

March/April 2020

# BAY area News

Narcotics Anonymous

## 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!*

## We Do Recover

When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends- Jails, institutions or death- or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today are more fortunate. For the first time in man's entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a spiritual-not religious- program, Known as Narcotics Anonymous.

**Bay Area website: [bascna.org](http://bascna.org)**  
**24-Hour Helpline 888-779-7117 Call before you use!**

## **Infinity Came Too Soon**

The week before Christmas, Kevin C. died. His death happened way too soon, and way too fast. He died clean, with 12 1/2 years, earning an infinity medallion. You may not have known him because he was quiet, and didn't share a lot at meetings. He was always dressed impeccably. Some people said he looked like CNN news reporter Anderson Cooper. If you didn't know him, you missed out.

I had the privilege of sponsoring Kevin for a number of years, after he moved here from Sarasota. He was kind and loving, a good listener, and always interested in others. He was active at his church, and his men's group at the Metro Wellness Center. Kevin helped lots of people in and out of the program. He took care of his brother in a local ALF, visited people in nursing homes, and gave people rides.

Kevin was challenged with a lot of health problems over the years. The wreckage of the past can be hard to deal with, but he avoided self-pity, and tried not to let his health slow him down. Suddenly, in October, he went to the emergency room and was hospitalized for over a week. Several NA friends visited him. The doctors couldn't tell what was wrong and kept running more tests. Eventually, Kevin was told that he had advanced liver cancer. He returned to his home, with his two dogs and three cats, and started chemotherapy, but it didn't seem to work - in fact he got sicker. His immune system weakened, and his doctor told him he shouldn't go out to meetings. So we took meetings to him. I remember a sunny day, four of us sitting on his back deck. The topic was the Third Step. We read and shared with each other. It was a very powerful day of surrender, faith, and love. Kevin's physical condition deteriorated rapidly, but he had a strong program and a strong faith in God. He surprised me one day, wanting to go out for pizza at Gianni's. We put his walker in the car and headed over. Somebody had told him that they had a cauliflower crust pizza that was good. It wasn't, but luckily we also ordered a large New York style pizza. We had a good time, although he really couldn't eat very much, and insisted I take leftovers to my wife Carla, so that she could try the cauliflower crust. She didn't like it either.

Dying is not fast or easy. A week later Kevin was back in the hospital, and within days was transferred to hospice. We visited Kevin and sat with his family, who came in from around the country. We tried to help him and them as much as possible. By talking with his son, sister, cousin, and friends I learned more reasons to love Kevin, and understood what the NA program did for him and his family. Kevin died the week before Christmas. My sponsor gave me an infinity medallion to give to his family. The medallion represents the power of the NA program to change lives. I miss Kevin and think about him often. Infinity came too soon.

**Jim F.**

## **Magic**

In the beginning the pain was too great.

I needed the oblivious unconscious state "comfortably numb." I became insanity, it was my game.

Quickly I lost everything to my name, if this was my reality, how long could I remain?

Could I let their deaths be in vain? The pain I knew it would last, but the days turned into years so fast. Her pain was over, mine had just begun. Chaos and confusion is in which my world had spun.

It would take the act of an Angel to plant my feet back on the ground. A love lost, to have my love found, he came in the form of spiritual being opened up my heart and an eye that was all seeing. No longer having to hold on to the pain happiness, I knew I could obtain with honesty open-mindedness and willingness, I would gain. She isn't gone, she's with me when I close my eyes, and when I open them my life is still a surprise. Living a life beyond my wildest dreams. Everything is just as it seems.

"Magic" form of a spiritual being.

**Elizabeth**



## **“Any Addict Can Get Clean And Find A New Way To Live”...**

I got clean on December, 25 1981. I have been a member of Bay Area NA for 38 years. My passion and love for recovery helps me stay clean. I felt HOPE in my first meeting. In NA we have EMPATHY. This was necessary for me to get clean. I was told that NA had no recovery, no book and nobody can stay CLEAN in NA. This was discouraging and very sad. We had 2 meetings a week, both on Thursday in Pinellas County. Thank GOD for the few members in NA, especially Danny G, Henry S. and Carol N. they told me I was needed.

Those kind words touched my heart. We had hip pocket recovery, a little white booklet that we took with us we survived with GOD's love. As addicts got stronger from practicing recovery. Groups got stronger and we started growing up as a FELLOWSHIP. Please remember addicts were responsible for starting a helpline. Opening H&I meetings, providing information about NA to the recovery community. We struggled together and grew together. It was different we needed each other to stay clean. Our fellowship was growing worldwide and we got a book and an area and regional committee. We had our first CONVENTION. This experience was awesome. Bay Area was getting stronger. We were helping hundreds of addicts to stay clean. It would not be fair to not mention that addicts with recovery were now able to sponsor newcomers and share about NA recovery. We got a major blessing when Dick and Cathy B. moved to Bay Area. They brought STRONG experience, strength and hope. With their help we learned about traditions and the earlier history of NA. The Bay Area fellowship has been my HOME. My love for recovery is because so many of you are CARRYING THE MESSAGE. MUCH LOVE FOR OUR TRUSTED SERVANTS. “THE LIE IS DEAD WE DO RECOVER IN NA”

**Jimmy S.**

## **It's OK To Be Clean**

“I tried to contain myself, but I escaped.”

If you did not use drugs, I did not hang out with you. I had no use for you. I felt better than you. I knew the answer to life. I did not understand life without using anything. I had no concept of complete abstinence. Why would anybody in their right mind want to live that way? I really did not participate much in life near the end of my using. It was a full time job just to stay high. Life would be way too boring if I did not use drugs. I was really separated from the real world. Everything in life revolved around using. I was left with a big empty void when I quit using.

I was blessed to be sent from jail to a treatment center. I was introduced to 12 step recovery there. There was not much free time while in treatment. They had our days pretty well planned out. I was slowly learning about leisure activities. I believe I might not have stayed clean if I was not placed in a treatment center. It was a blessing in disguise for me. The treatment center introduced me to jogging. I worked myself up to a six mile run so that I could run off property. I actually felt good jogging. It was a clean high. I went to the beach, on picnics, fishing, and camping. We played softball and went to movies during my stay in treatment. I was learning how to have fun clean. The fellowship was very small in my early recovery. There were not many planned activities locally. Most required a road trip. A road trip by itself was fun. We learned to love and hate each other in short weekend. Service work was a requirement for most of us twenty-eight years ago. There was so much to do, and so little time. I believe attending my first convention gave me the most powerful feeling that let me know it is okay to be clean.

“Oh, the places you'll go. Oh, the things you'll see.” - Dr. Seuss

**Jimmy S.**

# ANNIVERSARIES

## March

Emily M., Keys to Recovery, March 1st, 14 yrs  
Dave M., We Do Recover, March 3rd, 31 yrs  
Kevin G., I am the Problem, March 3rd, 10 yrs  
Heidi K., SYA, March 4th, 11 yrs  
Rick N., SYA, March 4th, 11 yrs  
Steve K., Morning Serenity, March 4th, 4 yrs  
Shawn C., It Works, March 4th, 3 yrs  
Brittney G., Trust the Process, March 5th, 8 yrs  
Tom P., Morning Serenity, March 5th, 6 yrs  
Gary F., DOA, March 7th, 19 yrs  
John R., Trust the Process, March 7th, 1 yr  
Melissa H., Spiritual Solutions, March 8th, 3 yrs  
Lexi B., Change Starts Here, March 9th, 5 yrs  
Shelia C., Women on Wednesday, March 12th, 13 yrs  
Rob A., We DO Recover, March 12th, 1 yr  
Jay M., Resurrender, March 15th, 13 yrs  
Shauna S., Do You Really Want to Know, March 16th, 4 yrs  
Jeannie K., It Works, March 17th, 30 years  
Adika C., We Do Recover, March 18th, 11 yrs  
Tim B., Come As You Are, March 18th, 7 yrs  
Kimberly S., Ladies to the Core, March 19th, 18 months  
Eric G., Happy & Free, March 22nd, 31 yrs  
Pamela N., Soul Sistas, March 22nd, 20 years  
Pete C., Primary Porpoise, March 23rd, 33 yrs  
Joe S., Spiritual Principles, March 25th, 8 yrs  
Jenna B., Happy & Free, March 27th, 8 yrs  
Elizabeth C., March 27th, 1 yr  
Michelle P., Happy & Free, March 28th, 11 yrs

## April

Darrell, Morning Serenity, April 1st, 1 yr  
Maci H., Just for Today, April 1st, 1 yr  
Josh M., Just for Today, April 5th, 2 yrs  
Brittany G., Outside the Walls of Addiction "Her Story," 18 months  
Mike C., Just for Today, April 7th, 2 yrs  
Heather T., Women on Wednesday, April 10th, 6 yrs  
Kace W., I am the Problem, April, 13th, 1 yr  
Chaise H., Soul Sistas, April 15th 6 yrs  
Wendy S., Spiritual Principles, April 22nd, 7 yrs  
Daniel B., Sunshine Group, April 24th, 5 yrs  
Tia G., Change Starts Here, April 24th, 18 months

Ross B., What Can I Do, April 26th, 4 yrs  
Chrissy P., What Can I Do, April 27th, 5 yrs  
Jenelle A., Keys to Recovery, April 28th, 6 yrs

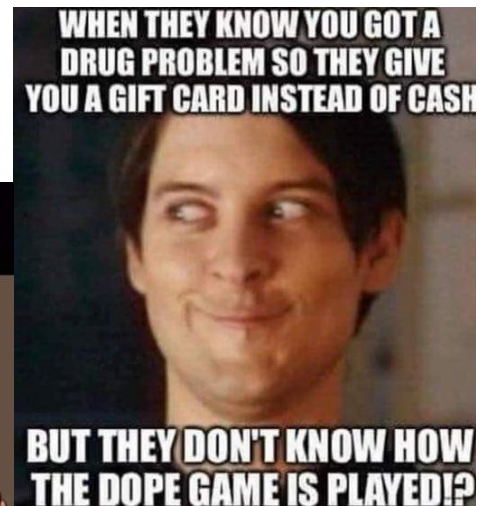
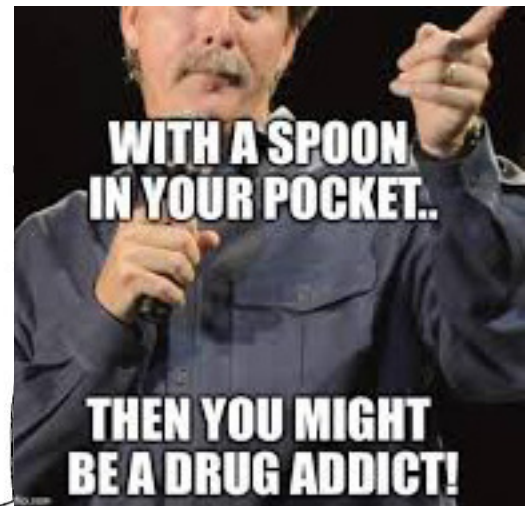
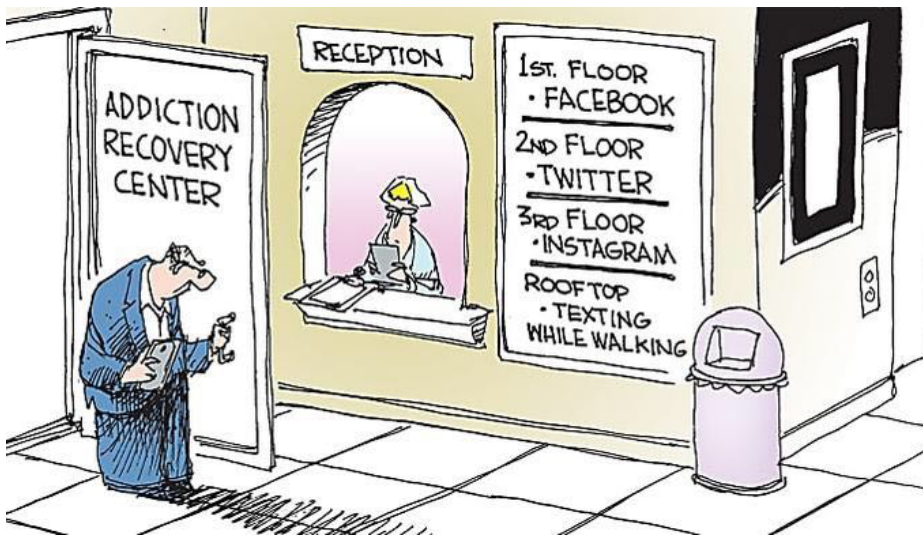
## May

Lisa T., Resurrender, May 1st, 18 yrs  
Dave P., Morning Serenity, May 1st, 7 yrs  
Andrew H., Real Talk, May 1st, 5 yrs  
Connie B., Morning Serenity, May 3rd, 5 yrs  
Randy B., Morning Serenity, May 3rd, 5 yrs  
Brooke T., May 5th, 23 yrs  
Bo B., We Do Recover, May 5th, 1 yr  
Dana, Women & Recovery, May 6th, 4 yrs  
Tori H., It Works, May 7th, 24 yrs  
Cathy W., May 7th, 9 yrs  
Susan A., Be a Part Of, May, 7th, 1 yr  
Stephanie B., Ladies to the Core, May 10th, 2yrs  
Erica S., Spiritual Solutions, May 13th, 3 yrs  
Mitti F., We Do Recover, May 14th, 1 yr  
Brian H., Just for Today, May 15th, 9 yrs  
Danita K., May 19th, 12 yrs  
Ruth B., Women on Wednesday, May 21st, 25 yrs  
Steve G., Come As You Are, May 22nd, 10 yrs  
Jenna DR., What Can I Do, May 25th, 5 yrs  
Brent K., Change Starts Here, May 27th, 7 yrs  
Maria E., May 27th, 2 yrs  
Daryl H., Morning Serenity, May 29th, 27 yrs





# LOL



Me listening to songs about sex, drugs & crime on my way to buy a vegan, gluten free vanilla cupcake



I'm soooo gangsta



Grow or Go

© 2019

Jodi

## Will I be there?

A relapse will have you looking at everything once you finally surrender and are willing. I have been looking at ego and how much or how little it was a part of my decisions over the last year. The literature says be humble or be humiliated. It has been my experience that it is a quick drop to that once I choose to pick up. I know for a fact, that I began to judge, those with more time and those with less time. Even people with many, many more years than me, if I thought it wasn't healthy I didn't even care to listen and I definitely missed their message.

I am recognizing how many times in a day I say "I". Every time I do, and it is a lot, I ask, "Is this ego?" When we share, I am told to share my experience, it's impossible to do without saying "I." I guess it is healthy to continue to ask, "Is this ego?" Now I am contemplating the things I did in the rooms to "help" another sick and suffering addict. Did I do things to look good? If it really hit the fan would I be there for them? Would I answer the phone for someone when they called? Would I limit my interactions with those that were new or coming back? It is real easy to get on a high horse and become judgmental, but when it really mattered would I be there for someone? I believe that now I would. I have a different perspective based upon my new experiences, and that is what we share with each other, right? I will never be that addict that isn't there, that uses "I have to protect my recovery."

I understand that and the primary purpose of each group is to carry the message to the still sick and suffering addict. If the newcomer is the most important, and that person who relapsed or is in a relapse, and is still coming to meetings, is the newcomer. Then it is my responsibility to be there, not pull away claiming "I am protecting my recovery." "We only keep what we have by giving it away." That is to the newcomer and the person coming back or struggling. I am beginning to understand the traditions at a deeper level after the last year, and I have to ask myself "Am I really living this program or am I just trying to look good and letting my ego run rampant?" For this addict, my ego is one thing that lead me back out. I am grateful for my experience over the last year and a half. I am able to relate more and I can only ask that it make me stronger in actually living the program and not just claiming to live the program. It is real easy to be there for someone when they're on top of the mountain, but will I be there when it really matters?

**Adam W.**

## Learning to Trust

"Wait right here. I will be right back!"

I had the ability to trust when I was using drugs. I would give a dealer my money and trust that what was in package would get me high. Once I stopped using, I acted like I could not trust anyone. Actually, I was the one that couldn't be trusted. I was a liar, cheat and a thief. It a while to sink in, that it was I, that could not be trusted. The time I spent with my sponsor helped me learn to trust. He openly shared the issues in his life. He didn't seem to have any secrets. He showed trust in me. The group extended their trust in me when I was elected treasurer. I told them I had been a thief. They said they knew. They trusted me. These valuable lessons allowed me to see who I needed to trust. Trust took practice. It took taking risks. The first person I needed to trust was me.

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." - Dale Carnegie

**Jimmy S.**



# Grateful For....

The page features two colorful butterflies in the upper right quadrant, one smaller and one larger, both with intricate patterns. A large, abstract paint splash in shades of blue, green, and yellow is positioned in the lower right, partially overlapping the text area.

Grateful for my Recovery! I keep getting blessings!

**Maura C.**

I'm grateful for the ability to process my feelings with my higher power and my support network.  
Grateful to watch others grown up in recovery as well.

**Erica S.**

Grateful for perseverance.

**Melissa W.**

Grateful that even though I had family members who manipulated 12 step programs for legal purposes, which left a bad taste in my mouth, and I didn't trust this process AT ALL...I finally decided to really give this a fighting chance! I put my faith in people who believed in me and started asking for help, even though I didn't want to, not at all, not even a little bit! I'm grateful that I finally gave myself a chance and had faith in my own abilities to do this, because I never believed I could actually do it before.

**Robin S.**

Freedom! Freedom from active addiction and freedom of choice! Because of RECOVERY (not just abstinence) I get to choose the life I live today!

**Lisa T.**

I will always, ALWAYS be grateful that I found NA because of someone else, but stayed for me.

**Emily M.**

The opportunity to practice direct communication!

**Colleen G.**

God's grace.

**Kimberly S.**

That God constantly reminds me of my worth.

**Ernest E.**

Grateful to feel God's love and mercy today, and for real friends.

**Brent S.**

My beautiful children! My loving wife! Being financially stable, having a roof over my head, awesome people in my life, and next Saturday, I will have 100 months clean!

**Rob P.**

My willingness to be willing, and country music.

**Chris B.**

I'm grateful to have the choice and ability to follow protocol and listen to my doctor in times of illness.

**Bobby H.**

I am grateful for good health! Also for kind, loving, and supportive friends!

**Liz M.**

Grateful for knowing God didn't make a mistake inside of me.

**Drew F.**

I am grateful for the amount of meetings we have in our area.

**John H.**

Grateful for the awareness to know what to do when to get out of my own stuff.

**Dan T.**

Grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the Bay Area.

**Megan G.**

Being able to think before I react.

**Rosalind D.**

Family.

**Kimmie P.**

I am grateful for the relationship I have with my Higher Power, because if I didn't have that relationship, I wouldn't be able to be in gratitude and see all the "God Moments."

**Tara L.**



*Thank You!*

## **What Service has done for me?**

I wanted to express what service has done for me in my life outside of NA. Even though words can never completely capture it all, here is my attempt:

I have heard that service for the program builds self-esteem in meetings, and I've found this to be very true. Yet there is so much more that it has given me.

H&I has helped me find my voice and quelled the fear that I have nothing of importance to say. It has given me hope when I see people from facilities at meetings. H&I has given me reasons not to use, because I don't want to let down the guys in the facilities, or by seeing the misery of people going back to those facilities.

Sponsorship has helped me build trust, love, and the ability to receive love. It has helped me learn boundaries and the importance of holding them. Sponsorship has brought me some of the purest joy by being part another person's journey of cleaning up their wreckage and finding serenity, self-worth, and happiness.

Going to Area and Region has given me experience that I use to chair a subcommittee and sit on committees at a national level in my industry. It has given me experience in being courageous and persevering while letting go of the outcome of the situation. I have used this to deal with government entities for my employer with good results. This level of service has taught me that what others think of me doesn't matter. That holding fast to my principles is what is important.

Service has shown me how to flourish in the "normal" world, a skill I was in short supply of when I came into the rooms.

**-Anonymous**



## Self-Compassion

Hi Everyone,

Thank you for allowing me to share. It took me a couple of times going through all 12 steps before I could EXPERIENCE self-compassion for myself. I had always confused it for feeling sorry for myself. Now I know there's a huge difference. One of the areas in my recovery that I have had the most growth is establishing a personal relationship with my higher power. I picture my higher power as a team mate. There is nothing we can't do together. One day I was doing some letter writing and I thought to myself, "If God was to write ME a letter, what would he say?" That allowed me to look at my life through the eyes of God with love. The following letter is what I received. It was very healing and has become my mission statement.

Dear Patty,

I'm so proud of you. Ever since you were a little girl you knew I was there. It thrilled me to see you so excited when the flowers would pop up in the spring. I remember when you and your brother climbed to the top of that weeping willow tree on a windy day. As my breath blew through the air that tree was bending and leaning. The harder I blew, the tighter you held on and the louder you laughed. You were so young, yet you learned that day about the power of the invisible.

I'm sorry you were shamed and punished for being authentic back then. I'm sorry that when you were sad and your feelings were hurt and you cried you were beaten. To be forced to stop crying while being inflicted with physical pain calls for extraordinary measures. I think your right, that's when you learned to detach and disassociate.

When you were 28 you were sold on those commercials. I gave you the courage to join the army so you could "Be all that you could be." That soldier, the one you gave emotional support to while he was going through emotional family issues. Well, like your mother, when people drink too much they're capable of unspeakable acts. I'm sorry he got into your room that night and raped you while you slept warm and comfortable in your bed. Stop blaming yourself for forgetting to lock your bedroom door; how could you have known you thought you were safe.

In 1996 you met Vic, I've never seen 2 people laugh so much. You were both so silly, going to the movies, diners, the theaters and of course the music. I don't know if you realized it or not but I was there that day when you were sitting alone at the kitchen table and you made a conscious decision to feel your feelings and express your emotions with another human being. You did a great job, you were so vibrant. After some time you started to get in touch with pain, hurt and scary feelings. Then one afternoon when you were vulnerable and crying, well let me say what Vic did to you that day most people don't live through. It made your military experience seem like a walk on the beach on a sunny day. My love and compassion were nowhere in his thoughts, he showed you no mercy.

About a month later you surrendered. You surrendered with all your heart and mind. You did what you thought you needed to do to come home to be with me that day. It was me that sent someone to save you. The ICU nurses did a great job taking care of you that week. I'm glad you feel my presence in the people I have put in your life this past year. You need to let them help you now.

You see, I need you to let them help you, so you can help me, help others.

Love Always, God

What's in your God's Letter?

ILS, I pray I remain teachable

**Patty S.**



## Willingness

"If you're gonna pray for potatoes, you'd better grab a hoe."

Most of my life I was motivated by pain. I became willing when the pressure was on. Only when I was in trouble did I show any willingness to do something about it. I still looked for the easy way out. My sponsor told me the pain was in the resistance. He would ask me, "How important is it?" The next question he asked me was, "what do you want to do about it?" He encouraged me to participate in my recovery. Recovery is an action program. This was a healthy way for me to learn willingness. It was a major turning point when I first showed willingness without extreme pain involved. The process started because I was always getting into jackpots and needed help. The first time I became aware that I was becoming willing was when I heard "if you have a sponsor then use him". A sponsor is more than a name. He will share his experience, strength and hope. Once I realized willingness is the key,

I stopped creating wreckage of the present. I learned that prevention is much easier than the cleanup.

**Jimmy S.**

## ACTIVITIES

### Bay Area Public Relations Poster Drive

**When:** March 7, 2020

**Time:** 10:00 am for bagels and leaving at 10:30 am to hang posters

**Where:** Terra Nova Club House

7550 40th St. N. Pinellas Park, FL 33781

\*Please join the Public Relations committee to help hang posters so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us.

\*\*Please dress appropriately.

(NA is not affiliated with this location)

### Florida Region 10th GSR Assembly

**When:** March 14, 2020

**Time:** 9:00 am-5:00 pm

**Where:** Tampa/Brandon Sheraton Hotel

10221 Princess Palm Avenue Tampa, FL 33610

**\*\*Conference Agenda Review and CAT** on 3/14/20 from 9:00 am-11:00 am, workshops to follow.

(NA is not affiliated with this location)

### Work the Steps or Die...

**When:** March 21, 2020

**Time:** 10:00 am-4:00 pm

**Where:** Radius Church

165 13th St. St. Petersburg, FL

**\*\*Come take ALL 12 Steps in one day!**

**\*\*Four 1-hour sessions and lunch is provided**

(NA is not affiliated with this location)

### SYA Picnic

**When:** April 11, 2020

**Where:** Fort De Soto Park, Pavilion 5

**Time:** 10:00 am-4:00 pm

\*Food, Bounce House, Fellowship, and Meeting at 12:30 pm.

\*\*Park entry is \$5.00 per car.

(NA is not affiliated with this location)





## BASIC TEXT QUOTES

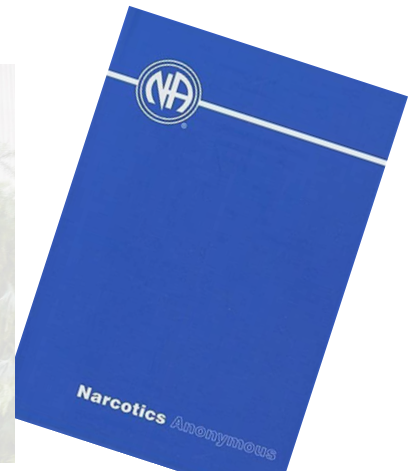
"We have paid dearly with our pain for the right to recover"



-Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, page 10

"We used drugs to cover our feelings, and did whatever was necessary to get drugs."

Basic text: Why Are We Here



"While using, we lived in another world. We experienced only periodic jolts of reality or self-awareness."

Basic Text Who Is An Addict

*"We have been experts at self-deception and rationalization. By writing our inventory, we can overcome these obstacles."*

*Basic Text Step 4*

"The full fruit of a labor of love lives in the harvest, and that always comes in its right season."

Basic Text Preface



Do we really want to be rid of our resentments, our anger, our fear?

Many of us cling to our fears, doubts, self-loathing or hatred because there is a certain distorted security in familiar pain. It seems safer to embrace what we know than to let go of it for fear of the unknown.

(Narcotics Anonymous Book/page 33)

—Narcotics Anonymous