

*Just for Today
On the Bay*

The Ties That Bind Us
Together

The Bay Area Newsletter
February/March/April 2004

Recovery in Print



The Ties That Bind Us Together

When I think of this introduction to the Twelve Traditions, I'm reminded that N.A. is a "global" fellowship. We are tied to groups and members all over the world. I hear the old-timers share about the immense struggles in the early days, and there is always recognition of how important it was to maintain the connection between members and groups, regardless of age, race, sex, ethnic or social backgrounds. These "ties that bind us together" helped us keep our primary purpose first, in the spirit of unity and group conscience.

It has been my experience in recovery that I can disagree and express my views, because the Traditions give me a voice and allow me to think freely and for myself. The rest of the story is that I have an ego that wants to bully and strong-arm everyone to believe what I believe, because I believe that I know what's best or right. Most of the time my intentions are good, but my actions do not represent the principles of unity, personal responsibility and open-mindedness. I am aware of how others use manipulation, intimidation and aggression to split members and groups, because I have recognized the same shortcomings in myself.

There have been countless situations in my personal relationships and at group conscience meetings where there was balance and harmony ("all will be well") because

the ties, or common ground we all stand upon were evident and present above the egos and personalities.

It is said in our literature that the Traditions protect us from internal and external controversies, which means from ourselves. Some of the ways that I respect the ties that bind us are, first and foremost, to try and serve N.A. by helping another addict. To be an example of unity and responsibility by trying not to judge or gossip about others. To participate as an equal member of the Fellowship. To try to guide what I say to others and share at meetings so that I am honest, not cruel.

I try to be unafraid to stand up for what N.A. represents, and not what I represent.

Anonymous



I Know !!!

What Do You Truly Believe ???

The ties that bind us together are stronger than those that will tear us apart if we stay vigilant. As “old-timers” we must set a better example for the newcomers so that they may understand that it is only through vigilance that this is obtained.

The program of N.A., not the Fellowship, is where these principles are found. It is the myth of the 90-day-wonder, and the treatment centers that give the misunderstanding of the principle of the program. The textbook, meetings, sponsors, the Steps, the Traditions, these things are the basic H.O.W. of the program.

It is not fair to the lives of the newcomers that we go to meeting after meeting and sit back and co-sign the B.S. We are a society that is based on N.A. principles alone, and we are not affiliated with any outside enterprises.

The atmosphere of recovery is based on what we do, and what we say in the presence of the newcomers.

When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.

Signed,

No Matter What, No Matter What,
No Matter What!
12/13/86 (One Day At A Time)

“The ties that bind us together” are greater than the world that could tear us apart. It’s been a long time coming, but where do you start? You start by giving thanks to your higher power for shedding his grace, and giving his mercy and love. And to the men and women who came before us who lived and died to show us a better way to live without using dope. Our faces may be different, our complexions not the same. See, it is much deeper than race, sex or creed. It’s about what you really want out of life.

What do you truly believe? If you think about it, we are all the same. We all feel shame and pain. We all have wants and needs, we feel remorse and bleed.

We all lived to use and used to live, but once you put the drugs down you really start to feel there is a purpose to the master plan. Just stop and take time to listen and you will understand.

There are no big I’s or little U’s, because even if one addict dies, we all lose a part of ourselves that we can never get back.

So stay on track, for the ties that bind us are our experience, strength and hope. It’s the belief that addicts do change, and we never have to use dope!

Anthony E.

What It Means To Me

Often times I am perplexed by the suggested topics for our Area newsletter. I guess it is all a matter of perception and perspective. It always make me think about what these topics mean, and what they mean to me. *The ties that bind us together* could mean so many different things to different people.

Our diversity is our strength. I believe that for me those “ties” are our spiritual principles. I have had to do service work with people I wasn’t particularly fond of, but we did it because what we were doing was for the greater good. I may have disagreements with people, but I always have to go back to the idea that even if I don’t like what an individual may be doing, I have to believe that they would never do anything to intentionally harm Narcotics Anonymous.

I know that my behavior has left something to be desired on many occasions since I have been clean. I believe in the principle of perseverance, showing up even when I have embarrassed myself or been humbled.

Survival is a binding principle for me. I cannot live without the program of Narcotics Anonymous. I know this because I existed in a life (during the time that I was using) that lacked direction and anything else that was redeeming, until I got clean.

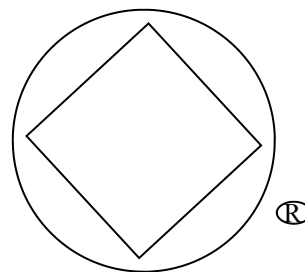
Integrity is a binding principle for me. Maintaining my integrity means that I try to do the right things for the right reasons, even when I don’t want to, and even when no one else is watching.

The process of the Steps helps me to discover what our principles are, and my sponsor assists with the process of figuring out when and how to act on these precious principles. Service is a wonderful arena in which to try out the principles. We all know that being involved in service allows us many opportunities to engage in the use of spiritual principles. I’m sure that I have caused a resentment or two (or thirty) in the world of service!

I love Narcotics Anonymous, and I am so grateful that this God-given program has survived all of our personalities. It has only survived because of the binding ties.

Thanks for listening,

Peace,
Kristy F.



We Are All Addicts

“..as long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart ... all will be well...”

I was asked to take a minute and write something besides poetry for this newsletter, so I gave a little thought to what the topic means to me. I was always told that when you are asked to do something ... you do it, because that's your Higher Power stretching you in preparation for growth.

The first thing that comes to mind is that we read a lot of material at the beginning of our meetings. One of the things we read about is our common last name, ADDICT. We ask that people not identify themselves as cross-addicted, alcoholics, etc., because the term “addict” encompasses everything.

I used to cringe when people did this, and I would fight it vehemently. Now I realize that some people don't fully understand what we mean when we ask that they not identify themselves in any other manner than “addict”. So, here is an opportunity for me to speak my peace...

Basically, the first tie that binds us together is that we are addicts. We are not cross-addicted to a number of substances. We are addicts, meaning addicted.

Our readings state that “we don't care what or how much you used”, so why would we want you to confuse a simple program by identi-

fying yourself in a multifaceted way? It's really simple. Are you a man or a woman whose life was controlled by the use of drugs (which includes alcohol)? Then you are like us ... an addict.

Separating ourselves and putting different labels on ourselves does not promote unity. We need unity and we need to identify as addicts so that no addict seeking recovery need ever die.

One thing that keeps me clean is to give away what was so freely given to me. Sometimes what was given to me was someone pulling me aside and telling me what things meant, even when I didn't want to hear it. I didn't want to hear these lessons because I was self-centered, and I thought I already knew everything anyway!

My job in recovery is to be here when an addict reaches out for help. Sometimes we give a little guidance in just the right way so that someone can understand and save their life.

Those of us who have some recovery realize that when we first came to N.A. we didn't know what was wrong with us, and it was only by coming back that we slowly started to realize what things really meant. Things finally started to sink in. You know what I mean?

Jennifer S.

Could We Have A Meeting ...?

“Could we have a meeting if no one showed up with a key?”, someone asked me. I responded, “We can and we do, if in our hearts we are free.”

“What about that person I really don’t like?” I responded. “I’ve found my resistance, it just isn’t right. And fortunately for me, the enemy I found was me!”

“But what about the whores and the pimps?” I responded, “We learn how not to make those labels fit.”

Someone said to me, “Sleeping with newcomers, it’s just a shame.” I responded, “I think loneliness is to blame.”

“What about all those different cliques, you know, the northside, the southside, the beachside, and those club-housers who are so terribly sick!”

I responded, “It’s my perception and judgment that’s learning to go, and any meeting I go to is because I want to grow.”

“But what about the people who have to share at every meeting they go to, and how they always need to say, “I’ve been clean so many years.”

I responded, “Who am I to say what part in my Higher Power’s world they play? If I don’t use, and I go to meetings, I get one more day.”

I said to someone I remember when I found N.A., “I could not look in your eyes, I could not pray, I couldn’t stop using.

I could not live life on life’s terms. I was a liar, a cheat, and a walking zombie standing up on my feet.”

And then I came here. I felt something different that filled that void deep inside. I was told to keep coming back, and that my story was important, and so is yours.”

I prayed that the paranoia would be removed. I sat with my back to the wall, checking the doors, and slowly I began to believe that I have a disease.

I started feeling the “we” and little by little I learned how not to compare, to see similarities instead, and to disagree without being disagreeable.

I learned that abstinence does not equal recovery, but guidance from my sponsor, the Steps and the Traditions are the key.

“How did I learn this?” you say. I made every mistake possible, and sometimes still do. I did all those things I accused you of doing, and then...

Somehow, that Power I felt in my first meeting came true. No Addict Seeking Recovery Ever Need Die From The Disease Of Addiction.

We Do Recover..

I found hope for me, and I found hope for you!

Anonymous

WE Have History

I know that the ties that bind us together include many things ... our common experience in our addiction, our involvements with the tools of recovery (like the Steps and Traditions), and the human side of our new world (like sponsorship, service work, and our social lives in N.A.) Sharing these things helps us to create a history together, and having this history binds us to each other, and helps us to weave a fabric so strong that we can survive "life on life's terms" without the use of drugs.

One person who is bound to me will remember all those late nights when I rang their phone and cried, wondering if my boyfriend who traveled in his work missed me as much as I missed him. Another will remember grabbing me at the end of my mother's funeral and taking me outside to sit under a tree and just "be". And another remembers all too well sitting next to me and holding my hand for five days and five long nights after I ruptured a disc in my back.

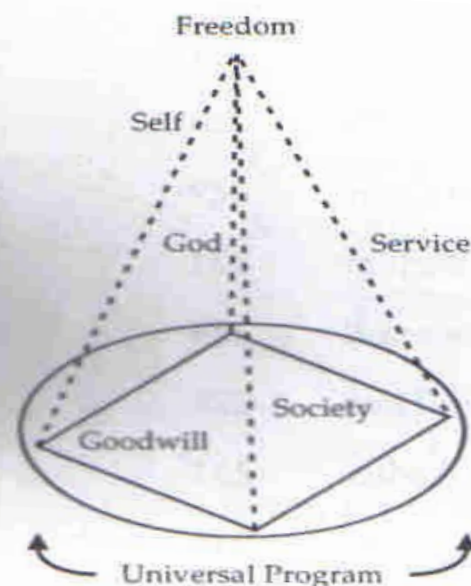
And I have learned how to open my heart and my life to share your history with you. I have been with you at the birth of your babies, weddings, graduations, and much more. Together we have created and are creating new history. What a blessing it is to have this kind of continuity in our lives.

There are more people and moments like these in our recovery history than we can possibly catalogue, but the point is well made.

The days we spend together, the events that come both tragic and mundane, the challenges we face on a daily basis truly bind us together. It becomes our history.

It makes us a family.

Anonymous



Poetry Corner

The Choice

In the battle of heaven or hell,
There is a place where dark secrets dwell.
One is dark and one is light,
One brings fear, the other life.
We have the choice, we have the right,
To bring the darkness into the light.
It starts with sadness, tears and shame,
And ends in surrender ,
And giving up the pain.
Ending isolation, ending the game,
We return to life and choose our paths,
And most times we even learn to laugh.
Living in the here and now,
We find the direction,
We find the H.O.W.

Anonymous

To Everyone

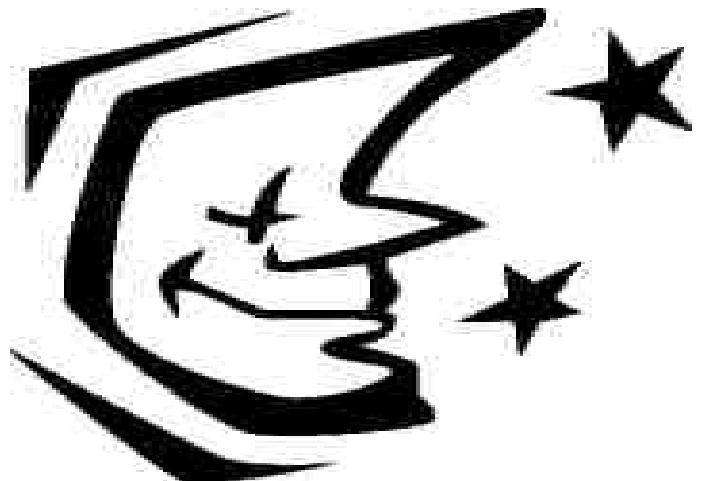
Love everyone,
The more people you love,
The more blessings you get.
Love without exception,
Because at the very end,
This is what we want ...
Love.
We are here to learn to love.
Once we learn how to love,
We will obtain Nirvana.

Jose G.

Life Is A Journey

True to the essence of what I am meant to be,
So I walk a path that calls me to.
Along this journey,
I have experienced many things,
My heart has had songs to sing.
Lessons that I wouldn't pass us, even today,
A bit far fetched, some might say.
Joys and sorrows, pains and pleasures,
Each it's own unique treasure.
The distance between now and then
is undefined,
Goals and dreams have become more re-
fined.
Time is no longer circumstance,
And life is no longer just about chance.
What a precious few may be blessed to
learn,
What I have realized and made my concern,
Life is a journey to the soul that dwells
within,
The path for each is different, but akin.

Jennifer S.



Friendship

I started using when I was twelve. My best friend was with me. We encouraged each other. Our first dialogue getting high: “Do you think you’re a burnout?” he said. “I don’t know” I replied. “I am, and I think it’s a privilege.” I don’t know why I can remember that dialogue so well, other than it was the first time I acknowledged that I was a “druggie”, so to speak. By the time we were sixteen we had done every drug possible in almost every fashion. We hustled together.

We got arrested three times together. At one time we were put into the newspaper. They had mismatched our names putting his first name with my last name and my first name with his last name. Naturally, our parents, as liberal as they were among the parents in our community, knew we had to be split up. We related to each other too much. His mother drank. My father drank. We had numerous relatives who used and dealt drugs. We were used to “scenes” and to withdrawal. Chaos was the norm.

I hit bottom when I turned twenty-one. I totaled his car, went to jail, and was facing prison. After finally complying with the courts protocol, I was released, and within a month I got clean for the first time. My friend did not. Since I was driving the car, the courts mandated that I go to meetings and substance education. He didn’t get arrested that time. I moved to Florida.

After a short period of time I got clean and started working the program. He stayed out. Nine years later, he came in. For the nine years he was out there we had limited contact. I would stop by his house when I was in town, but I couldn’t stay long. I don’t even know why I would stop. It would just scare me. After a few years I wouldn’t come by at all.

And then he got clean. At first, when I spoke to him he had about six months. At that time I was going on eleven years. This was the first coincidence in the early years of knowing someone in recovery that I had used with before, and this was my best friend from when I was a kid!

He parroted metaphors and program quotes, some I hadn’t heard in years. We redeveloped our friendship. I relapsed shortly after we started talking again and he was very hurt. Since then, we talk about every 3 to 5 days on the phone. He has about four years now. After a blackout period of nine years we are close friends again. It’s amazing! The ties that bound us together when we were adolescents were everything related to the disease—chaos, failure, injury, jails, institutions, near death experiences, etc. Today, we are bound by recovery, sponsorship, meetings, newcomers, service, activities

Ron K.

D. O. A.

The Defeating Our Addiction meeting of N.A. is the oldest meeting still in existence on the west coast of Florida. Danny G. started the meeting in July of 1981. Originally it was held at Danny's house on Monroe Circle off of 4th Street in downtown St. Petersburg. The meeting only stayed at Danny's house for two weeks. The group found a new location at St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church on 5th Avenue North. The meeting continued to be held there for almost three years. The first year the group struggled due to low attendance, but the members soon found a way to bolster attendance by picking up clients from local treatment centers. In 1984 the group moved one last time to its current location at the Gulfport Presbyterian Church.

The meeting started out as an open discussion meeting and also flirted with a step meeting for a short time. The group continues to be an open discussion meeting, which is held at 8pm on Thursday nights, except for the last Thursday of the month when a pot luck dinner and speaker meeting is held. The dinner begins at 7pm and the meeting begins at 8pm. The group also added a meeting a few years ago which is held on Saturday. The Saturday night meeting is held at 10pm and is an "ask it basket" meeting.

D.O.A.'s meetings are usually small which helps provide an atmosphere of intimacy. The meetings on Thursday generally have about twenty or so people who attend.

The pot luck speaker meeting brings in a lot more people, so if you don't get there early you might have trouble getting a seat. The Saturday night meeting is a candle light meeting and usually only about 10 people show up, but that's the way they like it. Unless a person doesn't want to, everyone gets a chance to share. If you don't know about the "ask it basket" format, come to the meeting and see what it's all about.

D.O.A. has a strong base of home group members for being such a small meeting. The number fluctuates, but usually totals about 10 people. The home group members are active not only in the home group, but on the Area level as well.

The group purchases literature for addicts to purchase at the meetings and also has a sponsorship program for newcomers.

Each month the group forwards its Seventh Tradition money to B.A.S.C.N.A. after expenses are paid.

If you haven't had a chance to check this meeting out, and you might like a smaller meeting, than come out to Gulfport on Thursday or Saturday nights.

We'll be there ...

Defeating Our Addiction



SLUGGO

#51 "You and Your Jack" December 1993
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Anniversaries

Always Here

Ashly S 03/18/03 1 yr

Be A Part OF

Mary Lou 03/10/03 1yr

Brenda W. 03/14/92 12 yrs

BAYNA

Angela F. 03/03/02 2 yrs

Mike W. 03/18/02 2 yrs

Ian W. 04/03/03 1 yr

CAYA

Sue M. 03/22/92 12 yrs

Curt 03/26/02 2 yrs

D.O.A.

Tina F. 04/25/02 2yrs

Lisa 05/02/02 2yrs

Give It Up

Bruce R. 04/18/99 5 yrs

Danny B. 04/02/91 13 yrs

H. O. W.

Sandy R. 04/04/99 5yrs

Kevin Z. 04/01/03 1 yr

ICOF

Louis P. 13 yrs

Diane B. 7 yrs

Just For Today

Julie C. 02/13/98 6 yrs

Ernest H. 03/22/89 15 yrs

Kiki 03/19/03 1 yr

Mel B. 04/01/00 4 yrs

Life's a Beach

In Memory of Kevin M. 02/24/96

Matt D. 04/05/03 1 yr

Cindy 5 yrs

Mark S. 03/05/89 15 yrs

Debra 02/07/98 6 yrs

Faith C. 02/06/01 3 yrs

Jack C. 02/02/03 1 yr

Mike P. 02/09/03 1 yr

Meeting

Vern F. 03/20/01 3 yrs

New Freedom

Shamir E. 02/18/03 1 yr

Anthony B. 03/16/02 2 yrs

Patricia H. 03/26/02 2 yrs

Kathy S. 03/27/02 2 yrs

New Life

Angela H. 03/10/01 3 yrs

Linda S. 02/06/90 14 yrs.

Tonderic J. 02/27/97 8 yrs

Never Alone

Denise F. 04/15/94 10 yrs

Surrender

Colin Y. 02/28/99 5 yrs

Jeannie H. 03/17/90 14 yrs

Neal R. 04/11/90 14 yrs

SYA

Michelle H. 02/10/02 2yrs

Rick F. 02/10/02 2 yrs

Kathy L. 02/14/01 3 yrs

Mary J. 02/15/02 2 yrs

Mark P. 03/10/02 2 yrs

Wayne P. 03/11/85 19 yrs

Craig M. 04/03/02 2 yrs

Tom B. 04/19/92 12 yrs

Jeff C. 04/27 01 3 yrs

Welcome Home

Dan K. 02/05/88 16 yrs

Dave L. 02/18/88 16 yrs

Danny S. 04/04/03 1 yr

Bob M. 03/21/88 16 yrs

Amy W. 04/06/02 2 yrs

Leslie M. 03/08/96 8 yrs

Pete C. 03/23/87 17 yrs

History



First Edition Basic Text

circa 1983

Florida Region Help lines

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

We would like to thank all of you who contributed to the newsletter. It was by your efforts that this publication was made possible. We look forward to your contributions in upcoming publications, and we accept articles, poetry, jokes and cartoons. We will try our best to let everyone know what the theme will be as soon as possible. There are many ways to submit your writing. Some of them are listed below. You may also give a hardcopy of your work to one of the newsletter subcommittee members.

◆ **E-mail to:** lit@bascna.org,
colforbin30@hotmail.com, rking1@tampabay.rr.com

◆ **Or mail to:** BASCNA

Just for Today on the Bay Newsletter

P.O. Box 703

Largo, FL 34649

ILS, Shawn G.

AREA SERVICE AND SUB-COMMITTEE TIMES

**Activities meets every Thursday at 6:30pm
at Borders Book Store at Tyrone Mall.
Additional Needs meets the Saturday before
Sunday ASC at 4:00pm.**

Sunday morning before ASC:

Hospitals & Institutions	9:00 AM
Public Information	10:30 AM
Helpline	11:00 AM
Literature	11:30 AM
Policy BASCNA	12:00 PM
Administrative	12:45 PM

**Area Service Committee (ASC),
meets the second Sunday of every
month**

at 1:30 PM in rooms 10 & 20.

***All meetings are held at
Terra Nova* 5501 28th St. N. St Peters-
burg FL***

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

Announcements for the Good of NA

7:45am Meeting

of
Narcotics Anonymous

*A good cup of coffee
&*

A great meeting

Come join us every morning-It could save your
life

Weekends are traditionally bring a friend

Terra Nova Clubhouse 5501 28th Street North St.Petersburg
NA not affiliated with clubhouse

Go to a meeting before you pick up
NA Helpline 727-547-0444

NEW MEETING LOCATION!

The Sunshine Group



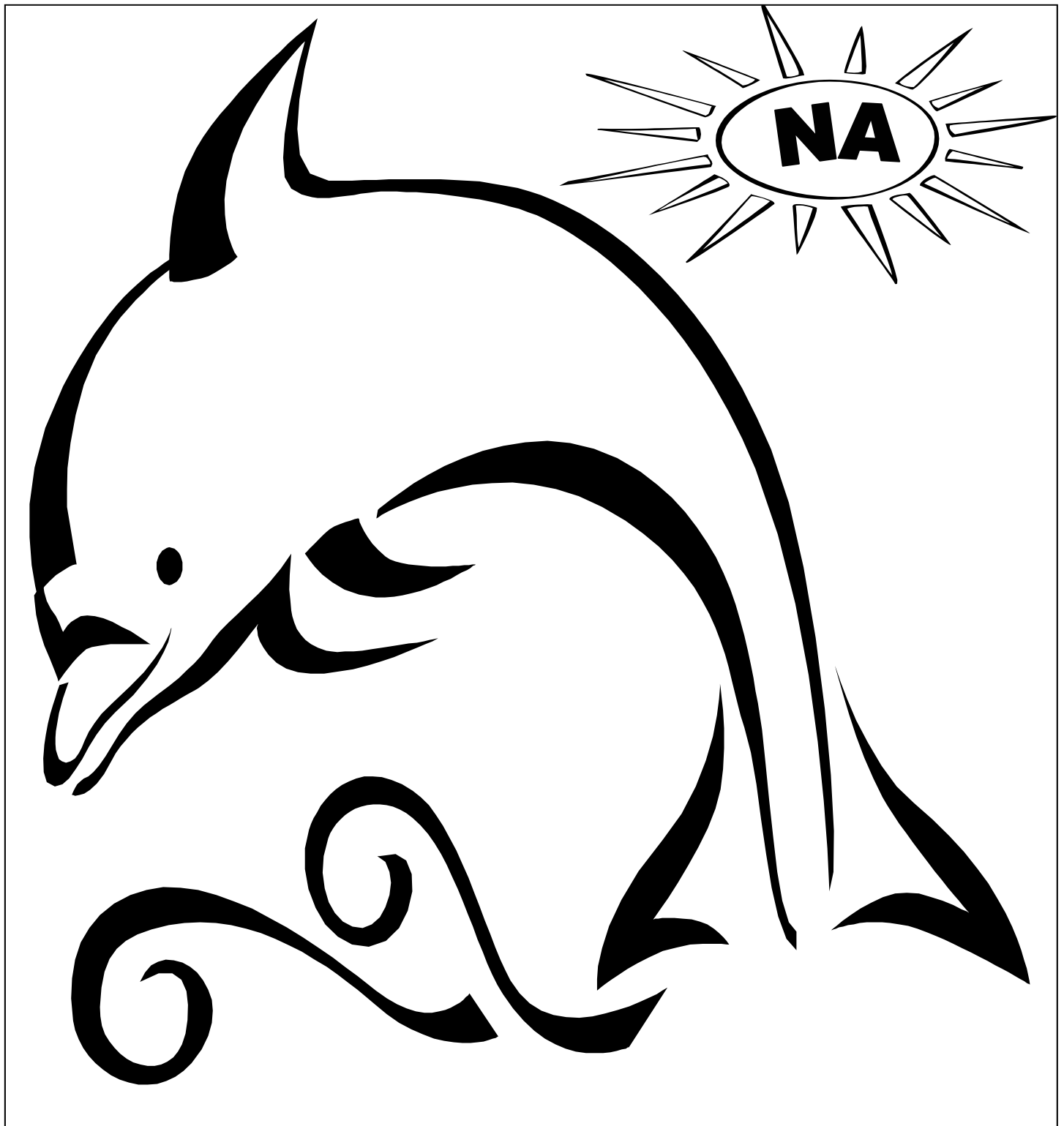
Of Narcotics Anonymous

**IS MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION
STARTING SUNDAY,
JANUARY 18TH AT 8PM:**

**St. John's Episcopal Church
1676 South Belcher Road
Clearwater**

Meeting previously located at:
Suncoast Hospital
2025 Indian Rocks Road, Largo





Literature Subcommittee Note:

The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual contributors, 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 Second Tradition. Please indicate if you would like that feedback published.