

# CleanTimes

April - June, 2005

Serving the West Tennessee Area of Narcotics Anonymous

*NA in May in Memphis May 6th, 7th and 8th 2005*

## Humility With the Flip of a Coin

I arrived in Tulsa in October 1997, a couple of days before Halloween. It had to be a Monday night. I had a week clean and I was struggling with that concept. I say that because I had been going to meetings, but I had not surrendered to the idea that NA was the way to stay clean. I did, however, know that something had to change in my life. I started attending meetings from the first night I arrived in Tulsa. Geographic changes do not always work for any period of time, but this one worked long enough for me to get a foot hold and make some contacts. I was in a position to go to meetings every day and night. In Tulsa, one could make an average of three to four meetings a day. I guess you could say that I obsessed about going to meetings. There were a couple of members that stuck out for me more than others, Doug and Lester. It was not hard to notice that they both had their own personalities.

When I first met Doug I found that we had something in common. Doug was a welder and I was going to Welding School. I remember trying to talk to him about welding to strike a conversation with him, but he always seemed to be a little stand-offish. He seemed to be a little angry at life. The more meetings I went to I heard a little bit of Doug's story (gossip) from others. I heard that when Doug first came to these rooms he went through the revolving door that some addicts have to go through. I was told that members had told him to "Keep Coming Back" so many times that Doug was nicknamed "Come Back Doug". I have to admit that the first time I heard this I got so angry about Doug being labeled with that name I could have cried. The longer I knew Doug, it seemed the more angry he got. He would come to meetings and rant and rave about things that did not sound sensible to me, and the old timers would accept him for what he was, an addict. I heard that Doug at one time in life had over 11 years abstinent and then relapsed. This was the time that I first met Doug, right after his last relapse.

I need to also tell you about the other addict that stood out to me, Lester. Lester was a member of "The Tulsa Original Group." I went to this meeting every Wednesday and Sunday nights. The format of this meeting was to split up into two meetings after the opening readings

were read. The format was to take the newcomers into their own meeting and have a book study on the first three steps and the first five chapters of the "Basic Text." The old timers would stay and do a book study out of "It Works, How and Why." It was all suggestions, but the format recommended for anyone with less than ninety days attend the newcomers. I always chose to attend the Newcomer meeting. I learned a lot in those meetings. Just about every newcomer meeting I attended Lester also attended. Lester had between 10 and 11 years clean when I first met him. Lester would come to the meetings wearing a polyester suit. Lester always looked well-groomed, always wore a tie and his socks and shirt matched. I have to say that Lester was definitely noticed when he walked into any room. I really got to know Lester very well. Lester shared about his fears and tears in those meetings. Lester also shared his recovery in those meetings. It is so wild how much you learn if you just listen. I don't mean listen to just the words shared in meetings, I mean listen to the feelings we share in meetings. Lester had Hepatitis C and didn't get tested until he was 6 years clean. Lester knew he was dying. Lester would come to those meetings and share about his fears and hopes. Sometimes Lester would cry and we would cry with him. These meetings were very humbling meetings. I mean I would come to a meeting thinking that my life was a piece of poop because my car broke down or because I had a using dream and Lester would show me just how good I had it. I do have to say that Lester was really not a downer type of person. He laughed and joked with his friends. He was the life of the meetings in those "meetings after the meetings" we used to have in Tulsa. At those meetings you would think he had not a worry in the world.

Things got a little rough for me, financially I mean, and I made the decision to return to Memphis. About two weeks before I was going to leave Lester died, he won his war, he died clean. I was heart broken. The whole fellowship, it seemed, was at his wake and funeral, standing room only. I miss Lester. Even more wild, a week before I left Doug was found dead in his car from an overdose, the disease won. Again, standing room only. Support was strong for both members.

Now here comes the flip of the coin. Anytime I feel my life is poop I flip a coin, heads I think of Lester and the pain he must have gone through or tails I think of the pain Doug went through. Either memory is a very humbling experience for me. Even today I try to keep the memory of Lester alive in my life by giving away my card with my name and phone number on one side and a poem called "Humility" on the back to newcomers, because Lester used to give away the same poem when he was here.

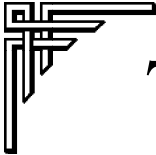
In Humble Loving Service,  
Mark R.

P.S. If anyone would like to see this poem, let me know. I carry it in my back pocket.

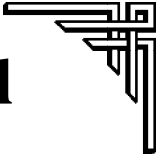
### The recovery of partnership

*"As long as I take it easy and make a commitment with my Higher Power to do the best I can, I know I will be taken care of today."*

Basic Text, p. 120



**Take my will  
and my life  
Guide me in  
my recovery  
Show me how  
to live**



**3rd Step Prayer**



# **Why Service at the Area and Regional Levels Is Important to My Recovery** by Tim H.

Service has been an integral part of my recovery since I was a newcomer. At two months clean, I spent a considerable portion of my first NA In May In Memphis campout in the kitchen cleaning dishes. My patience and humility were sorely tested, but I believe that by the end of the weekend, I was beginning to feel good about my place in the fellowship. I felt as though I really did belong here, and I was comfortable with trying not to prove that I was somehow unique. That first taste of service was the beginning of becoming more successful at living Tim's life inside of Tim's skin.

At six months clean, I volunteered for service on the H&I committee, and began what has become my longest continuous service commitment. I sought the advice of my sponsor and other recovering addicts before offering my service, and I was assured that if I were truly committed to doing the right thing for the right reason, my work would pay me back in multiples. As is so often the case with this fellowship, the people who have been around longer than I had insight that eventually showed it to me. My work in H&I has sustained my recovery at some times when my disease was pushing hard on my self-obsession. By offering my experience in recovery to others, I have constantly been reminded of what this program can do in my life if I am willing to make the effort to apply the principles.

At eighteen months clean, the chairmanship of the H&I committee became open, and I was asked to fill the position. I was very apprehensive at first, but not because I wasn't sure if I could handle the job. My ever-present ego told me that I could whip this committee into shape in no time, but my insidious low self-esteem wanted me to believe that other NA members would doubt my abilities because of my lack of clean time. Somewhere in the process, I believe that the patience and humility that had slowly awakened in me over a year-and-a-half helped me to see that if my motives were spiritual and unselfish, my Higher Power would lead me in my efforts.

Over the next two years, I learned more about my ability to practice tolerance and acceptance, frequently concerning my own behavior and shortcomings. As I became more involved with other addicts at the area level, I began to recognize my ego-induced behavior more readily, and I was able to ask for help with my closed-mindedness more easily. During some contentious ASC sessions, I was able to sit back and accept where the discussion was going more often than in the past. I was letting go and letting my HP drive, at least some of the time. I felt like I was actually growing spiritually, and that burning hole of self-doubt was getting smaller all the time. I was making more and more friends within the fellowship and finding that I truly appreciated the strength and hope that they shared with me. When my second term as H&I chair was finished, I was happy with the work that our committee had accomplished, and I figured that it was time for me to step back and rest on my accomplishments. I guess that my HP had other plans for me, however.

After a short period of time without a service position other than my H&I panel work at Lakeside, I was asked if I would be willing to assume the role of Alternate RCM for the West TN Area. I consulted my sponsor, and we decided that Regional service was something that could offer me further growth in my recovery. The first VRSC meeting that I attended was quite an eye-opener, as the discussion on our state tax obligations became heated and protracted. I wondered what I had bought into, especially since the prospective RCM had withdrawn his name from consideration by this time. I thought that I would be representing my area alone, and I wondered if I was up to the task. It was then that my sponsor and my friend D'Etta C. both reminded me that in NA I need never be alone. I had the support and experience of many addicts to draw upon, and this strength was freely available to me at anytime. Since that first weekend in Nashville, I have been blessed with the opportunity to grow in fellowship and enjoy the myriad resources associated with the vast group of people I have come to know from across the Volunteer Region. After one year as Alternate RCM and two years as RCM, I look forward to sharing this experience with another member of the West TN Area of NA. I hope that this article will help convince someone of the rewards available through service, and that they will step up to a commitment to serve as Alternate RCM until this fall. That way, I can help acquaint them with the responsibilities and joy that I have found in Regional service. My gratitude to NA and the WTANA will show when I am able to share the rewards of service with all interested recovering addicts. Thank you all for allowing me to serve.

In service to recovery, Tim H.

**Editors Note:** This was taken from the Narcotics Anonymous Ireland Website so I feel this should be NA approved literature.

## ***Narcotics Anonymous Ireland Serenity Prayer in Irish***

A Thiarna

Cuidigh liom a bheith sásta

glachadh leis an méid

nach féidir liom a athróe,

Tabhair an misneach dom

athróe a dhéanamh nuair is féider;

Ach go mor mor,

Tabhair an aigne dom

an dáchinéal a athint —na chéile

***And for those of you whose Irish is a little rusty here's the phonetic pronunciation...***

A Heerna

kiddy lium aveh sawsta

glockoo lesh on made

nock faydir lium a ahroo

Toor on mishnock dum

ahroo a yaynav noor is faydir

ock go more more

toor on agna dum

on daw kinawl a ahint oh kayla

## **NEW MEETING IN TOWN**

# **Farfromusën**

### **TUESDAY NIGHTS 8:00 P.M.**

Heartsong Church  
800 Houston Levee Rd.  
Cordova, TN 39018

*Don't Forget!*

# **Lunch with the Bunch**

every 3rd Sunday at the Lunch Bunch  
258 Merton  
Everett Memorial United Methodist Church

### **How Well Do You Know Your Basic Text?**

*In what chapter in our Basic Text  
are these sentences found?*

We cannot save our ass and our face at the same time.

The ability to face problems is necessary to stay clean.

We are addicts seeking recovery.

We had to reach our bottom.

Not only is this way of life better than the hell we lived, it is better than any life that we have ever known.

.....  
*If you have a group you would like show-cased in the Cleantimes Newsletter, or have an article, cartoon, poetry, or whatever sharing experience, strength and hope, please contact me, Connie G., 266-2430 or at kateyesldy40@aol.com.*

# Birthdays and Anniversaries

## April

Debbie F. - 4/10 - 23 Years - Clear A.I.R. of Memphis  
Marc R. - 4/11 - 2 Years - Cordova Hope  
Tommy W. - 4/12 - 12 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Claibourne S. - 4/16 - 25 Years - D.H.F.  
Mark V. - 4/21 - 1 Year - Clear A.I.R. of Memphis  
Arlena A. - 4/22 - 3 Years - Positive Image  
Sherry W. - 4/23 - 12 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Kelly R. - 4/23 - 2 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Steve A. - 4/23 - 4 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Trinity P. - 4/25 - 1 Year - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Jimmy Mc. - 4/26 - 1 Year - Cordova Hope

## May

Vivienne S. - 5/1 - 7 Years - Cordova Hope  
Gretchen V. - 5/3 - 1 Year - Cordova Hope  
Bobby K. - 5/4 - 1 Year - Cordova Hope  
Lee H. - 5/4 - 1 Year - Cordova Hope  
Tommy M. - 5/5 - 3 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Jolene - 5/5 - 25 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Melvin F. - 5/5 - 1 Year - Positive Image  
Jason E. - 5/6 - 9 Years - The Attic  
Christine - 5/6 - 18 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Nicholas M. - 5/8 - 14 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Alice F. - 5/13 - 13 Years - Positive Image  
Bill R. - 5/21 - 4 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Laura W. - 5/23 - 2 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Kevin C. - 5/25 - 6 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Harold F. - 5/26 - 5 Years - New Beginnings

## June

Joann T. - 6/11 - 15 Years - Positive Image  
Pearl - 6/12 - 4 Years - Positive Image  
Kasha W. - 6/15 - 2 Years - Cordova Hope  
Polk O. - 6/18 - 13 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Kendo - 6/16 - 2 Years - Positive Image  
Valerie D. - 6/30 - 9 Years - Positive Image

*Editors Note:* I apologize if your birthday has been omitted. Please get with your GSR of your Home Group and have them contact me, Connie G. - 266-2430 or at kateyesldy40@aol.com for the next issue. Please note these are actual clean dates and birthdays may be celebrated on a different day. Listen for announcements in meetings for exact date of celebration.

## Who was Jimmy K?

Together with Frank and Doris C., Guildia K., Paul R., Steve R., and others, Jimmy K. founded Narcotics Anonymous in Southern California. He and these members held a series of meetings beginning August 17, 1953 in order to organize what was then referred to as "San Fernando Valley Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous." The first documented recovery meeting in Southern California was held on October 5, 1953.

Jimmy is a key figure in NA's history for several reasons. He wrote several portions of the Little White Booklet, the most famous of which is the "End of the Road" section. He designed the NA logo (later modified by the WSC). He served as the volunteer office manager of the WSO from the time it began to 1983.

Jimmy K. lived from 1911 to 1985. The last 36 years of his life were spent as a clean and recovering member of Narcotics Anonymous.

-Excerpt from NA World Services' NA Magazine®

# NA in May in Memphis

**May 6th, 7th & 8th, 2005**

**Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park  
Piersol Group Campsite**

## 12 Categories

Pork Ribs, Pork Shoulder, Beef, Poultry, Sauce,  
Beans, Vegetarian, Exotic, Backyard Style,  
Hot Wings, Cakes n Bakes & Showmanship

PLEASE register before April 30 by calling  
901-292-6022 or email to nainmay@hotmail.com.

ANY person, group, area, whatever may enter a team but must  
agree and abide by registration  
conditions and cookout rules and must provide their own  
cooking equipment and supplies!

# NA WORLDWIDE WORKSHOP

**May 27-29, 2005**

*Friday Evening to Sunday Afternoon*

**Talk about Infrastructure, Our  
Public Image, and other issues  
important to NA**

Doubletree Nashville-Downtown  
315 4th Ave. N.  
Nashville TN 37219  
Rooms: \$109/night  
Reservations: 615-244-8200

This is one of only two Worldwide Workshops to be  
held in North America this conference cycle. The  
other workshop will be in Burbank, California on  
April 15-17, 2005