



# **THE CLEANSHEET**

## **Dallas Area Newsletter**

### **November 2006**

Email us letters/comments: [cleansheet@dallasareana.org](mailto:cleansheet@dallasareana.org)  
Helpline: 1-888-NAWORKS or 972-699-9306

Dave M. Newsletter Chair 214.717.8260 david.mundt@gmail.com

**THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: FREEDOM FROM ACTIVE ADDICTION**



*The Cleansheet needs your support. Please take a minute of your time to share your experience, strength, and hope. Email submissions to The Cleansheet at [cleansheet@dallasareana.org](mailto:cleansheet@dallasareana.org) by November 24th for the November Edition*

*If you don't have access to email and would like to submit an article call Dave M. @ 214.717.8260*

# IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!!!

## CENTRAL GROUP

Joyce Mc. 1 year  
 Angeliqeu F. 2 years  
 Chuck C. 2 years  
 Pat S. 5 years  
 Chris W. 5 years  
 Sammie H. 5 years  
 Thomas G. 5 years  
 Joseph G. 7 years  
 Cleo F. 7 years  
 Phyllis C. 7 years  
 Eric D. 10 years  
 Kelvin B. 10 years  
 Sharon F. 11 years  
 Kenneth 14 years  
 James S. 15 years

## CARROLTON/ FARMERS BRANCH

Adam R. 30 days  
 Neil 30 days  
 Grecia 60 days  
 Steven W. 60 days  
 Suzy W. 60 days  
 Steve 60 days  
 Laura 60 days  
 Virginia A. 6 months  
 Carrie 9 months  
 Casey G. 2 years

## COURAGE TO CHANGE

Stephanie 30 days  
 Brenda 6 months  
 Marcus 9 months  
 Delores 9 months  
 Shirley 2 years  
 Lirery 7 years

## GROVE GROUP

Angela L. 1 year  
 Laura E. 18 months  
 Lori H. 2 years  
 Albert W. 4 years  
 Willie D. 4 years  
 Albert W. 5 years  
 Lamont A. 5 years  
 Janel J. 6 years  
 Shirley B. 7 years  
 Donna L. 8 years  
 Redell W. 10 years  
 Thomas B. 10 years  
 Louis H. 14 years  
 Victor W. 14 years  
 B.J. 19 years

## TOWN EAST GROUP

Nona 30 days  
 Christina A. 30 days  
 Michael A. 30 days  
 Isaac G. 60 days  
 Austin G. 90 days  
 Toni S. 1 year  
 Chelsea G. 1 year  
 Mandy M. 2 years  
 Clyde M. 2 years  
 Ely R. 2 years  
 Glen W. 5 years  
 Brad P. 6 years  
 David R. 7 years

## WAXAHACHIE

Moriah 60 days  
 David 90 days  
 Geneva 9 months  
 Clay B. 1 year  
 Phillip W. 1 year

## WORK STEPS AND LIVE

Rebecca F. 30 days  
 Vicky 30 days  
 Ben H. 30 days  
 Larry B. 30 days  
 Ed P. 60 days  
 Melissa G. 2 years  
 Becky B. 3 years  
 Warren B. 3 years  
 Ruben N. 8 years  
 Pat G. 14 years  
 Ray F. 18 years

## WYLIE

Krissy 9 months  
 Andrena 9 months  
 Mike K. 18 months

If your groups birthdays were excluded and you would like to get them printed here please get with your GSR and ask him/ her to turn in your groups birthdays at the next Dallas Area service meeting.

The Cleansheet would love to recognize your birthday too. Send it to us [cleansheet@dallasarea.org](mailto:cleansheet@dallasarea.org).

## WRITINGS FROM THE FRONTLINE

### UNITY

This past weekend the Waxahachie group had their first annual picnic and there was unity shining through. It was pouring rain and still people showed up to support the group. We had an awesome day with the speakers who came out to share their experience, strength and hope with us. Without the unity of Narcotics Anonymous that event would not have been possible. Unity to me is a very important part of my recovery. It allows me to know that I am not alone in this journey and that there is hope all around me.

*Amy S. Waxahachie Group*

### UNITY

Our literature states. "Personal recovery depends on NA unity... and that unity depends on how well we follow our traditions." One of the definitions of unity is: harmony of opinion, interest, or feeling. It is clearly stated in our literature The Twelve Traditions are NOT NEGOTIABLE.

Harmony of opinion, interest, or feeling (UNITY) as members of NA, requires to understand OUR COMMON WELFARE should come first. Survival of the individual members depends upon the ongoing survival of "NA" groups and when our twelve traditions are taken as a set of guidelines, when there are conflicts, the traditions instruct us that our common welfare ought to be given a higher weight of importance.

Failing to understand this, can undermine a Groups ability to provide a clean safe place to recover.

The twelve traditions were developed from post mortems of Twelve Step groups that DIED. When our literature refers to "our predecessors HARD WON EXPERIENCE", it is telling us members and groups suffered and/ or died to help us learn this information. It is important to honor that our "COMMON WELFARE" must come before the welfare of any one individual. Our literature states, "We find that what is best for the group, is usually best for us".

Dallas Area Addict

### "SERENITY"

A year ago today I was livin, gettin high;  
doing drugs and alcohol, had so many reason why.  
with no self-love, wasn't capable to live life on its terms

escaping problems, and bad feelings  
drugs was all that I could yearn.

then I found a way to get back to a life worth living well;  
found a program with a system, to escape my living hell.

only twelve sweet steps –  
I walked them, got my feet on solid ground.  
found true friendship, learned about me,  
from addiction, got unwound.

let me tell you then, my secret, it's so simple and it's free,  
steps have led me to a better place where I can just be me.  
don't need to front don't need to lie

I live now just for today.  
if you want what I have gotten, then you got to try N.A.

It's a place where you can understand, and yet be understood;  
it's a place that's safe and loving,  
things you won't find in the hood.

if you wake each day afraid that you won't find that old "next one,"  
give yourself a break and try N.A., for this battle *can* be won.,

it don't cost no money, just your time; and you can be set free.  
if true happiness eludes you, then just take this tip from me.

just surrender, walk the 12 steps, get some spirituality

joy can be yours  
if you want it – then you'll find serenity.

*Deborah J. P. Steps of Life Group Wisconsin*

## Freedom From Active Addiction

When I first came into the rooms of NA, I had some idea of abstaining from using because I'd had a 10-year period of abstinence, but no program of recovery. So, it was just a matter of time for me until I picked up again because I had no knowledge of the nature of my disease of addiction.

Well, it's been almost 4 years now, and God has taken away the urge to use my drug of choice, and for that I'm eternally grateful. But as the old saying goes, "**freedom ain't free**" and I have certain obligations that I must commit to in order to maintain this blessing of release from the urge to use. Want to hear 3 of them? Time, space, and your attention span require that I limit it to three, o.k.?

1. I'm committed to maintaining my **focus on living one day at a time**, which frees me from fear of the future and resentment of the past. When I drop it down to one day, **THIS DAY**, it makes it easy for me to keep things simple and to do my best within **THIS 24-hr period**. My freedom from active addiction depends on me keeping things simple, one day at a time. I am an expert at complicating things, so this is really a commitment that's difficult, but Mama said that anything worth having (**FREEDOM**) is worth working for!! Actually, she said it's "worth waiting for", but if I work the program, I don't have to wait, I can have my freedom **NOW**, one day at a time!!! As an addict, you know I struggle with patience

2. I'm committed to **participating in the fellowship of NA through meeting attendance, special events, service work, and sponsorship**. This builds my awareness of the power of unity and identification with people from all walks of life, all cultures, all perspectives, and all personalities who are **JUST LIKE ME!!!** Wow, what a feeling to belong to something where I'm not required to pay for membership or meet some other materialistic requirement. I belong because I only have to have a **desire to stop using and be willing to learn how to live a new way of life!!** Our freedom is in our unity and within our unity diversity is welcomed and encouraged I'm glad that I've found a place where I fit in just as I am, by others who are also enjoying the freedom from active addiction by working a program of recovery.

3. I'm committed to **working the 12 steps and the 12 traditions and doing my best to practice the spiritual principles they espouse** as I move through my day each and every day. Does this mean that I'm a "spiritual guru" who oozes spirituality and has this serene look on my face 24/7? **NO WAY!** This means that I do my best to be aware of whether my actions, words, and behavior are causing harm to myself or others. This also means that I reach out to other addicts to bounce ideas off of them, because my thinking is sometimes confused and confusing, and I need input from others to make sure I'm not about to do something stupid, harmful, or just plain **WRONG!** **THIS IS WORK**, but I willingly accept this challenge because my freedom is so precious, that **I'll go to any lengths to protect it, by any means necessary.**

There it is, my thoughts on the awesome freedom I've found from active addiction within the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. This is just one woman's opinion. what's yours? This is also the first time I've had the **NERVE** to submit something to the CleanSheet!!! Wow!!! Thanks for allowing me to share!

Lou A., Grove Group

## Dear Cleansheet,

What does the term freedom from active addiction mean? Is it as simple as "I don't ever have to use again?" Or does it have many more benefits than just that?

I don't remember exactly when the obsession to use was lifted for the first time. What I do know is that today, thanks to N A, things that would have run me to the dope house in the past are a minor inconvenience. I don't want to get high when life shows up. I can walk into a grocery store or corner gas station and get a coke without thinking of the alcohol on the shelf. Is that freedom? NA helped me grow up. I don't throw as many temper tantrums as I used to. By applying a few of the principles I've begun to learn, my life has gotten much easier.

My personal relationships both at home and in the world are getting better. I'm improving at allowing others to be who they are. Is that freedom? I don't have to control anything or anybody. That is not always easy but today at least I'm involved in the process. My higher power is taking care of me today. All I have to do is keep moving toward the right direction. Toward that point of freedom.

William A. Town East Narcotics Anonymous

## Freedom From Active Addiction

The first thing that comes to mind is no longer thinking about drugs 24/7. Where was I going to get more, how was I going to get the money, was it going to be any good or another disappointment. My mind and body is now free from that pain and misery.

My life is so much more than that now. I feel good about myself, I trust in a loving and caring Higher Power, and I have clean friends who love me no matter what my life was like in the past.

I got clean at Northside in 1994. It was scary. People did not think I would make it. I got a standing ovation when I picked up my 30 days, then 60 days, and so on. Now I am back in college, work full time, I am a sponsor and a sponsee, and I also have constantly been in a service position for the last three years. I have a full life that is without chaos. Why? Because of the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous and this program of recovery. I live with hope, love, honesty, forgiveness, and trust.

Debbie H. 12/9/94 Wisconsin

## Freedom from Active Addiction

Before coming to the program I made choices by default. The type of work I did, what car I drove, the people I associated with, I didn't think of these as choices I thought of them as the best I could do. Yet, I thought I did have a choice when it came to using. I never realized I had given up my choice years ago until I tried to quit.

When I decided that getting high every single day just didn't seem like the way to live and decided I needed to "cut back" I realized I no longer had a choice. At some point I had crossed the invisible line and "my solution for living" had become a problem. Even thinking about quitting made me want to use more. I had convinced myself I had some type of control over my life. It's like that one realization made the walls of an illusion come tumbling down. I wasn't happy, my life wasn't going along as planned, there was no plan and I was adrift on a lonely sea of isolation. It wasn't so much that using was my problem, it was more that I used to cover up my inability to live my life in relationship with bosses, peers, friends, loved ones, everyone. I did not feel comfortable around people, I did not trust anyone to care about my best interest, I felt totally abandoned by God if there was one and really had no clue what to do about it.

A counselor told me that if I wanted to get help I would have to quit using. I was told that I couldn't work on my inability to relate and then go get high when things became uncomfortable. He then told me about Narcotics Anonymous. He said that an associate was a member and they could help me quit getting high. I decided I would go to NA and quit using then find a counselor to help with my apparent issues with life. Those things I could not get through clean.

I showed up and listened to the readings and people sharing. I started to believe that I could get clean and it didn't mean I would be miserable and fearful for the rest of my life. I began to put together some days clean. I began to follow suggestions like "keep coming back". I got a Basic Text and began to read it. I got a sponsor and began working the steps. I asked a higher power to keep me clean in the morning and thanked my higher power for keeping me clean at night. I took on a commitment to open the meeting once a week. I showed up for clean up day and attended the business meeting. I began to feel a part of something like I was doing something good with my life.

I was told that if I wrote down everything I expected to get from the program in a year I would cheat myself. That has been true for me each year I've stayed clean. I started a new life when I got clean. I went from a frightened little girl who felt no one loved her to a beautiful woman who is learning to take personal responsibility for her choices. Our literature says there is only one promise in this program and that is the promise of freedom from active addiction. For me, that one promise has blossomed into a life.

Anonymous.....

Before sending anything in to us at the cleansheet please read and understand the following disclaimer.

By submitting your entry you are saying that you understand that, if selected for publication, your material will be edited in keeping with NA's understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Submissions will be copyedited to ensure ease of comprehension and adherence to the rules of English grammar. In addition, editorial staff may also substitute different words and/or revise sentence structure for clarification. You further understand that this material may possibly be retitled and/or reprinted in other NA Fellowship journals.

We at the cleansheet look forward to hearing from you.

**THE TOPIC FOR THE DECEMBER EDITION OF THE CLEANSHEET IS  
FREEDOM FROM ACTIVE ADDICTION**

## Addicts' Corner...

**This month's question: "What does "freedom from active addiction mean to me?"**

"Freedom from the use of drugs. Freedom from obsession and compulsion."  
*Felicia S., Northside*

"Never having to use again. Ever, ever, ever."  
*Bambi, Central*

"I no longer have to use. The fourth step talks about the "pressure cooker." I no longer have pressure in my pressure cooker. No skeletons in my closet. I can get into self acceptance. I can look the world in the eye and accept myself for who I am. I have an unshakable relationship with the God of my understanding. Living the steps to the best of my ability and applying the principles of recovery in every area of my life."  
*Alvin, Grove*

"I don't have to live that way anymore."  
*Tim, Tyler*

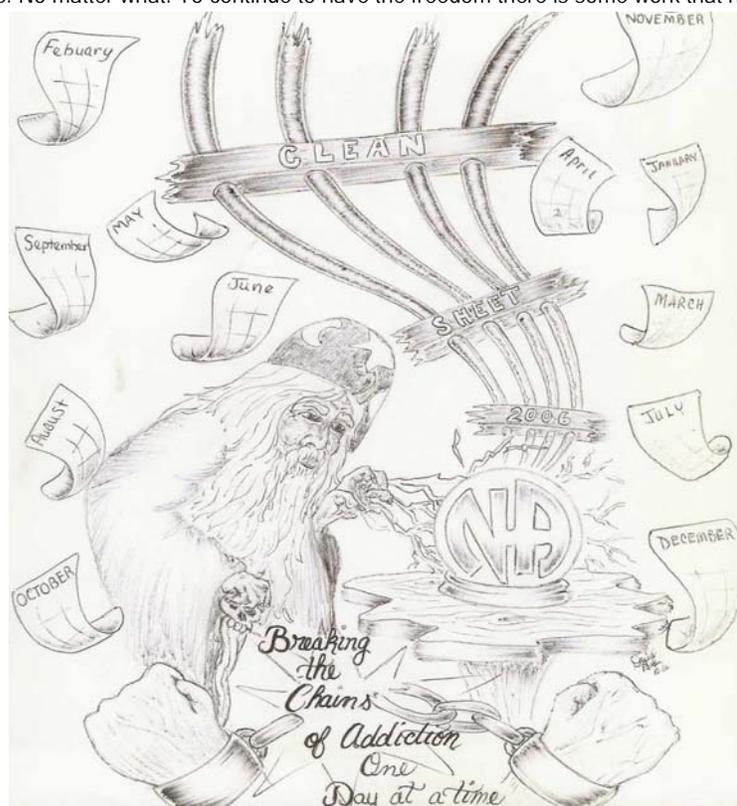
"Sanity has been restored. I have a clear path to have a relationship with the God of my understanding. A door open to have a spiritual connection. I am able to have a life again. I am able to be a brother, son, and uncle. I am able to participate in life. I have choices."  
*Donnie, Northside*

"The feeling of freedom from active addiction...the ability to make my own choices, to voice my opinions, to live my own life, not bound by my addiction, no a prisoner."  
*Norma, Grove*

"Being able to be free of self bondage. Free to enjoy life and accept life as it is. Being able to through without the use of drugs. I am able to go through all the obstacles without the use of drugs. No matter what. To continue to have the freedom there is some work that has to be done to keep that freedom. I have to do the spiritual maintenance. I go to meetings, talk to people, a God of my understanding, and service work."  
*Melody, Northside*

"Opportunities."  
*Anthony V., Duncanville*

"It means freedom from the use of drugs, freedom from obsession and compulsion, denial, self centeredness. Free from the destructive nature of the disease of addiction."  
*Tracie T., Duncanville*



# **WHAT'S GOING IN THE DALLAS AREA!!!**

## **Upcoming Dallas Area Service Conferences**

December

Carrolton Group 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month Get involved!!!!

## **Upcoming Events**

### **H&I Subcommittee Meetings**

November 19th @ 2pm Irving Group

Come and get involved in spreading the message of hope after dope

### **NORTHSIDE GROUP'S 19TH ANNIVERSARY**

Spiritual Principles Speaker Jam

Northside Group, 9236 Markville, Dallas, Texas, 75243

November 11th noon till 9pm. Come join in some fun, food, fellowship!!!

### **CENTRAL GROUP 21ST ANNIVERSARY**

Crown Plaza Hotel, 14315 Midway, Addison, Texas, 75001

November 24 – 26th

### **WORK STEPS AND LIVE NA**

Friday Night Speaker Jam

2125 SW. 3rd, Grand Prairie, TX, 75051

December 1, 2006

### **Area Committee Meetings**

Cleansheet Committee Meeting November 26th<sup>th</sup> 4:30pm @ Town East Group

### **Lone Star Regional Convention XXII**

**Never Alone Never Again**

**April 5-8 2007**

Holiday Inn Select, 5701 S. Broadway, Tyler, TX

### **Outreach Committee FLOOD PARTY**

Stonewall Group

November 2nd and 16th at 7:30

# FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Hello friends! My name is Repe, and I am an addict. I got a strong urge to write to you because I found faith and hope from an earlier issue of *The NA Way* (October 2002). I am currently serving time in prison in Finland.\* I committed all of my crimes before I cleaned up. I drove my life down to the ground by drug abuse, and my only choice was between treatment and prison. Had I not chosen treatment, I do not think I would be writing this letter to you. When I was released from prison in 2000, I started looking for professional help to get rid of drugs. I did not yet understand that I would have to change my whole life in order to stay clean and have a life worth living. I went to a rehab center, where I found out about Narcotics Anonymous. The center offered the possibility of attending NA groups, and I took the opportunity, hanging on for my life. I sensed from the start that this was the way for me to go. This sense was strengthened by information offered to me at the rehab clinic. After attending the first group, I no longer felt that I was alone. There were lots of others dealing with the same issues I had. It was a relief to hear and see people who had survived and returned to society. I spent a month in rehab and moved on to a treatment center where NA was an integral part of the program. At first, I attended the groups five to six times a week to get some understanding of what the fellowship was all about. Thinking about it now, it took about four months until I began to understand what NA was and why people went there. Of course, I did not yet imagine or believe that I would be attending NA for the rest of my life or that my whole life would be built around NA. A member with long-term recovery advised me to attend the groups regardless of how I felt. I was also advised to talk about how I felt when I did not know what else to talk about. So I started talking about my feelings, thoughts, troubles, my life, my joys, my sorrows, faith, and everything that was on my mind. I have done very well until today because of this suggestion. Over time, I started getting to know the people and services the local group offered. NA literature has become an important part of my recovery—especially here in prison. As my treatment at the rehab clinic came to an end, I moved into my new home, and the help I got through NA became very tangible. I remember feeling lonely, hopeless, and completely incapable of living a clean life in society. Following suggestions, I made a decision to attend NA meetings even when I was feeling depressed and downcast. As I entered the group meeting, I felt something like a giant wave go through my body, washing away my thoughts of loneliness and hopelessness. These thoughts were replaced by an overwhelming sensation of belonging that lasted for the rest of the night. It was the first experience of my new life with NA and with a power greater than myself. I remember everything about that night like it happened yesterday, and I enjoy reliving it. My life started settling down, and I got a job. While life was moving ahead (as it is still doing), I started evaluating myself in the way suggested by the program. I did not set the program aside to "wait" until I needed it. I stay focused on the program daily and try to find answers to my problems in it. I met my sponsor early in my recovery, and we have a great relationship. At one point, I was going to leave the relationship to find a new sponsor, when he was not behaving the way I wanted him to! After our disagreement (which only occurred in my mind), we got closer and our relationship got even deeper. I think the same rules apply between friends and with an addict and his sponsor: A friend/sponsor listens, supports, offers suggestions, encourages, mourns, and shares his opinions, as well as the victories and defeats of life. You can reveal your true self to a friend/sponsor exactly as you are without fear of rejection or condemnation. Healthy relationships are important, which is easy to forget in the busyness of everyday life. I was understandably scared when I entered prison after 2½ years clean. I used to deliver drugs into that prison, trying to avoid getting checked by the guards and personnel. I stepped through the doors of the feared central prison in Helsinki with very conflicting thoughts and emotions. My first hopes were to hook up with a group quickly and get transferred to a more peaceful prison. A couple of weeks later I was transferred to such a prison, where I am now writing this letter. I have faced my addiction here in its most brutal manifestation with no form of consolation. That has been hard to swallow whole, and on many occasions I have looked in the mirror, asking myself whether I am really like this. I have had to forgive myself and ask for God's direction. This is how life moves me, and recovery will not take me anywhere if I do not choose to work it. Today I am capable of facing my fears. My thoughts are with my new friends who do not take drugs and who have found a new way of life. "As long as I follow this way, I have nothing to fear."

Thank you, NA.

*Reijo S, Helsinki, Finland Taken from The NA Way October 2003*

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