

Letter from the Editor:

This is one way to carry the message of recovery and to reach sick and suffering addicts. On some days that is me. Please share your stories. Share your experience strength and hope or share your art. This is your newsletter. This is your area. All you have to do is email us at: **lit@bascna.org** to submit something! *Thank You!*

Growth

When life shows up not sure what to do, Surrender turned over have faith I'll get through. I'm only human with fear anger pain so strong, It's okay not to be okay when things go wrong. Thank God I have a program to help me deal

With all these feelings I have, the struggle is real.
Used to run away from myself and the feelings I had,
When life got hard I did things that were bad.
Acted out, forced my own will,

Obsessive compulsive could not sit still.

Acceptance and patience my disease would not allow.

Wanted what I wanted and wanted it now.

Never ending thoughts couldn't get any rest,

Scheming and plotting completely obsessed.

It's amazing how much things have changed.

Through the process of recovery thoughts rearranged,

I can feel what I feel without running away,

Without acting out or using just for today.

Reach out share my struggle with people, who care,

Get a new perspective experience to share.

Accepting the things I can't control,

Gives me peace and serenity soothes my soul.

Courage to face life as it comes my way,

No matter what happens in life I have N.A.
When the struggle is over and I make it through,
The blessings are great the Hope comes true.
I can live life on life's terms and be okay,
Things get better if I don't use and get out of the way.



24-Hour Helpline 888-779-7117 Call before you use!

A Chance

When I found Narcotics Anonymous, all I wanted to do was stay out of jail. If I could just stay clean for the next nine months. I could get off of this program. I had no idea that by sticking and staying for a little while, my entire life would change and I would want to stay clean, but that's my story. I showed up to get my paper signed, and I found the answer to and entire lifetime worth of problems, selfinflicted and other wise, in the 12 steps. When I was out there I messed a lot of things up, mostly out of fear. Fear of failure, fear of success, fear of being imperfect. So I just got high. I got high and I ran away, until none of the opportunities even existed anymore. All that changed when I found NA. I stopped using, and I began to find a new way to live. The impossible became possible. Through the steps I was able to drop those fears and just do my best. I became a friend. I became employable. I became a 3.8 student. I got my son back, and became a mother again twice. I became a wife again. NA gave me the tools to become a success in every aspect of the word. All I had to do was work the steps and not use, one day at a time. How could it be so simple? I had no idea, but I went with it. In NA I learned that we don't use, no matter what... and we SHOW UP and do our best even when we don't feel like it. If you lose your job... If the car breaks down... If the meeting is cancelled... if your boyfriend gets diagnosed with leukemia... And he did, when we had only been dating for a few months. I had no idea what to do... But I knew "don't use no matter what", so I didn't. I went to meetings, I called my sponsor and my network, and I showed up. The prognosis was good. He made it through the hard part, and he was going to be ok. He could take a chemo pill every day and gain freedom from his leukemia. Our relationship grew over the next few years. We bought a house, had a couple babies, got married, went on trips and had fun!! I worked hard too... More steps, more experience, more service, more principles, more showing up no matter how I felt. Our youngest baby was 4 months old when we found out his chemo pill wasn't working anymore, and his leukemia had progressed. I knew it was time to show up, and "don't use no matter what", so I didn't use and I showed up just like NA taught me. I went to meetings and I cried. I cried on the phone, I cried to God, and I cried all the way home from the doctors appointment when we found out my husband would need a bone marrow transplant, and I would be his full-time caregiver. Thoughts of a 30 day hospital stay, leaving my kids, losing my husband to chemo and pain meds, being alone, and the unknown were daunting. Right then and there I decided I was going to do this to the best of my ability. I didn't know exactly how, but I knew if I did what NA taught me, I would be OK. I spent the next few months running on principles, and blind faith. I practiced HALT. I found gratitude

I spent the next few months running on principles, and blind faith. I practiced HALT. I found gratitude and positivity in every tough moment. I showed up and did my best. I thanked God every day for a shower and a bed, and that I wasn't dope-sick. I thanked God for making a way for me to climb out of my addiction, and allowing me to become the kind of woman that someone would want by their side. I found service to dive into for my husband, the nurses, other patients on the transplant floor, and NA. No matter what I messed up or how scared I was, I didn't use. I didn't use when my disease said "a drink would probably help you unwind", or when it said "this would be a lot easier if you could have a prescription for something too...", or when my disease said "RUN...FAST". I fell apart. I cried. I pleaded with God to help me. I screamed that I couldn't do it anymore. I screamed in the car. I screamed alone in my house. I screamed A LOT. There were some really hard days, but every night I went to sleep clean, no matter what. Then every morning I woke up grateful for that, and did it all over again. Every morning I asked god to help me. I looked for a positive perspective, and someone who needed help, then I showed up and did my best. My husband survived. Our relationship survived. My kids survived. My clean date didn't change, and neither did his.

One of the most profound things about my experience is that I have never been a caregiver for someone going through a bone marrow transplant before, and neither has my sponsor. No one I know has. I have never seen anyone do it, and I didn't read any how-to books. I'm just another recovering addict working a program one day at a time. I used every last principle, asset, and tool I gained in Narcotics Anonymous and I wore them out. I learned how to be of service at my homegroup, at

Area Service, and through sponsorship. I learned about fear and faith by working the steps. I learned how to have grit, determination, and be committed by getting clean. I learned to show up and do my best, no matter how I was feeling. I learned that service gets me out of myself. I learned that I can choose my attitude, and my behavior no matter what's going on in my life. I learned that I don't do just one... and that there's no chemical solution to a spiritual problem. Y'all told me NA is just practice. Y'all told me one day it would all make sense and one day it wouldn't just be writing steps, that one day I would apply it to my amazing life, if I don't use. When I got here, no one told me that I would use all this stuff I was learning to try and be the best caregiver anyone's ever seen. No one said that my husband would get leukemia and I would have to show up for him. They just told me If I don't pick up, I wont get high, and if I don't get high I have a chance. No one told me what that chance was for, but I'm gonna tell you right now, I'm grateful it's been a hell of a lot more than just staying out of jail.

-Ally G.



ACTIVITIES

Bay Area:

"Under the Stars"

New Years Eve at The Knights of Columbus Hall Pinellas Park
Catered Dinner, Dance and Speaker Meeting. More information to follow
keep an eye out for the flyer circulating soon!



Do You Really Want to Know home group event:

When: November 19, 2018 Where: St. John's Episcopal Church

Address: 1676 S Belcher Rd. Clearwater, FL

Lots of food, fun and fellowship!

Cleabration for Kevins anniversary and an early giving of thanks Time: Dinner 5:30PM and literature study with basic text at 6:30PM

Welcome Home home group event:

Thanksgiving Dinner November 22nd, 2018 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm



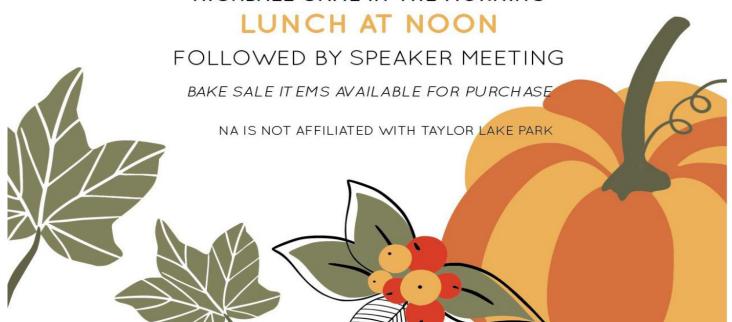


Gratitude DINNER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018
TAYLOR LAKE PARK | 10 AM-4PM | SHELTER #3

1100 8TH AVE SW, LARGO, FL 33770

FREE EVENT - PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE
KICKBALL GAME IN THE MORNING



Suncoast Area:



Funcoast Area:

New Tampa NA Hosting Speaker Jam

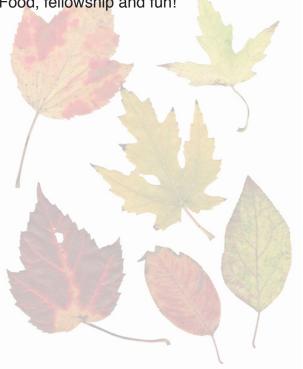
When: 11/10/18 Time: 6:00 pm- 10:00 pm

Where: St. James Church

Address: 16202 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.

Tampa, FL.

There will be 3 Speakers Food, fellowship and fun!



Grief and Recovery

When I was eleven, my mom passed away from heart disease. Six days before her passing, I said devastating things during one of my episodes and for the first time that I could recall, my mother couldn't stand to look at me. She went to the hospital that night and I never saw her again. On the morning of March 17, 1998, sounds of sobbing floated down the family hallway and onto the top bunk where I was sleeping. I heard my seven-year-old brother say with disbelief, "Mom is dead?" Looking back, I don't know that he really even had the capacity to understand what that meant. I cannot recall the feelings (if any) that enveloped me as I climbed down from sleep and sauntered into the living room to cross the threshold of my family's grief. But when the morning sun slammed into my face and nervous eyes fell upon them gathered there, I went numb. Body, Mind, and Spirit simultaneously shut down. Immediately, I knew this was a highly inappropriate response and in those few seconds of rapid processing realized that all eyes had come to rest on me, awaiting a reaction. I fell to the floor and began to sob, rapidly pinching my skin and exclaiming, "It's a dream! This is all a dream!" We didn't talk about my mother. Yeah sure, we cried for a few days, and then we got the life insurance policy money and bought our grief away. Shopping sprees, dirt bikes, drum sets, and a brand new house built from the ground up! We were too busy to grieve. And so my anger, guilt, depression, and self-hate silently grew within me for many years. My mother's death was the beginning of the unraveling of my family and the start of my own downward spiral. With no healthy outlet for all of the emotions crashing through me. I became very angry and rebellious. I left home at fifteen and began my decade long journey of homelessness and institutionalization.

My clean date is December 1, 2003 and for that I am so deeply grateful. Even after getting "clean", I

spent four long years sporadically attending NA meetings but doing none of the suggested work. Back then; survival was my drug of choice. I was so busy getting my basic needs met by any means necessary that I had no time to take stock of my innards. I had no time to think about the loss of my mother and the hateful things I'd said, no time to process the abandonment I felt towards my family for letting me disappear because it was easier. In those four years of abstinence, I birthed two sons. The first born, Casey, I struggled to raise for 19 months. We became the only constants in each other's lives, in and out of homeless shelters, sleeping on couches, whatever we could. When I became pregnant again and realized the father wasn't going to stick around, I decided to give the child up at birth. A few months later, I thought adoption was such a marvelous problem solver that I decided to give Casey up too. I couldn't take care of him and he was too much work anyway. He would go to a great family and I could get back to my life; it was a win-win. But when I walked out of the room that day to leave him behind, this was the final rock on the staggering pile of grief and self-hatred that finally came crashing down. The gift of desperation followed closely behind and I wanted change. At the time I was living in Bay Area and traveled all the way to Kentucky to admit myself into the last institution I've been in to date. There, I got a sponsor and started working the first step: practicing honesty with another human being. The journey that ensued from the seed of Truth has been nothing short of tragically magical. Coming home to myself has been the longest journey that I choose to take again and again, each morning when I wake up. I wouldn't change a step.

I spent so many years numb to my feelings that they didn't come back when I commanded them to. I had to do the work and trust that the emotions would come how and when they were supposed to; and come they did. All of the work I was doing (building trust with supports, reading literature, writing on steps) was preparation for the time when that grief, trauma, and abandonment came bursting through the surface all at once. In 2010, my best friend Lauren passed from the disease of addiction. When an old sponsor of mine called to give the news, the grief was intense and IMMEDIATE. It was then that the Universe decided I was ready: ready to grieve Lauren, ready to grieve my children, ready to grieve the abandonment of my family, to finally begin to grieve my mother. This wave of unresolved emotion crashed over me and all I could do was honor it. A friend came to pick me up and we got together with a bunch of people to attend a meeting. It was important for me to be around others when the wave initially hit me. But the time came when I knew I needed to be with my grief alone and my sponsor and supports gave me suggestions on the safest ways to do that. I journaled, I listened to sad music and cried, I went for long walks; I clung tightly to the comfort of a stuffed animal of my son's that I kept. I colored, took long baths. Oh yeah, I acted out too. Let me not even lie. Shoot, it was my first go around really feeling the feelings. I certainly did stay with them the entire time without trying to escape in unhealthy ways. Please! Progress not perfection.

Grief is a winding road: it's a journey, never a destination. I don't believe that I will ever come home from my losses and trauma. Like addiction, I have just learned to live with it in healthier ways. Sometimes it remains undetectable within me, and sometimes it flares up and I have a choice to make. Which toolbox will I grab? Will I reach for the one that provides immediate but momentary relief knowing that acting out will only give me more pain to heal from later? Or will I choose the one that allows me to truly connect with my pain and cope with it, leading to a path of healing and lasting peace? Sometimes I still reach for that immediate relief but I'll tell ya: the further I travel down this road of Recovery, the less that box works. When I am given the gifts of Awareness that I'm acting out and Willingness to do something about it, I reach out to my supports who work for my God and return to the basics. Recovery is not linear, it ebbs and flows. Sometimes I have to take steps back to get the awareness I need for the next chapter of my recovery journey. I deserve to be gentle with myself and to give myself space to make mistakes. Working with supports who love me unconditionally has taught me how to give this to myself.

Grief and I have crossed paths many times throughout my recovery journey since that initial introduction in 2010. Each time, it gets a little easier as I learn what works best for me during the

process (and it IS a process). I have sought outside/ professional help many times to help me navigate the waters of grief and trauma. This saved my life. There have been periods when the emotions became too much and I lost the ability to function. Professional help coupled with the support of Narcotics Anonymous brought me back to life and has restored me to sanity many times over. If you're reading this and haven't been introduced to grief yet, I wish this experience for you with all of my heart. It will bring you Home to yourself and to your own personal God like nothing else. If you are currently navigating the waters of grief, my heart is with you. You are not alone and you WILL get through this if you let yourself. You don't have to do it perfectly; you just have to do it. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Close your eyes and imagine the most beautiful circle at the end of a meeting filled with your sponsor, friends, supports, the newest shaking newcomer, and the old timers you admire. We are with you, hands in yours, braving each step together, walking each other home.

By: Rachael J



LOL

brooooo where ru?? U better not be ripping me off. Been waitin here for almost a hour



Sorry, your dealer was arrested for methamphetamine possession. Want a donut? They're healthier than meth. When you're a princess and haven't been given attention in 3 minutes.



COMPLAINING ABOUT A PROBLEM WITHOUT PROPOSING A SOLUTION

Resumes are all about wording. Did you file and organize papers or did you manage an internal database with sensitive information? Did you post on Instagram or did you plan and execute social media campaigns that increased engagement by 120%? Think about it.

When you are polar opposites but you're homies cuz you went to rehab together 29



S CALLED WHINING



Sometimes

By: Shannon

Sometimes I feel like I have nothing. No gift to give or thoughts to say. That I'm here simply taking up space. These thoughts are like thunder. They crash quickly and so loud. The silence is deafening. It is like a nameless face in the crowd. Where a blank stare speaks truths unseen.

Sometimes I feel like I'm treading water. The waves are too big and I'm going under. There always seems to be a choice to make. Selfless, no more like self mess. Because of these thoughts I can't shake. Much like mighty Zeus perched up on high. My problems are the world. They way quite heavy on my mind.

Sometimes there's sun and my mind mends. The social butterfly blooms, darkness ends. Laughs roll like wind through a meadow. A smile so bright even the sun has a shadow. There is energy to match the Energizer Bunny. A new found freedom that makes life funny. There's goals, dreams, a list that never ends. But then suddenly my world tilts and bends.

There's a few constants of which I'm sure. Life is a blessing but also a chore. I work for where I'm at and, where I don't want to be. but blue eyes and beautiful breath I'll have bad days but they won't succeed. Sometimes it goes right but also wrong. It's perseverance that shows I'm strong.





Obsession

Stared...

We met, a meeting Kisses and smiles soon Fake blonde, slight pale tan and finely made up

Make-**u**p

Selfish thought, added obsession make And can

And will

Stop peristalsis automatically Heart, hand, hemoglobin flow through Nothing

To inspire Diseased thought...

Precious Belly button mole perfectly placed Soft skin. Bernini-like breasts Caress and care for her wounds Here she winks warmly agai**n**...

We met...

Together rising a natural tide Bubbly blue sea water crashing, cracking God's stones Place**d** by man to set apart Addiction she has

I have

We have...

She is For me

Love punctures eroding mind Pulverizes already micro synapses into sandy storm I can't stop...

This chapter was taken from my memoir written about a trip to Europe, and the context surrounds one meeting I attended in Germany. We were on a river cruise for eight days, and finding a meeting was super important as I was on a wine-infested boat with 97 Catholics who believe that alcohol is a beverage.

The Elevator is Broken: Please Use the Steps

After over a decade, one of the most important parts of my life is being clean. Actually, it is the most important part of my life. If I weren't clean, I would have nothing, so First Things First. Meetings, even now, after all these years, are still the most balancing thing I can do for myself with the exception of meditating. Oh, and yoga...there she is...my inner hippie is coming out. Before we left the U.S., I researched the internet site for Narcotics Anonymous and found the list for the Italian provinces. Since I did not have the itinerary for Germany, I had the ship steward do the search for me. Kindly, my favorite ship person, helped me pick a meeting, called a cab, and translated to the driver Wenne (Pronounced Winnie) in German.

We found five meetings in Cologne, and luckily, there was a meeting on the day we would be moored there. I was off: Dienstag (Tuesday), 19:30 (7:30 P.M.), Winnie (Non-English speaking cab driver), and a 12 step meeting. I am not sure which was the more intense of the feelings I was experiencing: excitement or fear.

Winnie did get me to the meeting, which was on the second floor in a junior high or middle school. I found my way through the maze of classrooms and got to the elevator. There was a sign on the control panel (in German): "The elevator is broken, so please take the steps." Really?

There were twenty-two people in the room; Lots of leather, lots of tattooed necks and lots of coffee. It was much like the meetings in Ft. Lauderdale. I felt comfortable—in a foreign, drug-addicted, heart-broken type of way. I think what I was feeling was fragility—pure vulnerability.

When I sat down in the meeting, I gripped the little white pamphlet I brought from home. It is the condensed version of the larger textbook we use in study meetings. We introduced ourselves. When I introduced myself, there were mostly lit up faces, some applause, and of course, some disdainful looks, because Americans are so well respected all over the world...Not.

At the beginning of every meeting, we read from the literature. I followed the best I could to identify certain words, translating from German to English. The format dictated that each participant read a paragraph, page, or entire chapter then pass to the next person.

When the rotation got to me, the group pushed me to read the chapter from my book in English. The person next to me, Jens Fuchs, pointed for me when I needed it, prodded me to read, and sat proudly with his arm draped over the back of my chair. I cannot remember what he looked like but I do remember feeling welcomed and loved in the room. As Jens silently adopted me as his pet for the duration of our ninety minutes together, I suddenly felt like crying. After each of the readings, Jens gently and quietly whispered in my ear. He translated the stories from the other members. I felt a part of a group, just another addict on vacation basking in the reverie of recovery. I felt important to him.

In this particular part of the world, Cologne, there is a fifteen-minute smoke break at the forty-five minute mark, about halfway through the meeting. I went outside with the Germans, smoked cigarettes, and was approached by anyone who could utter even the smallest of English words. I wish I could remember the conversations we had but I only remember a guy named Willie. He was wearing a leather jacket, ripped tee shirt, and biker boots. His neck was tattooed and he was the spitting image of Sid Vicious from the Sex Pistols. I am not kidding. I told him so, too. He laughed and in broken English said, "I love zee Zex Pistols." We laughed and laughed together.

Willie and I talked about an NA convention that had recently been held in Hamburg. He gave me a big hug and his email address. After we finished the meeting, we hugged, again, and promised to write.

When I went out front, the cab was waiting! I was picked up promptly at 9:30 by, you guessed it:

Winnie!

I wrote to Willie today and the address is defunct. It has been two years since we met, and he was, after all, a drug addict-biker with a tattooed neck. Statistically, of a hundred addicts that get clean, only three percent will remain clean for a year. Two years would be a lot to ask.

It was super cool that two of my besties that night were Willie and Winnie. I see that as a sign from my HP that I have a will to win, and in order to do that, I need you guys. I need the fellowship, the love, the support, and most of all—the acceptance you give. So...when the elevator is broken, take the steps.

-Linda D.

HOROSCOPES

Aries - Brave and dynamic. You can count on an Aries to initiate things.

Taurus-The bull is born with Venus as their ruling planet. This makes them all about the romance.

Gemini- They are masters of language. They therefore prefer songs with dope lyrics.

Cancer-You can count on their memories for intense personal events. They will recall every detail.

Leo- They can be very stubborn but they do it with such flair and optimism.

Virgo- A Virgo will rarely water something down before delivery. They tend to say things unfiltered.

Libra- Constantly searching for beauty in every form.

Scorpio- This sign gets a bad rap for their intensity when they are very deep emotionally.

Sagittarius- This is the most adventurous and openminded of the signs.

Capricorn- This Earth sign is all about making the money to care for their families.

Aguarius- You can look to them for innovation. They are visionaries.

Pisces- They feel what other people are feeling. This is both a curse and a blessing.



ANNIVERSARIES

November

JJ R., Morning Serenity, November 1st, 6 years Rodney F., Relax & Recover, November 5th, 15 yrs Debbie B., SYA, November 5th, 15 years

Scott K., Welcome Home, November 4th, 15 yrs

Melanie S., Soul Sisters, November 1st, 2 years Kim G., First Things First, November 7th, 8 years Kelly C., Relax & Recover, November 7th, 6 years Joe S., SYA, November 11th, 27 years

Jackie J., Breaking Free, November 11th, 9 years

Robert R. Primary Porpoise, November 14th, 30 yrs January

Patty S., Soul Sisters, November 19th, 5 years

Drew F., What Can I Do, November 24th, 5 years

December

Shannon S., Morning Serenity, December 12th, 2 yrs

Lori C., Morning Serenity, December 19th, 1 year TJ, ReSurrender, December 20th, 20 years

Matthew D., What Can I Do, December 21st, 13 yrs Noel C., Welcome Home, January 29th, 5 years

Jimmy S., Welcome Home, December 25th, 37yrs Janet V., What Can I Do, December 26th, 5 yrs Cheryl K., What Can I Do, December 28th, 1 yr

Mark S., Morning Serenity, January 1st, 2 years Sharon L., Miracles Happen, November 20th, 21 yrs Nancy T., Welcome Home, January 9th, 1 year Johnny E., Freedom Group, January 10th, 29 years

Anthony D., YFC, January 15th, 3 years Ramon R., Welcome Home, January 16th, 10 vears

Denise S., Life's a Beach, January 29th, 7 years William S., YFC, January 27th, 3 years



Hope

To the addict that steals/robs to just get one more: I see you, there is hope that one day your obsession and compulsion to take can be replaced with the willingness to give.

To the addicts that finds sending their kids to school, to daycare, to someone else is so bittersweet: I see you, there is hope that one day your double life doesn't need to begin, as soon as they turn their back.

To the addict who lies because the truth is far too painful to admit: I see you; there is hope that one day the truth can set you free.

To the addict that can't look at him/herself in the mirror because they hate so much the thought of who they are: I see you, there is hope that one day you can hold your head with pride in who you are.

To the addict that wakes up and immediately hates that a new day has arrived:

I see you, there is hope that one day you don't have to wake up and repeat the same hell filled actions required to get one more.

To the addict that sells him/herself for one more: I see you, there is hope that one day you can wake up knowing you are worth so much more.

To the addict who "knows" there is no other way to live or die then by addiction:

I see you, there is hope that one day you can know what I know, that you never have to feel this way again.

To the addict that feels so broken beyond repair: I see you, because I was you...

There is hope that this isn't the end of your story, you can begin a new page, a new chapter, a new journey.

~AC

BAY AREA HISTORY



1984 (22 Meetings):

Additional Meetings:

- Ocala N.A. Group in Ocala
- Sicker Than Others in Clearwater
- Welcome Home Group in Largo
- N.A. Group in Tampa
- New Freedom in Tampa
- Survivors Group in Tampa
- New Hope Group in Tarpon Springs
- The Only Other Game in Town in Bushnell
- **New H&I meeting at Dacco in Tampa
- **A meeting, later know as The Steps, was formed to improve the input for the writing of the Basic Text. After the Basic Text work was done, this meeting went on to work on the new I.P. pamphlets. The Steps meeting was located in St. Petersburg at 2620 5th Ave. N. and was subsequently renamed, We Are Recovering and was relocated in St. Petersburg to the Trinity Lutheran Church.