

# THE HEART OF NA

May 2011, Edition 1- Mid-Coast Newsletter

## THE HISTORY OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

BY: KEVIN D.

Two 1935 events were critical to the eventual rise of recovery mutual aid groups for drug addiction: the founding of Alcoholics and the opening of the first federal "Narcotics Farm" (prison hospital) in Lexington, Kentucky. The members christened themselves Addicts Anonymous and met regularly at Lexington from 1947 until 1966. Addicts Anonymous group meetings were completely voluntary. By 1950, Addicts Anonymous had a membership of more than 200 patients declining by the 1960's when regular meeting attendance was roughly 35 men and 28 women.

Danny C. was among the first patients admitted in 1935 to the newly opened facility in Lexington, Kentucky. It was the first of his eight admissions over the ensuing 13 years. Following a suicide attempt and final re-admission in 1948, Danny participated in Addicts Anonymous meetings and had a profound spiritual experience that served as a catalyst for his sustained recovery. Following his final discharge from Lexington in April of 1949, Danny started a new group called Narcotics Anonymous (NA) to avoid the potential confusion of two AAs in New York City. It was not the NA that exists today, but Danny's efforts first brought the NA name to national attention. In 1951, six members had achieved a year of sustained recovery. Three years later, a total of 90 members had achieved stable, drug-free living. Danny continued to lead New York NA meetings until his death at age 49 on August 19, 1956. The NY NA dissipated in the early 1970s in the wake of harsh new anti-drug laws and the death of his successor Rae L. in 1972.

Jimmy K. was born April 5, 1911, to James and Lizzie K. in Paisley, Scotland, his family having first migrated from Ireland in the mid-1830s. A self-described "lone wolf," Jimmy's excessive use of codeine, pills, and alcohol had left him "bankrupt physically, mentally and spiritually" and an "abject failure as a man, a husband, and a father." It was in that state that he began his recovery in AA on February 2, 1950 introducing himself as an "alcoholic addict". He communicated with Danny C. in the early 1950s about the NA group that Danny had started in New York City. In the middle of June 1953, the planned meeting of NA was held at the Unity Church on Moorpark Street in Van Nuys. One of the AA members attending was Jimmy K., who took over the leadership of this group in July of 1953. On August 17, 1953, the first organizational meeting of the group met at 10146 Stagg Street, Van Nuys, California, with six people present (Frank C., Doris C., Guilda K., Paul R., Steve R., and Jimmy K.). Jimmy K. was nominated as president September 14, 1953.

Personality conflicts ensued, and all original members of the NA organizing committee had resigned their leadership

positions by the end of 1953. The first NA group moved to "Shier's Dryer"—a sanitarium for alcoholics. Between 1953 and 1958, the fledgling NA group in California continued to meet, but meetings were, at best, "periodic or sporadic. By 1959, the only NA meeting was at Shier's Dryer, and Jimmy K. had stopped attending that meeting because of his strong feelings on the need for NA non-affiliation and self-support.

When NA ceased meeting in late 1959, Jimmy K., Sylvia W., and Penny K. met to see what they could do to rekindle NA. There were no existing members, no money in the treasury, and no literature. NA was reborn when they started the Architects of Adversity NA Group at Moorpark, later known within NA as the "Mother Group." The adaptation of the Steps of AA as a guide to recovery from other drug addictions is not as straightforward as it might seem, and the nature of these adaptations exerted a profound influence on the subsequent history of NA. It began with substitution of the phrase "alcohol and drugs" for AA's "alcohol" in Step One and "alcoholics and addicts" for AA's "alcoholics" in Step Twelve. By 1959, The First Step read, "We admitted we were powerless over drugs...that our lives had become unmanageable," and the Twelfth Step read, "carry this message to addicts." Jimmy K. prevailed in these discussions in getting the phrase "our addiction" inserted into the First Step rather than such alternatives as alcohol and drugs, narcotic drugs, or drugs. AA, New York-based NA, and later Twelve-Step groups staked their institutional identities and the process of mutual identification on a particular drug choice. In contrast, the NA rising on the west coast in the early 1950s forged its identity and internal relationships on a shared process of addiction.

A significant development in the history of literature for recovering addicts occurred between 1954 and 1956 when the California-based NA developed a pamphlet that is variably known as the Little Brown Book, the Buff Book, or the Little Yellow Book. Following the near death of NA in 1959, Jimmy K., Sylvia W., and Penny K. undertook the writing of new NA literature. Who Is an Addict?, What Can I Do?, What Is the NA Program?, Why Are We Here?, and Recovery and Relapse were all written during 1960, and We Do Recover was completed in 1961. These writings, along with the Steps and Traditions, were consolidated into a publication called the Little White Booklet—also known as the White Book—which was first published in 1961 and to which personal stories were added in 1966. The White Book served as the primary piece of NA literature for the next 20 years and provided the framework for the later development of NA's Basic Text.

Excerpts from William White, Chris Budnick, and Boyd Pickard

## FIRST STEP

### Following in Their Footsteps

BY: Sarah "Boston"

*"Addicts more experienced in recovery than we are will already have dealt with the matters we are just beginning to face." – It Works: How and Why, pg. 52*

When we work the steps of NA, we move towards the freedom from active addiction that NA promises us. We start at Step One, "We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable." The experience of others may help "our long-standing illusions to be shattered." Such as, the idea that we could control our use of any form of mood or mind-altering chemicals. Katy realized this is not true because she "was faced with a lot of consequences. I wanted to stop, but always ended up using more." Jeff "would try to prove I didn't have a problem. I never looked at the feelings. I finally got to the point where no amount was enough to make the feelings go away." Jim sometimes thinks he "could control my use, but then I look at the 3 packs of cigarettes a day I smoke, the 4 or 5 cups of coffee, the ability I have to obsess over anything that changes my feelings, and I think I am in the right place." If we are powerless, how can NA help? For Greg, it's about "buying into the 'I can't, but we can' concept." Matt finds "I am powerless, but the steps of NA grant me a choice. Once I use this solution, I am allowed to tap into a power greater than anything I could be capable of."

Some of us still believe we have control, just not in addiction. When asked if we can't control our addiction, how can we control our lives? Matt says "The people my higher power and NA place in my life help me through. The more I try to control it myself, the more unmanageable it becomes." Jeff makes it simple, "I make plans, I do footwork, and I set goals. I do my best to accomplish, but the outcome ain't up to me. I just focus on doing my part."

Honesty is the spiritual principle behind the first step, but what do we gain with honesty? Katy gains "Accountability. It gives me a sense of reality, lets me live in the moment." Andy gets "freed from the consequences of dishonesty." Jeff receives "The ability to look in the mirror and be okay with the person looking back." Another finds freedom in "not having to remember useless, meaningless things, which are not true. I don't feel alone in a crowd because honesty helps attract and retain people who like me for me."

Step One builds the foundation of our recovery with surrender, but what does this mean? For one addict, "surrender means not having to fight what I think and feel, or pretend." For Lester, it means "becoming willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish something- whether staying clean, staying married, or keeping a job." For Jeff, "surrender means I am not responsible for my feelings, only the way I react. I am not responsible for your actions, just my own." Matt sees it as "getting out of my own way long enough for the program to work. I had to be beaten to accept that I had lost, then I could join the winning side and begin to accept the

solution, to seek it with the same vigor that I sought my drugs." The willingness we experience in being honest starts our spiritual growth. We find that we can apply Step One anytime we feel empty, longing for something to fix our feelings. We have found the solution to active addiction and hopeless desperation, in Narcotics Anonymous

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

### When My Faith Withered...

BY: David

My first two years of my recovery were pretty easy, no real bumps in the road. A couple of weeks ago I lost one of my close friends. Even before I came into recovery, I have always been a very curious person and I ask a lot of questions. I like to understand everything and do not like the unexplained. Before recovery, I did not have any relationship with a power greater than myself and denounced the religion I was brought up with. Through the program and having a little bit of willingness I started to believe that there could be something greater than myself out there.

My relationship with my higher power has grown in the two plus years I have in the program. I can see him working in my life and I have come to believe that he will never give me something that I cannot handle. When my friend died a couple of weeks ago I started to question my faith and could not understand why something like this would happen to a person so young. It hit me and a couple of my other friends hard. Narcotics Anonymous has taught me that I need to remain willing and open-minded and I never lost faith one hundred percent. Even during the worst periods in the last couple of weeks I knew that my higher power was with me. One other thing Narcotics Anonymous has taught me is that when something happens people are there for you no matter what. The unconditional love in the rooms is so powerful. I do not deal with death very well, like most of us, and I have been in my head a lot in the last couple of weeks. I just keep thinking about who am I going to go ice skating with, or who is going to get Greek food with me. I will always remember her great company.

I keep thinking about the amazing times I had with Danielle. And I remember her big smile and her great hugs. One thing I know is that picking up would not make anything better. I talk to my friends about how I am feeling, and I go to meetings and share about it. One night I could not get her off my mind and I went to a meeting that I do not normally go to, I got out of my comfort zone and got the relief I needed. I received texts from people that I had not talked to in a long time out of concern. The day after she died, I chaired our home group the night Danielle was supposed to share. The power and emotion in that room that night was so strong it was unlike anything I had ever been through in my life. In recent weeks I have come to understand that I will definitely not understand everything that happens, no matter how unfair I think it is. My higher power puts people in my life for many reasons, and I do not believe in coincidences. The grieving process is different for everyone and I am going through the process with the help of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous

## ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

### **Spiritual Retreat in the Keys**

**By: Mark B.**

There was a rush to leave on Friday afternoon. We had somewhere to be; in the keys! The patience and the tolerance ran thin. All the addicts finally got on the same page and we hit the road. With each mile, with each potty break, the anticipation grew. Hitting the first key, we thought we were close. After hours of obeying a very slow speed limit, we reached the Sugarloaf KOA. Pulling in, you would've thought you made a wrong turn into a music festival. Tents, RV's, bandannas, hardly any clothes, people everywhere! Then came the first test of patience; putting up the tent after 4 hours on the road. With 5 campsites, our little tribe had tents everywhere.

After eating, we noticed a small gathering by the pool begin to grow. We began hearing a beat float in the air of a familiar variety; rap music. The booties began to shake, the arms began to rise, the sweat began to pour, the fun had begun! What started as rap turned into a rave with glow sticks, break dancing battles, and more sweat! The energy grew exponentially with the music until a frenzied beat released our inner addict and all went crazy! This atmosphere of good energy lasted late into the night with meetings and fellowshiping and spilled over into the next day.

The morning began early as anyone who has ever slept in a tent in South Florida in May would tell you. The activities began at 7 am and didn't stop until midnight. Ranging from workshops such as "From Rude Awakening to Spiritual Awakening" with speaker Richie Rich to the Clean Time Countdown before the main speaker meeting, the schedule was full all day.

And then there was the sun. Lots of it! Everyone tried escaping it by jumping in the pool, jumping on a jet ski or boat, or by jumping off the floats placed in the ocean. Addicts became professional kayakers, fishermen and beach bums in one day. As the day wore on, the skin changed from pink to red like the Sugarloaf sky.

The main speaker meeting with Barry K. was a sight to behold. Over a thousand addicts gathered outside to hear a message of recovery. We listened to the message as the night was lit up with streaks of lighting in the Sugarloaf sky. A slight breeze cooled our sun burnt bodies and blew his words of hope straight into our ears. When the meeting was done the biggest group hug ever was created addicts sprawled over acres of land to end the meeting with the 3rd step prayer.

When the circled dispersed, addicts went their own way to find their own spiritual experience. Some found it at the spiritual Whispers, others burnt Resentments in the bonfire, some sat silently by the water, while others continued fellowshiping late into the night. After a sun drenched day, many an addict slept well that night! Sunday morning came too soon. Many addicts sat around with a dazed face wishing they didn't have to leave, and more importantly, wishing they didn't have to pack up the camp. To make things worse, as

everyone was taking down tents, it began to rain. The rush to finish was on, but after all was said and done the spirituality remained.

The ride home was full of laughter, stories and experiences. Ranging from patience and tolerance learned from "unhappy campers", to fun had and spirituality gained through many different avenues. The weekend was short but the memories, feelings and camaraderie gained should last a long time for all.

## SUB-COMMITTEE OF SERVICE

### **How H & I Helped Me in My Recovery**

**BY: A Grateful Recovering Addict**

Since getting clean a little over a year ago, my life has gotten much simpler and better. I listened to all the suggestions, got a sponsor, and started doing service in my second month clean. The service part of my recovery is what I value the most. When I came into the rooms, those with recovery gave me everything I needed. I quickly learned that I can only keep what I have by giving it away. I was grateful for that and I knew when I got the opportunity to return to someone else what was freely given to me, I would do it.

During my 90 in 90 I kept hearing about an H & I meeting and how it was a great way to do service. I noticed that the people who did that service had an attraction to them that I wanted. I went to my first H & I meeting at 3 months clean. I paneled two meetings in which my home group members chaired. I will never forget my first meeting for H & I. I left that meeting like I won the lottery. It felt so good to be able to help others. I could see people confused when they walked in, and leaving like they had a spiritual awakening. At six months I started speaking at H & I meetings and continue to do so today. My own experience, strength and hope may be unique to me, but there are parts of my story in everyone. Speaking about it is just another way to give back what was freely given to me. If my pain can help anyone hear the message, then it wasn't done in vain.

When I got my yellow keytag I began to take meetings into detox facilities, a commitment I have today. There are many facets to what makes my recovery work for me, and the engine that drives me into the middle of NA can change from day to day, however, every time I bring a message to an H & I meeting, there is something special I feel from those who are grateful for the opportunity I helped present to them. Whether it is as a panel member, a speaker, or a chairperson, my recovery is always more serene on the days I do something for H & I. The people I have met through H & I are some of my closest supports. Seeing someone at my homegroup that I met in the facility I had been bringing a meeting into gives me hope that this can work for anybody. Just one person, that is my motto in H & I, help just one person and everything leading up to that point in my life was worthwhile. I'd love to help everybody, but just for today, one at a time is good enough.

## Events

### Area-

**September 30-October 2, 2011 - MCCNA XI** --- at the Hilton Deerfield/Boca Raton, 100 Fairway Drive, Deerfield Beach, FL. 33441. For reservation call 1-800-624-3606 ask for Narcotics Anonymous MCCNA 2011. Contact MCCNA Chair Elaine - 772-216-4549

### Region –

**May 14-15, 2011 - Gulf Coast Area Presents** Regional Weekend- Crown Plaza of Fort Myers 13051 Bell Tower Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33907 For hotel reservations call: 239-482-2900 When making reservations mention code: South Florida Region Rate: \$109. plus, plus - There is NO Room block For information: Tom K. 239-770-8507

**May 14, 2011 - Latin Convention of South Florida Presents** Dinner and Talent Show - 6:30 PM to 1:00 AM St. Bartholomeow's Church 8005 Miramar Parkway, Miramar, Fl. Suggested donation- \$15.00 Information please contact: Elmer M. (786-298-9319) or Jeanette L. (954-850-0477)

**May 14, 2011 -North Dade Area H&I Presents** NA Western Wear Dance & Raffle - West Dixie Club 1636 NE 148th street 10:00 PM - 1:00 AM \$5.00 - \$3-H&I, \$8.00 Couple Contact Delven P. 7860-487-4587 or Lori 786-380-9641 West Dixie

**May 21, 2011-** Coconuts Group of NA – having their 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary picnic. Saturday 12PM-3PM at John Prince Park at the Island, off 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. North and Congress in Lake Worth. Contact 561-255-1356 Speedy or Ursula 561-201-527 for questions

**May 21, 2011 -Beach & Bay H&I Presents** Spaghetti Dinner - 6pm Spaghetti Dinner 7pm learning Day 7:30pm Meeting Tickets \$5 Info contact Ed K 305-505-5323 St. Johns Church, 4760 Pine Tree Drive, Miami Beach

#### ANIVERSARIES

- Miguel- 4/20/2007 (4 years) •Justin - 5/15/2010 (1 year)
- Miguel – 5/15/2010 (1 year) •Katie- 11/13/09 (18 months)

### (REGION CONTINUED...)

**May 21, 2011 - South Broward Area Presents** An Evening of Family Fun Bowling - 7:30 9:30 P.M. AMF Lanes, 8200 W. State Road 84, Davie, FL 33324 \$15.00 PP Includes Shoes, Ball, Pizza and Soda More Info: Mike 954-821-3966 Charlie 754-204-0999

**May 27-30, 2011 - Gold Coast Presents** GCCNA XXI - HYATT REGENCY BONAVENTURE HOTEL & RESORT, 250 Racquet Club Road, Weston, Fl 33326 \$99.00 dollar room rate (954) 616-1234 For more information contact Karen C (Chair) (954)-336-8518

**June 5, 2011 - North Dade Area Presents** Annual Help Line Picnic - Oleta River Park, 3400 N.E. 163rd street. N. Miami Beach Noon to 5pm \$5 Contacts:Rick D 305-947-0287 Lucas 1-786-231-4367

**June 5, 2011 - Sunset Coast Area Presents** Beach Unity Day - Its that time of year again to come be apart of With food, fun, and fellowship \$5.00 Donation \$5.00 Parking Fee Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Pork Water & Tea Speaker meeting with Linsay F. from South Dade Area Donations being accepted for raffle contact: Jake K. 954-931-0871 Tommy D. 239-732-5076 Jen F. 863-414-4959 Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park Pavilion #5, 11135 Gulfshore Drive., Naples, FL 34108

**June 11, 2011 - South Florida Regional H&I Presents** H&I Awareness Picnic - Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315 11am-4pm \$5 includes hamburger, hot dog and bag of chips. Drinks \$1

#### Group Information-

•Gift of Life *IS MOVING!* As of May 8<sup>th</sup> they will meet at Veteran's Park still at 11AM every Sunday until God determines otherwise

•Not High Noon has moved as of May 2<sup>nd</sup> to Church of the Palms, located at 1960 North Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. (It is located on Swinton about a mile north of Lake Ida)

#### Submission Information

To submit an article, send it to [midcoastnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:midcoastnewsletter@gmail.com), Articles can be anything that is recovery related and remember we could edit the article to make it fit into a given space.

We meet the LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, at 6:00 pm at PANERA BREAD® in Delray (right at Linton and Federal)

\*\*We are **NOT** affiliated with PANERA BREAD®