

REACHING OUT

Volume 1

Number 1

WELCOME

This is the first issue of what will be a bimonthly H&I newsletter. Its purpose is to carry the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery from addiction to the institutionalized addict, and to assist H&I committees and groups throughout the Fellowship. Welcome to all of you who are in an institution, as well as those of you who are involved in carrying the N.A. message in institutions. We hope you will participate freely in this newsletter, and benefit from receiving it regularly.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The need for a newsletter which addresses the growing needs of H&I committees, as well as institutionalized addicts, has evolved in various stages. Hospital and institution committees throughout the Fellowship have from the very beginning been an important part of Narcotics Anonymous. Many H&I activities that began early in our history as a Fellowship have continued until the present. Throughout this period we have recognized the importance of carrying the message of recovery to the institutionalized addict, and members' willingness to do that has had a direct impact on our growth as a Fellowship.

Over the years, the WSC-H&I Committee has evolved as the focal point for filing and distributing information regarding H&I activities throughout the Fellowship worldwide. As the Fellowship of N.A. has grown, the task of maintaining, updating, collating and distributing information has become an overwhelming one. To keep up, we have had to make some changes.

One of the first phases of growth created a need for more than one annual meeting of the WSC-H&I Committee. The committee's functions and activities began to require at least a semiannual workshop to complete the growing workload. Eventually, further workshops had to be held at area and regional levels to parcel out various projects. Some projects included the development of sorely needed hospital and institution literature which would knit the structure of Fellowshipwide H&I into a more cohesive network of actively operating H&I committees.

What further complicated matters, and compounded our already serious problems, was a phenomenal leap in the growth of Narcotics Anonymous during the past five years. It became apparent in the final phases of the 1983/1984 WSC fiscal year that steps would have to be taken to formally create an informational pool which could be accessible to all persons needing information to assist in their H&I efforts.

This brings us to the present, and the need for a bimonthly H&I newsletter which can serve as a forum for sharing H&I items of interest Fellowshipwide. Stories, articles and other items which can focus on 1) problems encountered in H&I service and the solutions that were applied; 2) stories of recovery within an institutional setting (treatment centers, hospitals, jails and prisons, etc.); 3) items of interest sent in from members of the Fellowship, whether institutionalized or not, that may hopefully be of assistance to those struggling members who cannot attend regular N.A. meetings.

One item of grave concern is the overwhelming need for correspondence that is requested by addicts seeking recovery in an institutionalized setting. In most cases where there is no Narcotics Anonymous meeting

available within an institution, the process of developing a regular H&I meeting through an active H&I committee locally can take months. It is during this crucial time that addicts seeking recovery "inside" need our support. In the months ahead, we would appreciate it if any H&I committees or groups that have established correspondence secretaries or sub-committees would contact us so that a cohesive network of committees and members can be developed to respond to these requests for correspondence. The WSC-H&I Committee will continue to respond to each letter individually until such a network has been formed. Any offers of assistance with correspondence will be greatly appreciated. Any ideas that your H&I committee or group has regarding this area of twelve step work will be welcomed, as we can always better carry the message collectively than we can alone!

INPUT

This newsletter is specifically designed to meet the needs of the institutionalized addict and H&I committees throughout the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. As the person assigned the task of compiling this newsletter, I am respectfully requesting any input that will reflect the needs, problems, solutions & growth of H&I activities worldwide. To date we have received H&I information for indexing (mailing addresses of regional, area and local committees, hospitals, institutions, treatment facilities and contacts). We have indexed approximately 346 facilities and 60 H&I committees, but we realize this is only the "tip of the iceberg." Please address all your input and information to:

H&I Newsletter
c/o World Service Office
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Suggestions for input

From active H&I committees, groups or persons: What sort of problems have you encountered while carrying the message of recovery into hospitals and/or institutions? How did you solve these problems? What do you feel is necessary to better assist you in your H&I activities? What sort of growth are you experiencing? Any new developments? What would you like to hear about in future newsletters?

From the institutionalized addict: What do you feel will help your institutional N.A. meetings? If you do not have an N.A. meeting in your institution, how can we help you establish one? Do you have outside support for your meeting from the N.A. Fellowship? If you do not have support from the outside, how can we assist you in getting outside speakers, support, etc? What would you like to hear about in future newsletters?

Exerpts from actual letters, when depicting a thought or experience relevant to recovery, whether by an inmate/patient or H&I committee member, may also be used in the newsletter. We hope to publish this newsletter once every two months, but that is solely dependent upon what sort of response we recieve from you, the H&I community.

Excerpts From Letters

From Texas: "In a spirit of recovery and humble gratitude, I am writing to inform you that the message of hope that N.A. provides is now available for those who want it here at Bastrop Federal Institution. With this letter, I wish to happily inform you that the Bastrop chapter of N.A. has indeed formed, and as of this writing had two meetings, both of which were quite successful. We would like to thank Sarah H. (our outside sponsor), Dave T., Mr. G. (our inside sponsor) and the WSO. Also included is my sponsor Mr. Bob M. It is my intention, as those before me, to be a trusted servant of Narcotics Anonymous, to help other addicts find serenity and recovery throughout the program and

Twelve Steps of N.A. I close this letter with a beginning: 'My gratitude speaks, when I care and when I share with others the N.A. way.'

Yours in service,
H.D., Texas

From Virginia: "We have a small N.A. group here at Staunton that meets twice a week. They started another N.A. group at a field unit, and are getting full support from administration. Our group is not growing! I know I sound a little depressed, and maybe I am, but I am no quitter. I have a lot of time invested in N.A., plus I owe my new way of life to the Fellowship. I would not feel good about myself if I didn't keep trying to help the still suffering addict. I would like to get someone to write to share my thoughts as well as my growth with. I know my Higher Power will bring me through all this. Any suggestions are always welcomed." R.D., Staunton N.A., VA.

From Minnesota: "I attend another Fellowship faithfully here at the Federal Prison Camp in Duluth, but it isn't the same. I'm sure you know what I mean. There's another guy here who had never heard of N.A. until I told him, and we are all fired up to start a group here. We think it might be really popular, as a large percentage of the inmates are here on drug related charges." D.T., Minnesota

Note: D.T. and the inside sponsor called the WSO from Duluth, MN. We sent a meeting starter kit and materials so that a group could be started posthaste!

From California: "This letter is in response to your most welcome letter and literature which I recieved from you only today. Now that I'm mature enough to accept help for what it is, my friend and myself want to start a group to try and help ourselves and others in similar positions here at this facility." M.B., San Luis Obispo, CA.

From Texas: "I'm writing in regards to my present situation. I am incarcerated here at a Federal Prison in Bastrop, TX and I attended the N.A. meetings here on Tuesday nights. I'm respectfully requesting the addresses of N.A. groups in Alaska. I am eligible for parole in February of 1985 and my plan is to be released to Ketchikon, Alaska. If there isn't an N.A. meeting there, can I please have the address for Anchorage.

I've been locked up for nine and a half years now, and if my Higher Power requests, I'll start an N.A. group in Ketchikon." H.S., Bastrop, TX

Note: We sent copies of the Alaskan meeting directory pages from the N.A. World Directory. Also, we suggested calling the hotline in Anchorage for assistance from the Fellowship there.

New "Meetings within the Walls"

TEXAS	BASTROP FEDERAL INSTITUTION
FLORIDA	BROOKVILLE ROAD PRISON
MICHIGAN	DUNES CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
GEORGIA	DODGE CORREC. INSTITUTION
IOWA	MED. SEC. UNIT, MT. PLEASANT
NEW YORK	FISHKILL CORREC. FACILITY
CALIFORNIA	CCI-TEHACHAPI, SAN QUENTIN PRISON (RANCH)
OREGON	WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL CENTER
MINNESOTA	DULUTH FEDERAL PRISON CAMP
WASHINGTON	WALLA WALLA STATE PRISON
VIRGINIA	STAUNTON INSTITUTION

Institutions inquiring about starting meetings

INDIANA	BRANCHVILLE TRAINING CENTER
ALABAMA	LIMESTONE CORREC. FACILITY
CALIFORNIA	CMC EAST, SAN LUIS OBISPO
WASHINGTON	FORT LEWIS, ARMY STOCKADE
FLORIDA	F.P.C., EGLIN, A.F.B.

FROM THE EDITOR

A question was raised in the Loner Bulletin #4 concerning the problem of receiving our Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous in a correctional institution or controlled environment. Many facilities have restrictions with regards to hard-bound texts or literature. In these instances the World Service Office, as well as local (regional, area or group) level H&I committees should be made aware of the proper institutional procedures necessary to send hardbound text to N.A. groups or individual institutionalized addicts. In this way we can better carry the message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous to the addict inside through existing channels and procedures. The Hospitals and Institutions Handbook states in the Do's and Don'ts. "DO follow all security regulations at all times." Rules governing receipt of material by inmates/patients falls under security guidelines.

The World Service Conference H&I Committee would like to thank everyone who has sent H&I requests to us. The opportunity to serve you and assist in your H&I activities provides the springboard of growth for our Fellowship, and illustrates how carrying the message of recovery can be shared with the addict who cannot attend regular N.A. meetings. Each edition of the WSC-H&I Newsletter can be shared throughout the Fellowship. We hope it will enhance our ability to reach the still suffering addict, both "inside" and out, who might otherwise never learn of recovery from the disease of addiction. In Narcotics Anonymous we try to remember that "My gratitude speaks when I care and when I share with others, the N.A. way." What better way to share than with the addict who cannot reach you! We look forward to all of your comments and input for forthcoming editions. Thank you for allowing us to be of service to the Fellowship.