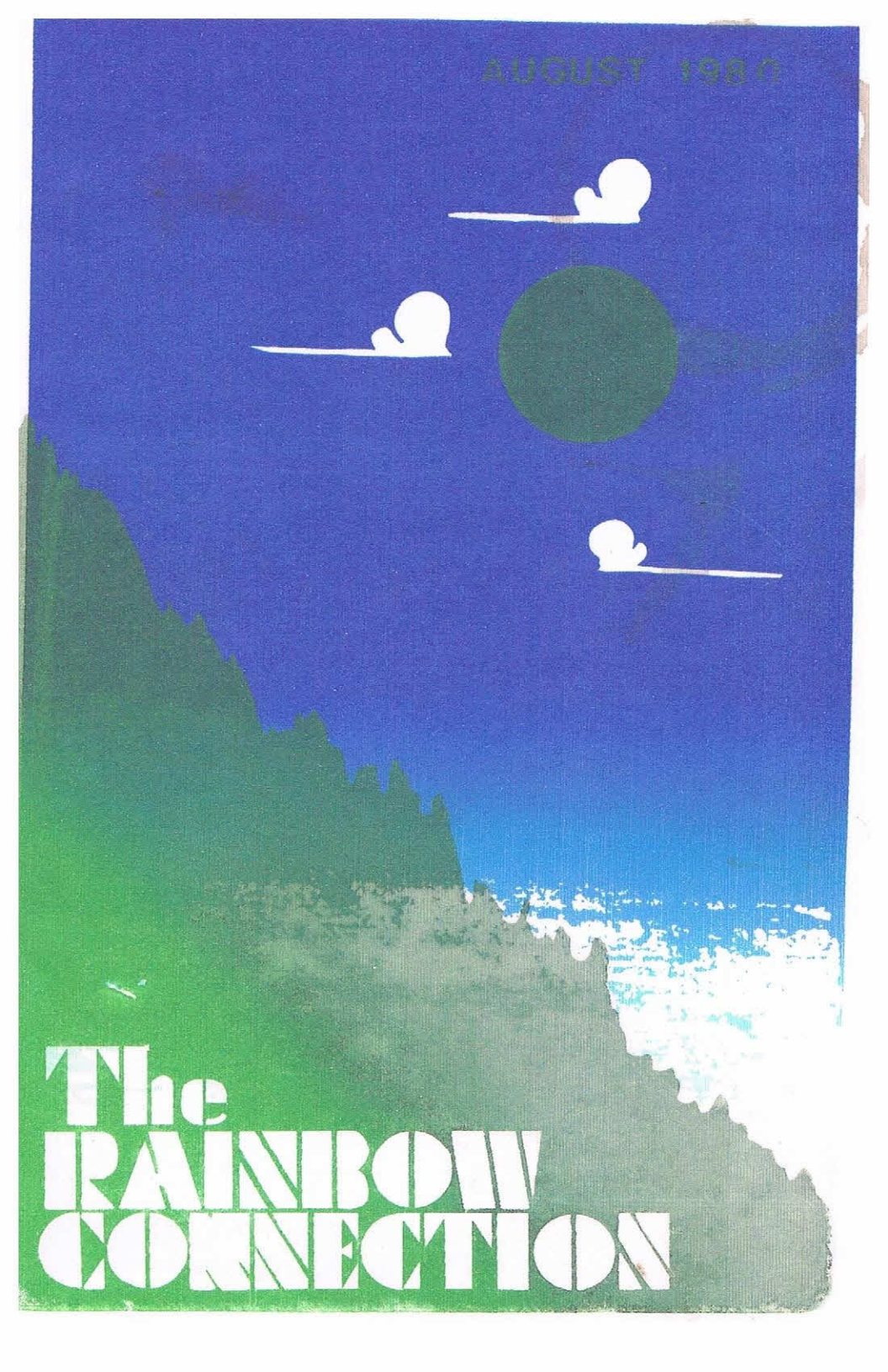


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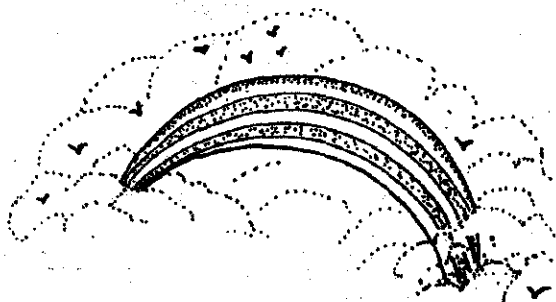
The RAINBOW CONNECTION

HOW IT WORKS

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovery possible.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once, we didn't become addicted in one day, so remember — EASY DOES IT.

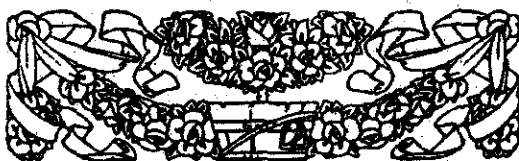


The Rainbow Connection

Metro Atlanta NA

" ... caring and sharing the NA way ... "

Volume 2, Number 8 - August 1980



**Individual opinions expressed do not necessarily
express those of NA as a whole.**

**We welcome your story, article or perspective
relating to NA recovery. Send to:**

**The Rainbow Connection
890 Atlanta Road
Marietta, GA 30060**

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of Narcotics Anonymous**



TOTAL ABSTINENCE

We addicts have a very real disease. It is the disease of addiction, and it is a disease. Medical experts are still examining and determining the cause and the symptoms, we already know only too well the end results of this cunning killer. And of course a blessed few have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous and hence recovery.

I have found from my personal experience that this disease concept is easier heard than accepted. When I first heard "You are not responsible for your disease, but you are responsible for your recovery," I jumped right on it. I did so because I could use this to defend my past actions, calmly explaining to people who I had used and abused in the past, "But you see I have a disease, the disease of addiction."

It is this same concept that has, thank God, shot down many would be relapses for me. It is hard for me to fathom that a few milligrams of valium would hurt a healthy young man like myself, since valium never was one of my favorites. It is also very easy to rationalize a six-pack of Bud when water, iced-tea and soft drinks have succeeded in doing nothing but make me bloated. But it's hard to con a con and I know my using pattern better than anybody. I know that a few pills will only make me crave more whether I want them or not, and it is absolutely impossible for me to drink one six-pack of beer.

And just for the sake of conversation, let's presume that I was able, for example, to smoke pot and nothing else or take valium or librium without taking any other drugs at all. I would be doing good by some peoples standards because I would not be using narcotics or I would not be drinking a quart and a case, chasing barbs. All I would want to be is just another pot-head, or valium addict, or whatever addict. And what is the difference between a herion addict and a pot-head, or a down freak, or a valium or librium addict? When it comes down to it aren't they all dependent on a drug of one form or another. What is the difference between shooting dope and sucking booze out of a bottle? Society accepts drinking so does that mean that we should drink? Or what we can drink? I never did really care about society in the least and still don't, so why should I care what they believe about drinking? Unless that cagey disease of mine is looking for a way to get me loaded. Then that monkey will tell me that is OK to drink just a six-pack, or take just a few pills, or just a social shot of herion.

It says in our literature that "This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs," and I have found that this works for me. I'm glad that I don't run in that rat race of getting stoned all day, every day. I'm grateful that I wake up each morning feeling good, and am not in some semi-comatose state of withdrawal.

I heard someone say once that "A wise man learns from his experiences, but a wiser man learns from the experience of others." I will gladly let my past experiences teach me that I am an addict and I will let others relapse for me and show me that I cannot take that first fix, pill, drink or toke.

STEP TEN

"We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

By the time we reach Step Ten, we have come a long way. We have been working on facing ourselves, seeing the truths and accepting the responsibilities of the problem within. We've had a good long look and we've done our best. We've made all our personal amends and have done all we could on the financial amends. For most of us, the straightening out of our financial matters will take some time, but we have a plan and a schedule for our payments and we are carefully sticking to it.

Having reached this point we often experience a great temptation to pat ourselves on the back and take a rest, or a vacation. But it would be a mistake to do so, for life does not take vacations, it continues. And at this point it is opening up for us, broadening ever more. Much of the horror of the past has dropped away, and with it much of our fear of the future. We are coming closer and closer to the present, to experiencing life as it is. Many of us will begin to experience moments of actually being in the Now, right here within it as it happens. And these are joyous occasions, spiritual experiences. We have begun to have a conscious contact with our higher Power, our Source.

The danger of becoming complacent at this point is tremendous, and complacency kills. We have found that without continuous action on our parts, continued willingness to cooperate in our own recoveries, to put the principles of this program into practice in all areas of our lives, we will without question lose all we have gained. We have absolutely not been cured of addiction. Our disease has been arrested, we have been relieved of the terrible obsession, and great amounts of grace have begun to flow into our lives. We are beginning to experience happiness and peace, and the wonder of lying down to sleep at night and realizing that the thought of using drugs has not plagued us throughout the day, perhaps has not occurred at all.

But this arrestment of our disease and its replacement with new life is a daily matter, and is entirely dependent, day by day, on our spiritual condition and the actions necessary for its development. Our disease is cunning and patient, and if we ease up on the practice of our new life now and allow lethargy and complacency to take their course, we will surely rejoice the miserable majority of our brothers and sisters in active addiction. We may wish to coast for awhile, but we have found it necessary to remember that we can only coast downhill.

Life does not stop, it moves on, it changes constantly. We must move with it or fall by the wayside. There is a movement, and it is either forward or backward; but there is no standing still. We are either living in the problem or living in the solution. And this is true with each and every day that passes. This cannot be overemphasized: we have put a daily reprieve from a killer disease, and this reprieve is dependent directly on the maintenance and development of our spiritual condition.

We have only begun to live this life — indeed, to live at all. Continued practice of these principles is necessary if we are to survive and become truly a part of the celebration that is life.

Therefore, "We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. "Self-will doesn't disappear overnight, and we must keep on the watch for it and the wreckage it creates in our lives. Each night we look back over and review our day, asking ourselves such questions as: Where was I selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or afraid today? Is there anyone I have hurt, to whom I owe amends? Did I live in the problem or in the solution today — was I concerned only with myself and what I could take, what I could get out of life, or was I concerned with others, with what I might give, what I might contribute to life? What did I do today to cooperate in my own recovery? If we review each day in this manner, we will be able to keep our houses clean and thus remain receptive to the Spirit. Grace seems to flow only through clear channels, and keeping the contact open and clear is a daily task.

Usually when we review this way, any negative feelings or experiences from the day will jump right to the foreground, and using these questions we can find where we were at fault. Once again, it is our actions and inactions we must be concerned with here, not those of any other person. If there is someone we have harmed that we ought to make amends to, or some situation that needs to be set right, we do this **as soon as possible**. Our lives depend on it. If we skip something in our review, we've found it will often crop up as soon as we go to bed, either postponing our sleep or preventing it altogether.

We also use Step Ten to keep ourselves clear, open and sane **during** the day. Whenever we are upset or bothered, no matter what the outside cause may seem to be, we can stop for a moment and ask ourselves, What is the truth here? Why am I really so upset? What is the fear here, the self-concern? Where am I out of line? Seeing the problem, we can ask our higher Power to help change our attitude or focus, to see us through the situation, to give us the strength to do His will.

If a situation or feeling continues to bother us, it is absolutely necessary to admit this to ourselves, and then to someone else. Counsel with others is necessary all along the path. If we have any doubts about whether or not we ought to discuss a particular feeling or problem with our sponsors or with someone else, we do not hesitate: we go and discuss it. Experience alone will teach us when this is necessary. But better to be "too thorough" than to skip anything, better to admit all than to rationalize, justify and repress anything. A friend of ours says, "I can get into trouble underestimating the power of my disease, but I'll never get into trouble overestimating its power."

It will be necessary at times to write out our Tenth Steps. Again, with experience we will begin to know when this is called for, but if there is doubt we go ahead and write, and then read our inventory "to another human being." After discussing the problem with someone else — whether the inventory was written or verbal — we make what amends are necessary and turn toward being of service to others. Taking our eyes off of ourselves and turning them toward others is essential to our recovery. There is no longer a place for self-concern in our lives, for we are in the hands of the Father.

It is important once again, when working the Tenth Step, to not allow ourselves to fall into and wallow in self-condemnation, guilt, remorse and self-pity. These are old, old traps and there is no room for them in our lives, either. Nevertheless, they will probably crop up again from time to time. When they do we try to see them for what they are and let them go. We do the best we can with what's in front of us, and the rest must be up to God, as we saw in Steps Six and Seven. It's important here for us to have compassion for ourselves, also, and patience. When we review at night we try to remember the more positive events and feelings of the day, and to give thanks for them. This is important in maintaining our balance, as well as in the development of an attitude of gratitude, the key to so much peace and joy. One of our favorite prayers is "Thank You." Even when the bad days come, if we are willing to look and to be honest with ourselves, we will surely find much to be grateful for. Life is just beginning to open up for us — or, rather, we are just beginning to open up to life. We are quite literally being reborn, the Light and Breath of the Spirit are upon us, and the flower of thankfulness is beginning to blossom.

Bill
Atlanta





ON SPONSORSHIP

When we speak of sponsorship we mean the opportunity of the N.A. member who has made some progress on his recovery program to help another drug addict to gain and hold sobriety and cleanliness through N.A. The sponsor may be a member with some years of not using behind him, or he may have only months. His "age" and experience may well depend on the availability of sponsors in a locality.

"Sponsorship" can also mean the responsibility of a "group" as a whole for helping the newcomer.

This responsibility is unwritten and informal. But it is the heart of the N.A. approach to recovery from drug addiction through the suggested twelve steps.

This responsibility is two-edged. The recovering addict wishes to share what he has learned with another addict because he knows how important it is for "one addict to talk to another." The other edge is our own need to preserve our own cleanliness and sobriety. We know from experience that our own "not using" is strengthened when we share it with others who may need and ask for help.

Most of the present members of N.A. owe their cleanliness and sobriety to the fact that someone else took a special interest in them and was willing to share a great gift with them.

Sponsorship is merely another way of describing the continuing special interest of a seasoned member that can mean so much to a newcomer after he turns to N.A. for help.

Individuals and groups cannot afford to lose sight of the importance of sponsorship, the importance of taking a special interest in a confused addict who wants to stop using. Experience shows clearly that those who get the most out of the N.A., program and groups which do the best job of carrying the N.A. message to - still suffering addicts, are those to whom sponsorship is too important to be left to chance.

By these members and groups, sponsorships responsibilities are welcomed and accepted as "opportunities" to enrich personal N.A. experience and to deepen the satisfactions that come from working with others.

I personally am very grateful to my sponsors for showing me that special interest and love on more than one occasion.

Skip W.
Atl. Lit. Com.



A PRAYER FOR PATIENCE

Oh Lord, give me patience. When I become vexed with those close to me and berate them, help me to look within and see whether the irritation and the words I have mentally or verbally thrown at them are, in fact, what I have within me — the very things that I must change.

When someone fails to understand my simple statements or directions, may I change from impatience and look for the lack of clarity within *me*.

When I am in a group and feeling bored, help me to stop and look within to find that I am bored with myself, while projecting it on my environment. So much is going on there that no one can comprehend it all.

I will be conscious of the sights and sounds around me; more aware of the thoughts and feelings of others, remembering that all are, in their individual ways, seekers on the path of higher attainment; more careful of words that trigger a desire to run from the present. I will follow my thoughts, to see whether they are fleeing into the shelter of the past or the fantasy of the future; use wisdom to ascertain whether they are filled with pleasure or pain. I will use discipline to become master of myself and my surroundings, to listen and participate constructively.

Give me patience, Lord, not to seek instant perfection but to be aware of, and thankful for continuous progress and improvement; to let events take their orderly course and not force the children to grow faster than they should; patience just to let them "be", not to interfere and thus create havoc.

Let me not become angry and irritated with myself when I err. Let me pause for compassionate reflection, seeking the cause of the error, knowing that due to my having asked, Spirit will assuredly respond. If it does not happen immediately, then may I have the patience to ask and ask and ask again.

Oh, Spirit, give me patience not to be too impatient with the way You run Your universe. Let me leave Your job to You and take care of what is mine to do.

Give me patience with my impatience and, since all must be in balance, if I become too patient, long suffering, and apathetic with the things I can and should change, let me be impatient with my PATIENCE.

Bill



Early Summer, 1980
Nashville, TN



My dear Bettye:

Your Letter from Georgia of March 20 says, "I haven't had a drink or a pill today!" And so I greet you with the same, "I, too, haven't had a drink or a pill today!" And this is surely because I have been strengthened and protected by a Power greater than any single one of us in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, this Power working mysteriously through all of us.

You see, some weeks ago I had surgery and drugs were determined necessary for the operation. I want to tell you how it happened to me that I had surgical drugs but didn't become a practicing addict again. This all started last summer when I finally admitted my health was not OK. I put off as long as I could going to a doctor and when I hurt bad enough I made a decision. Kinda like getting "sick and tired of being sick and tired" of alcohol and pills.

I located a physician who sends people to AA. To this doctor I brought fear, dread, and suspicion held in tension with hope that "this time it would be different." You may remember I began my nine year addiction to valium in 1967 with a well-meaning doctor's prescription. I once resented him deeply. Today I know if I am going to be able to forgive myself making mistakes, I must forgive that psychiatrist the same. During all the years I drank alcoholically, at least from 1969, until May 29, 1975, I don't recall ever lying to a doctor about how much I drank. When I finally got to A.A., I drank only 6-8 cans of beer every night along with about 16 mg. of valium during the day. The tolerance decreases! Alcoholics don't lie; they just don't tell ALL the truth. What I never told the doctors was what EFFECT all this had on me: the violent vomiting, the wrenching dry heaves, the hateful phone calls during blackouts, not daring to drink in public, the passing out every single night, and the preoccupation with suicide. Alcohol and valium are both downers. And the terrors . . . terror in the 3 a.m. dark if the floor boards creaked, terror if a car passed by the house, terror if the phone rang, terror if it didn't. The drug lies to you. You see, I thought I was the only one like this and I was ashamed. Yet now I know any one of us in A.A. or N.A. can make just a passing remark to such horrors and any other one of us knows precisely.

So I approach the young internist with fear, dread, and suspicion balanced against hope. Lo! I find respect! A genuine curiosity about the Program. How am I working the 12 suggested Steps of Recovery? Who is allowed to go to Alanon? Where's the clubhouse?

He told me last fall I might some day need corrective surgery. In my mind's eye, I see a horrendous procession of A.A. Friends telling about relapses into drinking and drugging after a visit to the hospital or the dentist. Their faces resemble those in the pictures of victims of Nazi prison camps. The trouble about relapses is: one has no guarantee of staying alive long enough to get back to the Program. Now, I can handle the idea of dying; but I don't want to die drunk or drugged.

So I don't think about it because I don't go under the knife today, and today's all I've got. Until . . . today is insurance forms, sign here, weigh in, draw blood, stiff sheets on clanging iron bed, draw blood, dinner on a tray, more tests, lousy-smelling hall that echoes hollow, draw more blood, med students with prison-gray faces like our members at the pen; people, people everywhere, all in a hurry. Finally, quiet. Quiet. I have been taught, God ain't gonna lay on me any more than I can handle for this 24 hours. Maybe I have to take it 24 seconds at a time. But that's OK, too. After midnight the same day the operation was scheduled, a woman was admitted in the bed next to mine for a kidney transplant. I heard her whole, tragic story in dialogue through the nasty curtains. I realized my illness could, could, become as hers. My surgery was to prevent this. 24 seconds at a time, take it 24 seconds at a time. It was then I was to begin to practice a spiritual ceremony that was to be repeated again and again for most of three weeks. It worked for me: I pass it on.

I quote the 23rd Psalm from grammar school days. The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He restoreth my soul. Green pastures. A honey bee is darting stem to stem in the deep, lush grass. Gray pony is chomping deep clover, stomping flies away. Steel bit and dark leather raddle. Clouds make George Washington's face. Clean air carries honeysuckle beckonings. He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul. . . . Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil. For thou art with me. . . . Surely I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

I pray, I pray. Help me believe Thou art with me forever. Or just now. Just for 24 seconds.

Next in this spiritual ceremony is Step One. I am powerless over alcohol . . . over drugs . . . over my health . . . over the monstrous hospital . . . over all these people. Totally unmanageable, my life. When I try to manage these things, I become insane. Easy to surrender to this.

We came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity: Step Two. I am trying to believe God will restore me to sanity. It is insane to be so afraid. God, I believe, help my unbelief. Please give me the faith I don't have.

Step Three: We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. I do decide. Right now, I do make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God. Understanding is superfluous. Just turn it over. My will. My life. Hell, I don't have any other choice. Just take it all, God. Help me accept Thy will. God ain't gonna lay on me more than I can handle for this 24 hours.

The Lord is my Shepherd . . .

A nurse suddenly is heard in the dark and gives me injections. Oh, my God, I have been given drugs. The Lord is my Shepherd. God please keep me clean and sober. Please don't let me go back to the old days. I turn over my will, my life. It blurs. Blurs.

Then I'm in the operating room. "Breathe deep, slowly." I'm out. Next, the young internist is saying my name. Calling to me. I don't want to wake up. I hear him say that the surgeon did indeed find the bad gland in my neck. I reply, "Oh, good" and I hear my own voice and I know I can still talk, like always. Thank you, God. Thank you. Sleep. Some idiot wakes me to see if I want a shot to kill the pain. Dam. "Don't you have any aspirin in this place?"

The wise and gentle surgeon appears, beaming with relief and joy; only a touch of bragging to the students. I'm flying high and tell him, "We don't need you." Fly high. Relief. Tell everybody. The young internist just keeps appearing regularly. He had promised to watch my chart and keep me from getting back on drugs.

A couple of days later, I don't feel right. The terrors are coming back. I am so alone. My voice rattles around space and slaps me in the face, bouncing off walls, mocking me. The dreading, dreading begins to grow. Geometrically. It projects into phantoms of horror. Horrors again. Like the drinking, drugging days. All the sudden I see myself going crazy. I can't stop crying. "Nurse, nurse" someone calls. Little Gail is sitting by me, she holds my hand, I hear her clear and clean voice. She listens, then she talks, talks me down. We laugh. And I'm OK. What the hell was that all about? The drug lies in you. Walk around, restless, Become tired. Lie down. The Lord is my Shepherd . . . I am powerless . . . I believe, help my unbelief . . . turn it over.

Withdrawal! Drug withdrawal. Can't remember where I left my glasses, again. Time for supper or for lunch? What day is it? Did I read my prayer books? Or not? Withdrawal, again. Oh, no. "Poor me; why do I have to go through this again?" "Poor me, pour me another drink." I resent all that is, for this dirty trick. The drug lies to you. Black pit. "Why me, God?" "Why not?" I crave, I crave, I crave that first tranquilizer. The first drink or fix sets this off. I am nervous; I am so nervous. Vision blurred. And the terrors, flashing back. The Lord is my Shepherd . . . I am powerless . . . I believe, help my unbelief . . . Turn it over.

Physically I was again hooked on the levelers. My inbuilt, natural leveling capacity was again blown away. Valium: it brought my highs down and my lows up. And it kept me always churning, churning 'round and 'round. Stock car racing was my favorite sport then. The drug lies to you. Barbara Gordon's book, *I'm Dancing as Fast as I can*, explained this to me last summer when I had never found anyone in A.A. who understood. But it seems to me sad she lacked my Higher Power other than Intellect.

I had the physical compulsion again but this time there was a difference. My mental obsession was not with using, but was with NOT using. Obsession rechanneled, used positively. I discovered, too, that our illness is indeed progressive. My withdrawal this time was for more intensely frightening than it had been almost four years ago when I came off valium. Yet my Higher Power worked mysteriously through my friends in A.A. & N.A. to keep me off drugs. Phone calls: "This too shall pass"; "It's a selfish program"; "Are you learning anything?" And through meetings, sometimes two a day, where I found newcomers to help: "You've got to give it away to keep it." This proved a good time for reading and I discovered in the "Big Book", *Alcoholics Anonymous*, a lot of things had been added since I read it cover to cover five years ago! Quite striking to me was the difference in attitude towards physicians 45 years ago and today. The founders of A.A. talk about occasionally having to call on a Dr. to carefully administer a sedative. MY dope pushers were liscensed and reputable physicians. Of course I chose doctors who would give me what I wanted.

Today I feel great, have a sense of well-being. I have yet to understand all the teaching there has been for me from this recent crisis. I do know I am uniquely qualified to help someone else go through such as this. It shuffled my deck of cards and I'm playing with a new hand. I have today new goals, a new direction, new priorities. For example, good health had been one of the things I took for granted. Now it is precious and I am guarding it carefully.

Yet the biggest message has been in my having had to surrender one more part of the Big I, Self-Will Run Riot, Pride. For instance, I kept trying to will that I be well. It didn't work. I have been recovering at the rate I am SUPPOSED to recover, not at the rate I decided I should or wanted to recover. Sobriety is Journey not Event. I know, further, that my own will power did not keep me from getting back on pills or booze. Too many times I lost this will to be clean and sober. This is how we know that a Higher Power does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This, to me, is free, unearned Grace.

Bettye, "Don't take the first drink. Don't take the first fix. Make a lotta meetings." God does the rest.

Your Friends,
Georganna E.
Nashville, TN



pages 10 through 14

10.

FOR WHAT SERVICES DOES N.A. RELY ON THE PROFESSIONAL

FOR WHAT SERVICES DOES N.A. RELY ON THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY?

N.A. personnel is not equipped to provide the following:

1. Detoxification, hospitalization, medication, psychiatric and other medical diagnosis and treatment, or professional nursing and convalescent care. (Some professional people who are members of N.A. sometimes perform some of the above as part of their professional practice, but these are not a part of N.A. membership or N.A. group activities.)
2. Housing, food, clothing, money, and other welfare and casework services; professionally staffed day centers, halfway houses, retreats, and rest homes. (In an emergency, some N.A. members, as private citizens, temporarily help lodge or feed an addict. But we are aware that such assistance is outside the N.A. province, better performed by those of professional skill, experience, and other resources.)
3. Professional psychological, legal, marital, vocational, and employment counseling, training and opportunities.
4. Community organizations law enforcement, and legislation in regard to drug-problems. (Some N.A. members participate in these as citizens, but not as representatives of N.A.)
5. Professional research and scientific training and education. (N.A. members often cooperate privately in these efforts, too.)
6. Theological and pastoral counseling, and other religious services.
7. Initial case-finding and motivation for the still-denying problem user. (Many of us are recovering from addiction today because some professional person "pushed" us into N.A.)

WHAT UNIQUE SERVICES DOES N.A. OFFER?

The personal, subjective experience of addiction is, of course, something only an addict can share with another addict. We have found that trying to help another addict-in our unique but often effective way-is good for us, whether or not the addict we try to help uses what we offer. For this reason, N.A. groups and offices attempt to concentrate primarily on this person-to-person service, without getting involved in any extraneous enterprise no matter how worth while.

As a result, Narcotics Anonymous has had more than twenty years of trial-and-error experience, face-to-face, with literally hundreds of thousands of drug addicts. This mass of intensive firsthand experience with all kinds of problem drug users, in all phases of both illness and recovery, is unparalleled as far as we know. N.A. is glad to share it freely with any professional person . . . or any addict who wants it.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET N.A. HELP FOR A DRUG ABUSER?

A telephone call to N.A. will bring prompt help or information. In many of our communities, Narcotics Anonymous is listed in the telephone directory. In urban centers, there is usually a local N.A. central office for the N.A. central groups in the area.

Services an N.A. office offers include:

1. Getting an N.A. member immediately to talk to any problem user (willing to listen), to take the patient or client to N.A. meetings, and to answer questions.
2. Providing the same sort of N.A. "sponsorship" promptly for the addict upon release from correctional, hospital, or rehabilitation facilities.
3. Giving information about where and when local N.A. groups meet.
4. Supplying leads to hospitals or convalescent care, and making emergency help for desitute addicts available.
5. Arranging, upon request, to conduct N.A. meetings within institutional facilities, on an armed forces base, or nearly anywhere.
6. Furnishing N.A. guest speakers for interested organizations, and cooperating with writers and communications media desiring information. Because N.A. meetings are held every day and night of the week, N.A. groups offer continuing supportive contact to help the addict maintain recovery. And in addition to offering this time to the addict N.A. offices and groups can make available a wide variety of N.A. publications.

By far the best way to refer an addict to N.A. is to take him or her to an N.A. meeting. Establishing direct telephone contact between the addict and N.A. while the client or patient is with you can also be effective. Some professionals who regularly make use of N.A. services began by getting to know several N.A. members personally and by attending N.A. meetings.

WHAT DOES N.A. COST?

N.A. costs the addict nothing; N.A. costs you nothing; and N.A. costs taxpayers nothing.

Each N.A. group or office is entirely self-supporting form (a) passing the hat to pay expenses (there are no dues or fees), and (b) the small profit which is sometimes made on N.A. publications sold mostly to N.A. members and groups.

This self-reliance, this acceptance of responsibility for maintaining N.A. services without accepting any outside funds, has proved of considerable theraputic value to many recovered addicts in N.A. who were once considered hopelessly irresponsible.

WHAT IS THE FIRST HARD FACT TO FACE ABOUT N.A.?

The organizational structure of Narcotics Anonymous is quite unlike that of any health or welfare agency known to us. N.A. practices vary from place to place, too. All N.A. services are performed voluntarily by the addicts themselves and without cost. There are no rules, no regulations, nor even "official" N.A. procedures.

WHO REALLY RUNS N.A.?

There is no official governing authority in N.A. We rely on tradition, suggestion, and example. The principal operating unit of N.A. is the local N.A. group. Each group is autonomous, and instead of officers with authority groups rotate leadership.

Neither the trustees of the General Service Board, local central offices, the annual General.

Service Conference (delegates from U.S. and Canadian groups) nor a neighborhood N.A. group has actual authority over any N.A. member or entity.

N.A. is not an organization in the usual sense of that word, with hierarchies of power. Instead, it is a fellowship of peers. This is important.

HOW YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT N.A. AND HOW TO USE IT?

Going to N.A. meetings is the best possible way to get a feeling of the form and the dynamics of N.A.

ISN'T N.A. ONLY FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF ADDICTS?

Many N.A. members, as well as professionals, have occasionally so theorized, often differing strongly among themselves as to which kind of addict N.A. helps most, or least.

Each theory has been proved wrong before our own eyes. In fact, probably every N.A. member was positive he or she was unsuitable for N.A., or vice versa, until the addict found himself or herself a clean N.A. member.

Some of us are poorly educated, others have professional degrees; some are religious, others consider themselves atheists. We welcome quiet, intelligent dope fiends as well as any other kind. Any problem user is welcome to give us a good try.

N.A. members can be as immature as anyone else, but most of us try not to be. We wish that the image of the "typical N.A." were that of our most respected, beloved statesmanlike members, but we cannot claim all of us are such paragons of maturity.

We urge that N.A. newcomer to keep an open mind. We hope that other people, too, will investigate N.A. with some thoroughness before drawing any conclusions. We are pragmatic.

DOES N.A. CLAIM TO BE THE WHOLE ONLY ANSWER TO ADDICTION?

You may hear this said, but most of us in N.A. do not hold this view. After all, of the millions of addicts in the world, N.A. claims an active membership of only about 10,000. Also many of us have received lifesaving aid from professional people like yourselves, as previously noted.

DOES EVERY DRUG USER WHO CONTACTS N.A. ACHIEVE 100% LIFETIME ABSTINENCE?

No, not in our experience. Of course not.

To get some data on what percentage of us do maintain sobriety and for how long, and what proportion have relapses—maybe, or maybe not, followed by recovery—our General Service Board has surveyed a continent wide sample of N.A. membership.

Among 1,355 respondents, about 64% reported maintaining abstinence for terms of one to more than fifteen years, either immediately after their first N.A. meeting (41%) or after their first N.A. year (23%).

You are invited to send for details of these and other findings of the board.

WHY IS N.A. ANONYMOUS?

Our experience has produced good reasons for never revealing the fact of our N.A. membership in the public media (TV, radio, films, the press.) This practice has proved of sound psychological value in teaching us that our common welfare is more valuable than publicity for a few individuals.

"I am a recovered addict" is, however, a statement distinctly different from "I am a member of N.A.". And N.A. members have never been urged to refrain from saying the former, publicly or privately, if they choose. After all, N.A. members reveal their addiction when they try to help another addict, and when they appear as N.A. members before non-N.A. groups.

But we feel that we have no right to disclose such information about anyone other than ourselves. (This is a principal reason so few attempts have been made to maintain any lists of N.A.'s) This can, of course, raise an ethical problem for an N.A. group asked by a parole officer or judge to certify that someone is going to N.A. meetings.

No one has ever seriously suggested that the American Cancer Society, the National Association for Mental Health, or the National Tuberculosis Association reveal any list of the patients afflicted with, or recovering from, these conditions. Ethical physicians do not tell who has what. Counselors do not talk about clients' secrets. Clergymen have never been urged to betray the confidentiality of privileged communications.

N.A. feels a similar ethical responsibility.

N.A. does not wish to suggest or encourage a conspiracy of silence or any secrecy which might perpetuate the stigma imposed on drug addicts. Our public information committees have for years tried to get N.A. mentioned in the press, radio, and TV. Recently, our General Service Conference suggested that N.A. members more often consider revealing their own addiction on a person-to-person basis whenever appropriate.

We therefore invite your thoughtful inquiry into the spirit behind the N.A. tradition of not revealing N.A. membership in the public media. We will be happy to send you, on request, literature explaining its importance in our recovery and to the survival of our Fellowship.

NOW — HOW CAN WE HELP EACH OTHER?

We are all on the same side in our interest in helping drug addicts—even when we approach it in different ways. Thus our mutual interests and hopes should outweigh any misunderstandings that might crop up.

N.A. wants to work in cooperation with the professional and all other sections of the community in doing our part in the total circle of help needed around the addict. We can fulfill only one role: providing the N.A. program of recovery.

We would welcome your suggestions and help for doing more of it, and doing it better.

Thank you,
Cheech Atlanta



We are publishing this letter so other literature committees and members interested in the new literature can have the benefit of reading it.

Dear Members of the WSC Literature Committee,

I asked members of my home group what topics they would like to see in the N.A. Big Book. These are the results of my survey:

God, or Higher Power

Sex

Fellowship

Let Go/ Let God

Perfectionism

Anger

Fear

How to cope with old drugging friends

How to cope with families who practice total denial of a members drug problem

How to deal with an interpersonal relationship with another abuser

Gratitude

The Twelve Steps

Relationships between two people (man & woman) after sobriety

The hows, do's & don't's

After a slip, then what?

It's so hard to straighten up again

Loneliness

The opposite sex

Tolerance

Patience

Honesty

Sponsorship

Keeping occupied

Twelve step work

Getting involved in N.A.

Dealing with the person leaving prison

Dealing with the person leaving an institution

I hope that this will help.

When I was in Wichita the fourth of July, I heard that you were also requesting outlines for the book. My idea was that it could have twelve chapters, each chapter about the twelve steps and then place the material accordingly. It would read as follows:

I. 1st step

- A. powerlessness, first things first
- B. how did you find the program
- C. gut level feelings
- D. surrender

II. 2nd step.

- A. came to believe
- B. God as I understand him
- C. higher power
- D. Insanity and sanity, think it through
- E. the group

III. 3rd step

- A. Made a decision, God as I understand him
- B. let go let God
- C. Thy will be done, not mine
- D. turning it over

IV. 4th step

- A. Inventory
- 1) resentments, 2) fear, 3) honesty

May higher power bless you

Thank you

Toronto Literature Committee



FEAR OF COMMITMENT

A member who attended the 1st East Coast Convention of Narcotics Anonymous said he got such a good feeling that NA was going to continue to grow and provide a sure and reliable source of ongoing recovery that it made him more comfortable making a full surrender to the program. I remember when I made my surrender and it was much the same. There are a growing number of addicts seeking recovery who are able to do this today. When I made my surrender, it may have been spiritual but it was also the most practical thing I could do in all honesty. I didn't really like the idea of personally making any commitment to anything. I had been to enough meetings however to realize that if there was any place on this planet I belonged, it was NA. After my surrender I came to see the program in a different light. And joy I found in the program seemed to grow as time went on and any deficiencies I thought I saw got better. That's one thing I love about recovery — without drugs in my system I won't tolerate an intolerable situation very long. Neither will our groups. If we have problems in areas where our groups need growth there are those who leave thinking rightly or wrongly that there is someplace else to go. I enjoy the many times I have been able to stick with the program throughout one of the growing periods. When the complainers leave it is beautiful to see the other member settle down once more to the basics of the Twelve Steps and Traditions. The most remarkable thing about these times has been the obvious fact that there is now and has never been anything "wrong" with our program in any way to my knowledge. Our program is the Twelve Steps and Traditions. Difficulties occur when those who have not surrendered are looking for a way out of their recovery. The difficulties generally cease with the departure of the trouble makers. The only thing sad about all this is that we're all trouble makers in the beginning and those who leave never hear our message of identity and love. Our Twelve Traditions guard and foster the atmosphere of recovery where a persons character can change without the pressures which exist outside the program. The Twelve Steps guide our way as surely as a lighthouse can guide a ship into port in rough seas on a dark night, past the rocks and other hazards. My surrender was to the fact of my addiction and the truth of recovery. I have faced many personal difficulties clean and sober and the members of this program have loved and comforted me every step of the way. Because of my surrender I was able to let them. I helped by asking for help before it got so bad no one could help. I came to see that as a recovering addict I had to fight a tendency to think I could do it by my self. I had to realize that my perception of difficulty was all screwed up. I would think I was in trouble only after things had gotten completely out of hand. As I have grown in the program I have learned to react to a much lesser degree of discomfort or uneasiness and bring in others to talk to about what seemed to be bothering me. In this way my troubles didn't have as much time to get very big. Selfless service has given me the feeling that it was OK for me to relax and enjoy my new life. Doing for others without taking credit is a form of prayer to me. It puts me and my Higher Power in a good light together. I pray for those who cannot, as yet, surrender to their addiction and our program of recovery but I want to stand with those who stay to make it better and help make recovery available to the millions of addicted people who die never knowing help was possible. Standing together as a unified whole we are able to feel the Spirit of our Fellowship move through us. Serenity and peace of mind and body fill the old voids of despair, guilt and loneliness. I am able to trust myself and my fellow man as never before. God has changed a nut to a bolt. There is a saying on an old clubhouse wall: "Came to get, stayed to give." I am the willing instrument of a loving God spreading recovery from the hell of addiction into the clear light of day. Maybe this way of life isn't for everyone but it's sure been good to me. My fear of commitment has been replaced by wonderment as I have seen the program in my area grow from one meeting a week to

over forty. I want to be involved with a program that can work so many ways for so many different types of people from all types of addiction. As a recovering addict I have to respect the program and if I can even be a small part of the whole, that's where I want to be. I think my fear of commitment had to do with all the commitments I made before I came to the program. I simply didn't want to be disappointed again. I took it slow and easy and gradually found ways to feel more useful. I was honestly scared of taking a running start because of all the brick walls I had run into. After a while I remembered that I had been loaded when I made all those commitments and it wasn't surprising I made a few bad choices.

Bo S.

Atlanta Literature Committee

July, 1980

RELAPSE

The subject of relapse seems to come up fairly often in meetings; it is a facet of our disease that we have to deal with as a constant possibility. People do relapse, they do slip. We are all only a toke, fix, or pill or drink away from a slip and it is only a burning desire to stay clean and sober and mighty Higher Power that keeps us clean and sober. In my recovery I've been told that education about the disease will do away with any reservations about my addiction. The past week has given me more education and destroyed more reservations about this disease I've got than all the group therapy and reading I've done so far. A friend who slipped, showed me just how dangerous, just how insidious, the disease of addiction is. Dishonesty destroyed trust which had been carefully built and nurtured over many weeks. All attempts at reasoning and rational help were useless. The disease creates people who are cunning and baffling, and nothing can help anyone who does not want to be helped. It takes a great deal of courage and strength to stand back and allow someone to destroy themselves, but I can only go to take responsibility for my own sobriety. I don't mean to sound cruel, but I am the sort of person who will try and tell someone about their broken finger when my own leg has been cut off. It hurts to have someone close to you go out and use; it hurts to see someone change overnight from a recovering drug addict to a using drug addict. The difference is intangible, it's frightening and it's unmistakable. The most that I can do is be there and be available to someone who wants help. I think that most of us can identify with the role of rescuer: ever ready to pull someone out of the fire. None of us can afford to take responsibility for someone else's actions. We can share our experience, strength, and hope; we can share the pain, and we can share the growth and joy, but we cannot feel or live for someone else. This is one of the more valuable lessons that the programs is giving to me. It's keeping me clean and sober and I'm learning to live.

Paul K.

Recognizing our character defects is the first step up the ladder to a better attitude.

COME BACK — WE LOVE YOU ...

In recovery from my addiction as a member of Narcotics Anonymous I have had to see a lot of addicts to whom I feel very close go back out and use. Some, I now realize, are not addicts. They just somehow wound up in the program. The fact that they can doesn't bother me unless I start to forget that I can't. The addicts know a pain that is still very real to me. People say that even the excruciating agony of childbearing fades with time. I guess I felt so totally inadequate and uncomfortable for so long that the memory is vivid, even today. I know what a miracle my own recovery is today.

Loved ones whom I have known on this program teach me a lot of things — those who relapse included. I am still an addict and my life is less managed by me than ever before. Every thing I hear about relapses makes me grateful to be a recovering addict. Even when I slip into ingratitude, the simple beauty of being clean and sober just now impresses me and fills me with hope for the future. One thing has been true for me: a lot of people I know have something I want and I will go to any lengths to get and maintain — but using addicts don't have anything I want and I will avoid getting what they have any way I can!

Addicts seeking recovery are what Narcotics Anonymous is all about. If we could not respond to the needs of those who suffer, we wouldn't have much of a program. I like to look at everything one day at a time. If someone got loaded yesterday but appears to have an honest desire today, something inside won't let me turn away. Sometimes I would like to. Being close to someone in that kind of agony is painful. Especially someone who is as close with their feelings as I am. Today though I usually feel I have something to offer. Sometimes it is a kind word and sometimes not so kind. I don't enjoy feeling like I have to hedge words with someone playing games I'm susceptible to. I spend too much of my time today redirecting negative energies into useful channels to want to argue about it. Someone who has relapsed is threatening because I respect the power of the disease of addiction. When they indicate their desire for recovery they become members again. I believe that any addict who is clean and sober today and has a desire to recover is a member in good standing. I may not want all of what they have to offer but their desire reinforces my own and I will try to help them in any way I can. I would want someone to do the same for me if situations were reversed. I have to add though, in all honesty, that one of the things that attracted me most to the program was the fact that I didn't hear anyone promising me a rose garden. I knew it would be tough. I wanted it to be tough because I don't respect things that come too easily. They offered me twelve simple ways to earn my recovery, the Twelve Steps. I'm one of the ones who did not deliberately try to work the Steps quickly (after the first 90 days.) I really wanted to give myself a break and I tried to work each Step in order and as completely as possible before going on to the next. I had heard too many old timers talk about 90 day wonders. Somehow I knew from the beginning that a lot of my problem had to do with rushing things and almost never giving enough attention to the important things in my life. I would worry but that's only concentrating on what's wrong — not seeking a solution. I try to remember all these things when someone is asking for help. I am very grateful for what this program has given me and passing it on gives me a good feeling and reminds me of the basics as well. I don't look down on some one who has fallen prey to their addiction. We suffer from a terrible illness made all the worse by its ability to disguise itself as pleasure or relief. Being able to help another addict seeking help, new or coming back, gives me the great joy of recovery, the feeling of my Higher Power using me as an instrument. Those who let me lend a hand in their recovery are really giving me more than I could possibly return.

Bo S.
Atlanta

What does tomorrow hold
What will we need,
We weren't ever told that
tomorrow is guaranteed.

You might feel sorrow if
you don't comprehend,
today is only yesterday's
tomorrow, today could be
the end.

If we'll be here tomorrow
God can only say,
so don't try to borrow time
til another day.

Charles



Crime doesn't pay

Sad are the days that pass in prison
thinking of the ones at home you're
missin.

Knowing that you might be sentenced to time
you still committed a ruthless crime.

Taking someone's hard earned money,
thinking oh how funny!

But you're just another person who
wasn't too wise,
maby now you're smart enough to realize.

No matter what they say,
crime doesn't pay.

Charles



From Hell to Heaven

Down into oblivion each night
you fall,
each day you wake with your
master, alcohol.

Soon the hang-overs require
that morning drink,
to settle your raging nerves
and enable you to think.

But one was never enough and
the compulsion grew,
now you find yourself drunk
in the mornings too.

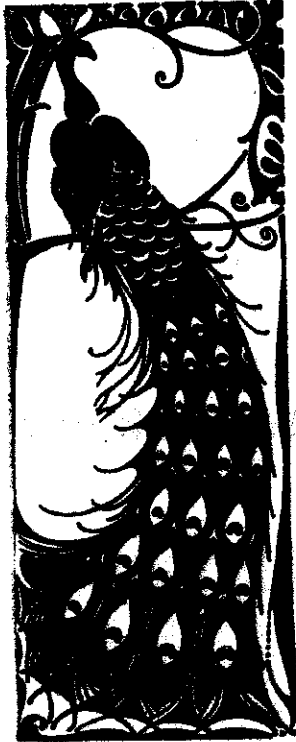
Running on your treadmill,
trying to get free,
I stand here helpless even
tho I hold the key.

For I have walked in your shoes
and drank from your glass,
the same cool liquid almost
killed my ass.

Because of this about you I
really care,
but unless you are ready, my
answer we cannot share.

Just remember I hold the key
to unlock the pain,
and give to you the inner peace
you search for in vain.

Janice





There is one constant thought,
As I travel this way.
There are tomorrows for me,
If I live for today.

There is plenty fo comfort,
When I choose to do right.
With my eye on the "now",
There will always be light.

I need not weep alone,
Or sink in despair.
When I live for the moment,
God will always be there.

by jolene ryan
8-16-80

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marietta ASC 9-26-80

New meeting in Douglasville on Wednesday nights at 8:00pm. Meets at Douglas General Hospital. Also new Women's Group meets Sunday nights at 7:00 at the Rising Sun. New Trusted Servants Workshop meets at the Rising Sun on the 3rd Saturday at 6:00pm is sharing information on service, particularly group service for meetings. Come to share what you know or learn what you don't. Stockpiled literature now available at WSO prices. The new meeting directory in booklet form is now available for 25¢ each. The directory lists over forty meetings in Metro Atlanta and is similar to the meeting directories in use on the West Coast. Need to support the 11th World Convention coming up in Miami next year was discussed. After discussion, it was agreed to suggest the reading of the First Tradition after all business meetings in our area. We hope this will alleviate the situations where a volunteer fails to do their job but takes offense if anyone else tries to help or does their job for them. Our common welfare comes before personalities and there are always other group need for those who really want to serve. This ASC meets on the last Friday at 10:00pm at the Rising Sun Clubhouse in Marietta.

Atlanta ASC 10-5-80

Lynn W. now in charge of the answering service at the Highland Club. Asked for new 12th Step list. Barry L. declared that the H&I Committee was defunct. There is a new outside sponsor for the Golden Eagle Group. The Committee applauded Barry's service. Maxine reported the progress on the upcoming Funday event in Gainesville. Lynn W. sponsoring new group at Georgia Regional Hospital. Cecil has started a new meeting at I-75 and Howell Mill Road which meets Thursday's in the log cabin behind the Baptist Church at that intersection. Billy B announced that he will be stepping down as ASC Chairman. Elections for Chairman and Treasurer will be held at the next ASC. This ASC meets at the Highland Club in Atlanta on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00 am.

REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE FORMED

On Sunday October 12, 1980, a group of trusted servants met at the FUN DAY celebration held in Gainesville, Georgia to form a regional service committee to serve Georgia and any other parts of the south which don't have RSC's yet. Members present were all active in NA service. Both the Marietta and Atlanta ASC's were represented. Laura H. opened the meeting and the need for the committee was discussed. Laura has served as our Regional Service Delegate at the World Service Conference which meets annually in Los Angeles. Her group consciousness has been based in the two ASC's in metro Atlanta which is proper for areas which do not yet have regional committees. Having read from the Service Manual of NA and having a group present sufficient to back up a regional committee, elections took place. Maxine of Gainesville was elected Chairman, Lynn W. of Atlanta was elected Co-chairman, Susan B. of Marietta was elected Treasurer and Shirley C. of South Atlanta was elected Secretary. Shirley is going to send out letters to surrounding areas to determine the size of the area which will be served by the Committee. Susan will ask the ASC's for money to open the account. The group set the date of the next meeting for Sunday, November 16 at 4:00 pm at the Highland Club in Atlanta. Minutes are to be sent to WSO and other areas to announce the Committee. We pray this RSC will bring increased unity of feeling and activity to our rapidly growing area. We are grateful.

The Rainbow Staff



The Rainbow Connection

SUNDAY

12 Step Study Group — Rising Sun
Highland Group — Highland Club

MONDAY

Clean and Serene — Ridgeview Institute
Feeling Free Group

Peachford Hospital

New Answer Meeting

Parkway Regional

Highland Group — Highland Club

Serenity Group — Gainesville, GA

United Methodist Church

Literature Meeting — Rising Sun

TUESDAY

Open Arms — Brawners Hospital

New Visions Group

DeKalb Addiction Clinic

Buckhead Group — St. Ann's Episcopal

Canton Group — No. Ga. Mental Health

Highland Group — Highland Club

11:00 am Meeting — Highland Club

New Meeting — Ga. State U.

Room 212, 11:40 am

Non-Smokers — Rising Sun

(no smoking in room only)

WEDNESDAY

Turning Point

Peachtree Parkwood Hospital

Southside Survivors — Clayton General

Forward Group — Rising Sun

11:00 am Meeting — Highland Club

THURSDAY

NAVAHO Group — VA Hospital

Woodstock Meeting

Little River Methodist Church

New Meeting — Kennestone Hospital

Golden Eagle Group — Buford Prison

Open Up Group — Rising Sun

11 am Meeting — Highland Club

Good Time Gang

Holy Cross Catholic Church

Highland Group — Highland Club

FRIDAY

New Connections — Peachford Hospital

Highland Group — Highland Club

Reaching Out Group — Rising Sun

New Birth Group

New Horizons Womens

Pre-Release Center

Late Meeting — Highland Club

SATURDAY

Speakers Meeting — Rising Sun

Froggy Junction

Ridgeview Crisis Center

Survivors Group — Rising Sun

Speakers Meeting — Highland Club

Meeting times are all 8:00 pm except
Survivors Group and Friday Late
Meeting at Highland Club which meets
at 11:00 pm; and the Golden Eagle Group
and Southside Survivors which meets at
8:30 pm.

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USE THIS FORM FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the groups springs from our traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience, our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A., as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such ought never be organized; but we create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.