked it out, I don't know; but I know that the police department and the Narcotics Division kept their word to us. And they never staked us out, they never busted us in any way, shape, or form - never roused us coming or going to meetings. And so, we in turn kept our word, we policed ourselves and we followed the Traditions as best we knew how. And this is what has made us basically begin to grow in the past 12 years."

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Here is Jimmy's vision for NA, in his words: "You know that I've said many times, a long time ago, that a man without a dream is only half a man, and a fellowship without a vision is a farce. And I still believe that and know damn well that we can find fulfillment in living a day at a time here. And a day at a time our vision and our Fellowship can become a greater reality. They're the things that I'm still interested in. Two years ago at the convention, when I had just regained my voice, I said then that as long as I live I would use what voice and what strength I have to further the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous and that other beautiful fellowship I belong to, Alcoholics Anonymous; and I intend to do that. But it's going to take all of me, and it's going to take all of you, and all the people that you're going to talk to, and all of the people you're going to carry the message to, to make this a greater reality."

This man made it his life's work to help NA grow in whatever capacity he could. For that reason, he is an important part of our history- not THE founder, but one of the FOUNDERS. Not the man who started NA, but a man who believed in NA so strongly that nothing would or could stop him from helping make the recovery we have today a reality.



Jimmy K designed our symbol on a napkin while in the hospital with Tuberculosis in 1968.

Letters To The Editor

Could you print an announcement that the Monday night meeting at Reston Community Center (Conscious Contact) needs trusted servants beginning in January?

It's been carried for the last year by a couple of folks who are going on to other things. I'm afraid that if a couple of folks with desire and commitment don't step forward, then Dulles Corridor

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." -Albert Schweitzer

WHEN I FIRST STARTING ATTENDING NA meetings, I felt confused and alone, yet I was too scared to open up to the people in the meetings who were reaching out to me. I kept going to meetings because they made me feel better, but I couldn't admit to myself or others that I belonged in these rooms, that I was an addict who needed to abstain from all drugs.

will lose one of its oldest meetings and its meeting place. This meeting is one of the first groups of any kind, recovery of otherwise, to meet at the Reston Community Center and has met continuously in this same facility.

I think it would be a shame for us to lose that kind of continuity in the community because the folks in our area don't have any sense of history. It's a good little literature meeting. It is self supporting at this time. Because of the number of people new to recovery, it needs the continuing support of members who understand what the NA program is all about.

John G

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I started to know a couple of people that I could talk to at meetings, but I was still too shy to share and not humble enough to tell someone when I needed help, so I would go to a meeting on Tuesday, use on Friday, hit a meeting on Sunday, then go home and use, and so on, for a long time.

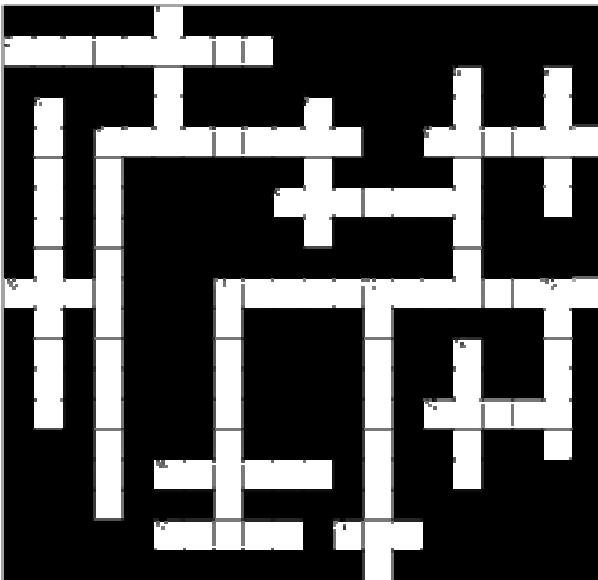
It took me well over a year from the first time I went to a meeting to become spirituality sick enough to take my recovery seriously. I had 10 days when I went to the 2005 CPRCNA convention in Ocean City. I felt completely invisible in such a huge crowd, and, along with some roommate trouble at the hotel, I was ready to hit a local bar on my way back to the hotel. Instead, I ended up calling a friend who was also at the convention. He dropped whatever plans he had (I don't know what they were, I was too self-absorbed to ask) and listened to me ramble about my feelings for hours.

That convention, and particularly, that night was a turning point for me. After that I began to collect some real clean time. For the first time ever I made 30 days. Although I can't say I've been clean since then, I can say I've been working on my program since then, and have managed to accumulate over 5 months.

I want to thank that person for helping me that night, for listening to my nonsense, helping me get outside of my insanity long enough to see that I could have a better life, and inspiring me to work for it.

Throughout my NA experience, there have been countless people in this program that have served, loved, and inspired me. I am so grateful for the opportunity I have to associate with the members of NA in the Dulles Corridor Area. I only hope I can do for others what you have done for me. - Jessica L.

Thanksgiving Word Puzzle



ACROSS

DOWN

- 2. Small red fruit of Wampanoag families
- 7. Chief of Wamanoag
- Covers a turkey
- 8. Thanksgiving potatoes
- 9. Pilgrim village
- 10. Wore breeches and doublet
- 11. State where Wampanoag lived
- Pilgrim leader
- 15. What Pilgrims lived in
- Pilgrims' ship
- 16. Fleshy flap on turkey
- 13. Holiday bird
- 14. Wild turkey food

- 1. Abode
- 3.
- 4. Orange colored potatoes
- 5. Fall sport
- 6. Wore apron and a linen coif on head
- 7.
- 11.
- 12. Horn

- of plenty
- 17. Cranberry habitat
- 18. Pumpkin

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Regional - Public Relations Handbook Review of Chapters 7 and 8 ("Treatment" and "Healthcare") 7-9pm Holy Cross Hospital	9	10	11	12
13 Regional - Nature Awareness Day start at 12 noon Sugarloaf Mountain 7901 Comus Road Dickerson, MD	14	15 Regional - Public Relations Handbook Review of Chapter 9 ("Phonelines") 7-9pm Holy Cross Hospital	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Regional - Thanksgiving Marathon Starts at 10pm	24 Thanksgiving Marathon Ends at 7pm Wesley UM Church 5312 Connecticut Avenue NW Washington DC	25 THANKSGIVING	26
27 Area Service 2- 5 pm Saint Timothy's 432 Van Buren St Herndon	28	29	30			

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We meet regularly to help each other stay clean. We are not interested in what or how much you used, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.

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Our area is located in Northern Virginia and holds about 20 meetings per week in Oakton, Reston, Chantilly, Centreville, Sterling, Leesburg and Round Hill.

24 hr Help Line number (703) 435-1230

C&P Region Help Line (800) 543-4670