

A newsletter of the Autonomous Region of Narcotics Anonymous.

someone in NA who believes in me

and wants to help me in my recovery

The Autonomous Region of Narcotics Anonymous is comprised of groups & individual members who have come together to support each other in carrying the message in their local communities. Regardless of literature preferences, location or meeting formats.

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How To Join ARNA

Your Group is a member of ARNA when decide to be. Even if your Home group meeting already supports NAWS, ASIS, USSC, or any other Narcotics Anonymous service organization, your participation is welcomed here at ARNA, regardless. Registering your Group provides the necessary meeting information for our Meeting Directory, as well as the contact information for your Group to remain fully informed and up to date with all communications and services of ARNA.

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Our members speak

Anonymous from Fredericksburg, Va. “Long Journey Home”

I was fortunate to come in to NA when I did, just as work on our Basic Text was beginning. My home group, the Hulmeville Steppers, got involved when our group conscience voted to remove the AA 12 and 12 from our meeting, and to replace it with steps and traditions written by addicts, for addicts. We then set out to start writing them!

I was the group’s secretary and could type, so I typed up transcripts from the taped, “unofficial” step meetings we held at a member’s apart-

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This is our second issue of this monthly newsletter. Our intention is for this newsletter to serve as a vehicle to communicate experience, strength and hope in recovery among the members and groups of ARNA. We welcome your input into this newsletter. Please contact us at newsletter@arna.world.

Please send anything you would like to share with other members and groups of ARNA, including - personal experience, strength and hope in recovery; what becoming a part of ARNA has meant for you and your group; challenges and successes you have experienced in becoming a member of ARNA; anything else you would like to communicate with other members and groups of ARNA.

This is your newsletter. We will do our best to serve you by delivering an updated issue regularly, editing your input into an easily readable format, to facilitate effective communication between the groups and members of ARNA. We will also welcome any ideas you may have to improve the quality and effectiveness of this newsletter.

Our members speak

Anonymous from Nebraska “Hospitals & Institutions”

For many NA members giving back freely through H&I is mandatory for our own personal recovery and sanity. Working as a prison caseworker, I am still haunted by getting to know an inmate that had obvious addiction problems; of having to cut that suffering addict down, body cold, as they could not live with the miserable disease of addiction anymore, strangulating themselves by twisting a sheet around their throats tied to a single bunk.

It was gut wrenching calling their poor family to tell them your loved one is gone. These miserable memories I would not wish on my worst enemy, will haunt me forever. I would go out after work and destroy myself with drugs so I would not feel. From 1984 to 2003 in my prison there was never NA anything. It is still the same all over the world today - ask inmates getting out of jails and prisons today. Together we can change this. Through God's purpose for us and our life saving NA literature, I am out of my own mental prison of thirty years. In July 2016, with my wife and niece we attended a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in Peru, South America. A beautiful NA sign was in front of the building for PI advertising the meeting and phone number. My wife translating for me before the meeting I asked the chairperson if he would like some free basic texts in Spanish for members that could not afford one, to have. He said the representative out of Lima had told them that this was unlawful and all books had to be bought through the NAWS corporation. My wife asked him how many NA basic texts they had, that we would buy some to give out. He said the basic text was more than eight dollars American. Their area had no basic texts at all to sell or give away. We talked some more about beautiful recovery. We all hugged our brother. When returning a year later that meeting was shut down and there were no NA meetings in a city of more than one million people, no calls were returned to us, when we left messages of concern to the world Lima office. Still in July 2016, we called the prison in this same Peruvian city. They said they had never heard of NA. We asked if we could donate basic texts. The director asked if we could bring enough for the men's and women's prison. The day we went to donate the books, they had a security problem and we were only allowed to leave a basic text for approval at the front gate. We were told to come back tomorrow, but we were leaving for America the next day.

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Anonymous from Fredericksburg, Va. “Long Journey Home”

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ment, then edited these transcripts into a format we could use in our step meeting. We shared copies with other groups in Pennsylvania. Unbeknownst to us, other addicts in other parts of the country were also beginning to write NA Literature, by addicts for addicts. A Literature Conference had been held in Wichita, Kansas, where a Guide for Literature Committees had been produced. We were put in touch with these other addicts, who we learned were part of the N.A. World Literature Committee, and we formed the Bristol Literature Committee in Bucks County, Pa.

We met up with some of these addicts at the First East Coast Convention in June, 1980, at Bucknell University in Pa. I celebrated 90 days there and delivered 80 pages of material on the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions that I had already transcribed, to the World Literature Committee. It was at that convention that my daily obsessions to use were lifted from me, replaced by the overwhelming spirit of NA Literature that I was infected with there.

Some of us remained heavily involved in the NA World Literature Committee from that point until the Basic Text was approved (in 1982) and produced (in 1983). I was elected as the Vice Chair of the World Literature Committee at the 7th World Literature Conference, held in the house I shared with George R. and Al R. in Ivyland, Pa, in January, 1982. I had a year and 10 months clean at that point. I was still in that position when the Approval Form got approved to be our Basic Text at the World Service Conference that spring.

A year later, when the Basic Text came out, the wording had been changed in the 4th and 9th traditions that stated that “all else (outside of the groups) was not NA”, and that service bodies and committees “could not dictate to, nor govern, NA Groups.” The Chair of the World Literature Committee, Page C., held his First Edition Basic Text up on the floor of the World Service Conference in 1983, ripped it in half, dropped it on the floor, and said, “This is not what we sent to the World Service Office to be printed”. It wasn't – several addicts in California had changed what thousands of addicts all over the world had approved. Something was not right.

Much has been written about what happened after that, about all the subsequent editions that were printed, and reprinted, trying to get those

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Anonymous from Fredericksburg, Va. "Long Journey Home"

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traditions right. They never did quite get it back to what the fellowship had tediously reviewed, edited, sent input in on, reviewed again, then approved in the first place. That was the beginning of the end of this addict's love affair with NA and NA Literature. I went to a World Literature Conference in Jamison, Pa that fall – the 9th – and was recruited by the new Chair of World Lit to be the Secretary of World Lit, but within 2 months, I had to resign from that position. N.A. World Lit was not the same. It was clearly being taken in a much different direction than what I had experienced in my first four years of being heavily involved with it. That Chair, who was from California, eventually became the first paid chair of the World Service Office's Literature Committee. That didn't surprise me. However, by then, I was long gone.

Back then, there were no N.A. meetings in my area, nor anywhere else that I could tell, where sponsors were taking addicts through the 12 steps with the new Basic Text. We didn't have any step guides developed, yet. Everyone was just trying to figure it out on their own. Sponsors just sort of helped newcomers figure something out that they were just becoming familiar with themselves. There was a meeting, in South Philly, where I kept hearing that people were going through the steps with sponsors. I'd avoided that meeting, because I'd heard all kinds of rumors about it. However, after 4 years clean, I'd reached the end of my tolerance for "clean and crazy", and knew I had to take the steps, or I would die. It was really bad, for me. I needed 12 step recovery.

I wound up on the doorstep of that South Philly group, and couldn't seem to keep my feet from taking me back there, again and again, for a couple of months. There, I was witnessing something I hadn't seen anywhere else in NA in my travels around the country for 4 years. Addicts weren't just getting clean there - they were finding recovery through the 12 Steps. I kept going there for a couple months, not believing what I saw until I watched newcomers come down those steps, scared and shaking one week, then just a few weeks later, be doing better than good, and on their way through the 12 Steps with a sponsor. I finally couldn't take it anymore, and asked someone to sponsor me through the steps.

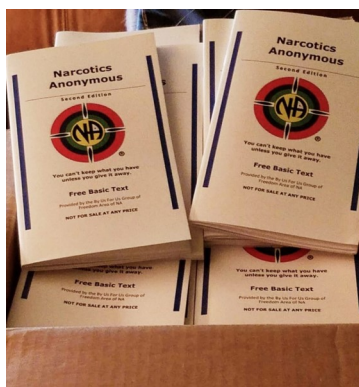
That's when I learned that they were using the AA Big Book to take addicts through the steps, there! The NA purist in me was appalled - but the addict needing recovery chose recovery over NA purism. I figured as long as they didn't bring it into the meetings, they weren't breaking traditions, and I knew that as soon as NA developed a step guide for the basic text, they would start using the NA literature.

However, for the addicts seeking recovery, like myself, recovery couldn't wait. That group made all the difference for me. After going through 17 jobs in 4 years, I got the job that summer that I still have today. After many failed attempts at relationships those first four years, I met and married the girl I am still married to today, 36 years later. I learned to live my life on life's terms. I grew comfortable in my own skin for the first time in my life.

I saw dozens of addicts find recovery that summer, and got to start sponsoring several myself, after I went through the steps. That group never got the chance to switch over to the NA literature once a step guide came out, the way I am sure that it would have. That fall, the Philadelphia Area Services Committee exercised its authority to dictate to groups when it demanded that group cease and desist using the AA Big Book to take addicts through the 12 Steps. The group, by then including several hundred members, became split down the middle on the issue, with half of the group electing to comply and remain on the NA meeting list, while half refused to be dictated to by a service body, and left to form Addicts Anonymous.

By then, I knew the difference, and could not compromise the principles of recovery in the name of NA purity, so I went with the Addicts Anonymous faction. Little did I know, then, that both factions of that once thriving group were doomed to fail, as they had lost group unity. Had that service body not intervened and interfered with that Group's Conscience, this never would have happened. A lot of addicts died as a result of that interference. I knew a lot of them.

Since it was made clear that N.A. did not approve of how I experienced my 12 Step recovery, I left and never looked back. I had learned to go where I belonged, and was told that I did not belong in NA. What I now realize is, by believing them and leaving, I recognized the authority of that service committee. I was part of the problem, without knowing it. I had experienced 12 steps of recovery, and continued to practice the



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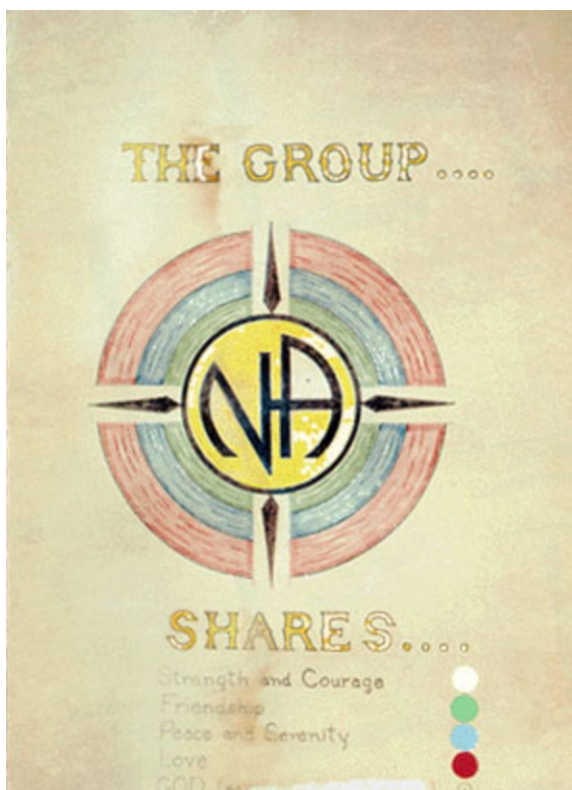
Anonymous from Fredericksburg, Va. “Long Journey Home”

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steps every day, ever since. I knew I was an addict, and knew my life depended on maintaining my spiritual condition. I thrived in recovery, but never went back to NA. I didn't go where I didn't belong. A little over a year ago, when we moved to a new town, I just decided on a whim to go to an NA meeting in my new hometown, Fredericksburg, Va.

Somehow, I knew I was home. The next day, I went to another meeting, and made it my home group. There I met my current sponsor, someone who had stayed and written a step guide, back around the same time I was being thrown out of NA with my group. My new sponsor had recently written a similar guide for the Grey Book, and I was able to help edit it. I asked them to take me through the steps and traditions with their new guide, and have finally found where I belong. I am now sponsoring 9 other addicts through the N.A. 12 Steps.

It was a long, strange journey, but it sure was nice celebrating 40 years back where my recovery journey began, in N.A., earlier this year. Today I know – nobody else, no service body, no “official”, can tell me where I do or don't belong. That is between me and my Higher Power. Today, I know I belong in N.A. No one can take that away from me. I am so happy to be home.



How To Join ARNA

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Our website is a VISION of an Autonomous Region following the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

Each member will have the opportunity to vote on accepting this website content, section by section.

**ARNA Region is guided by
the Spiritual Principles of
the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions.**

A workshop on how to **Print**
and **Distribute** Narcotics
Anonymous literature..

Date : 13.2.2021

Time : 15:00 UK GMT

Join us on Zoom
Meeting ID :
7697227366

RE-IMAGINING
THE NA SERVICE STRUCTURE



Sunday, January 17, 2021

2:00 PM – 4:30 PM (EST)

ZOOM ID 847 6870 8064

Password 076834

We do not represent an NA group, area, or region. We are concerned members of NA having an informal discussion about the value of Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (NAWS) to our spiritual fellowship and our relationship with NAWS today. Any NA member is welcomed to attend. We value your input.

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By just leaving one NA Spanish basic text that day for the director to review, when we went back to Peru the following year my sister had arranged an appointment with that Peruvian director of corrections for us. He said he had received the basic text, and could we train some of his officers to bring NA into the prison? How powerful is the NA basic text? Wow! Through my wife as our wonderful translator we explained about our traditions, but said our group would like to donate basic texts, step working guides, meeting formats for inmates to encourage the inmates to have their own meetings. The director went on to basically give my PI presentation for me, that he was tired of inmates dying of drugs; that his Country had a hell of a drug problem, cocaine and now meth, and nothing ever worked. I told him I had worked in corrections in the USA and NA saved my life. I described how all over the World NA was saving lives and giving miserable addicts new lives worth living. I explained that we were trying to get inmates to have their own meetings inside institutions and the literature we would donate would hopefully plant seeds of hope in Peru & give using addicts relief.

The director, a huge man, hugged us when we left. We will visit and do an H&I presentation for the inmates on our next visit, after the damn virus is over. Our Higher Power was with us - it was so satisfying to do H&I in this manner, we pray all our NA brothers and sisters get to experience this type of H&I, a rush better than any drug!

Why not plan an H&I recovery vacation in a poor Country, see the sites, find a printer there and donate our basic text to all the meetings and institutions in the area? Stocking a prison or jail library with our literature helps fill our loving 5th tradition and fascinating 12th step.

Due to the corona virus, the opportunities to do H&I for those suffering in institutions with nothing, utilizing our NA literature is overwhelming. If we feel we need to replace our face to face message of hope we can write our personal story or that of another addict. Just print it off and fold it in each basic text you're giving away, sending a personal message of hope in with the basic texts. Most jails and all prisons allow inserts. The jails do not want any staples as they are used for tattoos. There are no excuses when we're working on God's will.

Here are some facts and reality of NA today related to this story. Most old-timers will tell you the best book you can put in a still suffering addict's hand is the basic text. We have spoken to many old timers during our H&I research - many were friends with our NA founders. The name of the city in Peru was left out of this story so no one can send a non-legal binding cease and desist letter to the prison. The constant violations of our traditions have killed many addicts over the years, by bullying our fellow members to not give our own recovery literature away freely. Members that value our traditions support any group that is giving our NA fellowship or group approved literature freely to still suffering addicts and newcomers with nothing. All groups should be encouraged to print and give freely. Nonprofit organizations using profit and donations to support luxurious budgets at the expense of our Narcotics Anonymous primary purpose are allowed to ignore our non-negotiable traditions. We need our incredible loving groups to open up our recovery program with our literature written freely by fellow addicts in order for it to grow.

In America we incarcerate more of our citizens then anywhere in the world, most related to drug and alcohol problems. Our prison system's explosion, building new prisons at great costs, has not been squelched at all in the last 40 years. Are we personally meeting the mark for our 5th tradition and 12th step? What are we doing in our own back yards? My sponsor does not allow any excuses from me to not give freely of myself for H&I.

If I was in isolation with Covid in a jail cell alone tomorrow, would you make sure I had immediate access to our basic text in that jail's library? We are so blessed to even have a basic text, the most powerful book ever written for us addicts. Can we make it more available?

If a newcomer addict has a basic text edition you do not use, then buy them one you do use, or have them get one you would like them to use. Please do not cause disunity or confuse the newcomer over a mere edition of our loving basic text. The suffering addict does not care what edition they get or how much was spent. How big is our God? Together we can help our fellowship grow, getting hope to many, like Jimmy Kinnon would have wanted. Members can go to the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous website to find help in giving back freely to save lives.

Thank you so so much