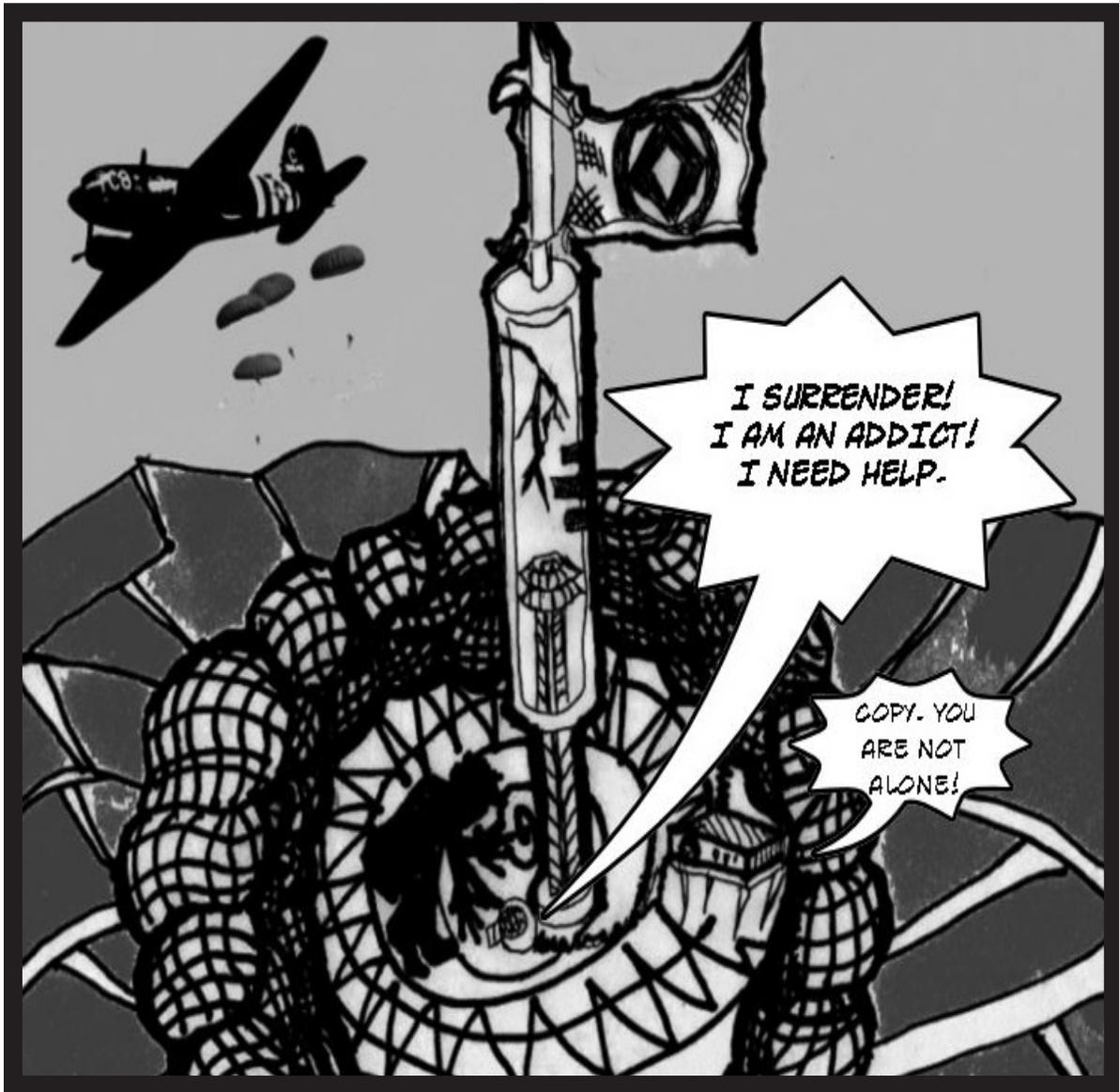


BUCKS COUNTY NARCOTIC ANONYMOUS CLEENSHEET



WINTER EDITION 2014
1ST, 2ND & 3RD STEPS

Guidelines for Submissions Articles to BCCS:

The Guidelines used for BCCS are not personal opinions of members of BCCS subcommittee. To ensure fairness and in the spiritual principles of the program, the BCCS tries to the best of it's ability to employ the same guidelines set forth by the NA Way magazine which was established by the NA World Service Board. The following The following excerpts below regarding editing is taken verbatim from the NA Way Magazine from the NA World website. For additional information visit the website at <http://www.na.org>.

The NA Way Magazine is broad-based recovery and service oriented journal for NA members. One of our roles is featuring updates and information from world services. Our editorial content ranges from personal recovery experiences to opinion pieces of concern to our fellowship as a whole, right through to humor or nostalgia about recovery. While we prefer typewritten documents, we will gladly accept handwritten materials as well.

"Editing: All manuscripts go through a review and editing process. We look for a tone that reflects a spirit of unity and mutual respect. Any article that slanders another NA member will be rejected. Explicit sexual references and all obscene and vulgar language will be deleted from published articles. Articles that are written in a "preachy or teach-y" tone may be edited to read from a more personal one. We make other edits in keeping with NA's understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, using standard NA language such as "clean," "recovery," and "addict." Implied endorsements of outside enterprises are deleted, as are any other references that may be perceived as being in conflict with NA's spiritual principles. Authors' names are printed using the first name and last initial, unless the author asks to be identified as "Anonymous."

Opinion pieces that challenge prevailing interpretations of the Twelve Traditions are welcome, and in those cases, some of the editorial guidelines noted above may be relaxed.

In addition, submissions are copyedited to ensure ease of comprehension and adherence to the rules of English grammar, i.e., we will review and revise sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, etc. Editorial staff may also substitute different words for clarification, but content and the author's intentions are retained in the copyediting process. We do our very best to maintain the tone and voice of the author. We prefer definite, specific, concrete language and orthodox spelling. The reference books we most use are current editions of Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, The Chicago Manual of Style, Fowler's Modern English Usage, and The Handbook of Good English.

("-<http://www.na.org/?ID=naway-submissionguides> (NA World Guidelines)

Editor Notes is one suggestion...

Contribute: bccleansheet@yahoo.com

STEP ONE

THE WAR STORY

The suburban warfare of using narcotics, using in the woods surrounding residential and commercial establishments. Visiting tent cities, living in a over-heating beater car. The gasoline tank always screaming fill me. Going down to the badlands to get more and only to return to a dull, mundane and gritty wasteland called lower Bucks County to steal from my loved ones.

Its when there is no more wax, plastic bags or even lower shelf booze bottles left. I see clarity. What Am I doing? I visited the welfare office in Bristol to scam some funds, a poster was tacked on the wall that said ,“if you are addicted”... call this 1-800 number. I called. I couldn't die like this anymore. I was rotting from the inside, seeping through my pores from the drugs I abused. They gave me a run around. Seeing if I was serious for a few days. Those professionals sent me to Detox by the fourth day. I stayed and slept. Ate well for the first time in years. They wanted me to stay for their rehab. I balked at first then stayed.

An Narcotics Anonymous twelve step program came in the evening to hold a meeting. I sat and barely heard their message. I was consumed with the visual. The sound was lower and drained out. I saw people who said they were like me. They dressed like twenty year old

punks. Yet they were clean and content. How could they be without drugs? The desire to use was so powerful still even with being abstained from drugs attained. Hell I felt worse, knowing "I couldn't handle life." without a substance.

A Basic text was given to me there. I read. I refuted every line as lies. This couldn't be the only way to stop and become whole again. Was I ever? I complied. I showed up to all the N.A. meetings. When I was released, I started going to meetings.

I was the outsider they called a newcomer. I Kept coming back day after day. I used again and again. Collecting white key tags. Sometimes other variants of colors. Always returning to white. I did everything they asked except stay clean, My thoughts and feelings drove me back to self-destruction. I became the chronic relaps-er. I was dangerous to them but I was always welcome.

Years went by. I kept coming back. One day at my last asylum, I woke up and felt as if I was never going to stop using. I was an addict. No hope. I accepted powerlessness. I surrendered. I lived in desperation, I went to about ten meetings a week as a N.A. regular. I gained commitments at a home group level and at area service.

I was told I was a N.A. soldier. I had a whole N.A. army, I was involved with. I was part of, I was never alone again in the disease of addiction.

SECOND STEP

"We came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

My experience, strength and hope on the 2nd Step:

Its Sunday morning at 7am and I've been reading over a couple of the 2nd steps that I've written since I first came to NA. This is an emotionally painful, sometimes comical activity that has me filled with gratitude and hope for what NA and step work have to offer. Sanity, in my experience is a completely relative idea. When I wrote those steps, I was living in my mother's basement, on probation, on welfare (food stamps, etc...), unemployed, very few teeth and was completely consumed by the most important thing in any newly clean addicts life... a romantic relationship. Needless to say, like many before and since, I used. Got clean again, same mindset and used. And again... This last time, September 8th, 2007 I finally surrendered to the idea that there is only one daily choice afforded me by NA which MUST be made to stay clean and change my life: Do Not Use Today. Due to that surrender and working a program of NA, this morning I sit in my own living room, warm, fed, coffeed, toothed and employed, with only a vague nagging in my head that a romantic relationship will "fix me". Sanity.

Insanity is also relative. When I was using I remember clearly having two big men, dealers to whom I owed money, stomping/ breaking my ribs with their Timbs and throwing me out of the van where I was copping. I ran around the block and came right back with the \$7 in my sock to try and cop short. A bad idea and clearly insane. Didn't work out... Made complete sense at the time. Today my insanity revolves mostly around dark chocolate, junk food, porn, sex/love, exercise and workaholism. Progress

not perfection. We upgrade our insanity through working a program and practicing these steps.

My understanding and practice of the 2nd step over the years has remained pretty consistent. Its never involved god, or an Hp or any of that. I have come to believe, through practice and direct experience, that my sanity is restored by honest sharing of my thoughts and intentions with my sponsor and other addicts, AS WELL AS a willingness to be open-minded enough to listen to their responses. To be clear, I make NO claims about my mental state. If I had the patience to type out my thoughts we could get a good laugh at the continuous stream of insanity, but its the mechanism of restoration that we offer in NA. I have often heard this step distilled into the expression "We Can!" and this is how it works for me. I cannot think my way out of my own insane thoughts and actions. Its only when I allow others into the process that I find any freedom & peace.

If you're new and this sounds like some regurgitated programmed literature BS... it probably is... I came to NA with 40 years of broken, misinformed preconceptions and twisted mental paths. I desperately needed re-programming. The commitment to meetings, sponsorship, consistent step-work, prayer and service to others has re-programmed my actions and changed my life.

If you read this hoping for some insight in how to "work" a 2nd step... my suggestion is that you try and practice honest sharing of your thoughts and ideas with others in recovery. I've found that the understanding and empathy (and lets be real sometimes judgment) of other addicts allows me to see the insanity in my life. For me Other People are my Power greater than myself. The Hope I can offer is that this has worked for me for more than 6 years, and that it works just as well this morning as it did in September of 2007.

THIRD STEP

"We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him."

The steps are written brilliantly. It has the ability to better any addict, from any environment all around the world. I've heard people share their experience from meetings in LA, WA, NJ, and all around the world at the recent world convention in Philadelphia. It is this proof that has intrigued me to believe in the program and the step process in general. The 3rd step in particular has changed my life in more ways than one. I have been through the concept of the 3rd step many times but have had trouble applying it into my life. As one that complicates EVERYTHING, I always seem to exaggerate the simplicity of the 3rd step. In all honesty, it has very simple concepts that I need to keep that way in order to practice it in my life.

After I admitted I was an addict and needed help, I needed to have a concrete idea of what exactly I believed in. Why I chose to get out of bed every morning and actually pursue life. It was in this state of mind that I became aware of how low my self esteem actually was. I didn't think any more of myself as a scared little boy with life beating down my door every second of every day. Life was choking me. Without the use of drugs, I was intimidated by meetings but still believed that these people were living productive lives and had a backbone that I always dreamed of. They had conversations with their own opinions and their own personalities. I was baffled. When I worked on a 3rd step with a sponsor, he told me about how it is to make a decision to continue with the steps. It sounded so easy in context, but I didn't realize how much freedom came from making that simple decision.

It was a decision to better myself. To not just dream about what I could be. To face all the emotions that have enslaved me for years and understand why I took them so seriously. To use action, rather than let it fester, was one of the hardest, best decisions I've ever made. My whole concept of God is to allow other people into my life to help me better it. Since I believe in the fellowship, I became vulnerable with my support network and they told me to keep going. That it got better. That I would become free from myself. I became more willing to let go of my own principles and morals and believed in the ones that people with freedom I wanted had.

The most freedom from this step that I've experienced was letting go of control. Letting go of the outcome of my life. It was told to me that life is short and could end at any minute, to live it to the fullest, and to experience as much as possible. It wasn't until I let go of the drug and believed that I was WORTHY of experiencing these things that led me to the point of living today. I put the work in areas of my life that I want to succeed in, and everything else works itself out the way it's supposed to be. No matter what I experience or go through I have faith that it will work out the way it's supposed to, and I will be okay.

I heard in a meeting one time that God's will has no boundaries or limitations. Using blocks every dream, every relationship, and destroys my life. With this step I'm able to pursue finding out who I am and what I stand for. It gives me purpose to live. It lets me be responsible for things that I can actually be responsible for. It allows me to be vulnerable, and let other people in. It allows me to feel emotion, pain, love, and trust. It inspires me to let go of the burden I've carried for so many years, and start a new productive life.

-Ricky Raccoon

EXPERIENCE IN N.A.

What the average person thinks of when they think of a junkie: that's not me. I'm talking your typical purse snatching or pan handling type frantically running through the inner city streets that neglected him as a child, desperate for the next one. As a matter of fact, about the only thing I do have in common with that archetype is the one common trait that I believe differentiates all addicts from the rest of the "herd of humanity"- that desperate need for the next one and the uncompromising drive of attaining it by any means necessary.

In the beginning things were innocent enough, an adolescent desperate (theres that word again) for the acceptance of his peers. engaged in an activity he didn't really condone, in order to look cool, instantly experiencing the most radical change in perspective imaginable. I had found the solution to all my problems. I was honestly having too much fun to notice the intimate new relationship I was developing begin to gradually spiral out of control. Gradually became rapidly and before long I had backed myself into a corner that I couldn't get out of. One night in an inebriated stupor I made a feeble attempt on my life that landed me in what would be the first of many stays in the psych ward. It was here that I had my first exposure to NA.

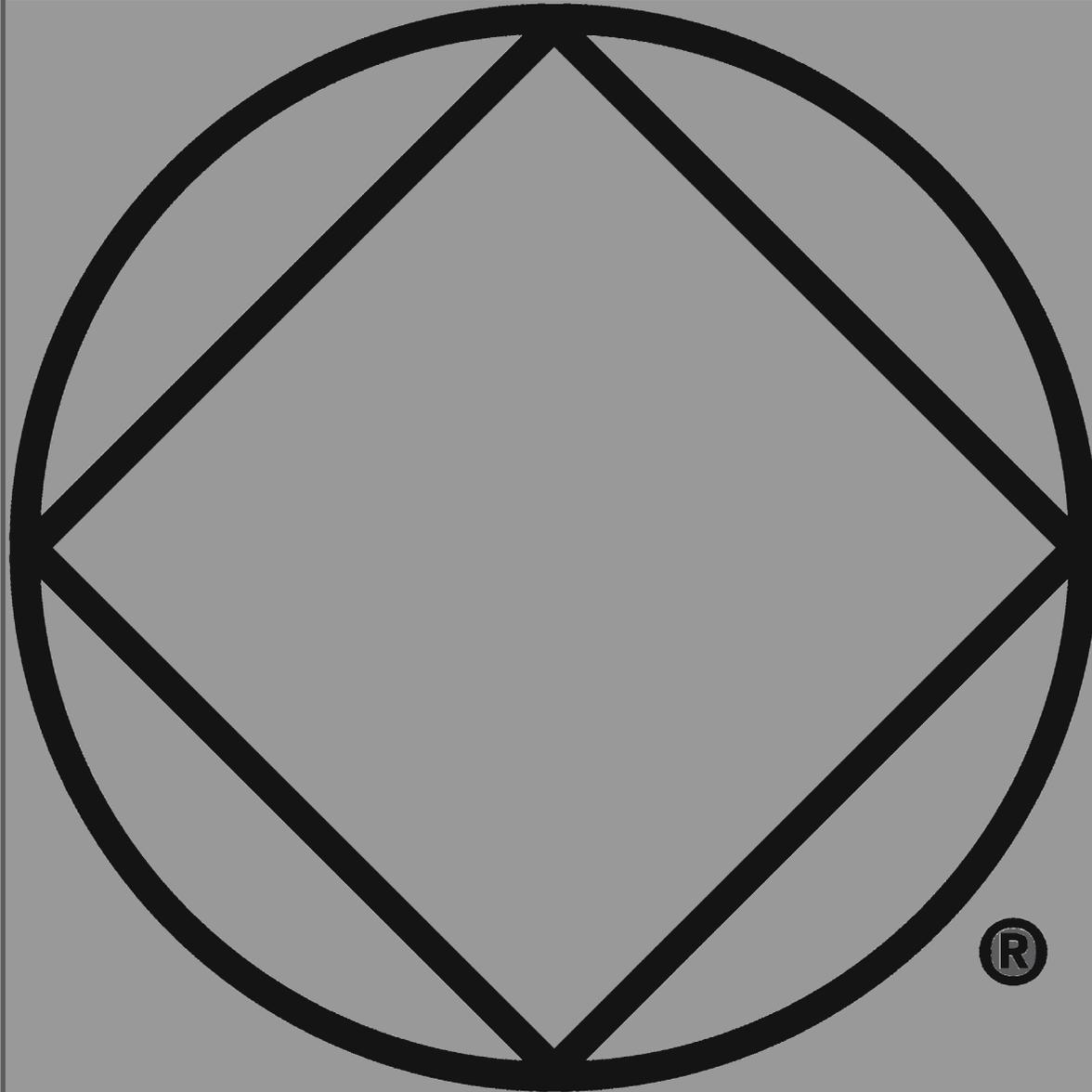
To say I was skeptical at first would be an understatement. NA looked, to me, like the opiate of the addicted masses- the rigid structure looked indoctrinated, the fellowshipping cultist, and the 12 Steps (as I perceived them then) far too authoritative for me to go along with. I was doing everything I could to exclude myself. Needless to say when I got out I was high within 24 hours. The next two years for me were about reaching lower and lower bottoms bouncing from facility to facility, state to state, still disqualifying myself every step of the way. These misadventures culminated in my arrival in this area where, for the first time in my life, I would begin to focus on the similarities I shared with the recovering addicts around me instead of the differences.

I pulled up to the recovery house that I'd soon be calling home for the better part of 3 years, with every intention of repeating the same pattern that had me wearing out my welcome in towns all over the country. I knocked on the door and a man answered with unkempt shoulder length hair that looked like he hadn't showered in days and a Domo T-Shirt on. I was intrigued. He introduced me to his brother who was so rock n roll that that's literally what they called him, and for the first time I started feeling comfortable around people that were clean. I went to meetings with them and they introduced me to a hodge podge cast of characters that could be called anything but normal. They were about a better way of life, the solution to their problems being NA. I found myself wanting what they had and decided it was time to suspend my disbelief.

Meetings lost their “church on Sunday” feeling. I found myself looking forward to them as an opportunity to catch up with friends. I collaborated with many of them on projects outside of NA (some of which are still going strong today) providing me with a much needed outlet for excess energy. Even now as I write this, my main motivator for doing it is that one of those friends is responsible for this publication and she was in need of content. Symbiotic relationships fuel my life today and the people in my inner circle take responsibility for me, and me for them, in a way that only the wonders of this program, and everything that is inherent in NA, could have cultivated.

As I look back on the last 3 years of my life I can trace the growth I've had as a human being just as boldly and definitively as I could the progression of my disease in my addiction. I am becoming a more responsible and productive member of society everyday and for that I am eternally grateful. Without the program of Narcotics Anonymous and the support and company of the friends I've made here, with or without ever having gotten into drugs, I'm not so sure that I would ever honestly be able to say that. You can learn here. You can live here. And you can certainly make life long friends here.

NARCOTICS



®

ANONYMOUS