

A HISTORY OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CALIFORNIA FELLOWSHIP

1949		(Habit Forming Drug Groups and Addicts Anonymous)
1950		
1951		
1952		
1953	(1)	Founding – August 17th, First Meeting – October 5th, Sun Valley, Ca.
1954		
1955		
1956		First NA literature printed
1957		(NA becomes a “one man rule” and stops adhering to the Traditions)
1958		
1959		Narcotics Anonymous in California “DIES”
1960	(1)	Narcotics Anonymous restarted by 4 early members
1961		
1962		<i>Narcotics Anonymous</i> White Booklet Published without stories
1963	(4)	
1964		Board of Trustees and Parent G.S.O. established
1965		Stories added to the White Booklet
1966	(10)	Meetings started in Northern California
1967		
1968		The <i>Voice of N.A.</i> Newsletter first published
1969		Bylaws adopted for the Parent GSO
1970	(20)	
1971		First World Convention held in La Mirada, California
1972	(70)	World Service Office opens on Crenshaw Blvd. In Los Angeles
1973		First Area Service Committee formed – San Fernando Valley
1974		
1975		<i>The N.A. Tree</i> published and service structure adopted
1976	(200)	First World Service Conference held in Ventura, California
1977		First Regional Service Comm. formed and WSO was incorporated
1978	(400)	First World Convention outside Calif. held in Houston, Texas
1979		First World Literature Conference – work begins on Basic Text
1980		
1981	(1100)	Grey Review and White Approval manuscripts published
1982		Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text was approved
1983	(2000)	<i>Narcotics Anonymous</i> Basic Text was published
1984	(3000)	
1985	(4000)	
1986	(7000)	First World Convention outside the US was held in London

This timeline represents the best historical information we currently have about the history of NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS as we know it. This overview is admittedly incomplete and probably contains some minor inaccuracies. As more information and documentation becomes available, our picture of the early days of NA will certainly change. This timeline only addresses the mainstream Narcotics Anonymous that began in California and to which all current NA groups relate. Twelve Step fellowships for addicts have been started independently many times but, with the exception of some recent attempts, all these groups have either died out or joined with us and become part of our Fellowship. Information about some of these other fellowships is in a separate document.

Prior to the founding of NA there were several attempts in California to start fellowships for addicts. The 20th Anniversary of NA was held on August 18, 1973 and at this celebration one of those who helped start NA, Jimmy Kinnon, talked about our history. A tape of this talk exists, and on this tape Jimmy states: "Before NA there was HFD, Habit Forming Drug Groups. These were hidden, there were one or two or three people meeting in apartments here and there. Nobody knew where they were. They demanded certain things and they were dominated by one person or two persons. You know, you and I don't go for authority, we don't like authority. A few of the people I met down on skid row years ago from East LA formed another group known as Addicts Anonymous. They infringed on the AA name, and they died very quickly because they too were dominated by one man. We had another group started in the Valley then that also called itself HFD and was dominated by one man. So we found out very early and our experience has taught us that we can have no bosses, no big shots in Narcotics Anonymous. These groups were probably AA Special Purpose groups which tried to move away from the umbrella of AA and establish themselves independently. They existed in the late 1940's and early 1950's in and around Los Angeles, California and we do not know much about them. The only written documentation we have found is a copy of a letter written by Bill Wilson dated March 30, 1954, and addressed to Betty Thom, H.F.D. Group, Apt D, 1319 – 14th Street, Santa Monica, California. The text of this letter reads:

Dear Betty:

Thanks a million – nay, two million – for your heart-warming letter of March 11th up-dating me on your progress with addicts. I think this is all perfectly wonderful. At this stage, I am sure; it is the quality that counts rather than the quantity. That you have been doing a quality job and have inspired others to do likewise is very evident.

What can you tell me of the progress of those other groups which at Lexington and here in the East go under the names of Addicts Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous? At times I pick up very second-hand stories to the affect they are making progress but not so much as they might if they really came to grips with the 12 Steps and had proper hospitalization. I'm also interested to know how many people you feel you have really straightened up and how these divide themselves between narcotics who were once alcoholics and the narcotic pure and simple.

All of you concerned in this work surely have my warmest appreciation, and I hope you will let everyone have the occasion of knowing it. Meanwhile, the main transmission belt to the addict will be from our AA members who have also suffered addiction. And they should surely be allowed attendance at open A.A. meetings, just as anyone else is. One more question, do any of your recoveries who were straight addiction cases find difficulty in identifying themselves with other AA members. I guess you; I have noticed in many alcoholics a marked aversion to dope addicts – and visa versa. How is this situation working out as you now see it?

I wish I could write you the long letter that you deserve, but my desk is piled high.

Meanwhile, May God love you dearly – all of you.

Devotedly, Bill Wilson

Our fellowship dates back to 1953 when another group of people in California began talking about starting a fellowship for addicts similar to AA. They had their first formal meeting for this purpose on Monday, August 17, 1953. The following is a transcription of the minutes they took of that and subsequent meetings from a photocopy of the hand written original.

August 17, 1953

A Committee of 6 including Guilda Krouse, Paul Rosenbluth, Jimmy Kinnon, Steve Ryan, Frank Carnahan and Doris Carnahan got together at 10145 Stagg St. at 8 PM for the purpose of organizing an AANA Group.

The name "San Fernando Valley Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous" has been voted on and accepted.

Nomination of Jimmy Kinnon for Chairperson – Voted and accepted

Nomination of Doris Carnahan for Secretary – Voted and accepted

Nomination of Frank Carnahan and Guilda Krouse for six months period of time on a rotating Committee for leadership – Voted and accepted

Nomination of Paul Rosenbluth and Steve Ryan for three months period of time on a rotating Committee for leadership with Jimmy Kinnon as alternate – Voted and accepted

By-Laws

The following By-Laws entered and accepted as of this date August 17, 1953 in effect as long as the group is active. Any suggested changes by four or more people active in the group call the Secretary and request a committee meeting.

August 19, 1953

Second Committee meeting met at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St. for the purpose of continuing drawing up the By-Laws.

Term of Office – Secretary and Chairman will be active one year and may be selected to serve a successive term.

Duties of Chairman – the duties of the Chairman shall be to preside at all meetings of the governing committee, to appoint Committees whenever such are required. In the absence of the chairman, or in the event of his inability to act, the committeeman next in seniority shall act as chairman in his stead.

Duties of the Secretary – The duties of the secretary shall be to keep a full and complete record of the business transactions of the governing Committee and of the group. To supervise the keeping of the books and accounts of the Group, and to discharge such other duties as may be prescribed by the governing Committee. The secretary shall also receive and safely keep all funds of the Group and deposit the same in such bank or banks as may be designated by said governing Committee, and such funds shall be paid out on the check of the group signed by the Secretary and counter – signed by the Chairman. The Secretary shall be an ex-officio member of the governing Committee.

Any Committee Member who is in continual disagreement with the majority voice in committee affairs to the point of departure from the traditional and accepted welfare of the group may be asked to resign from such committee. On refusal to resign such member may be removed by a majority committee vote.

August 24, 1953

Third Committee met at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St.

The regular Meeting of the Group shall be held at 8:30 on every Monday Evening

The Governing Committee will meet the first Wednesday of every month at 8 PM. In case of a Holiday, the meeting shall fall on the following Wednesday.

Following Tradition Seven, it shall be the policy of the San Fernando Valley AANA to make payment for facilities provided.

All meetings shall be closed except the first meeting of the month.

Speakers must be alcoholics and Narcotic Addict's or one with both addictions.

August 26, 1953

The Fourth Committee Meeting held at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St.

Resignations of Paul Rosenbluth and Steve Ryan have been received and accepted. Replacement of the Governing committee made this date of Pat Hand and Bud Craig.

For Twelve Step work in institutions and hospitals the recovered Narcotic Addict should have one year or more abstinence from narcotics, alcohol, and barbiturates and will be screened to protect AANA as a whole.

August 31, 1953

The fifth Committee meeting held at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St.

Our Purpose has been taken from the Key.

All laws or amendments there to pertaining to the organization as a whole, all business matters, publicity, etc. must require a majority vote of the Steering Committee for enactment.

No member shall hold office in this Group or serve as a committeeman for this group simultaneously with the holding of an office or service as a committeeman in another group of this kind.

September 14, 1953

The sixth Committee Meeting held at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St.

"S.F. Valley AANA" changed to "Narcotics Anonymous".

Tommy Moore voted in as alternate to relieve Jimmy Kinnon to fulfill souly his duties as Chairman

Doris Carnahan voted to secure a suitable building.

September 21, 1953

The seventh Committee Meeting held at 8 PM at 10146 Stagg St.

For purpose of forming last minute details for handling first group meeting, Gilda Krouse voted and accepted to print Our Purpose and contact all newspapers.

Doris Carnahan to contact all heads of Narcotics Div. of the Police Departments.

Tommy Moore to have signs made up.

Miscellaneous is to be distributed among all committee members.

The Salvation Army building's use donated by the Dad's Club of Sun Valley accepted as a suitable meeting place. The Dad's Club giving responsibilities to Frank and Doris Carnahan for care of the building and the key.

October 5, 1953

Accepted absence of Pat Hand until such time as is convenient for his return.

October 24, 1953

Accepted resignation of Bud Craig.

November 15, 1953

Accepted resignation of Gilda Krouse and Tommy Moore.

December 16, 1953

Resignation of Doris and Frank Carnahan accepted.

Accepted resignation of Jimmy Kinnon.

December 18, 1953

Nomination of Bud Pantsar for Chairman, accepted.

(end of minutes/by-laws)

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

OUR PURPOSE

This is an informal group of drug addicts, banded together to help one another renew their strength in remaining free of drug addiction.

Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous, to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the causes of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same we wish to apply to our lives the truths and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe that by so doing we may regain and maintain our health and sanity.

It shall be the purpose of this group to endeavor to foster a means of rehabilitation for the addict, and to carry a message of hope for the future to those who have become enslaved by the use of habit forming drugs.

STARTING MONDAY NIGHT OCTOBER 5, 1953 AND EACH MONDAY NIGHT THEREAFTER AT 8:30 P.M.

**CORNER OF CANTARA & CLYBOURN, SUN VALLEY, CALIF.
DIRECTLY BEHIND SUNLAND LUMBER COMPANY**

(old business card)

**NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
CANTARA & CLYBOURN, - P.O. BOX 54
SUN VALLEY, CALIF.
MONDAY 8:30 P.M.**

FIRST MEETING (from handwritten sign-in sheet)

1.	Joanne Pantsar	10121 Colwell Dr.	Chase 7-4203
2.	Manuel Candillo	3326 E. 6th St. L.A.-23	AN1-7680
3.	Jane Von Hentachel	13472 Louvre St., Pacoima	EM9-2276
4.	Jess Loys	3572 Beswick	AN5962
5.	Gil Von Hentachel	13472 Louvre St., Pacoima	EM9-2276
6.	Ellen Pantsar	10121 Colwell Dr.	Chase 7-4203
7.	James H. Shears	505 Olive View, Col. (Cal?)	EM1-7311
8.	James (?) D. Crowley	6049 ½ Tujunga, S. Valley	SU3-2647
9.	Frank M. Celusta (?) Jr.	6049 ½ Tujunga, S. Valley	SU3-2647
10.	Paul J. Rosenbluth	6049 ½ Tujunga, S. Valley	SU3-2647
11.	E. (?) Romels (?)	2709 7/0 (?) Ontario St. Brent.	
12.	A.J. Ross	12507 Wicks St., Sun Valley	

13. M. Stewart	10551 Nettleton, Sun Valley	
14. Guildia, (Guilda ?) Krouse	8217 Fair Ave., Sun Valley	
15. F. (?) Sherman	8496 Glenoaks Blvd., Sun Valley	
16. Charles Dolce	14903 Victory Blvd.,	STO-5211
17. Jimmy Kinnon	10717 Sherman Pl., Sun Valley	

We know of at least two different typed versions of By-laws which were developed from these minutes. A framed set of original typed By-laws was given to Jimmy Kinnon in 1973 at the 20th Anniversary Dinner; a second typed version has recently been found. These two documents are nearly the same, except for layout. The recently obtained document reads:

BY-LAWS AUGUST 17, 1953

1. This Society or Movement shall be known as Narcotics Anonymous and the name may be used by any group which follows the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
2. Service Committee shall consist of five (5) members and secretary. Eligibility is based on seniority (abstinence) and activity in the group.
 - A. One of five to be selected to serve as chairman.
 - B. Terms of office: Chairman and secretary to be active one year and may be selected to serve successive terms.
 - C. Two members to serve for three months periods of time on a rotating committee and serve as meeting leaders.
 - D. Two members to serve for six months period of time on a rotating committee and serve as meeting leaders. Chairman to serve as alternate leader in absence of others.
 - E. Committee replacement through seniority and activity in Group, committee members C and D may serve again on next rotation if no others wish to serve. No one is obliged to serve on the committee.
 - F. DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN: The duties of the chairman shall be to preside at all meetings of the service committee, to appoint committees whenever such are required. In the absence of the chairman or in the event of his inability to act, the committeeman next in seniority shall act as chairman Pro Tem.
 - G. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY: The duties of the secretary shall be to keep a full and complete record of the business transactions of the group and the service committee meetings, supervise the keeping of the books and accounts of the group, and to discharge such other duties, as may be prescribed by the committee. The secretary shall also receive and safely keep all funds of the group and deposit same in such bank or banks as may be designated by said committee. Such funds shall be paid out on the check of the group, signed by the chairman and countersigned by the secretary. The secretary shall be an ex-officio member of the service committee.
3. Any committee member who is in continual disagreement with the majority voice in committee to the point of departure from the traditional and accepted welfare of the fellowship may be asked to resign from the committee. On refusal to resign, such member may be removed by a majority vote of the committee. This in no way affects membership and acceptance of such member within the fellowship.
4. The regular meeting of this group (San Fernando Valley Narcotics Anonymous) shall be held at 8:30 P.M. on every Friday evening. Subject to change for welfare of group.
 - A. The governing or service committee shall meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 P.M. and in case of holiday the meeting shall be on the following Wednesday.
 - B. Following Tradition Seven, it shall be the policy of the group to pay for facilities and refreshments provided.
 - C. All meetings shall be closed except the last meeting of the month. This may be waived by the

chairman to convenience guests who wish information or who may be beneficial to the movement or the group. The chairman shall always remember Step Five of our Traditions in the waiving of this rule.

- D. Speakers shall be Narcotic Addicts, Alcoholics, or non-users who can be informative to us in our rehabilitation.
- 5. For Twelfth Step work in institutions and hospitals, the recovered member should have at least one year or more abstinence from narcotics, sedatives and alcohol, and will be screened to protect N.A. as a whole.
 - A. All laws or amendments thereto pertaining to the society as a whole, all business matters, publicity, etc, must require a majority vote of the governing committee for enactment.
 - B. Any suggested changes pertaining to the fellowship or amendments to the By-Laws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.
 - C. Any suggested changes by four or more members active in the fellowship may be presented to the committee for consideration, by requesting a committee meeting through the service group secretary.

The first formal, printed Na literature that was published in California was a small buff colored pamphlet which appeared in 1956. Very few copies of this pamphlet survive. The following is an accurate copy of the text of that pamphlet.

(cover)

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
P.O. BOX 1043
Studio City, California

(inside cover)

This booklet is dedicated to those who suffer from narcotics and sedation addiction. We, in Narcotics Anonymous, offer no cure, but we can honestly, positively, show you a way out, a way to quit using.

DO YOU NEED NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS?

You do, if you are an addict.

Are you an addict?

Ask yourself these questions. Answer them as honestly as you can.

1. Do you lose time from work due to "using"?
2. Is "using" making your home life unhappy?
3. Do you "fix" because you are shy with other people?
4. Is "using" affecting your reputation?
5. Have you ever felt remorse after "fixing"?
6. Have you ever gotten into financial difficulties as a result of "using"?
7. Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when "using"?
8. Does your "using" make you careless of your family's welfare?
9. Has your ambition decreased since "using"?
10. Do you crave a "fix" at a definite time daily?
11. Do you want a "fix" the next morning?
12. Does "using" cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
13. Has your efficiency decreased since "using"?
14. Is "using" jeopardizing your job or business?
15. Do you "fix" to escape from worries or trouble?

16. Do you “fix” alone?
17. Have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of “using”?
18. Has your physician ever treated you for “using”?
19. Do you “fix” to build up your self-confidence?
20. Have you ever been to a hospital or institution on account of “using”?

* * * * *

If you answered YES to **any one** of these questions, **you may be an addict.**

If you answered YES to **any two** of the questions, **chances are you are an addict.**

If you answered YES to **three or more** then, **you are an addict beyond doubt.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Absolutely nothing, unless you are convinced you **must** do something about it, and **sincerely want to do something about it.**

If you sincerely want to stop using, we in Narcotics Anonymous, who suffered from the same addiction, and who are now arrested cases and living a new way of life, have a program that will show you the way out. We can't offer you a cure, because neither you nor we will ever be **cured** of addiction. But like us, you can become an arrested case. You can stop using and start living.

WHAT IS THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM?

Narcotics Anonymous is an absolutely non-profit-making fellowship and is connected with no police, political, or religious organization. There are no initiation fees, no dues, no charges of any kind. There are no pledges to sign. Any one may join, regardless of age, race, color or religion. We are not interested in what you used, how much, or who your connections were. All we ask is that you have the sincere, honest desire to stop using.

We of Narcotics Anonymous are exactly like you. We are a group of addicts who meet regularly to help each other obtain and maintain our sobriety and to stay clean.

Before coming on the program, our trouble was we could not manage our own lives. We couldn't live like normal people. We had to have something different, and we thought we had found it in drugs and narcotics. We got so we had to have these drugs and narcotics no matter what the cost. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, wives and children. We did them great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. We broke not only the laws of society but the greatest law of all – the law of nature.

We were running away, that was our real problem, for the use of drugs and narcotics is but a symptom of underlying causes. We used in order to escape facing life and its problems. We realized we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are drugs and narcotics that we had lost the power to do anything about it.

Jail did us no good. Medicine and psychiatry had no answers for us. Everything else having failed, in desperation we sought help from each other, in Narcotics Anonymous.

Here, we have come to realize we are not moral lepers. We are simply sick people. We suffer from a disease, just like alcoholism, diabetes, tuberculosis, heart trouble or cancer. There is no known cure for these diseases and neither is there for drug addiction, but by following a pattern derived from Alcoholics Anonymous and its teachings, we have become arrested cases. We found out how to live a life free from the uses of narcotics and sedation. We have stopped using. We have learned how to live.

Here is how we did it. These are the steps we took, and they are the steps we suggest for anyone who sincerely wants to stop using.

1. We admitted 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 understand 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 whenever 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 understand Him*.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

* * * * *

Does this sound like a big order?

We don't expect you to do it overnight. You didn't become addicted in one day. *"Easy does it."*

We suggest you begin a program of recovery by taking Step One. Admit you are powerless over drugs, that your life has become unmanageable. If you are in a jail or hospital, you have gone through complete withdrawal and have stopped using for the time being. Upon release, tell yourself you will not use *today*. It is most important you get in touch with a member of Narcotics Anonymous or attend a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous at once. If you are not in jail or hospital, the same thing holds true. Stop using for *today*. If the compulsion becomes so great you can't see going through a whole day, then put yourself on a *five minute* basis of not using. After five minutes, do it for *another five minutes*. Minutes will grow into hours, hours into days. Quitting for one day, then another, will eventually help you break the habit. Go from Step One to Step Two. Then to Step Three. You do it by stages, first thing first. By constant attendance at Narcotics Anonymous meetings, you will find answers to the questions that may be disturbing you now.

OUR PRAYER

***God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.***

JUST FOR TODAY

Tell yourself:

JUST FOR TODAY my thoughts will be on my recovery, living and enjoying life without the use of narcotics.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have faith in someone in Narcotics Anonymous who believes in me and wants to help me to recovery.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

JUST FOR TODAY, through Narcotics Anonymous, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid. My thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way of life, even for today, I have nothing to fear.

(inside rear cover)

For information regarding time and place of Narcotics Anonymous meetings, write to:

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 1043

Studio City, Calif.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 13023 So. Eastern Station

San Diego, Calif.

Perhaps, the best record of the early years of NA in California exists in recorded talks given by Jimmy Kinnon. Jimmy talked about the history of NA on several occasions, most significantly at the 20th and the 23rd (actually 22nd) Anniversary Celebrations of Narcotics Anonymous which were held in Southern California in 1973 and 1975.

20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER – ISLANDER RESTAURANT – LOS ANGELES – AUGUST 18, 1973

Chairman – Bob Barrett – Introduction (excerpts)

The 20th Anniversary is I think, a good occasion for me in terms of, I was not around for the 20 years because I was still playing crazy. But about 15 years ago, when I did come around I met some people that – something happened in the process. And it wasn't to happen for another three years – before I was to get clean at the insistence of the state. And then to find out that I could come out after a couple of years and to stay clean over a period of over ten years. It wouldn't have been possible if there wasn't people like the people in this room that kind of insisted, kind of pushed, kind of bad-rapped me, they kind of help me up. They gave me all the things that were necessary, the things that I needed. And at the same time, one person that I became very close to, at that time, stayed in close touch with me over the years; giving me some confidence in terms – that I could do it if I would only try. And we've been through many trials of error in my growing up. And at the same time, we've shared a lot of heartaches and pleasures also. I'm going to let him tell you his own story in terms of what happened.

At this time, I've been going through papers – our offices and things have been in trunks of cars and back of garages – in cardboard boxes, in old filing cases, and what have you. And many of these things that we keep as mementoes as to times gone by. And one of these mementoes that I've kept over a period of years is an original set of By-Laws that were adopted in 1953. (The text of these By-Laws can be found beginning on page 3 of this work) August the 17th, which was yesterday – today is like a year (20 years) and one day. This set of guides that were set down in order to determine, to run, or to govern NA as a whole – some particular guides. There have been many, many additions and changes since then. But at this time I thought it would be appropriate that I put these here By-Laws in some kind of archives for safe keeping. And who better is there to give this (to), and put it in safe keeping, but the person who helped put it together, kind of sheparded it around, kept us all tied in some manner together. And I put them in a binder so that he can probably put them away with the rest of his treasures as a remembrance of –say – oh, that's where it started and this is how it is today. And I would like to, at this time, to introduce and present this here set of By-Laws as a token of safe keeping and a token of whatever -- I can't – don't even know the words to express it – to Jimmy K., one of the founders of NA; and one of the people who has been a mainstay; and one that keeps it together and has kept it together through many of the years that it has been around. So, this is the By-Laws, an original set, and I'm going to give these here to Jimmy. And at this time Jimmy probably can give a little more

background and highlight as to where it came from, what happened, and what's happening right now. I'm gonna turn it over to Jimmy K.

My name's Jimmy Kinnon, I'm an addict and an alcoholic. (Text of Jimmy's talk is complete)

I've been on the verge of tears for about one hour here and that almost did it. But I'm not ashamed of tears anymore, providing they're the kind that is shed for something that's worthwhile. That just about wiped my brain clean; I can't even remember what I was going to say now. However, in our fellowship, at any time, our main purpose has to be always foremost in our lives; whether we're socializing with each other in our individual homes or whether we're at a gathering of this kind, particularly this kind. What I have to remember, personally, that I'm here, and possibly all of you are here because of people who'll never be here. The newcomer is the life-blood of this organization; always has been, always will be.

Bob pointed out a few people who are here tonight and some people who couldn't make it tonight. Those people we call "Trusted Servants" of Narcotics Anonymous. Mostly, anyone who takes a position or any kind of leader (whether it's Chairman of a Group, Representative of a Group, GSO Representative, Trustee, or anything else regarding this organization) just lets himself in for a lot of work, a lot of criticism, and a lot of those things that go on. But you see, we have to grow, and our shoulders get broad enough to carry these things because the life that is given to us makes everything worthwhile. If it wasn't meaningful and worthwhile, I wouldn't be here tonight. If this program didn't lift me higher, carry me further, and make me feel better than anything else ever did in my life, I wouldn't be here. That's for damn sure!

I sit up here in this chair; I've always admired these chairs but never thought I'd sit in one. I say a "Yee Gods!" shade of Peter Lorie, you know, where's the fat man? - - - But, first things first they tell us - - - You know, this is part of a dream come true; and a dream envisions great changes but progress demands many small actions. A dream doesn't come true because of one group of people, or one man, or two men, or three men. It comes true because a lot of people work at it, because a lot of people put effort into it, because a lot of people buy the idea and carry it forward. That's one of the reasons we're here.

Most of you have noticed that there are a few pictures over there on that easel. These are some of the pictures of the beginnings. We started long before NA was a reality, even in name. We grew out of a need (we grew out of a need) and we found - - - Those of us who were members, had come into AA and found we could recover. In AA we found out that many addicts were still going down the road of degradation and death. And we thought it was right that we should try to do something. But, you know, we're funny people, the more we try to do things together, the more we fight each other and the more we tear each other apart; tear down the very thing we try to build. And that's been the history, up until a few short years ago, of Narcotics Anonymous. We tore down as fast as we built. That's the kind of people we are and we must recognize that to recover. All of us must know the nature of the illness, the nature of the addict, and the nature of recovery. All these things are necessary to grow, and to live, and to change. And we started from resentments; resentments made us grow.

Before NA there was HFD, Habit Forming Drug Groups. These were hidden, these were one or two or three people meeting in apartments, here and there. Nobody knew where they were; they demanded certain things, and were dominated by one or two persons. You know, you and I don't go for authority, we don't like authority. A few of the people I met down on skid row years ago from East LA formed another group known as Addicts Anonymous. They infringed on the AA name and they died very quickly because they too were dominated by one man. We had another group started in the Valley then that also called itself HFD and was dominated by one man. So we found out very early and our experience has taught us, that we can have no bosses, no big shots in Narcotics Anonymous.

For a while after we formed - - - A lot of things happened that I'm not going into tonight - - - but due to some things that happened and due to the nature of the addict, the nature of our illness, some people were put in a position where they became the leaders again, the Great White Father - - - You know, we can't have a Great White Father or a Big Momma, you know, it doesn't work in this

organization. And NA died once more, and the friends of ours in AA helped to pick us up, and said "Don't let it bother you". These were the real friends we had in the beginning; members of AA who believed in us, members of AA had themselves a dual problem at that time and recognized that they came and helped us get started again. But again and again this happened in this organization. One person would try to dominate the whole movement. And every time it happened we began to die. Because the Traditions go down the drain when we try this. And one of the first things that we said when we met as a group in that house, #1 up there, where we formed those By-laws that Bob was talking about; where we sat together trying to iron out some of the things we wanted to do. We came down to very simple ideas. Number one that we believed that this program of 12 Steps would work for addicts as well as for alcoholics. Two, that the Traditions must be followed if we were to grow, and grow as a fellowship that could stand on its own feet aside from and away from Alcoholics Anonymous. We could take our own place as a fellowship, and not be dominated by or affiliated with anything or anybody else. And we said we would keep a place open for at least two years, and if in two years one or two addicts showed that this program could work for them, we would have felt that it had been worthwhile.

That, fundamentally, was what we started with. But we argued about it for about six weeks before we put those By-Laws on paper, and then we didn't want the By-Laws. The sooner I figured we could get rid of the By-Laws, the better off we'd be. Because the policies of the Traditions are enough to guide us in what we have to do. The Traditions will save us from ourselves. And this is what is so necessary for a fellowship like ours. This is life; the other way is death as we know it. But how hard and how difficult it is not to go back? How difficult?

The first big order of business we had when we got together was the name. I was the first Chairman of what we then called - - ah - - nothing. AANA, that's what it was called and I said "You simply can't do that". You made me your Chairman, we're gonna have to find another name; we can't call ourselves AANA or NAAA. And the Committee who voted me the Chairman immediately vetoed what I said. Right, that's a good way to start. They vetoed everything I said the first night, so I thought I was off to a pretty good start. I wasn't going to get away with any horse shit from these people. They were going to find out what was right to do. And so the first order of business was to contact Alcoholics Anonymous to find out if we could use their name; and they found out that you couldn't do it. So I got the satisfaction, at least, of being right on the first thing that they vetoed. That made me feel a little better, you know, because I got news for you, I get my own way most of the time. I know you recognize that because so do you. That's the kind of people we are.

But we had a lot of trouble when we first got together; because I'm just like you are and you're just like I am. You're going to have to show me that what you say is going to work or I ain't going to go along. And thank God we are like that. I think that's what makes this program work eventually.

It was very hard to find a place to meet; after we got together and agreed what we were going to do. You couldn't find a hall to meet in. Nobody would allow us in. They didn't trust us in any way, shape, or form. And it's pretty sad when you go from one place to another after you've got something real good going and nobody will let you use their hall. You know! Eventually we did find a Salvation Army hall and they allowed us to use it for five dollars a month. You know, that's pretty good, but there were no facilities there. There was one little restroom with a hand basin and a bowl in there, and that was it. There was no kitchen, so we had to go out and buy a little electric stove and some coffee pots, some cups - which I still have at home. I found them just this week; I've had them all these years. We used to give them to each other because this week you might meet at my place - which is the second picture up there - and next week we might meet at your place. So you took the cups with you so everybody would have a cup to get their coffee in. You know, not many of us had more than a couple of cups in our houses then; in fact, not many of us were working. But that's the way it was. I still have those things.

On the table here is the copy that we drew up, or rather Doris drew up, and Guilda, for the newspaper as our announcement that we were now in business. You know, we now had a hall, we now had a set of By-Laws, and we now had a purpose. And it says here:

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

OUR PURPOSE

This is an informal group of drug addicts, banded together to help one another renew their strength in remaining free of drug addiction.

Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous, to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the causes of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same we wish to apply to our lives the truths and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe that by so doing we may regain and maintain our health and sanity.

It shall be the purpose of this group to endeavor to foster a means of rehabilitation for the addict, and to carry the message of hope for the future to those who have become enslaved by the use of habit forming drugs.

STARTING MONDAY NIGHT OCT. 4, 1953 EACH MONDAY NIGHT THEREAFTER AT 8:30 P.M.

**CORNER OF CANTARA AND CLYBOURN, SUN VALLEY, CALIF.
DIRECTLY BEHIND SUNLAND LUMBER COMPANY**

I got news for you, the Sunland Lumber Company is now defunct, but we're still living. The Salvation Army hall is still there – there are 2 pictures of it up on the top line – it is now a Spanish church. Some of the other pictures up there are where we had some of our "Rabbit Meetings". We called them "Rabbit Meetings" then because we never knew where we were going to meet. If there were 5 or 6 of us at a meeting tonight we decided then whose apartment or whose house we'd have the meeting in next week. And you would take the cups and sugar bowls and the format with you, you know, and then we'd meet at your place next week.

It wasn't that we who were getting into the program then were so afraid of the law but the newcomers were scared to death. I made a sign and we put it outside of the front door of the church there – about twice the size of this – three times the size of that that said NA Meeting tonight at 8:30. And then we opened the door for business and we'd get about a dozen alcoholics in there who came to help us. And then a car would pull down around the corner slowly and they'd look at the sign and then they'd split. Nobody trusted nobody – you know they thought it was staked out. They wouldn't believe us when we told them there was no surveillance. And we weren't just too sure in the beginning ourselves.

Because as a group we decided we were going to get right with the law at least and we went down to the Narcotics Division. And we told them, we didn't ask them, we told them we were going to have a meeting of addicts. And they raised their eyebrows a little bit when we first mentioned it. But there were 5 or us down there. A Miller, I forget if he was a Lieutenant or a Captain then, he listened and he said: "It's about time something like this happened, I've been trying to help addicts for years and with no success; I can't help anybody". And so he called in a lieutenant to listen in on our conversation and see what he thought. And he was a hard-nosed, old style, hope-to-die cop who knew for sure (who knew for sure) that none of us could recover, you know. And he listened and Miller was saying "I like that idea", "I'll go along with that idea", "I buy what you have to say", "I'll do everything I can to help you". All the way down the line he was all for us. He kept his word, by the way. And he said to this lieutenant "what do you think?" (Lieutenant): "Ain't gonna work, once a Junkie, always a Junkie, you know that, God Damn it. There's never any of them gonna get any better. I don't care what you say, I don't care what these people say, and it ain't gonna work." So he looked back at us and I didn't know what the Hell to say, you know I'm only one of the group. I looked at Doris and she didn't know what to

say. And Frank didn't know what to say. And old Pat, who was sitting back there with his mouth shut all this time and never opened his mouth says: "Lieutenant, my name is so-and-so, I was born and raised in such-and-such a place, I got arrested the first time for such-and such a thing, and I was sentenced such-and-such a time for so many years; and starting there I want you to go back and check my record all the way through. I've been in every God Damned Federal Pen, except Danamora, in the country, I'm the last of the Petermen, and I haven't had a bit of Junk for 18 years. I haven't been in Jail for 18 years; and this program works for me. Now you look it up and prove it to yourself because I was never out of jail from the time I was a kid until the time I found this program." And the guy didn't know what to say. Pat said; "Now I mean it, check it out."

Whether the guy ever checked it out, I don't know; but I know that the police department and the Narcotics Division kept their word to us. And they never staked us out, they never busted us in any way-shape-or-form, never roused us coming or going to meetings. And so we in turn, kept our word, we policed ourselves and we followed the Traditions as best we knew how. And this is what has made us basically begin to grow in the last 12 years.

A few of the other buildings on that – a few of the pictures up there – were men, one man in particular, who started AA within some of the Federal institutions many years ago and helped us start Narcotics Anonymous in Walla Walla, in San Quentin, and a few other places. Les has since died too.

I don't know what the hell I made these notes for, anyway, 'because I'm not following them.

We did begin in 1960 again, the beginning of 1960, with about 4 people. And started to build the group up again according to the original concept; the Steps for the individual and the Traditions for the groups. And we've been growing slowly and steadily ever since. Primarily, I believe, we've been growing because we haven't had the domination of any one group of people; particularly in the area that most of us know, California area. I think primarily that is the reason, the main reason for the big difference. Plus the fact that more and more addicts know the value of 12 Step work. It used to be we could never get addicts to go on 12 Step calls. Some strange things used to happen, you know, when about 8 or 10 addicts, in a group, would descend on some poor, unsuspecting little Junkie who was dying in a back room someplace in his mother's home. And we'd descend on him like hornets – whooo! You know! Everybody'd get scared – we had to go in groups because nobody would go alone or singly or in couples to go. Everybody was afraid they would get loaded if they went and called on another (another) addict. So that was another one of the myths that we build up ourselves – that we can't go and call on somebody who's using without using ourselves. One of the greatest lies of all time. You know it ain't true, not a damn bit true. And this is one of the reasons we grow. Plus the fact that we follow, possibly, the best thing that any of us can do, we are willing to listen.

Bob, what did you do with my other notes? Steal them, Oh, here they are.

I resigned one time as chairman of NA before I really got going again, because of the very thing I'm talking about. I resigned because we were not following the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. It's a strange thing, I said I was going to mention it tonight and then I decided against it, but I am going to talk about it. Because, actually, although we had meetings going for several years, about 4 years there was no Narcotics Anonymous. Because one of the things we said – that we would call ourselves an NA Organization and Fellowship as long as we used the Steps and the Traditions. So when we stopped using the Traditions and became a one man rule proposition there was no longer really any NA.

I mention it for two reasons; because it died out and there were only a few of us left, but it also points out the fact that this program, once we begin to live it, we can't let it go, it's going to grow again. This program is not going to die out if all of us in this room right now, and this is a miracle in itself, if all of us in this room don't make it, this fellowship is not going to die out. Not because I say so, but because that's the very nature of recovery: that once there is the knowledge that something can be done it is never lost. Somebody will pick it up and continue. We've come an awful long way. I paraphrase commercials an awful lot and there's a good paraphrase in our structure of Virginia Slims, "You've come a long way baby (you know) to get where you are now". And, I'm not going to say a Hell of a lot more because – ah – I'm too high right now – I'm going through the ceiling right now.

We're growing faster now than we ever did before. We're in more states, we're in more countries and there are more opportunities for each and every one of us to find our place in Narcotics Anonymous and carry the message of recovery to addicts all over the world now. We can no longer try to contain it here in California or in this country. But it's going to take everything all of us got; it takes everything we've got to stay on this program. This is a blood and guts program. This is not a program for panty-waists; but there are no panty-waists in NA. If you're an addict you've got a lot of guts to begin with or you wouldn't be here; so let's put them to good use. Let's take this thing that we've got and make something better, even that it is, out of it.

You know that I've said many times, a long time ago, that a man without a dream is only half a man, and a fellowship without a vision is a farce. And I still believe that and know damn well that we can find fulfillment in living a day at a time here. And a day at a time our vision and our Fellowship can become a greater reality. They're the things that I'm still interested in. Two years ago at the convention, when I had just regained my voice, I said then that as long as I live I would use what voice and what strength I have to further the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous and that other beautiful fellowship I belong to Alcoholics Anonymous; and I intend to do that. But it's going to take all of me, and it's going to take all of you, and all the people that you're going to talk to, and all of the people you're going to carry the message to, to make this a greater reality.

There are people out there on La Cienega Boulevard dying of our disease; there are people all over this world dying of our disease. And believe it or not, we are truly the only people who can really help them. Let's never forget that. You and I have been given, through illness, through suffering, and through disease, a talent for helping other human beings like ourselves. Let's never forget that we have it and that we are responsible for others. But primarily, we must be responsible to ourselves. And I seldom talk about Higher Powers, the particular concept of a higher power that I have, around the group; but believe me I have it. And I don't know how many people are in this room tonight. I don't know if there are 100 here or 110 or 112, but over and above all of us, and in and through all of us, there's a power that there isn't anywhere else in the world. That's what Narcotics Anonymous is all about. That's what it will always be all about. And I'm serious tonight – I'm live serious not dead serious. This is a program of life and living. I've been serious long enough and I hope for the rest of the night we all have a Hell of a lot of fun, because that's what living's all about – thank you very much.