

Clean Times

Jan/Feb 2014

www.tampa-na.org

I Had To Survive My Son's Addiction

Being a parent is tough. Being the parent of a using addict is very tough. Now I see the heartache I put my own parents through. But I had an advantage when it came to dealing with my son's addiction. I am an addict in recovery. I know something my parents (non-recovering addicts themselves) did not know – there is nothing I can do to “fix” my son. My job is to protect myself from his addiction while he stumbles down the path he chooses to follow. I wish I had come to this realization much sooner than I did. I spent much time and effort, emotion and heartache trying to fix him, without success. It wasn't until I let him go that my serenity returned.

I thought that as an addict I would recognize the signs of using in my own children. Maybe I did. Maybe it was denial that allowed me to not see. Maybe it was ego – these were MY children, I raised them right. But my children did start using. Is it genetic? Is it “the times we live in?” Do all kids experiment? Does it really matter?? What do I do now?

My older son had moved out. His using was not directly affecting me. But my younger son did live with me. As his using progressed my husband and I had to do something. For a long time we tried to fix it. We tried to control who he hung out with, where he went, what he did. “As long as you live under our roof...” We pushed for college. He got in and then didn't go. We pushed for him to get a job. He would get one and then lose it. Get another and then lose it. We

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From the Editor...

This month, we added a few favorite articles selected by the newsletter committee from our past year of Clean Times. The articles submitted were submitted for different reasons, but each of them meant something to the person submitting them. Please remember to submit your articles to newsletter@tampa-na.org for inclusion in the next edition!

-Deborah

bought him cars so he could get where we decided he needed to go, made him keep track of the mileage and destinations. He wrecked them both. We bought him bikes, he left them around town. We bought him a bus pass, but never knew where he was going. Then some money went missing.

Once we realized he had been stealing we determined he could not be in the house. But what could we do? He was only 19. He was my baby boy. I couldn't just kick him out; good parents don't do that to their kids. We tried to get him into treatment, but insurance denied it. So we gave him a tent and told him he could stay in the yard while he looked for somewhere else to live. Then we decided he could come in the house as long as someone else was home. But we addicts are crafty. Once in the house, he stole again. So again we said he could not be in the house. But my slender son could fit through the dog door, and steal some more.

Enough was enough. He had to go. We boarded up the dog door until we could get a smaller one. We told him he could not stay in the tent anymore. He had to go. We let him pack a bag then I watched my

continued on pg. 3 ...

2013's Favorite Articles

I chose a poem from May/June 2013 edition of the NA Newsletter on page 8. It's titled "MOTHERS" by Penny J.

This poem really hit home for me, not just for my mother, but for myself as a mother. In life I always dwelled on the BAD things I did and said. Reading this poem made me really see myself as I really was -as a Mom- I wasn't all bad. I did all the things in this poem, as did my Mom. As probably every Mom does. It's what we do! I realize after a few 24 hours in this program I am not a BAD Mom. Ok, so I made a few BAD decisions and today with the help of a sponsor and the NA steps I came to terms with my past transgressions. TODAY, I DON'T have to feel degradation, shame and remorse. TODAY, I DO feel honor, pride and faith. So thank you Penny J. Today I know I am a Mom that my children and parents are proud of!

- Cynthia P.

"MOTHERS" WRITTEN BY PENNY J.

There is a place- A haven a sweet safe refuge
It is the essence of beauty the epitome of Love
It is within my Mother's arms
Mothers we are more than just "MOM"
We've conquered the hurdles that we faced and slay dragons
along the way
We've fought battles and won wars... We are WARRIORS
Mothers; We are more than we know
For we are nurturers healers teachers and leaders
Nurses and doctors with and without the degrees

Happy New Year Funcoast, in 2013 our area said goodbye to friends and places that were icons. We also said hello to some new people, places, and events. My favorite was this areas inaugural hosting of a basketball tournament. Several NA sports fans had a dream and they reached for their dreams. A committee was formed and they began to secure a venue. In spite of the roadblocks this committee remained vigilant. In 2013 we saw that vigilance bring about our first Funcoast Basketball Tournament. As we heard during announcements in our meetings, they practiced every Sunday. Their perseverance saw them through to win the championship.

Our Funcoast area turned out for the first annual Speaker Jam Event. The speakers were amazing, the food affordable, and the girls were hot. We played pinochle as children played on the grounds.

I chose this article for it reflects how our fellowship continues to thrive in spite of saying goodbye to icons. Hello 2014 and the promise you have...

We all know that the NA Literature, the meetings, and working the program is what it takes to recover from our addiction. There are other ways and other things that we can do to help us in our recovery and we have lots of fun while doing it! We caught up with Shawn B., who plays on the Tampa Funcoast Basketball team, at a recent tournament and speaker jam and asked him a few questions:

Activities Letter

I would like to take a moment to thank all those that have supported me in this endeavor as your trusted servant as activities chair. I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce and thank the members of our committee; Ernest H. for his willingness to assist me as vice chair, Carol A. for her service as secretary, Alfred W. for his service as treasurer, and Kevin for his willingness to serve on the committee as a member. I am sending out this letter to ensure that we as a fellowship are on the same page in understanding what the activities committee's primary purpose is; to build more support, unity, and love within the Funcoast area. Our personal recovery truly depends on our unity here in NA. This goal can only be achieved through member participation. My hope is, in the spirit of cooperation and commitment, we as a fellowship will work together to support and promote our events and functions at the homegroup level and if you would like to become even more involved, please see me or any other committee member. A recovery-oriented atmosphere is so important, especially for the newcomers. We must keep in the forefront of our minds that our primary purpose is to touch the still sick and suffering addict. Being that this is a program of attraction and not promotion, let us try to be mindful of the way we treat each other and remember the love, tolerance, empathy, and compassion we were shown when we got here.

Sincerely yours,

CJ J.
Activities Chair

Faves - Mothers (cont'd)

We are risk takers and peacemakers and through our children we build great nations
Constantly laying foundations and through all of this we are still patient
Mothers-What a marvelous calling to be chosen as vessels to carry gifts from God
Placing diamonds in our gardens Cradles of Life we are
We are courageous Strong like Atlas carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders
As we ease the burdens of others
Becoming more beautiful as we grow golden
Mothers- We have the strength of a Hurricane with a sweet gentle breeze
Whirling and twirling and stirring up dreams our essence lingering
We are Elegant Intelligent Relentless and Eloquent
We are creative sharing in the creating of God's purest Creation
"OUR CHILDREN"
We teach them lullabies scriptures and verses and we heal and hurts AND
We are comforter's confidants companions AND COMPASSION
We are consistent as we go before you learning wisdom and returning to you life's lessons
AND WE ARE ANGELS
Watching over our family and our children while they are sleeping
We are BLESSINGS
Holding you close to our bosom while you are weeping
Often putting ourselves last never revealing the secrets and sorrows we are keeping
Love seeping from our being
WE ARE VIRTUOUS AND VICTORIOUS
WE ARE PURE-fashioned by God- WE are created to be in the image of HE-
- MOTHERS -
And for those like me whose Mother has passed on..
Sweet memories are left behind lingering on like a soft melody a smooth symphony
your fragrance Mother is still with me
And Mother I remember every little thing you taught me
And even though I'm not perfect because of you I'm still learning
Your fire Mother is still burning deep down inside of me
In my heart and in my soul
And when I lay me down to sleep I can see your Love flickering
Within the light of the stars
And I still hear your voice
"There is no idle time, for even when we sleep, we dream"
For there is only one sacrifice
That surpasses the sacrifice
of a Mother's Love
Cradles of Life we are
WE ARE MOTHERS

Faves - Bball (cont'd)

CT: How long has the Funcoast basketball team been playing together?

Shawn B: The core group of guys that are on the team started playing together about five years ago at the American Legion Playground; which is, on the corner of West Florida and Sligh Ave. A few of us heard about softball being played there. Then, someone mentioned that there was a basketball court. Smiles....We have heart for sports it seems.

CT: Does the team have a Coach and who is the Team Captain?

SB: Coach; hmmm, we have a few coaches.. James W., Richard W., and Eric B.

CT: What is the team's main goal?

SB: For everyone to have fun, players and the fans of the game. Just to have clean fun.

CT: What do you think the team can improve on to be better?

SB: We have a strong team. Continuing to build each other up is always an important key. Some of us have not played organize basketball in years.

CT: What are the team's strengths on the court?

SB: A never die attitude.

CT: What do you feel is the team's biggest accomplishment?

SB: We help each other, on and off the court.

CT: What one or two things does the team currently do in your training that are keys to your success?

SB: We try to meet at least once a week through out the year. We also play in different types of tournaments.

CT: What would be the team's ultimate achievement?

SB: LOL..to keep winning tournaments in the FUNCOAST!!!!

CT: What is your biggest challenge and what do you do to manage this challenge?

SB: Getting an old body to play! Have to remember that I'm not that young...

CT: How does someone go about becoming a member of the team?

SB: Commitment and dedication would be a nice start.

A WINDOW WITH A DIFFERENT VIEW

It was an early November evening. I had been busy with the days to do list. Finally done I decided to lay down for a fifteen minute power nap before work. As I lay in bed, I looked thru the window of my bedroom. The view was beautiful, for outside is a pond with a water fountain. It was the time of day when the sun catches and the effect is like diamonds on the water. As I laid there I began to thank my higher power. I have always found serenity in nature. It was in that moment of appreciation that I noticed "there are no bars on my windows". Often as a consequence of my using, I would place myself in jail, prison, or psych wards. In those places, if there were windows, they had bars or a mess fence that marred my view. Upon reflection, it's very much how active addiction marred my view of life.



While using I always believed I would die at the hand of a trick or receive a prison sentence and would die there. I was alone pretending the tricks, dope boys, or other street people were my family and the hotels my home. I did this for I thought it was my only hope of a family and a home. I gave up hope; to be honest I never had hope to begin with.

Most of my life I lived in a world of fantasy, the drugs and the lifestyle protected that fantasy. It was only when something inside me cried out, in that moment of desperation; I had the courage and willingness to try something different. It was from the desire to not go through withdrawal again that I picked up that white key tag. At first, most things got worst. I was homeless and slept at the meeting place. Eventually, I moved into a halfway house, found a job, and began to stay clean.

Almost four years later I laid in the bed looking out a window with no bars. I have a family that I love; a real family with parents, grandparents, nephews, and cousins. I decided to join you guys on this journey; I have a sponsor, friends, and spiritual advisors. I have found it true, "Old dreams awoken, new hopes are found". And to think how the drugs affected the view from my window.
-Ira B.

TAMPA FUNCOAST THIRD ANNUAL SPEAKER JAM AND BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

SPONSORED BY:
IT WORKS HOW AND WHY HOMEGROUP

THIS EVENT WILL BE HELD:
MARCH 29, 2014 8AM-4PM
COPELAND PARK
11001 N 15TH ST
TAMPA, FL 33612

THERE IS NO COST TO LISTEN TO SPEAKERS!

\$5.00 TO WATCH THE TOURNAMENT WHICH INCLUDES A HOT DOG COMBO!!

\$100 REGISTRATION FEE PER TEAM

I chose this poem for a few reasons. It was written by one of the young adults that I had the absolute pleasure to work with and reminds me of the amazing experience. I truly enjoyed reading the poem and have read it several times. The gait of the prose is well done and the translation of addiction is portrayed in a manner I find touches my soul and resonates strongly within me.

–Deborah N.

The Affliction of Addiction.

At the beginning it was unknown,
Something cloaked in the curtain of young age.
Everything at bay.
Peace.
But not reality. Just the illusion of tranquil neutrality.
For when the curtain pulls,
The marquee reads, “Real Life.”
Hate. War. Destruction. Shock.
For it was inside of me too.
Pity, I didn’t know then that I was lead role in the cast of a play.
Only because of the blindness that works so well.
The ire of addiction.
Of course it wasn’t detected until too late.
My itinerary death.
The motive irate.
No longer a knight.
Forever a knave.
A trapped piece of wood.
On addiction’s unforgiving lathe.

–Abraham D.

One of Some

Some do some don’t
Some will some won’t
Some have some don’t

Some go some stay
Some think I’ll just do it my way
Some work some won’t
Some try some don’t

He will she won’t
We want even if you don’t

Some live some don’t
Some feel some won’t
Some love some don’t
I will even if you won’t

We are one of some

–Lonny M

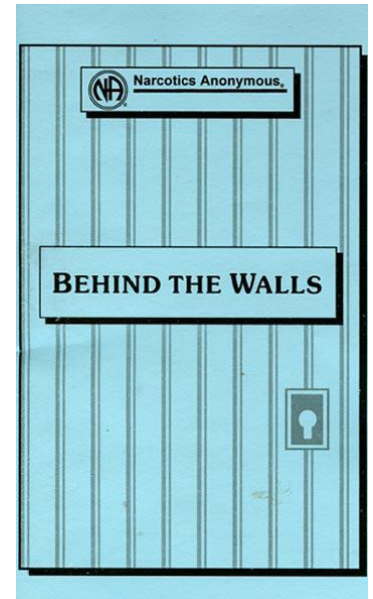
Like an artist

I have a perfect eye for proportion
But like a dreamer
My heart belongs to distortion
I don't know how to give up on love
Even when its given up on me
My sentimentality
Paralyzes my practicality
There is no balance with such things
There is no symmetry
Gravity’s a bully
So I fight back
With Icarus wings
Floating on anatomical securities
Touch and go intimacy
Until my shadow touches
My own back
And like a knife
The echo of the places I attend in my nightlife....stings
I’d kill myself
To stay yours
I’d kill myself
To not have to leave you by choice
But I’d be anyone else's
To get your fingerprints off my skin
To scratch your name from my voice
But I can't bring myself
To any other
As I've become your possession
A pet
Ur mother warned me not to climb into your covers
She said...
'He keeps his hands on his toys
And his toys in his bed...'
It's death before divorce
Because
A good girl with
A true heart
Will always pay for her loyalty,
And the ones that came before,
Of course
And you cannot share me
You can only keep me
And
I will keep the wound if it ensures
I get to keep the source
Who keeps
....giving them to me
So the pain
Is worth the amount of attention stuffed into each little
pinch
Yea the pain is worth getting to hold your hand
Even if it's really only my ARM you want to twist
Despite your intent
Yeah the pain
Is worth this
This
Attentiveness
Just
As
Long
As I'm
Noticed

Our vision is to carry the message that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life. The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous has helped introduce 15 self-sufficient NA meetings in state and federal prisons within Florida. The process began 6 years ago with the 'Pen Pal' project and developed into free-standing meetings; for inmates and by inmates. Many of these men and women are eager to work the steps and become involved in Narcotics Anonymous prior to release. The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous is working to realize our primary purpose by implementing the "Writing Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" initiative.

How can I help? Join the "Writing The Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" project. This can be your next step in further carrying the message. Through "Writing The Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)", you have another opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope; give back to an addict seeking recovery what NA has given to you.

For more information and guidelines, contact Gilbert O. at 813.245.5399



Whether you are an NA member, a professional who works with recovering addicts, an incarcerated member or a member who provides Hospital and Institution service, this NA World Services newsletter may be a resource for you. Reaching Out in its design helps incarcerated addicts connect to the NA program of recovery, enhances H&I efforts and offers experience from members who successfully transitioned from the 'inside' to be productive members of society. All are invited to share their experience, strength, and hope in the *Reaching Out* newsletter.

Contact Gilbert O. at 813.245.5399 or visit <http://www.na.org/?ID=reaching-out-index>

Anniversaries - January/February

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|----|---|-----------|----|----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----|
| A New Way | | | Keep The Faith I&II | | | Quest For Serenity | | Together We Can | | | |
| <i>Danielle R</i> | 2/8/1996 | 18 | <i>Ashley P</i> | 1/5/2013 | 1 | <i>Billy W</i> | 1/21/1987 | 27 | <i>Jay S</i> | 1/30/2003 | 11 |
| <i>Dannielle A</i> | 1/5/2007 | 7 | <i>Robert Y</i> | 2/1/1998 | 16 | <i>John G</i> | 1/24/2011 | 3 | Triple M | | |
| Breakfast Club | | | Life On Life's Terms | | | <i>Lynn D</i> | 2/22/1988 | 26 | <i>Luther R</i> | 1/15/1989 | 25 |
| <i>Angel G</i> | 2/15/2009 | 5 | <i>Donald D</i> | 2/27/2010 | 4 | Radical Recovery | | | TTNA | | |
| <i>Peggy C</i> | 2/14/2011 | 3 | <i>Todd E</i> | 2/4/2011 | 3 | <i>Martin P</i> | 1/20/1987 | 27 | <i>Jerry R</i> | 2/17/1996 | 18 |
| Daily Recovery | | | <i>Vince C</i> | 2/14/2005 | 9 | Recovery In Riverview | | | Unknown Group | | |
| <i>Barbara P</i> | 2/7/2006 | 8 | Live or Die | | | <i>Sharon M</i> | 2/28/2009 | 5 | <i>Amber F</i> | 1/17/2007 | 7 |
| <i>Jackie C</i> | 1/2/2007 | 7 | <i>Linda H</i> | 2/10/2003 | 11 | Recovery On The Northside | | | <i>Barbara P</i> | 2/7/2006 | 8 |
| <i>John P</i> | 1/5/2008 | 6 | Midday Meds | | | <i>Ed H</i> | 2/12/2011 | 3 | <i>Jerry R</i> | 2/17/1996 | 18 |
| <i>Lovett H</i> | 1/21/1988 | 26 | <i>Vivian M</i> | 2/21/1998 | 16 | Rise For Recovery | | | <i>Kim L</i> | 2/9/2003 | 11 |
| <i>Rhonda M</i> | 2/6/1993 | 21 | More Hope I & II | | | <i>Chanta S</i> | 2/2/2010 | 4 | <i>Lauron H</i> | 2/22/2009 | 5 |
| <i>Robert B</i> | 2/12/2005 | 9 | <i>Louis W</i> | 1/28/1998 | 16 | <i>Chrissy R</i> | 2/13/2010 | 4 | <i>Marissa K</i> | 1/12/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Willie W</i> | 1/2/2010 | 4 | More Will Be Revealed | | | <i>Joanne D</i> | 1/11/2010 | 4 | <i>Robert B</i> | 2/12/2005 | 9 |
| <i>Witt J</i> | 1/10/2011 | 3 | <i>Jeremy M</i> | 1/24/2009 | 5 | Squeaky Clean | | | <i>Tara B</i> | 2/25/2002 | 12 |
| Freedom From Pain | | | <i>Lamont J</i> | 2/19/2009 | 5 | <i>Vern</i> | 1/12/2007 | 7 | Uptown Tue & Fri | | |
| <i>Kim H</i> | 1/8/1991 | 23 | NA 180 | | | Stepping Up | | | <i>Caroline C</i> | 2/8/1989 | 25 |
| <i>Sean O</i> | 1/15/2009 | 5 | <i>David V</i> | 1/11/2010 | 4 | <i>Brenda B</i> | 2/24/2005 | 9 | Welcome Home | | |
| Fresh Start Group | | | <i>Shawn S</i> | 2/17/2005 | 9 | <i>George J</i> | 1/20/1992 | 22 | <i>John W</i> | 1/18/2009 | 5 |
| <i>Cynthia S</i> | 1/11/2009 | 5 | NA Speaker Meeting | | | <i>Marilyn R</i> | 1/20/2010 | 4 | <i>John W</i> | 1/7/2008 | 6 |
| Grow or Go | | | <i>Kim L</i> | 2/9/2003 | 11 | Sunset Solutions | | | <i>Oscar H</i> | 2/5/2005 | 9 |
| <i>Eddie B</i> | 2/20/1987 | 27 | <i>Melinda E</i> | 1/30/2009 | 5 | <i>Monk S</i> | 1/1/1985 | 29 | Women Do Recover | | |
| <i>Hank</i> | 2/21/1987 | 27 | <i>Robert Y</i> | 2/1/1998 | 16 | The Sanctuary | | | <i>Brenda O</i> | 2/10/2009 | 5 |
| Happy Hour | | | New Bite Of Serenity | | | <i>Sergio L</i> | 2/6/2010 | 4 | <i>Cherelle T</i> | 1/22/1998 | 16 |
| <i>Angel G</i> | 1/28/2010 | 4 | <i>Aaron G</i> | 2/10/2008 | 6 | The Ties That Bind Us | | | <i>Chevell</i> | 1/22/1998 | 16 |
| <i>Charlie L</i> | 1/14/2008 | 6 | <i>Charlie D</i> | 1/15/2006 | 8 | <i>John G</i> | 1/3/2010 | 4 | <i>Chrissy R</i> | 2/13/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Noah S</i> | 1/14/2005 | 9 | <i>Liz W</i> | 1/10/2000 | 14 | The War Is Over | | | <i>Pat S</i> | 2/6/1996 | 18 |
| <i>Vicki P</i> | 2/28/2012 | 2 | <i>Melissa J</i> | 2/22/2005 | 9 | <i>Amber R</i> | 1/10/2012 | 2 | <i>Sheila S</i> | 2/15/2007 | 7 |
| High Lie | | | <i>Oscar H</i> | 2/5/2005 | 9 | <i>Aris</i> | 1/7/1987 | 27 | Women Of Freedom | | |
| <i>Abby W</i> | 1/16/2005 | 9 | <i>Yolanda P</i> | 2/17/1993 | 21 | <i>Baxter C</i> | 2/12/2004 | 10 | <i>Abbie</i> | 2/14/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Caroline C</i> | 2/8/1989 | 25 | New Life | | | <i>Bobby M</i> | 1/3/2010 | 4 | <i>Alicia E</i> | 2/5/1996 | 18 |
| <i>Cassie H</i> | 1/1/2001 | 13 | <i>Carlton W</i> | 2/12/1999 | 15 | <i>Brian M</i> | 2/4/2007 | 7 | <i>Delphine D</i> | 1/31/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Mike C</i> | 1/6/2002 | 12 | <i>John P</i> | 1/5/1998 | 16 | <i>Jason M</i> | 2/12/2011 | 3 | <i>Jennifer</i> | 2/14/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Steve M</i> | 2/19/2001 | 13 | <i>Marilyn R</i> | 1/20/2010 | 4 | <i>Josh M</i> | 2/17/2005 | 9 | Women Stand United | | |
| Hope In Recovery | | | <i>Pam S</i> | 2/5/2011 | 3 | <i>Kandi O</i> | 1/13/2007 | 7 | <i>Chanta S</i> | 2/6/2009 | 5 |
| <i>Robert B</i> | 2/12/2005 | 9 | <i>Sara M</i> | 2/22/1994 | 20 | <i>Lou</i> | 2/15/2005 | 9 | Women's Hope | | |
| <i>Shawnya W</i> | 1/20/2012 | 2 | <i>Todd F</i> | 2/5/2011 | 3 | <i>Melissa M</i> | 2/1/2013 | 1 | <i>Cory B</i> | 1/30/2010 | 4 |
| How It Works | | | New Tampa NA | | | <i>Nancy M</i> | 1/24/2010 | 4 | <i>Dasy R</i> | 2/13/1997 | 17 |
| <i>Jusus H</i> | 1/19/1990 | 24 | <i>Steve D</i> | 2/18/2006 | 8 | <i>Robbie V</i> | 2/5/2013 | 1 | <i>Jen A</i> | 1/27/2008 | 6 |
| Hyde Park NA | | | Old-Timers | | | <i>Tiney R</i> | 2/5/2008 | 6 | <i>Misty L</i> | 2/5/2010 | 4 |
| <i>Chris K</i> | 2/18/2003 | 11 | <i>Alicia E</i> | 2/5/1996 | 18 | <i>Vicki M</i> | 2/12/1999 | 15 | <i>Sandy M</i> | 1/29/2008 | 6 |
| <i>Judy O</i> | 2/5/1998 | 16 | <i>Kim R</i> | 2/4/2009 | 5 | The Women's Recovery Room | | | | | |
| <i>Lisa C</i> | 1/9/2010 | 4 | <i>Pat S</i> | 2/6/1996 | 18 | <i>Alicia E</i> | 2/5/1996 | 18 | | | |
| <i>Maggie R</i> | 2/6/1988 | 26 | Parrot Pirates In Paradise Group | | | <i>Jennifer F</i> | 2/14/2010 | 4 | | | |
| <i>Patty M</i> | 1/5/1990 | 24 | <i>Ken T</i> | 1/3/1988 | 26 | <i>Karen S</i> | 2/2/2011 | 3 | | | |
| | | | | | | <i>Vicki M</i> | 2/12/1999 | 15 | | | |

The Tampa Funcoast Area of Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter Committee welcomes your comments, ideas, announcements, and articles. Your submissions must adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and cannot be copyrighted material from 3rd party persons or publications. Submissions may be subject to editing in order to adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and/or the space constraints or the group's conscience of the Clean Times Newsletter.