

# 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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## Our members speak

### Self-will

I ended up in the rooms because I did what I wanted, when I wanted to. I had to have my way regardless of how it affected those around me, or even the consequences I would have to face in the future due to them. The joke of it was that up until entering recovery, I quit every venture I went into. I would either give up or was forced off the path due to my misbehavior. The one thing I never gave up was trying to do things my way. I tried to quit using countless times on my own, but for whatever reason I was never able to. The one thing I really needed to give up, wasn't letting me go.

Upon entering the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, it took me time to understand what exactly the disease had done to me. One part I was able to recognize was the amount of self-will I used in my life. Even prior to using drugs, I had a very self-centered personality. I was taught in the rooms that these types of behaviors are not normal. It still astonishes me to this day that people without the disease of addiction don't think the way that I do. I viewed the world in such a dark lens - I assumed everyone else did as well.

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This is our ninth 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](mailto: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

### History of Our Basic Text and it's Many Editions

Bo S. from Marietta, Georgia, went to the NA World Convention in Houston, Texas, in 1978 (the first one to be held outside of California) and began asking everyone, including Jimmy K., "Who's working on an N.A. book?" Jimmy sent him to talk to Greg P. (who co-wrote the NA Tree with Jimmy, and was a Board of Trustee member). Greg told him "No one's working on it, Bo." Greg encouraged and empowered Bo to start working on it. Bo got a typewriter for Christmas that year and began to work on a book. He had a deep and abiding passion to see a book written by addicts, for addicts. He knew the need was great – he'd seen too many addicts die on the streets of Atlanta, who never even had a chance.

Bo was elected the second Chair of the World Literature Sub-Committee of the World Service Committee (aka World Literature Committee, or "World Lit") the following year. Work on N.A.'s Basic Text began in earnest that year. Jimmy K. had a couple of trunks full of material on experience, strength and hope (ESH) in recovery that addicts had written and sent in to the World Service Office (WSO) over the years. The World Literature Committee, under Bo's guidance, then put a call out to the fellowship for more ESH input from addicts.

The First World Literature Conference (WLC-1) was convened in Wichita, KS in 1979, where a Guide for starting local Literature Committees and developing literature was produced and distributed. Topics were suggested for members to write their ESH on. The Second WLC was hosted by Lincoln, NE, where 6 addicts (conference host Jim N. and his sponsees) donated their blood to get enough money for postage to send out a flyer to every known group in NA to announce the Second World Literature Conference (WLC-2), and invite all addicts to attend. All addicts in N.A. were invited and welcomed to participate in this effort.

At WLC-2, the committee decided in Group Conscience to use the 8 parts of the NA Little White Book as the first 8 Chapters of the NA Book. They also decided Chapters 9 and 10 would be Just For Today and More Will Be Revealed, respectively. All of the input that had been received to date was sorted by appropriate chapter – if a sentence or paragraph worked in more than one chapter, copies were made, and pages of material were cut up

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(Continued from page One) Self-will

Today, with a few years of recovery under my belt, I still suffer from the consequences of self-will. Albeit my life is way better, this is one of the defects I find difficult to shake. I believe self-centeredness and self-will go hand in hand. Recovery has given me many material gifts. I often forget in my day-to-day that I am an addict. I lose contact with my higher power. My self-will rears its ugly head. However, because of the work I have put in to my recovery I am usually saved before I do anything too drastic. My higher power comes to my rescue every time.

Working the steps, attending regular meetings, and working with other addicts keeps me within the arms of NA. This is exactly where I need to be at all times. It is my responsibility to maintain my recovery one day at a time. Attending NA has helped me to turn over my will to my higher power. If I can align my will with my higher power's will, all will be well. Turning that over and trying to rearrange my priorities has not been an easy journey. It is one that I am still in the process of. This might be something I will have to contend with for the rest of my life.

My journey has shown me things do get better. There will be ups and downs, but in the end I have hope that my life will be okay. I have escaped the fear of impending doom that plagued me in my active addiction. For once in my life I am able to look myself in the mirror and believe that I deserve good things. These might seem like basic necessities for the average human, but as an addict I was unable to do these things for most of my life. Because of the fellowship, I am able to turn over my will and face life on life's terms.

## Our members speak

### Surrender Applies to Many Things in Life – Even Poison Ivy!

I recently (this past week) struggled with a health issue that had the potential to drive me insane. This is not (or, is no longer) a normal state for me, so it was a rough week, to say the least. But I do have history with insanity, and along with that, history with being restored to sanity. So I've gained some vital knowledge on the subject along the way. However, I've also learned that knowledge alone will not get the job done, when it comes to insanity and restoration back to sanity. There's a process one must go through to get there. It involves a lot of aspects that go far beyond knowledge, primary of which is surrender. But the question, when one is in one of these acute states, even possessing the knowledge of the need for surrender, is *how? How do I surrender this one?*

My background includes recovery from drug addiction (I'm 41 1/2 years clean of all mind- and mood-altering substances), three near-death experiences (two of those out-of-body experiences), and two prolonged periods of being suicidal on a daily basis (one for two months, the other for four). All of these experiences happened before the age of 22. I am 66 years old, now.

In more recent years I have experienced recovery from a brain tumor, overcome chronic vertigo (attacks every ten days), and learned to just live with a constant, continual tinnitus in my left ear, with occasional tinnitus in my right. Tinnitus was cited as one of the conditions that drove a very famous

individual to suicide, recently, at age 62. There is no known cure for it, despite the daily e-mails I receive with miracle cures for it that only require shelling out way too much money for the latest version of snake oil. You learn to either live with it, or, as in the case cited above, not.

The thing is, with all of these experiences, a process led me through them to where I came out on the other side, a different person than I was before - usually a better person, more alive, more in tune with the flow of life, more in a position to be useful in helping my fellow human beings on this journey. They have grown my compassion and understanding of the human condition, of which I consider myself a lifelong student.

Recovering from conditions such as these, one also feels genuinely grateful for the ability to live life in a less acute state, and to experience the joy of living, free from that soul-sucking psychic pain. We relish in it!

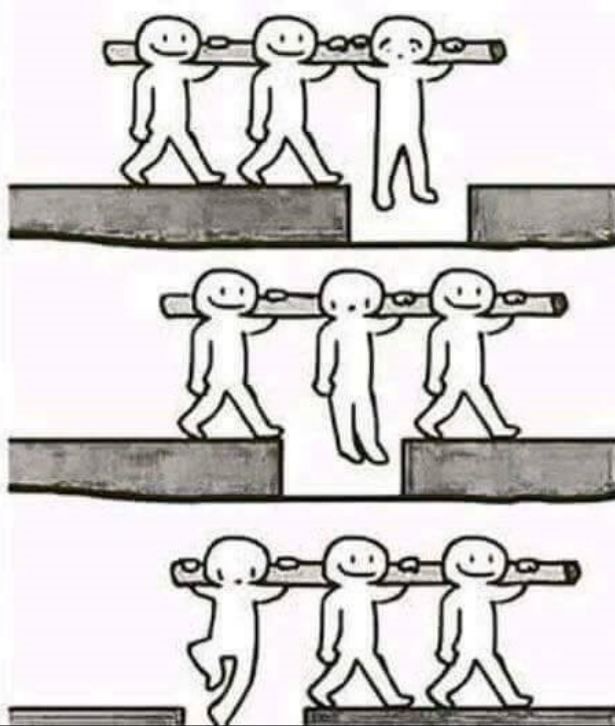
But let's go back to *surrender*. As the term implies, surrender requires an admission of complete defeat. This requires total honesty with oneself, being open-minded enough to consider such a thing, and a willingness to do whatever I need to do to surrender.

This may disappoint you, after this extensive build-up, but my current condition is....(I know, I'm bowing my head as I write this)---*Poison Ivy*. I've had it many times over the years, and especially since I've been living a 12-Step program, I usually haven't had bad reactions to it. I find the surrender pretty quickly, and realize that, the same as we say, "*Just don't pick up and go to a meeting*" to an addict trying to get clean, I would say, "*Just don't scratch that itch*", and "*think of others more, get more involved in whatever is going on in my life, and try to help others, where I can*" - all things that would take me out of myself, and away from thinking about my condition - poison ivy.

But we're self-quarantined in a pandemic, and I spend entirely too much time with myself these days. Even though I interact with many via the internet and a variety of on-line platforms, i.e. Zoom, Whatsapp, Marco Polo, Medium, Teams, Facebook, Messenger - I'm still pretty much here by myself, in my own little world, which I share with my soul-mate and life partner, Kathy. It's a lovely world, actually. Most of my time is spent interacting with the

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### If we unite nobody falls



*(Continued from page Two) History of Our Basic Text and it's Many Editions*

and placed in the chapters where they made the most sense. Then the committees got down to work.

Each chapter, page, paragraph and line were literally cut and pasted (with real scissors and paste), reviewed by several groups of addicts, read within each group, then finally read and either approved in the larger Group Conscience, or sent back to smaller groups to work on some more – a very iterative process!

The product of this effort, known as the Memphis Review Form (now more commonly referred to as “the Gray Book”), was then sent out to every known N.A. group in the world – about 605 at the time. While there were no addresses for any groups in New York City in 1980, copies of the Gray Book were provided to several known members from there, early in the following year. The Gray Book contained instructions and a request for each group to review the book, and to provide written input, edits and suggestions for changes. This is why the Gray Book had numbered lines, so that each reviewer could indicate the page and line number where changes and edits were suggested.

At the next three World Literature Conferences, held respectively in Santa Monica, California (WLC-4), Warren, Ohio (WLC-5), and Miami, Florida (WLC-6), all of the input received from all of the groups was taken through the aforementioned iterative cut and paste process, reviewed numerous times and decided on through Group Conscience. These three conferences all took place in 1981. By the end of that year, the Approval Form was ready to go out to the Fellowship for review and approval. Enough time was allowed for this so that all the groups could review and either approve or disapprove, then bring their Group Conscience votes to their Areas, then Regions, in time for their Regional Service Representatives to be able to bring their Group Conscience votes to the floor of the 1982 World Service Conference.

All that was left to complete were the personal stories for the First Edition. A Seventh World Literature Conference (WLC-7) was convened at a little farmhouse in Ivyland, Pa, in mid-January, 1982, in the middle of a significant blizzard, to review and select stories for the First Edition. At this conference, addicts who had submitted stories for the book were notified and requested to sign a release form for their stories. If any edits were needed to address the language of a story, they were asked to review and approve the edits to their stories. In an attempt to get stories from addicts from outside the continental United States, calls were made to addicts in Australia, Japan, London, and Hawaii. The addicts who lived in the house where this conference took place had a massive phone bill for that month, which they wound up having to pay themselves, as a donation, since the World Literature Committee had no funds to pay this expense.

A second Approval Form, for the Stories, was then sent out to the fellowship, along with a call for input on N.A. History.

These Approval Forms were reviewed by the Fellowship, at the Group level, and at the World Service Conference in 1982, the Fellowship voted on and approved our Basic Text for Narcotics Anonymous. “We have a book!” was declared!

Over 2,500 copies were pre-sold as Special First Editions for \$25 each to pay for the first printing. The prepaid copies had a red cover and were serial-numbered. The standard First Editions had a blue cover, but the contents were identical.

There were problems with the initial printer selected by the World Service Office to print these first editions, and that printer went bankrupt. N.A. lost approximately \$10,000 when this happened. Another printer was found, but when the galleys were sent to the WSO for approval, there was concern about the language in the 4th and 9th traditions. In the 4th Tradition, the language of concern was as follows: after the passage that said, Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women, addicts meeting in groups and using a given set of spiritual principles to find freedom from addiction and a new way to live”, the statement “All else is not N.A” caused some N.A. Board of Trustee members heartburn. They convened a quorum and decided to remove this statement.

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In the 9th Tradition, following the statement, "It says we may create service boards or committees to serve the needs of the Fellowship.", the next sentence was also a concern. "None of them has the power to rule, censor, decide, or dictate. They exist solely to serve the needs of the Fellowship, but they are not a part of Narcotics Anonymous." This handful (6) of Board Members also decided among themselves to remove this statement from Tradition 9.

When the book was presented to the Fellowship prior to the 1983 WSC – yes, it took a year to print that first edition – the chair of the World Literature Committee tore his first edition in half on the floor of the WSC and declared, "This is not what we sent you to print."

The fellowship was outraged and hence came the second edition which had the original approved language in the traditions, and some believe is the only correct edition.

In short order came the third edition which was approved without the ability of groups to review and approve up through the Areas and Regions, as the original Approval Forms had been approved. This brought the validity of the 3rd edition into question. A 3rd edition revised was then put out, restoring the language in the two traditions. This is the edition primarily used for what has come to be known as the "Baby Blues".

The Baby Blue used the Third edition revised because it had less AA language than the Approval Form. The Baby Blue, however, used the Fellowship-approved version of the traditions. Some have questioned why they used this 3rd Edition Revised, vs the 2nd Edition, for the Baby Blues. Apparently, they decided to use this version, as it had dropped some of the AA language found in the Approval Form and the 2nd Edition.

The Baby Blue also omitted the stories. The idea with the Baby Blue was to have a free copy of the book to hand out to newcomers. The name "Baby Blue" could be misleading, since paper cover on many Baby Blues is in a variety of different colors, not just blue.

The reason for the fourth edition was supposedly because it had been hard to translate prior editions into foreign languages. Specifically, there is no word in French for fix, as in "We are powerless over the first fix, pill or drink." Hence, the current wording "We are powerless over the first Drug." The fellowship thought these minor pragmatic changes made sense and approved them.

But the changes were not limited as promised, but numerous. Once again the fellowship was upset.

But there was a bigger problem. The third edition revised was not used for making the changes. A different draft of the book from a word processor was used to make the changes to. Thus, the resulting fourth edition was completely different from the third revised.

So, to correct this fourth edition of massive changes to an already significantly altered book, the fifth edition was created. The fifth edition was supposed to fix these aforementioned past problems. Because so many editions had happened recently, the WSC voted to allow no more editions for a specified period of time. This edition remained the official edition for many years before another edition came out.

One of the purposes of the sixth edition was stated as demonstrating broader inclusiveness, by including stories from addicts from all over the world. Some believe it was simply an attempt to bring in more revenue. It was noted that it also included stories that did not necessarily support the N.A. purpose of "total abstinence from all mind or mood-altering substances."

This is just part of the story of how the different editions of the Basic Text came to be. If you have any additional information, corrections or viewpoints, to add to this history of the editions of the Basic Text, we would love to hear from you.

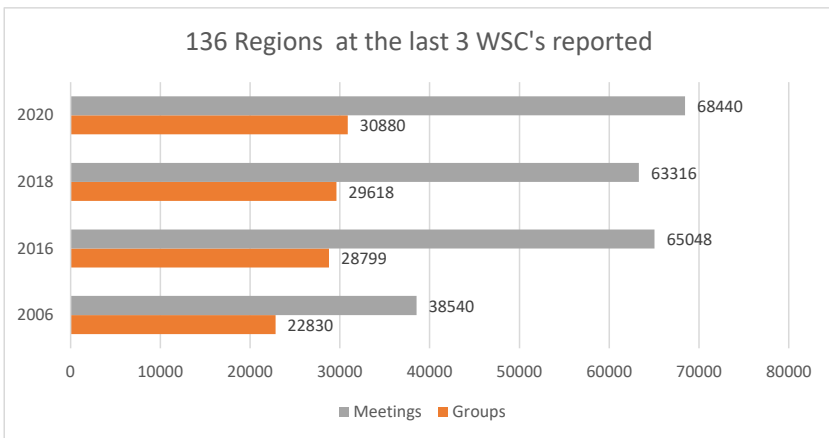
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(Continued from page Five) History of Our Basic Text and its Many Editions

The Basic Text was initially written by addicts, for addicts. It is our foundational literature that was most influenced by the open-participatory process of addicts working together, with no professional influence or editing, the purest form of which can still be found in the Gray Book (aka Memphis Review Form). It is important to have all of the facts on how it came to be written in the first place, and how it has changed and mutated through the various editions, and attempts to “improve” it.

The idea for this article, including significant input for it, came from John F. While our editorial staff, some of whom had first-hand knowledge of many of these events, provided significant input and edits to what John submitted, this article is untouched by professional hands. It has been written by addicts, for addicts.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve!



(Continued from page Three) Surrender Applies to Many Things in Life – Even Poison Ivy!

world from my great office in the basement, while she spends most of hers doing the same from her corner of the breezeway/family room in the addition of the house, upstairs. We interact with some very different worlds, along with some that connect with each other. We come together for meals. I fix her breakfast and dinner, and sometimes lunch or snacks. The highlight of each day, for me, is when I sit in the breezeway with her and chat for a while, or just share watching a show or two together in the evening. She is my only daily face-to-face interaction with anyone, largely for the past 17 months. We both are at high risk for the virus, and even though both have been vaccinated, this delta variant has driven us back inside, right as we'd begun tiptoeing outside of our own little paradise, here.

Kathy is a force of nature. She's one of the smartest people I know, and one of the greatest compliments she pays me when we talk about our initial attraction to each other is when she says, “You had a brain!” It was so obvious that she had a brain, my initial reaction to her was, she had a heart. An amazing heart, a sense of compassion and a capacity for love that I found quite breathtaking. I'd grown fairly jaded by the time I met her, so I really needed that. Plus, she was a great conversationalist, and the Irish side of me (74.8 % of my DNA make-up) loves conversations as much as I love anything in life.

She mentioned, when I first told her about my little patch of poison ivy inside my right elbow, “take oatmeal baths and get to a doctor if it spreads.” If only I'd listened to this wise counsel from my intelligent life partner, sooner. But I had other ideas. When the little patch inside my right elbow persisted with the itchies, getting worse each day, I found something called, “Poison Ivy/Poison Oak Extreme Scrub”. I found this on-line. It had great reviews. I went to Walgreens, all masked-up of course, found a tube of it, and began to apply it to my little patch. The idea was that it would draw out the poisons and nasty liquids in the poison ivy/oak to relieve you of the itchies. I needed relief!

Within two days, I noticed, while it helped some with the intensity of itchies inside my elbow, all that scrubbing had spread the poison ivy, first down around the wrist area of that arm, then up towards my shoulder, then around to the outside of the elbow. This was not good! I was in trouble.

When I mentioned this to Kathy, she just shook her head and said, “Stay away from me.” That's when I mentioned that I'd noticed a few bumpy rashes on her back when I was applying some lotion (with a roller, that didn't require me to touch her skin) the night before. That's when I got the look that did not encompass her afore-mentioned tremendous capacity for love. “You could have told me before I scrubbed my back with a loufa!” This was **really** not good!

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*(Continued from page Six) Surrender Applies to Many Things in Life – Even Poison Ivy!*

Now, even more isolated, the poison ivy traveled from my skin to my head – still traveling quite well on my skin, but it was seriously messing with my mind. I finally began taking the oatmeal baths, morning and night, and got the spray-on calamine lotion, which began to turn me a lighter shade of orange. The itches were intense all over, and I lost the battle in my resolve to “Just don’t scratch”. I’d wa Surrender Applies to Many Things in Life – Even Poison Ivy!

ke up scratching and have trouble getting back to sleep. I stocked up on the calamine spray. By Friday, both arms were so ripped up, dried out, orange and raw from all the attention they’d been getting, I began to fear for my sanity. None of this attention was making the itches go away. My work was suffering. I was having trouble concentrating. I had visions of skin-eating viruses I’d heard of – maybe this is that? Maybe this is killing me!

I remembered, in the midst of it all, that I do have a program I could try working on this condition. I finally admitted that none of my best methods had worked to stem the toxic invasion of my body that had begun with a simple taking down of some ivy creeping up an oak tree in my back yard (without gloves). Kathy would say, “We have a yard guy for that”. We do, but I’m a hands-on kind of guy who occasionally still likes to do it myself. Anyway, having run out of all other available options, I went to Urgent Care today. Actually, I made the decision to go last night – and from that point on, I felt relief. I got the best night’s sleep I’ve had in weeks, I got up, made breakfast, took care of the dog, and headed out to get my poison ivy properly treated by professionals.

I let it go – stopped trying to do it myself. I trusted my Higher Power to work through the good doctor and nurses there, and it was actually a beautiful experience. I think I finally found our new primary care physician in this area, two years after moving here from 55 miles north. We’ve been going all the way up there whenever we needed in-person treatment – mostly, we met with them on line, like we’ve done everything else in the pandemic. But we’re addicts – we don’t do change especially well. But, now I have a good experience with a doctor down this way!

I still have the poison ivy, but it no longer has me. I finally surrendered. The doctor and nurses knew just what to do, as I knew they would, once I’d turned all of that over to the God of my understanding, and tonight, I have peace of mind, I feel restored to sanity, and the itches have subsided (for the most part).

Thank God!

# ARNA

## **Autonomous Region of Narcotics Anonymous Literature Workshop**

Saturday • September 18th • 11:00am PST

12pm MST | 1pm CST | 2pm EST | 6pm UTC | 7pm BST

The Grateful Wakeup Group - Norfolk, NE, USA

More Will Be Revealed Group - Amsterdam, Netherlands

Open Your Heart Group - Nam Jai, Thailand

Life on Life's Terms Group - Kelso, WA, USA

We will have 4 presentations from home groups on their use of literature

Learn more at <https://arna.world>

ZOOM ID:

PHONE CODE:

**863 867 1859**

**ARNAARNA**

Audio Available on our website!  
www.arna.world