



"Core Issues Vol. 1 issue 3"

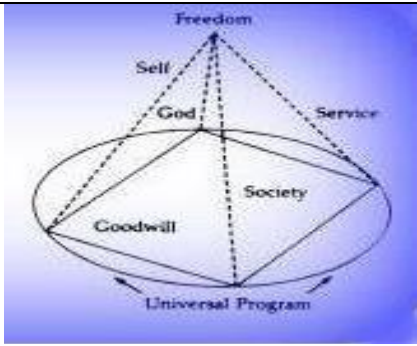
Core Issues
July, 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 3
By: Lester O.



Goals And Purposes

We believe there needs to be discussion among the members of NA with regard the purpose and direction of our fellowship. There are 'service' groups springing up throughout North America; their goals are as many and varied as our members. Our purpose at 'core' is to provide a venue to facilitate open and respectful discussion among the members of the fellowship. We discuss ideas about how to make the NA fellowship more responsive to the still suffering addict. We hold weekly meetings, publish a weekly newsletter, and plan events for the purpose of uniting our fellowship. These are not core meetings, core newsletters, nor core gatherings; they are our gift to the NA fellowship.

We Believe that
the Greater the
Base (Global NA
Society)



The Broader the
sides and the
Higher the point
of freedom.

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Yours in Loving Service,
Lester O.
Editor of Core Issues

(A non-profit Newsletter of the Core Group)

Notes:

This fellowship was built upon the unconditional love of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. That is our unique way of reaching those who cannot be helped otherwise. That is also the unique process through which our original Basic Text and many other pieces of



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literature were written in the same manner. That had never been done before, a huge mutual effort through a true group conscience process. That is what brought our fellowship to maturity and made us grow. The irony is that ever since those times we have been fighting a losing battle to retain the integrity we have been continuously losing ever since those first that many of our members have no idea that we are slowly losing the spirit this fellowship was built upon a transition from spiritual values to material, stemming that tide is one of the main purposes of this group.

David

Core Projects

Projects:

- **NA Views** - video conferencing center in Waynesville is still going forward with Travis bringing in his new developer to set the system up in his new home. They have the software, hardware and access now in new home. Bo and Ed to visit.
- **In the Know** – ‘back burner’ for now. Idea of providing a platform for experienced members to share what they have learned to participants is sound. Lucy O. – Memphis, Allen J MD and a regional person from Louisiana showed interest. Brian - Was to be non-confrontational and open to free sharing of experience. Phone tree to get word out. Myriad topics. Speakers on panel ‘have one dial-up, participants listen on mute, email questions during week to be mentioned at next call. Bruce – could record speakers on good subjects for playback. Brian – keep recordings for future needs. Bruce – wonderful idea to hear from experienced members.
- **Fellowship Gathering** – talked about possibly doing it in Memphis. Bo will call Gene and Lucy about it. Maybe they have a good idea. NA History might be good. Also good site for NA Literature History. Maybe Jim Nichols might be interested in hosting in Lincoln. People who helped write the Basic Text would all show up with their friends.
- **Did You Know:**
 1. World services considers themselves exempt from the NA 12 Traditions?
 2. Homeland Security states that NA receives no direct support from them.
 3. NA ought never be organized.
 4. What are the three elements of self-determination?



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5. Do you think spiritual growth is important?
6. How do you describe spiritual growth?
7. What's the difference between individual opinion and efficiency?
8. Do you believe the spiritual dominates the mental and physical realms?
9. What about body drugs in recovery?
10. Did you know that many members attend big conventions with funds paid by a treatment center?
11. Did you know the 12 Steps and Traditions are spiritual principles whereas the 12 Concepts are corporate principles?
12. (Fill in the blank!

nacoregroup.org – Made link to youtube.com to make it easier to get to our video clips.

Summary of Core Group Project Discussions for the Month of August, 2013

From the week of July 31, 2013;

Opened at 8:30

- Lester suggested that we could do video conferencing similar to internet radio and broadcast conference calls on a regular monthly basis Bo - conference call services.
- Bo added that "In the Know" can be activated as audio MP3 and can have recorded call from core group or on specific subjects, videos, our history, our WSC, our service structure and IP's - on new subjects, like 12 Stepping, Spiritual Awakening, Freedom from obsession and compulsion, events, fellowship gatherings, workshops, interactive discussions
- Lester added that we should watch out for Traditions Violations.
- We can have a weekly or monthly NA radio show - live like conference calls with 1000's of listeners. We could have video conferencing, conference calls with graphical support on website displaying items of discussion, minutes.
- Bo - Politics have run off very good members over the years. This not ok. Not amended, errors still go forward.
- Quote from Robert Heinlein: "After the list of organizational systems is read, including capitalism, communism, democracy, fascism, etc., there are two types of people in the world. One believes people have to be controlled, the other sees no need to control"



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- Bo - Travis and I thought it would be good to have a get together for members working in creative arts, writing, painting, music, and get together to express their feelings and experiences.
- **(See Addendum A) for article written by a core group member in Thailand.**

Closed at 9:30 pm - Bo did closing prayer of thanks for the Rising Spirit in NA.

From the week of August 6, 2013;

Opened at 8:30

- Jmu -- Bo – Lester
- Bo - mentioned the Lynn V. GNYR newsletter problem currently mentioned on Chris K's Blog.
- Everybody loved core Issue #1 and #2 No one complained about our material going out on Chris's Blog...
- Bo - Think we're doing fine, keep doing what we are doing. God bless Terry R and Dale S. Lots of members learned that the situation at world level is serious and we have to find ways to move on. Everybody in the world is on a learning curve and no one can help where they are in their progress. The point is to keep learning and find ways to personally and collectively move forward. NA never got anything easy! One way to get motivated is to imagine how you are going to feel a few years from now if you sit by and do nothing to help. 1980, 1981 and 1982 produced the "Proven Program" because addicts came out in the open, wrote what they experienced and compared notes through the WSC Literature Committee to get the book done. People who work that program get clean and stay clean.
- Jmu - our discussion about Drug Court and Homeland Security last week turned up with a few articles on Chris' Blog. Lester - Mentioned topic in July Issue of core Issues. Mike R and Mitch G started the discussion.
- Bo - Philly is a WSO Convention. WSO CNA! Glad members are getting together, that always helps. Disconnect is obvious in the heavy handed style of managing the Conference. Disregarding Fellowship concerns and views on important issues breaks the connection that should be in place between WSO and the NA Fellowship.
Jmu - WSO doesn't want a local host committee for WCNA - having a local host committee was discontinued in 2002. WSO claimed there was a problem with divided loyalty because host committees did not always agree with the way WSO handled thing.



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Even though WCNA operated under its own corporate name, we are learning everything world does is WSO driven.

- Lester - GNYR newsletter contained letter to WSO from members against SSP.
- Jmu – Complaint on Chris' Blog that the letter violated Traditions. Lester - didn't think warranted discontinuing newsletter. More of a personal or local thing.
- Bo - Got no particular response from issues on Bob Stone's death or the truth about Jimmy K lockout. The third big lie that has been fostered on the Fellowship is that the 12 Concepts are based on the AA model.
- Lester - Steve One Shot denies having a conversation with Bo and is not on the core group. Not sure what this is about, just an example of how different people see things their own way. This is common and should not surprise anyone.
- Lester - Likes letter from Mike B on Asperser's Syndrome sent in by David B. Should it go in newsletter? Jmu and Bo felt it was interesting and helpful and should go in. (**See Addendum B**).
- Bo asked Jmu and Lester if they watched "Fishead" movie. How does it affect us? Lester population already steered towards idea of 'Harm Reduction.' This is used to favor using meds instead of supporting NA recovery through the 12 Steps.
- Jmu - People who use psych meds are more likely to have major psychotic break mentioned in article he read. This means where they would not have had such a terrific break without having been on the meds.
- Bo - what needs to be done next? I am getting past my moving interruption, we need to look ahead. We could have an event here in Marietta or Atlanta.
Lester - 1st of any given month best for him.
Bo - Megabus.com has great prices and could help people attend without blowing a lot of money on travel. Members of NA have learned a lot in last two years since the history conferences began. Topics of event: What's happening with USSC? NA history - NA Society potential to include and bridge gaps among membership and locations. - Let NA members know it is OK to write about their questions and experiences. Newsletters from different places.
- Lester - We could have speakers from Lit Conferences. There is a planned lit conference in Orlando. This is the same area that broke away from FRCNA and joined SFRCNA recently.
- Jmu - will help Lester get tooled up for Skype calls? Needs camcorder.

Closed at 10:00 – Jmu did closing prayer: "Thanks God for helping us have a better understanding of what we can do today for the future of NA."



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From the week of August 13, 2013;

Dear Fellow Members,

Chill Out in Chilhowie this weekend in mountains east of Cleveland, Tennessee. New books and videos around the corner...

In Loving Service,

Bo S.

8-20-13 Notes from tonight's Conference Call;

- 1st Item of business was a discussion on why we need individual notes from meeting. Bo felt that not everything was getting conveyed with only him taking minutes and wanted to be able to make a more accurate set of minutes and individual notes would help and the notes should convey new ideas. Lester thought that there were often mistakes in minutes in as much as what he tried to convey did not always come across in minutes and that for the purpose of the Newsletter he often had to make corrections. When it came to others he could not make correction and that sending in personalized notes could help eliminate these problems. Jmu felt that it would be hard for him to do since he was usually multi tasking during Conference. After much discussion it was decided that for time being we would attempt to send in notes prior to the minutes coming out. One recommendation was that we should all be thinking about What Actions members can take and then convey it to the fellowship as best as we can .
- Lester mentioned that GNYR RD had posted a letter on The WSC Discussion Board implying that the SSP was a distraction to the fellowship. **(See Addendum C)**.
- Lester mentioned that Chris W posted on face book that the USSC announced that they were going to start a meeting Schedule for Greybook meetings.
- Lester also express doubts in that many Greybook meetings would actually not list their meeting because they did not want to affiliate themselves with the USSC. Bo mentioned that we should support anyone making a list of Greybook meetings
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- Bo mentioned that Chris and Boy will be doing their presentation on where our Basic Text came from and that ASIS will be there handing out flyers.
- Bo mentioned that Knoxville Camp out was a great success. Lester asked about campground amenities and was told that they were top notch, everyone with their own room and bed plus a big hall for meetings setting out food etc.
- Lester had some questions about setting up Skype and video conferencing?
- Renewing work on The Book was discussed and Bo, commented that we needed a working copy to send out for members to work with. Once that this is done work on the Book should escalate.

Meeting closed around 10 or 10:30 pm.

From the week of August 27, 2013

Opened at 8:30

- Lester - The Fellowship Lit Conference will be March 14-16, 2014 in Longwood Florida, near Orlando.
- Mitch and others will be at Philly WCNA passing out flyers of History of the Basic Text he wrote with help from others; especially Kirk K. Mitch read the 3 paragraph piece to us. He put out a thousand on the tables and at members seats during 2012 MARLCNA. Will make minor changes relating to the particular WLC conferences.
- Lester – send us copies.
- Bo – will be in minutes.
- Jmu – Loves it!
- Lester – there is talk about re-writing the Grey Form.
- Mitch – Has a friend making “Baby Grays.”
- Lester – Billy A. working on lit conference in Orlando March 2014 to go over “Total Abstinence” which has been in the works last few years. Important to let members know they can write material.
- Lester – has 23 pages for core Issues – September Issue.



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- Jmu and Mitch going to WCNA in Philadelphia. Registration \$95, must pay to attend meetings. Jmu going Saturday. Mitch has friend speaking Friday. Lester has copy of Program.
- Bo – Area and regional committee members don't seem to realize there is anything wrong with not having sub-committees at World Service Conference. Can't miss what they have never experienced.
- Jmu – WSC sub-committees shut down fifteen years ago.
- Bo – shut down earlier in 1990's for the "Inventory" to find out what the Fellowship wanted from world services – this a few years after writing the Basic Text, starting thousands of meetings and spreading NA worldwide. What the Fellowship expected was clearly written in approved service structure. World wanted more...
- Mitch – made funny crack about old service branches birthing new baby branches,
- Jmu – Someone asked what Jim Dilizia's function was.
- Bo – Without group conscience to guide them, they hired outside consultant to advise on corporate practices and how to manage an audience.
- Lester – Did WS fire Lee Manchester?
- Jmu – heard he was on staff at University of North Carolina.
- Lester will research this.

Lester's Input:

A lot of time was spent talking about what everyone will be doing at WCNA. Mostly I tried to listen. After most everyone seems to have said what they wanted to about WCNA I commented on the Orlando Lit Conference to be held in March 2014.

Bill Allen will be putting on the conference hosted by the Longwood Area, not part of the South Florida Region. Material to be conferenced for review and input will include a revision of our Basic text with input from the Grey Book and IP's on Total Abstinence and the ASIS Informational IP N, "Literary Work In Progress".

I mentioned that I think that this is a great idea in that it will show many addicts who were not around when we had Standing Committees and real Lit Conferences what it is like to actually participate in Writing and/or reviewing and inputting NL Literature. Hopefully after Orlando other Areas and Regions will once again start



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hosting Lit Conferences.

Before closing I asked Bo some question about Lee Manchester and his status at WSO and stated that I would give it further research.

Yours in Loving Service

Lester O

Closed at 10:15 - Jmu "Thanks God for bringing us together in an effort to help others."

Addendum A

Member, Group, Area, Region, World Service Conference

Clarification: The Member, Group, Area, Region and WSC is our service structure. The Members being the highest, most important level of service. We live clean and honestly in the present reality, without manipulation according to our spiritual principles. There is only one service structure. Our members through our service structure, created boards and committees that are directly responsible to the members. Most importantly we, as NA members, are all equal. An individual addict member of the NA World Board is equal to a home group member. A "World" trusted servant or "World" office worker is less important than a newcomer. The truth is in the principles found in the steps and traditions. The further we get away from that, the further down the road we go in putting "World Board" members or Office "Directors" on pedestals, the more we hurt, and the more we forget the newcomers.

For example I live in Southeast Asia. There are over 30 million addicts here who never heard of NA. While in my homeland of America you permit each other to carry on and on senselessly about a world board/office changing our structure to a one party government ruled entity with over 15 million US dollars a year in the non-profit coffers.

Our money pays excessive salaries and unnecessary perks. NA World Board/Office has not



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accepted voluntarily any non-profit watchdogs, such as Charitynavigator.org and Charitywatch.org, access to our accounting records. Most other non-profits have full and open disclosure to its members and the public. We th]e members cannot see our financial records. Our World Service Office marks financial documents to the World Board as "strictly confidential."

Wake up NA, especially American NA, or possibly kiss the newcomers ass goodbye. Addicts are dying over here while our funds are not prudently controlled by us, NA members, for the highest and primary purpose. The addict who still suffers in the horrors of addiction. Just for today ask yourself, do we want to pay exorbitant amounts on travel and entertainment or help addicts who have never ever seen a PSA, an H&I member, or even knowing what a sponsor is.

With every dollar we waste we give up opportunity for millions of addicts to live clean the NA way. The so-called railroaded job, political power seeking, SSP leaves far behind all using addicts and newcomers for tighter control of NA money. Did you already forget? I said 30 million addicts here who never heard of NA, in Southeast Asia alone. While we allow our "leaders" to print color posters saying how much we grown thanks to the World "leaders."

Here's a plan: keep our service structure and make it even more responsible to our members, cut the budget of perks and high salaries to servants and workers, tighten our financial belts and start putting addicts still suffering and newcomers first. We need honest, open to the membership and public all accounting books and records. We need a presence on a charity watchdog web site with honest disclosure. Stop wasting time and money on non-sense like the so called SSP that no one can understand and actually help addicts. Today is a good day to start.

- Dale A., Bangkok, Thailand

Addendum B:

Some thoughts on Asperser's and Addiction

(as it relates to Narcotics Anonymous)



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NA saved my life, after 18 years of using, I reached "the end of the road" and decided the only solution was to end my miserable life. By a miracle, accident, or coincidence I found myself in a NA meeting. I could identify with the addicts there. The behavior, thoughts, feelings, and problems being expressed were the same as mine. For the first time I didn't feel alone.

I began attending regularly (two meetings a week in my town). There was a meeting list that showed nearby meetings. I heard the idea of "90 meetings in 90 days", and by traveling several hundred miles a week did 90 in 90 for a year and a half. I always invited anyone who wanted to come along, and usually had a carload.

The "old timer" at my home group (18 months) mentioned area service, and I asked if I could go he said "do you have a car?" He was secretary for a meeting 30 miles away and hitchhiked every week, rain or shine (and snow). We went to area and regional service meetings; he took me to my first convention at 60 days clean, and became my sponsor.

I bought a copy of the Basic Text (second edition). It was difficult to read, because every page contained my life, thoughts, and feelings. It made me paranoid, like someone had been following me around listening inside my head. Like a good little addict and service junkie I memorized the book. I took on many trusted servant positions. My whole life and thinking was centered in Narcotics Anonymous in one form or another. My life got better.

You see, I've always been different, always an outsider. Not just when I started using. From my earliest recollections I never related to others. I had no connection to others, not family or friends. I always felt like I was from another planet, nothing about living on Earth made sense. Things that interested me greatly left others shaking their heads. I had been tested for IQ as a child, and that was higher than average (140+). My parents and teachers had high expectation of me and often said I wasn't performing up to my potential, "you can do better". By fourth or fifth grade I quit trying, I would never be good enough, so why bother?

My lack of social skills (*I am a complete ass around others*) (**and unaware of it**) meant that I was happiest when I was alone. In fact, to this day, I'm uncomfortable being around people. During my first 15 years in recovery I was at meetings, service work, functions, and conventions all the time - - **because it had a fixed planned predictable structure** - - I was able to cope and do well. NA was "organized" in a way my brain could deal with.

Despite a recovery that was going well, I couldn't keep a job for any length of time. Intimate relationships, when they happened at all, failed utterly. **I know, without a doubt, that I cannot use drugs. It's just a way of escaping from my problems.** But, what is my problem? Addiction answered many questions, and NA opened the door to a different way of



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life, but not a different me. Any negative behavior I could identify, could be dealt with and changed, but I was stuck.

After 29 years clean I came to the conclusion that something in my head was hard-wired incorrectly, a way of thinking that was not under my control. Not powerlessness, not unmanageability, not self-will, but an actual mental short-circuit in the structure of my brain. This happened before I heard anything about Asperser's or Autism.

From the experience of NA members with long clean time I already knew that there are stages of recovery. Spiritual awakening around 4 or 5 years. Emotional crisis's around 8 years. Severe life changes at 14 or 15 years.

When that 14 year thing happened in my life it was not an addiction thing. It was life..... turned inside out, and upside down. I didn't have a resource that dealt with it. NA didn't have the answer, religion or spirituality didn't have the answer, medicine and psychiatry didn't have the answer either. (Asperser's wasn't known much then.)

I stopped going to meetings, ten years ago; because I understood that my mental health issues did not belong there. That's not what NA is for. What I was dealing with wasn't addiction. Until I learned about Asperser's and Autism, I didn't have a clue. I knew I couldn't trust myself and found it impossible to trust anyone else. I had no desire to use, and addiction didn't fit the situation I was in. Counselors and other professionals only offered medication.

Like many people I thought autism was the politically correct word for retarded. I had heard many stories of people unable to function, but brilliant or gifted in a single area. I heard some parents talking about problems their child was having, and they used the term Asperser's syndrome. Since my standard reaction to not knowing something is to research it before admitting I don't know something, I sought information.

What I found was astounding to me. Pieces of a life-long jigsaw puzzle fell into place. Answers and explanations for why I am the way I am, came from every direction. Personal stories, clinical studies, research papers all appeared, as if by magic.

It's not something I caught, it's not something I caused, it's the way I was born, and it's not my fault. And it's not my addiction. Drugs were my way of self medicating my Asperser's, to get through a world and life I did not have the ability to understand. Drugs kept me from killing myself. I was depressed and suicidal since my teens. I never **ever ever** told anyone what I was thinking since I was maybe eight years old. They would have just locked me away or dissected me. I really thought that was true.

Is this some magical answer to everything? Hardly, it's a diagnosis that fits the patient. It gives me a personal understanding of my past, (and much of what is in my Fourth Steps), and



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an acceptance of myself that I've never had.

Am I an addict? I don't know, probably yes. Am I cured from my addiction? NO!

While you may not agree, I don't believe the addict who still suffers or newcomers at meetings would benefit from my current understanding of what is happening in my recovery. It could do some real damage. Just because I am more happy and comfortable in my own skin than I have ever been does not mean it fits anyone else but me.

If not for drugs, I would be dead. If not for Narcotics Anonymous, I would be dead. This new knowledge about myself may also help others to seek and find answers they need. In that spirit, I share it.

In Loving Service
Mike B

Addendum C

Hello! I am Sandy, the RD from ABCD. I have never posted on a discussion board in my life and am not on facebook. Nothing posted on the internet is private.

I make no mistake about that. I have been studying the issues facing us on Worldwide level since our RD stepped down in February. I speak partially for my Region and partially for myself in all posts.

It does seem to me that the funding of the WSC is at the root of some of our financial problems and partially led to the SSP discussion. I do note some other fiscally irresponsible spending on the World level as well that I have seen noted in other posts. We are NA, not Apple. We need to keep things simple and always have humility. Ego and grandiosity can get in the way.

One of the most problematic issues facing the WSC today, in my inexperienced opinion, is the number of unseated Regions. As pointed out, some are very small, but I believe there are 106. They do not vote. Our 9th tradition does state that we must be directly responsible to those we serve. We have chosen to insure we are responsible by allowing voting from each Region; to hear from all voices in keeping with the Concepts. We are not fulfilling that responsibility. So we are continuing to have a fiscally unsustainable WSC with proportionately less and less



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members having a voice and proposing sweeping changes at the same time, when, I believe, almost half of the Regions are unseated and do not vote.

It seems to me the SSP is a distraction and is causing disunity and, in ABCD's opinion, violates a number of traditions. One of the root problems that led to its creation, I believe, was to fix the WSC's funding problem so why don't we just focus on that. This discussion board is a great idea and allows the RD's to put their heads together. In fact, the whole fellowship could discuss and vote this way, or print the discussions out and allow paper submissions to be posted for those who do not have internet. I do believe if we do that, at minimum, all Regions could be "seated", at least remotely, even if they are not coming to the WSC. Perhaps, the whole WSC could be conducted this way and we could save a lot of money.

Another idea would be to partially conduct business this way so motions are posted and discussed online or via mail and shorten the WSC, just vote and leave, or combine it with the current Convention, just brief break outs for RD's and online or paper voting for those who are not in attendance. Or we could turn the WSC into a conference so it makes a little money. I made a suggestion to the NAWB Board about that a few months ago but haven't gotten any feedback. There are many ways to fix the seating and funding problem for the WSC that will not tear our fellowship apart and will not continue to distract members from just staying clean. Service should be simple and a joy, not a political quagmire and each group should be able to create the service structure that works for them, not others.

Whether the Board chooses to spend our funds traveling to promote the SSP or on translations is another issue. It's hard to control what others do. I guess we should ask them their priorities for using NA funds before electing them. Some of us will want the funds spent on the SSP and some on translations but we should know where they stand with priorities before the election so our Regions can elect those that they feel have their conscience.

I am new so I'm sure I will be corrected on my misinterpretations and mistakes and I am willing to learn.

In loving service,
ABCD RD