

November 26, 1991

Narcotics Anonymous  
World Service Office  
16155 Wyandotte Street  
Van Nuys, California 91406

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am an addictions counselor working at a methadone maintenance clinic in Northwest Indiana. I am also a recovering addict with 8 years of continuous clean time thanks to the fellowship of NA and a Higher Power.

It appears that there is a difference of opinion in the Northwest Indiana geographical area concerning a person's right to be considered "clean" and to speak openly in meetings. Some of these questions are as follows:

1. Are NA members on methadone maintenance considered "clean" or are they still considered to be "using"?
2. Do they, as members, have the honor of receiving key tags?
3. Can they speak openly at meetings or do they keep silent and speak to someone after the meetings?

This dilemma is causing some descention among our members and seems to be the underlying focus of many meetings. Some members who are on methadone maintenance and attend these meetings voluntarily receive great pressure and rejection from other members.

I am sure that I'm not the first concerned member of NA who is confused about this and writing to you. Members here in Northwest Indiana as well as around the world would appreciate the NA policy as it pertains to methadone recovery to be published in the sixth edition of our NA Big Book. For your perusal, I am enclosing the published experience of another recovering

addict who has found the above situation to be prevalent.

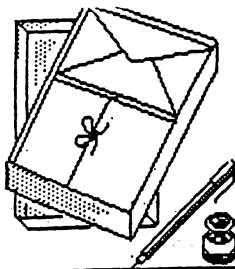
I will be eagerly awaiting your response. I consider this a "life and death" situation to my clients as well as other clients in methadone maintenance.

In loving service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kimberly Gamez". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

KIMBERLY GAMEZ  
15 Waltham Street  
Hammond, Indiana 46320

KG/wt



# SOUTH CITY AREA NEWS SHEET (Keeping In Touch)

October Issue

## "OBSERVATIONS OF A CONTROVERSIAL ADDICT"

### AS I SEE IT

It seems to me that the cliché "To Go To Any Lengths", has been grossly misused. The Basic Text tells us, as members trying to recover, we go to any lengths.

My understanding of this phrase means to adopt positive attitudes and with the help of a Higher Power, change our old ways and work the steps. But, as of lately, I see addicts going to any lengths to achieve popularity as a way to keep their name up front.

On the issue of the Lord's Prayer, it's not a matter of right or wrong to me. I'm willing to abide by group conscience. However, in the world of journalism there is a thing called irresponsible journalism. Tradition Two says that "Self-Seekers find they are on the outside causing dissension and eventually disaster for themselves." Many of them change; they learn we can only be governed by a loving God. Direction and manipulation fail!

I question the true motive and I look at the source from which it all started. We MUST remember that our personal recovery depends on N.A. UNITY!!! James D.

### RELAPSE

This summer has been one that this addict will always remember. Many who were here when I came into this fellowship have fallen prey to this disease again, and returned to active addiction.

Things are not always as they seem, even with ourselves. Sometimes we get settled into a routine in our program; we are beyond the early struggles with being clean and have encountered many of the benefits of recovery. We attend our meetings and we know the words and ideas of the program and can quote them all as if we wrote them ourselves.

Although it all looks good on the outside, when we are honest with ourselves we know our spirits have gone flat. This is a serious situation and needs our immediate attention, or we risk our whole program and may use again. When the inside feeling does not match our outside appearance, we need to become vulnerable again; we need to talk about how we really feel. Perhaps we have been seduced by the power of looking good and sounding good, because we have been around for a few 24 hours and have traded away the "genuineness" of being known by our friends through our feelings.

To hear of one of our members with multiple years "relapsing" is very sad, but it also reinforces what the Basic Text speaks on in "How It Works". "That 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."

They seem to get 4, 5, 10 years clean and become different from the newcomer and stop talking about how they hurt, how they are disturbed, how they feel in general, and no longer allow themselves to be vulnerable and let others know them as they really are. They stop doing the things they had to do to get

those years clean, such as, chairing a meeting, making coffee, or doing service work. Just look at any of the service work committees rosters, and you will find a majority of its members have only the minimum requirement of clean time to serve. Where are all the old timers? Have they all gotten well? Have they forgotten that N.A. did for them what they could not do for themselves?

N.A. still needs those members to share their experiences, strengths and hope, so that others need not have to suffer through the same experiences. --Tyfene M.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Third Tradition - "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." Are we judging the level of "desire" of members when they attend our meetings? Do we screen and then pronounce a sentence resulting in possible feelings of rejection towards members who are currently on prescribed medication from a physician?

Examples of medical problems/conditions which are treated medically with medication: Methadone - medical maintenance treatment for addicts with a medical problem (withdrawal from heroine and other opiates, etc.)

Personality or other mental disorders that may cause addicts to be diagnosed as dual-diagnosis (substance abuse in conjunction with mental illness, cancer, and phenobarbital to control seizures). These addicts are considered (by some) to be "unclean" because of their daily usage of prescribed medication to relieve pain. This is the BIGGIE QUESTION: Have I relapsed because I was anesthetized while undergoing major surgery or suffering from an illness?

Who says when one is a member or not. The Third Tradition states "the decision to become a part of our fellowship rests with the individual. Any addict who has a desire to stop using can become a member of N.A." Our primary purpose is to help each other stay clean. This suggests to me to try not to instill feelings of rejection towards a member who is taking medication but to help that member stay clean.

N.A. was founded in 1953. Methadone was approved in 1972 by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of heroin addiction. There is no where in the White Book where Methadone members were excluded from membership in N.A. Are we returning Methadone members to active addiction when we exclude them as members?

Reflecting upon my life. I remember my early struggles to get this program and to become a part of the fellowship of N.A. Being a Methadone addict, I was not clean because I shot dope and took anything else in order to not feel. But I had a desire to stop using and kept coming back. I did not "feel" a part of the fellowship but thanks to my Higher Power and a loving-patient sponsor; I found the program of Narcotics Anonymous. Through the 12 Steps I began to feel a part of the fellowship. Today I see members who are mirrors of my "early days" with one major exception: They are abstaining from illegal drugs.

Where do we suggest members who used Methadone go for support, fellowship or hope?

Frankly, I and other members don't mind sharing recovery with them. In fact, I welcome and have the utmost respect for those members when they come into these rooms, reach out, and share their pain and hopes for a better life. Who knows, their desire to be clean may rub off. Their desire connected to ours could only strengthen us in our journey in recovery. May God continue to be with us as we recover utilizing the 12 Steps and Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. **Donna M.**

Recently the committee that develops this monthly newsletter made the mistake of keeping a member's clean day out of the newsletter. This mistake has caused many addicts to have various opinions about what the responsibility of this committee is. Members have made all kinds of accusations about the authorization this committee has to make these kinds of decisions.

One thing I personally have observed in my short time in this way of life, is how insensitive and callous we addicts are to those of us who make mistakes in recovery. We have all the compassion in the world for the addict who still suffers while having very little tolerance for those of us who have found recovery. Perfection is not rampart in this area or this fellowship. We're people who have and will continue to make mistakes. The only difference is we do not have to make the same mistake expecting different results.

Being a member of this committee, I have a real problem with all the addicts who have given eloquent comments in meetings and on the area floor reprimanding this committee on the mistake we made. To me, it is not so much the mistake that counts as it is who made the mistake. We have challenged the membership to participate in the newsletter, to give us your input. But these addicts who are making all this fuss about another member's clean day will not take on the responsibility of joining any committee.

Furthermore, to write any article is a chance for the whole area to view one's ability to express ideas in a constructive way. The members of this committee have taken on the responsibility for the development of this newsletter. Members from this area felt the need for a forum in which addicts could share their personal experiences. The newsletter committee along with other addicts who painstakingly submitted articles made this newsletter a reality. This newsletter is guided by loving God and Group Conscience.

The member who's name was not in the newsletter for his clean day has expressed to me that he did not care if his name was in the paper or not. To those who want to take on that members concern, let me remind you to keep the focus on yourself. Know the facts before you comment in meetings about what is going on with the newsletter, and in the spirit of keeping it simple, come to the meeting or share your thoughts with an article. I read somewhere that, "He who is greatest amongst us shall be a servant and everybody can be great because everybody can serve." Mahon

#### WHAT IS N.A.

N.A. is the way. N.A. is the word to say.  
N.A. is the gift, dispelling all myths.

N.A. spells relief, quietly easing all your griefs.  
N.A. is love, coming from above.  
**Charlotte C.**

#### ONE ADDICT'S OPINION

Recent events have caused me to question how we interpret the traditions of N.A. "Spiritual Principles are never in conflict", best describes how this recent controversy should be viewed. A decision was made last month (9/91) regarding the printing of someone's clean time. The decision made was unpopular and in some circles of the fellowship, considered an outrage.

The question was asked what kind of precedent was bent set by refusing to print an addict's clean time. It was argued that the only factor to be considered was that the member had the required clean time. Other reasons were irrelevant. The analogy was that during a meeting, key tags requested by members ought never be questioned. In other words, no member had the right to question someone's clean time; pure and simple, case closed.

How right and correct this sounds. However, one can accept this belief only by limiting the debate to the question of clean time. The concept that spiritual principles are never in conflict opens a whole different area of inquiry. This particular issue is much too sensitive to be debated, purely in terms of clean time. A much bigger issue is at stake and that issue is spiritual principles. Yes, the question should be what precedent are we setting. Do we hide behind the issue of clean time using the 2nd and 3rd and 10th tradition to support our views, or do we boldly take the unpopular stand that the 5th tradition and the 11th step and the 12th step require us to make. This space will not allow me to fully restate the tradition and members must go to the basic text themselves to search for the understanding of these steps and traditions. I really do not wish to go into too much detail about this issue, but suffice to say that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. We strive to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him and practice these principles in all our affairs.

Do not be confused by the claim of "vicious rumors" to defend behavior contrary to the spiritual principles. It is one thing to claim clean time in a meeting, but altogether different when this claim is in writing. The written word is too powerful a vehicle to justify addict behavior that we know is contrary to the principles of N.A.

In the final analysis, I believe that I personally must follow my own conscious and resign. I don't believe this committee made a mistake in this matter. If the decision had to be made again, I would vote the same way. I am under no illusions about the reaction my decision causes. I understand that N.A. unity comes first and I need N.A. for my personal recovery. I must follow my own conscious and get out of the way.  
**Muhammad Abdullah**

#### CLEAN TIME COUNTDOWN - SEPT., 1991

We extend a special apology to Michael L. who celebrated 2 years clean, Anthony B. who celebrated 5 years clean, and Junious M. who celebrated 6 years clean in September, 1991.

#### CLEAN TIME COUNTDOWN - OCT., 1991

October 10 Paulette W. (1 year)  
October 13 Al G. (4 years)  
October 15 Bernie H. (2 years)  
October 21 Pam L. (1 year)  
October 25 Burney (6 Years)  
Carol M. (1 year)  
October 26 Kathryn T. (1 year)

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DRAFT RESPONSE

December 4, 1991

Kimberly Gamez  
15 Waltham Street  
Hammond, IN 46320

Dear Kimberly,

Thank you for taking the time to write the World Service Office with your concerns. We receive many letters regarding the use of medication in recovery, specifically methadone. As you have experienced, the use of medication in recovery is a very sensitive issue for us, and everyone has an opinion.

It is our experience that complete abstinence is the desired goal of every addict seeking recovery through Narcotics Anonymous. Our steps and traditions are the best resource we have to guide us on these matters. Understanding, tolerance, and compassion will serve us best in these situations, so that no addict is driven away from NA rooms by harassment, persecution, or being judged. The use of these spiritual principles is necessary in all situations, as is stated in our Twelfth Step: "we tried to practice these principles in all our affairs." Our lives depend on it.

As stated in our Fifth Tradition, our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. It seems to be generally accepted within the Fellowship that the message of recovery is best carried after we get clean from all mood or mind altering drugs. Therefore, it is advisable for anyone who is still using to participate by listening, and then talk with members after the meeting.

We advocate insuring that the addict who still suffers receives a clear message of recovery. We do not advocate rudeness, insensitivity, or a lack of compassion. If addicts who are still using share in a meeting, it is not productive to stand up, point, and yell at them to stop. Many times, an addict will state that they have used that day and don't want to use any more, so they have come to a meeting. Common sense and sensitivity would dictate that this person does not need to be told not to share.

On the other hand, if an addict identifies as being clean and then discusses how methadone is helping him/her stay off other drugs, we would hope that the meeting leader or secretary would gently interrupt, and remind this person that this is a program of complete abstinence. Asking such an individual to listen and offering to talk about it after the meeting can be most helpful to everyone involved. The meeting leader can then move on to another member who does have a clear message of recovery through Narcotics Anonymous.

Our experience has shown that an NA meeting cannot become a forum for using addicts who want to justify their using, and still fulfill its primary purpose. We believe that this position reinforces our recovery, protects our meetings, and supports addicts in striving for total abstinence.

The Board of Trustees endorses the efforts of groups who have utilized our traditions, especially Tradition Four (*"Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups, or NA as a whole"*) to guide them in reaching the following guidelines:

- A. Politely asking that those who have used not share during the meeting.
- B. Conveying, in attitude and action, a genuine welcome to addicts - using or recovering.
- C. Asking that the meeting leader, chairperson or speaker be an individual who is not using.
- D. Upholding the suggestions in the Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure of NA with respect to suggested clean time requirements for service positions.

As members and as a fellowship, we can never be drawn into situation in which we give advice or opinions on medication or illness. In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, it is not in the best interest of Narcotics Anonymous to venture an opinion regarding the practice of medicine. However, some of our members have assumed this responsibility by freely dispensing medical advice, sometimes at the expense of the welfare of others.

Recovery demands that the responsibility for a decision in these areas rests on the shoulders of the individual addict involved. The determination of medical need, and the underlying motivation for taking medication, including methadone, can and should be resolved by individuals using the Twelve Steps, an NA sponsor, and a Higher Power, as well as informed, competent medical consultation. No addict can shoulder the entire responsibility for these decision alone. However, each addict is obligated to participate in his or her own decision.

We are hopeful that this letter will assist in answering your concerns. If you have further questions or need help in any other way, please feel free to call on us.

Yours in Service,

Jack Bernstein, Chairperson  
Board of Trustees

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WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, INC.  
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
(818) 780-3951

December 5, 1991

Neal Griffin  
5113 Harbor Rd.  
Suffolk, VA 23435

Dear Neal,

We apologize for the delay in responding to your letter which was received on November 5, 1991. Due to an overload of work, we have been unable to respond until now. We hope this delay has not contributed to any problems or been an inconvenience to you.

The World Service Office does not have the answers to the questions which you raised. However, the questions you asked, and other similar ones, are one of the factors which have given rise to the traditions portion of *It Works: How and Why*. This project has been under development by the World Service Board of Trustees for over two years. The first six traditions are out for review and input by the fellowship. We have enclosed a copy of this review packet for your information, along with review and input forms. Hopefully, the descriptive essays on the traditions will help you with the upcoming workshop.

We would also suggest that you contact your regional service representative for assistance with this workshop. He can also help you in contacting both present and past trustees to ask for their perspective on your questions. In addition, we are forwarding a copy of your letter and our response to the members of the World Service Board of Trustees.

Good luck with the workshop! Thank you for contacting us with your questions. Please let us know how the workshop goes. Feel free to contact the WSO in the future with any further questions or concerns.

In fellowship,

Hollie Arnold, WSO Staff

Enc: Review and Input package for Traditions 1-6  
RSR contact information

NOV 2 1991

11/25/91

Dear friend,

I have been asked to chair a meeting on the Traditions at the Virginia NA Convention (10th. AVCNA) during the weekend of 1/3/91-1/5/91. I am writing this letter to request some information on this subject. If you could answer some of the following questions I would greatly appreciate it, and any other information that you think might be helpful would, also, be appreciated.

1. When were the Traditions adopted? Were they just adapted from the AA Traditions, or did we have our own painful growth experiences that brought about the formulation of these principles?
2. In regards to the 7th Tradition, are we being self-supporting or are we falling short-- at the group level, area level, and WSC level? If we are falling short, where do the funds come from to make up the difference?
3. In regards to the 4th Tradition, it seems that groups being ~~required~~ required to submit a Treasurer's Report to Area is a violation of this tradition; could you shed some light on this matter?
4. Do you know of any incidents or anecdotes from the past where these principles have had to be enforced in order to protect our fellowship?

I would like to thank you for any assistance you can give me in this inquiry, and, also, extend an invitation to come join us in Virginia Beach in January.

Your friend in recovery,

*Neal Griffin*  
NEAL GRIFFIN

5113 Harbor Rd  
Suffolk, Va 23435

\* Having to submit a report to Area seems to conflict with the idea of the autonomy of the group

SEACOAST AREA LITERATURE SUBCOMMITTEE  
C/O JEFFREY SHAFFER  
46 RIVER RD.  
STRATHAM, NH, 03885

11/2/91

TO WSCLC,

①

HELLO FAMILY. AT OUR MID-MONTH MEETING TODAY WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THE ISSUE OF WHAT WE FEEL IS AN INCONSISTENCY IN OUR WRITTEN MESSAGE, PARTICULARLY IN "THE GROUP BOOKLET" AND I.P. NO. 5 "ANOTHER LOOK".

WHAT WE CONSIDER INCONSISTENCY IS THE USE OF LANGUAGE SUCH AS "DRUG ADDICT" AND "DRUG ADDICTION" AS OPPOSED TO OUR FIRST STEP "... ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER OUR ADDICTION..." AND ALSO IN "ANOTHER LOOK", PARAGRAPH ONE "... THEN PERHAPS ANOTHER VIEWPOINT OUGHT TO BE EXAMINED IN THE HOPE THAT WE CAN DISCOVER A WAY MORE BASIC TO ALL ADDICTIONS AND MORE VALID IN ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL OF US."

WE FEEL THAT TERMS SUCH AS DRUG ADDICTION CREATES DISTINCTIONS AND CAN POSSIBLY LIMIT A PERSONS RECOVERY. FOR EXAMPLE, I (JEFFREY) GOT CLEAN AND CONSIDERED MYSELF A DRUG ADDICT/ALCOHOLIC. I THOUGHT THAT ALL I NEEDED TO DO IN ORDER TO RECOVER WAS TO STAY CLEAN. IN THE MEANWHILE I WAS ACTING OUT SEXUALLY, OVER-EATING, AND OBSESSING ON ROLE-PLAYING GAMES TO NAME A FEW. IT WASN'T UNTIL I FOUND N.A. AND DISCOVERED THAT I WAS AN ADDICT, THAT I HAD ONE DISEASE, ONE ADDICTION WITH MANY SYMPTOMS, THAT I WAS ABLE TO DEAL WITH OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS DISEASE IN MY LIFE. OTHERWISE, I WOULD STILL BE PROGRESSING DOWNWARD UNDER THE ILLUSE THAT "I'M CLEAN AND SOBER."

IN MOST OF OUR LITERATURE OUR MESSAGE IS EXPRESSED IN TERMS THAT WE ARE ADDICTS, WE SUFFER FROM A COMMON DISEASE CALLED ADDICTION, AND THAT DRUG USE IS BUT ONE SYMPTOM OF THAT DISEASE. THIS IS AN OPEN-MINDED PHILOSOPHY WHICH LEADS MANY MEMBERS TO DEAL WITH OTHER SYMPTOMS BESIDES DRUGS.

②

BUT NOW WE STUMBLE ACROSS LITERATURE THAT EXPLAINS THAT WE ARE DRUG ADDICTS WHO ARE RECOVERING FROM DRUG ADDICTION. WHEN WE LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, WE FEEL IT IS LESS LIKELY THAT MEMBERS WILL DEAL WITH OTHER ISSUES IN THEIR LIVES. IF THEY DO, IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY WILL GO TO SEVERAL FELLOWSHIPS FOR ALL THE "DIFFERENT ADDICTIONS" THAT THEY HAVE. THUS FOCUSING ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND OTHER MEMBERS AND BRINGING IN THE MESSAGES OF OTHER FELLOWSHIPS RATHER THAN USING OUR PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH ALL THESE ISSUES IN ONE SIMPLE FORMAT.

IN OUR OPINION, WE AS A FELLOWSHIP NEED A CONSISTENT WRITTEN MESSAGE. INDIVIDUAL ADDICTS CAN MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES AS TO HOW THEY WANT TO RECOVER, BUT N.A. NEEDS A STABLE, CONSISTENT MESSAGE THAT DOES NOT SAY ONE THING ONE PLACE AND ~~ANOTHER~~ THEN CONTRADICT <sup>ITSELF IN</sup> ~~THAT ONE THING IN~~ ANOTHER.

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE "THE GROUP BOOKLET" AND "ANOTHER LOOK" GO UNDER A REVIEW PROCESS HOPEFULLY TO BE COMPLETED BY THE 1993 WSC. WE WOULD LIKE YOUR INPUT ON THESE ISSUES INCLUDING ARCHAIC ESSAYS FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS AND N.A. WAY MAGAZINES ALONG WITH A LETTER FROM THE WSCLC DIRECTLY PERTAINING TO THIS LETTER.

③

ALSO, PLEASE EXPLAIN PARAGRAPH 2 OF PAGE XV, FIFTH EDITION, OF OUR BASIC TEXT. WE ASSUME THAT A DISTINCTION IS MADE TO RESPECT OUR TRADITIONS ALONG WITH A.A.'S. UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS BEING USED, FOCUSED ON, TO CLAIM THAT THE N.A. FELLOWSHIP AS A WHOLE MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ALCOHOL AND DRUGS — ALCOHOLIC VS. DRUG ADDICT. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THE INTRODUCTION BE READ IN ITS ENTIRETY

ALONG WITH PREVIOUS PAGES OF OUR SYMBOL, THE PREFACE AND THE REST OF THE TEXT. WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR INFORMATION SO THAT WE MAY NAIL PEOPLE WITH IT, BUT JUST SOME CLARIFICATION/INSIGHT SO THAT WE MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND THIS OURSELVES. WE ALREADY HAVE "THOUGHTS ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH A.A."

MAY WE SUGGEST THAT CLARITY OF WHY WE TRY <sup>NOT</sup> TO USE SUCH TERMS AS "ALCOHOL AND/OR OTHER DRUGS" BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR RESPONSE TO US.

THERE HAS ALSO BEEN CONCERN OVER THE LINE IN "HOW IT WORKS" (ITALICIZED) "THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP FROM RETURNING TO ACTIVE ADDICTION IS NOT TO TAKE THAT FIRST DRUG." THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORDS "ACTIVE" AND "DRUG"! THIS IS BEING USED TO DENY THE PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE AS WELL AS OLD BEHAVIOR WHILE ABSTINENT. AGAIN, PLEASE OFFER US SOME CLARITY. IF YOU FEEL THIS IS A PERSONAL/GROUP/AREA/REGIONAL RECOVERY ISSUE PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INFORM US OF THIS. WE ARE, BECAUSE OF THINGS LIKE THIS, TRYING TO PUT TOGETHER SOME LOCAL RESPONSE. WE ARE NOT REWRITING N.A. LITERATURE!

(4)

WE AS AN AREA LITERATURE SUBCOMMITTEE DID NOT RECIEVE  
BATCH 3 OF THE DAILY MEDITATIONS. WE REALIZE THAT IT IS A  
REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE DISTRIBUTED BUT  
EVEN SO WE RECIEVED BATCHES 1 AND 2 TOO LATE TO COMPLETE  
THEM. WE ASK THAT YOU SEND ALL LITERATURE-IN-PROCESS  
DIRECTLY TO OUR AREA. IF NEEDED, YOU MAY BILL US FOR ANY  
ADDED CHARGES. JEFFREY SHAFFER

46 RIVER RD.

STRATHAM, NH, 03885

WITH GRATITUDE,

THE SEACOAST AREA LIT. SUBCOMM.

OCT 17 1991

October 15, 1991

World Service Office, Inc.  
ATTN: Board of Trustees  
P.O. Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Dear Fellow Addicts:

In September, 1991, a proposed "alternative service can" was passed in the Peninsula Area of Northern California. The purpose of the can is to raise additional funds for sub-committees that are non-fundraising.

This "alternative service can" would be passed during meetings in addition to the Seventh Tradition. The money that would be raised would be deposited in a separate general area fund. It would then be distributed between these non-fundraising sub-committees (i.e. Hospitals & Institutions and Public Information).

In July, 1991, our area formed an adhoc committee to study the impact of such an "alternative service can" in our area. The committees' findings were inconclusive; however, the can was passed in spite of these findings.

As a concerned member of Narcotics Anonymous, my intention in writing this letter is to ascertain the impact, if any, of such a can on Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

I would greatly appreciate it if your committee could share with me any personal experience of alternative funding for non-fundraising sub-committees.

Respectively Yours,

  
Clark Latterell  
446 Wilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

## **DRAFT RESPONSE**

December 10, 1991

Clark Latterell  
448 Wilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94308

Dear Clark,

Thank you for your letter of October 15, 1991. We apologize for the delay in responding, but it was unavoidable. We hope this has not created any further problems.

As you indicated in your letter, you are aware that "cans" have been used in the past, mostly in relation to funding H&I services. These cans were in widespread use prior to the 1986 World Service Conference. At this WSC questions were raised by various regions regarding the necessity, accountability and appropriateness of funding services in this manner. As a result of these questions, the WSC H&I Committee decided to investigate the appropriateness of the H&I can and other existing H&I funding practices such as fundraising dances. The WSC H&I Committee solicited input regarding this issue from the fellowship immediately following the conference. During the Minneapolis workshop in July 1986 the committee unanimously resolved to present a motion for conference decision at WSC 1987 which would eliminate the use of the H&I can and return the responsibility of H&I funding to the service structure. WSC '87 overwhelmingly approved the motion to eliminate separate funding practices for H&I, thus returning the responsibility of funding H&I endeavors back to the service structure.

At the WSC last year a motion was referred to the World Service Board of Trustees for consideration and recommendation at the 1992 conference. This motion stated "That the WSC create a translations fund which only groups and individuals can make direct donations to.

1. The fund to be administered by the WSO.
2. Priorities for translations to be determined by the translations committee."

This motion has been discussed both in the WSB Internal Affairs committee and in the full board of trustees. As a result of these discussions, a



recommendation will be made that this motion not be approved by the conference participants. This is due to several factors such as the difficulty inherent in "earmarking" funds for a specific project, removing authority from the service body responsible for setting priorities by determining that one area of service is more important or needy than another, and problems with coordinating the allocation of service resources at each level of service. Additionally, you stated the funds raised by the "alternative service can" would be distributed between non-fundraising subcommittees, such as H&I and PI. In accordance with Tradition Nine, service boards and committees are formed to provide services for the groups. Funding for committees is then provided by the groups through contributions from Seventh Tradition donations. Since subcommittees are not in the business of fundraising, it is not advisable to form committees that the area or regional committee can't support financially. Through a full discussion of priorities, balanced by the funds available, the necessary funding is then allocated to subcommittees.

We are not sure what impact the alternative service can might have on NA as a whole. We are aware that many phone calls and letters have been received by the WSO regarding the lack of funds for subcommittee needs. Some areas and regions have been discussing the possibility of returning to the use of H&I cans to help overcome the lack of funding. We believe if members, groups and service committees feel there needs to be a change in funding NA services, they should utilize the service structure in the same manner as was used to remove the H&I can.

Members, groups and service committees use the Twelve Traditions of NA to guide them in their discussions and decision making process to guide them in arriving at an informed group conscience. While utilizing the Twelve Traditions, we need to keep in mind that the traditions compliment one another with the First Tradition reminding us that "Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on NA unity."

We hope this information offers some insight into the current funding practices of the fellowships and assists your area in future discussions on this issue. In closing, we wish you the best in your personal recovery and in your efforts to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Please feel free to contact us again if we can be of any further assistance.

In service,

Becky Meyer, Chairperson  
World Service Board of Trustees