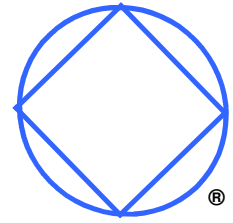


Sharing the Message



The Bay Area Newsletter

www.bascna.org

September/October 2002

GET INVOLVED

"WE SHARE THE PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY AS THEY HAVE WORKED IN OUR LIVES."
BASIC TEXT, P. 51

Narcotics Anonymous is just a group of addicts helping each other stay clean. It is amazing to look at this fellowship, just a group of recovering addicts that care enough to help provide the services necessary to help the addict that still suffers. These services today, are equal to a large corporation. Our predecessors must have been very dedicated to care enough to get this spiritual program started. Sometimes, I take this for granted getting caught up in my little world called life. Yes, I know a volunteer opens the room, makes the coffee, (the set up and clean up guys), but this is just the beginning of all the services done by volunteers. All hoping their time and effort will provide a message of hope to the newcomer.

This list of volunteer services goes on and on. Our literature was written by us. We have area, regional, and world committees that include an enormous amount of services. Where do I, as the individual addict, fit in to this fellowship? My journey started in a treatment program. I was asked to make the coffee for a new group that was going to be starting there, that group was a N.A. meeting. My understanding is anybody that attends a meeting is involved. If you feel the hope like I did at my first meeting, continued involvement will be a necessary part of recovery. My experience, strength and hope comes from the opportunities N.A. has provided for me.

Recovery for me started as a taker. I came to meetings to learn how to live life. My real first involvement was as a listener. Addicts sharing feelings and people listening, CARING AND SHARING THE NA WAY. From the taker, to a listener, I found a group I enjoyed. I asked if I could become a home group member. HOME GROUP: yes a meeting I felt had the atmosphere of recovery. To me my home group is

my main connection for staying clean. These baby steps in my involvement in NA set the foundation for recovery to happen.

Personal recovery started now. Sponsorship, practicing the steps, learning group conscience, growing spiritually as an individual and as a member of NA. What NA taught me was to share experience, strength, and hope. I cannot share what I do not have. Service work for me was learned slowly over a period of time. NA provided me the opportunity and support to get clean. My gratitude now has the opportunity to speak. It speaks by my actions.

Today, in hindsight I get a glimpse of the BIG PICTURE God is painting called Narcotics Anonymous. We are a group of recovering addicts helping each other stay clean by sharing our experience, strength and hope. Everybody that shows up at a meeting is involved. Let us thank GOD that some members are willing to give back at various levels to continue to provide the services that help the addict that still suffers.

Love in the Spirit of the NA Fellowship

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SERVICE WORK MATTERS; A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

For your willingness;

You asked, "What can I do?,"
saw a need and filled the gap
in hopes it would make a difference.

You did make a difference.

For your acceptance;

You saw us at our worse
and though we weren't the
most ideal bunch, you saw
through our rocky exteriors.

You accepted us any way.

For sharing your story;

You shared some of the most
difficult times of your life
with us in hopes we'd see
the similarities. By your sharing.

You freed us to share our stories.

For listening to us;

You encouraged us to express
our feelings, fears and concerns,
giving us some relief.

As we spoke, we grew.

You allowed us to hear ourselves.

For teaching us;

What it takes to be whole again,
about the Steps, about sponsors,
Traditions and service work, about trial
and errors and especially about forgiveness.

You told us the truth.

For giving us back some self esteem;
telling us it does count and
we do matter. You helped us
find our esteem through your
selfless esteem.

You extended your hand.

For giving us hope;

and something to strive for
by your example. We hope
that someday we will have
what you do.

You gave us a reason to believe.

For giving us our dreams back;

Letting us know we are all special
people with special gifts to
share, and for giving us an
opportunity to shine. By doing that,

You allowed us to feel worthy.

You're Higher Power Shines Through You.

From all the women
whose lives you touched
at the Pinellas County Jail

We love you and

You did make a difference.

Pam L.



AREA SERVICE AND SUB-COMMITTEE TIMES.

Saturday before Sunday ASC

Public Information 3:00 PM Room #10&20

Additional Needs 4:00 PM Room #19

Sunday morning before ASC

Hospitals & Institutions 9:00 AM Room #19

Activities 10:30 AM Room #19

Newsletter / Literature 10:30 AM Room #19

Helpline 11:00 AM Room #19

Policy BASCNA 12:00 PM Room #19

Administrative 12:45 PM Room #19

Area Service Committee (ASC),
meets the second Sunday of every month
at 1:30 PM in room 10 & 20.

*All meetings are held at
Terra Nova* 5501 28th St. N. St Petersburg FL*

*NA is not affiliated with any of the facilities listed here

Getting Involved - A Personal Journey

My first exposure to the fellowship occurred many years ago while I was in long-term treatment. At that time there were only a few meetings in the county and the Bay Area had not yet been formed. My motives for getting involved with NA were not the most noble at that point. Frankly, anything that would allow me to get off property seemed like a good alternative to spending time at the treatment center. Several of my friends from the treatment center were attending meetings in St. Petersburg, Largo and Clearwater Beach. I enjoyed the chance to meet people who were staying clean outside without the benefit of a treatment center.

One friend from the treatment center really motivated me to get involved.

He personally felt it was his salvation from his hellish life of drugs and crime. To him, NA represented deliverance, a new beginning from his previous existence. He and his good friend Henry helped show me what getting involved meant. For me it involved doing the suggested things that our literature espoused: going to meetings; forming a support network of addicts in recovery; reading the literature; getting a sponsor; working the steps; forming a relationship with a Higher Power; sharing in meetings and giving to others. My new friend helped introduce me to all his friends in the fellowship, thus smoothing the way for me to bond with other addicts. All these things were very positive influences in my life. I had always been a solitary addict, I used in seclusion and my first contact with other addicts was in treatment.

I wish I could say that I grabbed hold of recovery and never let go, unfortunately I held reservations about many of our basic tenets and assumed I knew better. I paid lip service to the many sayings posted on out meeting room walls – “Just for Today,” “Don’t use no matter what,” “A drug is a drug, is a drug,” and my personal favorite quoted from Henry – “Suffer, Suffer, Suffer.” I could not get out of my analytical thinking and into the spiritual feelings mode that would allow me to see the truth. My greatest stumbling block was the block of ice that I called my heart. There seemed to be an infinite distance that separated my heart from my head. What I was really doing was taking half measures with my recovery. I even got involved with service work on a group level and helped do little things to feel a part

***“I soon came
to the
conclusion
that all I had
to change
was
everything;
nothing
could come
before my
recovery.”***

of the fellowship. My drug demons were still lurking in the background, so it did not take me very long before my first relapse. In fact I relapsed while I was still in treatment. Obviously, if I were truly involved in recovery this would not have happened. My frozen feelings didn’t allow me to really feel the pain, shame, and embarrassment of my “drug fall.” I was so oblivious to my spiritual / feeling part of me, that I buried all my feelings. Logic ruled my life, emotions just got in the way.

When I came back from that relapse I had to deal with the pain and suffering that my relapse had imposed on my friends in the treatment center and the fellowship. Unfortunately I formed a pattern of coming back to the fellowship and picking up a white chip,

spending time in “psuedo” recovery only to relapse again. I unconsciously had placed my recovery way down the list of my priorities, my career was always number one, relationships might be second and NA came in a distant third. This pattern was to repeat itself over the next couple of decades. I could go years without using drugs, but I don’t feel I was in true recovery. Something was missing; I never found the peace and serenity I so desperately sought.

I just came back to the fellowship a year ago (August 16th), after a four-year hiatus that was my own personal hell. I had given up all hope and any thoughts of recovery were distant memories that happened in another lifetime. Obviously my Higher Power was watching out for me, even though I did not pray or

initiate any contact. I called a friend and explained that I was just putting in time until I died. I asked my friend to investigate treatment options that would also attend to my medical needs. My friend did all the footwork and found a program for me. Another friend from the fellowship took me to the treatment program. The fact that I had friends that would help me in my hour of need means that my prior involvement in NA had not been wasted. The support system I had established over the many years meant that I no longer needed to be alone.

My first NA meeting was at the treatment center. I was very scared; it had been along time since I had attended my last NA meeting. I came to the realization that I was in drug treatment and attending my first

What Does It Mean?

Our fellowship would cease to exist without those members willing to get involved. "To get involved," what does it mean? As I see it, there are many ways to get involved. At first I was not allowed to do too much since attitudes were different in those days. For a long time what I heard was "sit down, shut up, take the cotton out of your ears and stick it in your mouth." Those with time informed me that I did not need to share at meetings for the first couple of years. Anything I needed to discuss needed to be taken to my sponsor. I was told I know nothing about recovery yet, and they don't need to hear the disease. I do long for those days occasionally.

At the beginning of my recovery, service was whatever my sponsor told me it was. That meant making coffee, setting up chairs and cleaning up after meetings. With very little time clean I was told to get a home group. I became active in that home group. I do well serving on a home group level. I also did a couple of years of H&I work. I did try being a group representative but just had (and still have) a real problem with Area Service or Regional service meetings.

I was blessed; with five years clean I became a special worker. Being a special worker is still the best paying job I have ever had. While working in that capacity I dealt with Region and World a lot. I learned a lot about the politics that go on in our fellowship; it

soured me a great deal. It took a long time to see any beauty in this fellowship again. I still have no stomach for the politics within our fellowship (or in a work atmosphere for that matter). I have since only taken short-term commitments outside of the Home group.

Gratefully, there are those addicts who do participate in the subcommittees, and service above the group level. For me, I have learned at this point in my life I can not do that kind of service. I have yet to make it to perfection. I forget that I am powerless and get way too crazy over things that happen in the fellowship, especially in my home group. I can, however, be involved with many other forms of service that also need to be done.

My defects still peak at home group business meetings. I get crazy as if I have power over things in my home group. One is the fact that our home group has quite a decent amount of people on the home group list. Unfortunately only six people on average show for the home group meeting. Our group, like many others, still has difficulty finding those willing to take service commitments.

Ok, wait a minute, here I go again. Time to work on that sixth and seventh step not go off on a tangent.

There is a bottom line for me. If the best I can do to get involved is what I am doing, I am ok. Just for today I still have to let my sponsor help me to realistically see if I am doing my best.

Anonymous



Getting Involved

Committing to a positive group of beings:

- Doing positive service for the benefit of all.
- Replacing the old insanity and persons has helped me to build self-esteem and sense of worth.
- Given me the opportunity to give back what has been so freely given to me.
- Showing me how to interact with myself and others, using the principles of NA.

I have something to give and being of service allows me to do. Showing gratitude to others by carrying the message, insuring that NA survives for the future.

In Loving Service
A recovering addict

Dear Bay Area,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to serve as your Alternate Treasurer in 2000-2001 and as Treasurer in 2001-2002.

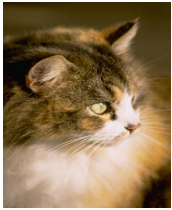
My term has come to an end and it is with bittersweet regret I say goodbye to that position. I am, however, looking forward to continuing to serve in some capacity at the Area level in the near future.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be of service and I am grateful to have had the opportunity.

Once again, Thank You!

ILS, Liz M.





Meet Jenna-fur

*A Note to the Readers:
The Commitment Jenna-fur showed to recovery, especially during leaner times, was astounding. As a result we have received oodles of letters asking Jenna-fur's advice on recovery related topics. Here's one!*

Dear Jenna-fur,

I just got my first year key tag from NA. Being clean feels great and I'm ready to spread the word. I want to get more involved in service work, you know, the kind that helps others and comes back to you. Right now I make the coffee for my home group. Do you think I have enough clean time to do more?

B. Willingto

Dear B.

Making coffee is great service work and as long as you feel comfortable doing that, it's great. But, if you feel it's time to move on, it probably is.

During my first three months clean, I helped in the kitchen by cleaning plates. ☺ I made it easier for the dishwashers to do their job. I felt good and so did they.

As time went on I became more selfless in my service work - that's quite a feat for a feline. I learned that the only way to keep what I have is by giving it away. By giving it away, you become a CATalyst in someone else's recovery. If you don't give it away your recovery stagnates. You remain in a state of CATalepsy, and stop growing.

That can be CATastrophe.

Jenna-fur

Dear Readers,

I want to "purr"sonally thank the Newsletter subcommittee for the opportunity they have given me which allowed me to share a little wisdom in a "meow"zing way.

I really enjoyed it and would love to continue. I want whoever takes over this commitment to know that "our" services are available.

You can write to Jenna-fur in care of her human. She answers all letters. Please see Sandy R. for the address.

Fill your trails with good tails!

Jenna-furs Human
Pam L.



"Just For Today" Scopes

Like your horoscope, these are your "Just for Today Scopes" to help guide you in your recovery... Remember these are NOT real, just good clean fun!

If you got clean in January: Guess what? Just for Today you're powerless! Surrender and let the recovery process begin!

If your clean date is in February: Just for Today, put the bat down! Seek a power greater than yourself and be restored to sanity!

If your recovery anniversary is in March: No worries if you have a Third Step in your life! Have faith and turn it over, Just for Today!

April is a great month to get clean: Just for Today, keep your side of the street clean! Find out your strengths and weaknesses and go from there!

If May is your anniversary month: Congratulations! Just for Today, the good news is you've done your inventory, the great news is you get to share it! Call your sponsor NOW!

If you got clean in June: Ok, you have a car with three wheels, but that doesn't mean you have to drive it! Become entirely ready, Just for Today.

If your clean date is sometime in July: Just for Today, you can stop acting out on your defects at any time. Just get out of your way and let HP do the work!

If you're celebrating your clean date in

August: Just for Today, the word is WILLINGNESS! Make that list; it is just a LIST!

If September is your anniversary month: Have you made any direct amends Just for Today? Brush the dust off your 8th Step list and get out there!

If your clean date is in October: Just for today, focus on you and *your* recovery. Try not taking another addict's inventory; take your own!

If your clean date is celebrated in November: Just for Today, be here now! Stay In the moment! Pray and meditate and watch the miracles multiply!

If December is when you pick your Anniversary medallion: Share the love! Take a newcomer to a meeting and help carry the message, Just for Today!

GET INVOLVED!

Get Involved? Who me? Why should I get involved? What does it cost? What do I get in return? How dare someone else tell me what to do! What do you mean, open a meeting and make coffee? Why should I have to be the one to show up earlier than everyone else and set up the meeting? You all better be grateful!

These are the things that ran through my head when I was first told it would be good idea if I “get involved.” It all began with less than 30 days clean when a fellow addict asked me to “do them a favor” for a couple of weeks while they were away. This “favor” entailed making coffee for 100 addicts! You know one of those big pots with one of those big filter things. I had not clue one on how to make coffee, let alone for 100 addicts! I quickly learned how to make the coffee, and the friend never returned. I felt very taxed doing it, week after week. While outside before the meeting started, I was bemoaning my new service commitment, when someone shared with me about willingness. “Did I have the willingness?” And if not, I shouldn’t be doing it. At that time, I was barely staying clean “just for today.” I don’t remember even discussing this with the woman I called my sponsor. I just decided that making coffee was *not* for me! I learned about willingness.

At about 6 months clean, I had a great sponsor, a homegroup and I learned to show up early, stay late, and get whatever I needed done before the meeting, so that I could sit through the entire meeting without being disruptive. I believe that I was given the key about this time and started opening and making coffee (only for 30 or so addicts this time), putting out the literature and setting up the chairs. I was elected by my homegroup to be Alternate GSR. I had no idea what that was, and what it entailed, other than going to Area Service one Sunday a month. So I did that, I went, and was thoroughly confused! I talked to my sponsor about this and quickly informed my homegroup that my sponsor did not approve of my latest service commitment, that I had been “dope-friended” by them! I learned about clean time and qualifications.

At about 16 months clean, I got a new sponsor who believed in service. She explained to me how her sponsor passed on to her the importance of being of service to Narcotics Anonymous. We give back, so we can keep what we have. We give back; otherwise we’re stealing from the fellowship. We give back so we can stay clean. She and another friend decided that we should get involved with Activities. I finally found something to do that was creative and fun: plan clean events for addicts! We had to do one function a month, and I got to help out with all of it. I learned that service work could be fun! I also learned about responsibility

and being accountable.

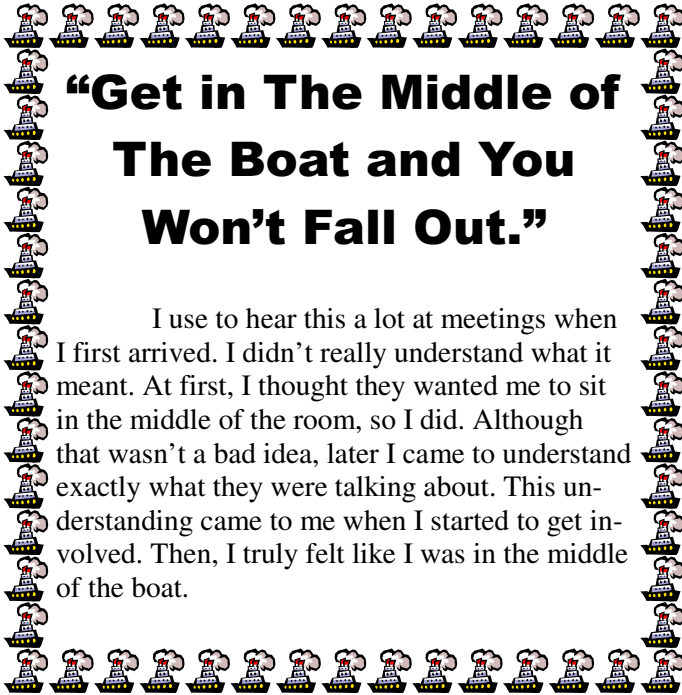
Around this time, I had another homegroup that also had 100 or so addicts meeting each week. I would come early, make the coffee, set up and complain. “No one else has the willingness! Why doesn’t anyone else’s sponsor make them do service work? How come I’m the only one here?” While lamenting one evening, a very close friend explained to me that if didn’t want to do it, not to worry, it was still going to get done. AND, here’s the biggie, if I wasn’t doing this out of the goodness of my heart, and only for some kind of recognition, then *I shouldn’t be doing it!* Wow! I learned the importance of self-less service.

Today, I remember these lessons that I learned early in my recovery about service: Willingness, qualifications, creative outlets, responsibility, accountability and selflessness. I also learned other interesting things about service, like the “warm-body” syndrome. Just because there is an open position and someone has the willingness, and clean-time requirement, doesn’t mean that it’s ok to elect them. There are consequences to this kind of thinking that go back to the *reasons* why this person is running and why we, the service body want to elect them. I have to check *my* motives why I’m electing this person and ask myself if they really are serving in the best interest of the fellowship, or do *I* just want the position filled.

Service work can be defined as anything that gives back to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The most simple thing to do is: show up. When the new addict just walking in the door sees a group of (hopefully) smiling faces, what a warm way to welcome them! The greeter at the meeting is also important for the same reason. Coffee does help to carry the message that there is somewhere warm and safe to come, and perhaps share one-on-one while at the coffeepot. The formally elected positions are also important in helping the groups stay focused on why they’re there: to provide an atmosphere of recovery where a clear NA message can be heard. Service work can also be a way to make amends, “Hello, 9th Step!”

Why do I do service work? Today, because my sponsors had instilled me the importance of giving back. There are spiritual benefits to be gained by being of self-less service. There are new things I can learn about my talents and what I have to offer. In my addiction, I felt so worthless. Now I can do something, because I can. Service work is something that *I get to do*. Today, it is an honor and privilege that get to give back to the fellowship that has given me a new way to live. As my great grand-sponsor use to say before he died, “We are all here, because someone else was of service.” What a powerful message, now go, GET INVOLVED!





“Get in The Middle of The Boat and You Won’t Fall Out.”

I use to hear this a lot at meetings when I first arrived. I didn't really understand what it meant. At first, I thought they wanted me to sit in the middle of the room, so I did. Although that wasn't a bad idea, later I came to understand exactly what they were talking about. This understanding came to me when I started to get involved. Then, I truly felt like I was in the middle of the boat.

When I Needed Him, God Talked to Me.

As a result of relapse, I'm in jail on a drug charge. Weary, dreary and depressed, I surrendered and joined the NA meeting that is brought into the jail by the H&I subcommittee. Far from well, I still have a hard time accepting the enormity of my disease, so I pray and pray.

This is how my day unraveled; it was too loud, too crowded, no court day. My nerves were unraveling. I'm shaking and pacing back and forth. Yes, my program was out the proverbial window. I walked to the back of the cell where there are four tiny dusty windows. I looked out, there was our rec. yard surrounded by two barbed fences and one razor edge fence. Looking through these fences, off in to the distance and I see it, the biggest, brightest and shiniest sunset I have ever seen. I got such a good warm feeling. It was as if God was saying to me, "Hello Diane, I just dropped in to restore your faith in Me. Show you your way to gratitude and remind you that I love you."

I tell you when my God talks, He talks.

Diane M.

Florida Regional Activities Calendar

September 13-15, 2002 Florida RSC Weekend:

Welcome Meeting at 10:00 PM

Adam's Mark Resort*

100 North Atlantic Ave.

Daytona Beach, Florida 32118

(386) 254-8200 or 1-800-444-2326

09:00am – 11:00pm Ad hoc on SEZF

09:00am – 11:00am PI

09:00am – 11:00am H&I

09:00am – 11:00am Literature

11:00am – 04:00pm FRC Inc.

11:00am – 04:00pm RSO

11:00am – 01:00pm Helpline

11:00am – 01:00pm Web Page

01:00pm – 03:00pm Ad hoc/Subcommittee Dissolution

01:00pm – 03:00pm Ad hoc/Theft of NA Funds

04:00pm – 06:00pm Policy

September 27-29, 2002 River Coast Area Camp Out

At Weeki Wachee Christian Camp* on the Weeki Wachee River, Hernando County, FL.

For more info. Call:

Kent H. 352-799-0341 Tom B. 352-560-0054

September 28, 2002 Eatonville Group Fish Fry:

Second Annual Fish Fry and Fundraiser

\$5 Includes "hot fish samich", hot grits and a soda.

1:30 PM until dark

Barnett Park* - Pavillion 4

4801 West Colonial Drive

Orlando, FL 32808

For more info. Call: Aleta 407-295-5107, Rita L. 407-298-7566, Gussie A. 407-445-1810

*NA is not affiliated with any of the facilities listed here



We would like to thank all of you for getting involved!



Because of you this Newsletter was possible! Recently an addict told me that the meaning of this Newsletter to him went beyond sharing our experience, strength and hope.

It helped convey unity within the Bay Area!

My three year involvement with this Newsletter has come to an end. I will miss it tremendously! And until another addict comes forward to take on this awesome service commitment, please continue to send your articles, poems, games, etc.

◆ E-mail to: lit@basena.org

◆ Or mail to: BASCNA
Sharing the Message Newsletter
P.O. Box 703
Largo, FL 34649



Poetry

A Monster Inside Me

Inside me there's a monster, in the form of a disease,
most times I can detain him, but sometimes he slips free.
Been hanging around for quite a while, usually right on the surface,
with only one single objective, existing only for one purpose.
To make me act like a person, that I didn't want to be,
and caused me lots of turmoil, and constant misery.
Other times he's more internal, further deep down inside,
sometime ago he figured out, that's a real good place to hide.
He wants to control all of me, each and every ounce,
being astonishingly opportunistic, knowing just when to pounce.
You see, if he could, I'm sure he'd like to breed,
only to see me battered, preferably to watch me bleed.
I'd swear on my very soul, this monsters got a brain,
utilizes it effectively to make mine appear insane.
For so very long he'd swore he had me beat,
celebrating his every victory, every little defeat.
Well I hope you had your little fun, I hope you did enjoy,
because day after day, one day at a time, I'll no longer be your toy.

Michael R

A Journey

Walking alone for all these years,
journeys of hurt, pain, and tears.
How much can truly one person bare,
how much really, before you are there.
Looking in God's eyes, isn't that the direction?
When will I feel that love and affection?
Many I've lost but not many know,
these tears in my eyes and what they show.
I still walk forward full of fears,
journeys of hurt, pain and tears.
Years of feelings that have been torn apart,
an empty shell, their once layed a heart.
How can I regain what has been lost?
At what price now will it cost?
Changing my outlook, again shifting my gears,
through out journeys of hurt, pain and tears.

Michelle C.

Real Friendship

You're a true friend
and someone for granted I'd never take.
You're feeling is genuine and never fake.
True is your heart inside and out.
A friend that no one you should ever doubt.
In my heart you'll always stay.
No matter how far I should go away.
Friends have come and friends have went.
But a blessing from God is when you were sent.
Others don't see how special you are.
But to me you're the dearest, dearest by far.
So remember, I love you and always will.
Because now I can see, when friendships are real.

Michelle C.





Beginning A New Day

As I wake up each morning, to begin a day,
 I try to look forward to it without the slightest delay.
 And as the sun rises, it's easy to see,
 life can be good, joyous, and wonderful for me.
 Then as the day progresses, and the sun caresses,
 the feeling in me are those of ecstasy.
 I go on thinking through out the day,
 how much I like for my days to go on this way.
 Later in the evening as the sun settles down,
 I first ask my Higher Power for my will to keep.
 I also thank him for my family and friends,
 and ask him to help me with any amends.
 Then as I sleep I dream of tomorrow,
 tremendously peaceful, totally lacking in sorrow.

Michael R

Can You Relate?

Using and abusing; always running around.
 How many of you can relate to the troubles I have found?
 Living to use and using to live,
 how much more of our lives to this disease will we give?
 Going to jail, being away from our loved ones.
 Doing things we would never do.
 Might as well face it, you are no better than me,
 and I am no better than you!
 We have all been down the same road one way or another,
 some a little more painful than others.
 We all have one thing in common and that is our disease.
 That is a bond between you and me.
 Yes! We all have done things we are ashamed of, this is true.
 But if we continue to condemn ourselves, we will continue to
 use.
 And then we will never discover who is me? Who is you?
 We have to hate this disease with all we got.
 And put our energy into recovery and give it our best shot.
 It's time to quit judging, stop saying yet, and just finally let go.
 Listen to what the Steps tell us and quit acting like we run slow!
 What do we have to lose?
 It seems to me nothing but everything to gain.
 Because no matter what we can't beat this without going insane.
 I can't go on anymore the pain is too deep.
 And this disease I truly do hate.
 So after reading this ask yourself, can you relate?

Tina P.

My Disease

My disease is relentless, sometimes beyond belief.
 It tells me all the time that I'm in need of some re-
 lief.
 The bastard that had so much power, I hardly put up
 a fight,
 He convinced me all the time that I was going to be
 all right.
 I remember how I used to cry as it brought me to my
 knees,
 treating me any way it damn well please.
 Why is it that somehow, I came across this creep?
 Sort of just let himself in, and decided to stay for
 keeps.
 I guess I let him in but I must have been out of my
 mind,
 but he fooled me into believing he was caring, loving
 and kind.
 I'll tell you something though, the dude he had to
 cruise,
 I've felt too much pain and turmoil, and experienced
 too many blues.
 There's not enough room for the both of us inside
 my little brain.
 Just for today I've drove him away, and things have-
 n't been the same.
 I'm still brought to my knees though, at least one
 time a day,
 I got lots of help from God you see, because I get
 down there to pray.

Anonymous

Corner



H&I Started My New Way of Life

I used for along time after the drugs stopped working. At the end of a weekend run, my only choice seemed to be use the gun sitting next to my bed. Thankfully, my Higher Power touched me with another option, one I would not have considered on my own.

I asked for help and entered a treatment center that day. Nurses and Doctors ran the treatment center. They were not like me, so I could not and did not listen to what they had to say. Days later, I had been brought to two meetings of another fellowship. In those meetings I also could not seem to listen. Again my Higher Power blessed me. Two addicts brought in an H&I presentation. I tried to listen. Then the next night brought two more addicts and another H&I presentation. This time I related and wanted to really hear them.

In those other meetings I excluded myself by looking at the differences. I could identify with the guys from NA. At that time having a man who looked like an old hippie freak come in made a difference. His long hair and tie-dye shirt meant I could trust him in my mind. They touched me in a way no one had for a long time. Some how I sensed they were being honest. To hear a man describe parts of my life as his own, floored me. I was still very fogged in and shook violently at parts of this man's story. The shaking was as a result of the mention of particular drugs by name. Seeing my physical reaction scared me. That fear became a healthy fear. I was now open to hear what others had to say. H&I started my new way of life.

Anonymous

Literature's Subcommittee Note: The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual contributor, and not the opinions of the Bay Area Literature Subcommittee, or Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. The *Handbook for Narcotics Anonymous* states that: "The 12 Traditions of NA should serve as the basic guidelines for editing your newsletter... the language of NA recovery should be used." All editorial decisions made by the Literature Subcommittee have been made with these guidelines in mind. We welcome any feedback in accordance with the 2nd Tradition. Please indicate if you would like that feedback published.

(Continued from page 3)

NA meeting emphasized the fact that my life had come full circle. What would be different this time, life was not going to change, so what was I willing to change? Life had taken away everything that I had placed ahead of my recovery; job, relationships, health, etc. I soon came to the conclusion that all I had to change was everything; nothing could come before my recovery.

During the past year I came to understand that I am a spiritual being, that my involvement with my Higher Power that was lacking in the past, is now renewed. None of this was my doing, when I stopped analyzing everything and got out of the way, I allowed God into my life. The joy, peace and serenity I had sought through drugs is now present in my life because I have a spiritual connection today. It has allowed me to thank God for my past tragedies, because it took losing everything, for me to gain everything. Everything I give comes back ten fold to me. I no longer fear the comparison of my insides to other's exterior, because we are all in this together, sharing a common foe, addiction.

Bob

GOD of Our Understanding Mostly a True Story

At one time my wife and I had a couple of recovering addicts living with us. My wife and the woman came home from the grocery store and they bought some prune juice, I asked sarcastically; "Does someone have a problem?" Everyone laughed, the girl turned red and said "I'm sick, that's not funny."

The next day I went to the clubhouse where my home group meets. I got a 3 oz. bag of peanuts out of the candy machine. Two bags came out, so being a good addict, I ate them both.

That night I had the worst stomachache I ever had. By the time I got home it was doubling me over in pain. The girl said, "See, that's God paying you back for teasing me yesterday." So I replied, "My God is not like that!" She smiled at me and said, "Maybe so, but mine is."

Joe S.



I'd like to share a little about service work, getting involved and how it has an impact on my new way of life in recovery. I'd like to say that when they say there are no coincidences I am really starting to see the truth in that.

Today was one of those days when I was feeling hopeless and alone (I'm currently in jail). Then, I received a letter from my sponsor and it brought tears of hope to my eyes. This letter came at just the right time because she gave me an assignment to do: a gratitude list. Basically that's just what I needed, because I was feeling hopeless and alone. I was on my pitypot. Just by doing something as little as a gratitude list, it brought my spirits up and restored some hope. What really touched me was that she, my sponsor, actually took time out of her day to sit down and write me. And it wasn't just a little one-page letter; it was four pages of her sharing with me. I am grateful that another addict did service work and got involved as my sponsor, because that small spark was able to ignite a fire to burn within me.

I have been around NA for a number of years, but I never did service work or got involved. I didn't even stack chairs or make coffee. Yeah, I got a sponsor but I never reached out and used her. I always went to meetings late and left early. Now, being in jail, and only getting one meeting a week, I've come to appreciate the others who do service work (H&I). Because if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't even have one meeting a week. And meetings seem to be what helps me deal with my insane way of thinking. I finally feel I'm where I belong and I'm not alone, "you don't know what ya got till it's gone." My gratitude for other addicts who go out of their way to share their time has had a Big Impact on me.

When I was free, I was approached and asked to make coffee. I declined saying; "I don't know how to make coffee." It's time to get honest that even though it is partially true, I didn't want to take the time out to do it. I would have to be there early and leave late, that's the honest truth! Now, wow! Would I love to make coffee! (I'd really love to drink a hot cup of coffee too.)

Okay, now I'm going to gloat a little (yes, I'm

still sick). First I'd like to say I've learned that everyone has their own way of doing their time. And as everything in life, it's how You Choose to do it. You want to talk about learning the hard way, that's me! However, I have made a decision to do my time differently this trip. So I started writing and I found I can express myself on paper and through poems. I found that expressing myself in riddles is a healthy way of sharing. Because then I don't get in my own way, I mean after I write something I tend to say, "no, it's no good." I'm my worst chief critic. Another part of my disease is the low self-esteem and self-

destructiveness. Anyway, I took a risk and shared a couple poems I wrote. And then I saw the impact of what I shared touched others as well. And then it was printed in the Newsletter. Wow, finally something positive for my ego. In the last issue of the newsletter, I was on the front page sharing my experience, strength and hope. Now I've been on the front page of newspapers before, but it wasn't about experience, strength and hope. It was for self destruction and drugs and honestly my ego fed on that like I was "big time." The only big time was the time I was serving for the bust!

It was brought to my attention that I am not only around NA, I'm in NA. Because I am getting "in"-volved and what a wonderful feeling to see I am doing something positive! By doing something as simple as sharing, lets not forget sharing honestly, and as I am writing this right now I have hope and I know this journey has just begun. What a great rush it is, I love it! Being the addict I am, I want more. But now it is more of something positive, not self-destructive. So until my pen meets paper again this is where my words will end, but my spark of hope has just begun.

Nic Nac

"In the last issue of the Newsletter, I was on the front page ... Now I've been on the front page of newspapers before, but it wasn't about experience, strength and hope. It was for self destruction..."

Anniversary Celebrations!

Woman and Recovery	Natalie	09-11-00	2 yrs
	Chris A.	09-11-99	3 yrs
	Cheryl	10-01-01	1 year
Primary Porpoise	Jane S.	10-29-00	2 yrs
Life's a Beach	Kelly C.	01-09-01	18 m
	Kiara W.	10-06-01	1 year
	Mark J.	09-31-01	1 year
	Nick V.	09-13-99	3 yrs
	Vern F.	03-20-01	18 m
Never Alone	John M.	08-26-01	1 year
Stairway to Recovery	Dolores M.	09-16-95	7 yrs
	Alison Z.	02-28-01	18 m
Free to Be Me	Brian D.	08-27-00	2 yrs
Always Here	Bill D.	09-19-96	6 yrs
	Brad M.	10-23-00	2 yrs
	Bobby W.	09-15-01	1 year
We Do Recover	Virginia	10-26-96	6 yrs
	Jack	10-28-01	1 year
	Chris P.	09-10-00	2 yrs
	Bobby C.	09-23-00	2 yrs
	Marty M.	09-01-94	8 yrs
	Kenny C.	10-19-94	8 yrs
	Rick S.	10-18-00	2 yrs
	Dick B.	07-15-75	27 yrs
	Kathy B.	07-15-75	27 yrs
	Jana L	08-16-92	10 yrs
Welcome Home	Kevin B.	10-06-87	15 yrs
	Scott	09-01-88	14 yrs
	Bert Y.	09-15-83	19 yrs
	Dave C.	10-12-97	5 yrs
	Vanessa R.	10-01-01	1 year
	Jeff S.	09-11-95	7 yrs
	Karen C.	09-11-95	7 yrs
	Art C.	09-10-95	7 yrs
	Glenn W.	09-15-01	1 year
	Ken T.	09-18-92	10 yrs
Keys to Recovery	Hector F.	08-07-98	4 yrs
	Troyette M.	08-22-95	7 yrs
	Billy J.	10-04-00	2 yrs
	Rick S.	10-18-00	2 yrs
	Sean Y.	08-11-01	1 year
New Life	Myra P.	09-21-91	11 yrs
Miracles Happen	Suzanne K.	10-07-97	5 yrs
ICOF	Dennis B.	10-21-94	8 yrs
	Scott G.	10-27-88	14 yrs
Freedom Group	Ernest B.	08-08-86	16 yrs
Save Your Ass	Lisa C.	09-28-00	2 yrs
	Cheryl C.	10-01-01	1 year
	Casey S.	10-31-01	1 year
	Rosa M.	11-04-01	1 year
D.O.A.	Marie	06-09-01	1 year
H.O.W.	Neil	09-20-84	18 yrs

Florida Region Helplines

For Hearing Impaired, please call:

Florida Relay Service— 800-955-8770

Bahamas Area: 242/325-6200—The Islands

Bay Area: 727/547-0444—Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Palm Harbor, Largo, Clearwater, St. Pete, Gulf Beaches, Indian Rocks Beach, Oldsmar

Big Bend Area: 850/599-2876—Tallahassee and Panhandle area

Chain O'Lakes Area: 352/319-5617—Lake County, Eustis, Tavares, Leesburg, Mt. Dora

Daytona Area: 904/831-1660 & 800/477-0731—Daytona Beach, Orange City, Deland, Deltona & New Smyrna Beach

First Coast Area: 904/723-5683 & 800/576-4357—Jacksonville, Fernandina Beach, St. Augustine, Orange Park, Palatka, Green Cove Springs

Forest Area: 352/368-6061—Ocala and surrounding areas

Heartland Area: 863/609-6040 & 888/210-2118—Polk County, Lakeland, Hardee County, Highlands County, Bartow, Haines City

Orlando Area: 407/425-5157—Osceola, Orange, Seminole and parts of Lake County, Kissimmee

Palm Coast Area: 561/848-6262—West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, Lantana, Riviera Beach, Royal Palm

Recovery Coast Area: 727/842-2433 & 800-691-5551—Pasco County, New Port Richey, Hudson, Holiday, Zephyrhills, Dade City

River Coast Area: Citrus County: 352/621-6737, Hernando County: 352/754-2000—Brooksville, Spring Hill, Homosassa, Floral City

Space Coast Area: 321/631-4357—Titusville, Cocoa Beach, Melbourne, Palm Bay, Merritt Island

Sun Coast Area: 941/957-7910—Bradenton, Sarasota & Manatee Counties

Tampa Funcoast Area: 813/879-4357—Hillsborough County, including Tampa, Oldsmar, Lutz & Brandon

Treasure Coast Area: 561/343-8373—Okeechobee, Port St. Lucie, Stuart, Vero Beach, Ft. Pierce

UnCoast Area: 352/376-8008 Gainesville, Alachua, Lake City, Live Oak, O'Brien & Gilchrist

H.O.W.	Kelly	09-30-01	1 year
	Steve D.	10-11-87	15 yrs
	Menima	09-25-01	1 year
Noon Group	Harry	06-09-01	1 year
	Kevin S.	06-17-01	1 year
	Sandy S.	07-03-90	12 yrs
	Tony M.	07-26-01	1 year
	Cindy F.	08-23-00	2 yrs
	Jeff M.	08-24-95	7 yrs
	Fernanda M.	08-26-95	7 yrs
	Richard W.	08-26-99	3 yrs
	Daniel C.	09-01-83	9 yrs
	Cathy M.	09-09-99	3 yrs
	Joe M.	09-26-99	3 yrs
	Mia M.	10-28-91	11 yrs