

Clean Times

July/August 2014

www.tampa-na.org

Trials and Tribulations

There are many trials and tribulations in our lives that as addicts we are unable to really process and overcome until the time comes that we are completely spent physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Even after all the time that I prayed for it all to end. The God of my understanding had a different plan for me and answered my pleas and prayers on His time, not mine.

Today I see the reasoning and the message has been received. If I had done things my way and the method I thought was correct, I would have yet again not received all the gifts and blessings that have been afforded to me today.

Upon my sentencing to the Department of Corrections, I was lost, desperate, and unsure how I was going to be able to make it for all those years behind those walls. I had

reached a point of anger that motivated me to figure out what it was that the DOC could do for Saesha. The determination to come out of that place better than I had arrived was a driving force, indescribable. Immediately, I got involved in the Institution, trying to find my way to what would better me. I didn't qualify for the drug treatment program due to my years of sentencing so I taught the youthful offenders. Then the race was on. I was introduced to the NA meetings there and immediately knew that it was my missing link to a better me. After attending them for two years, I realized that the inpatient treatment program was a must for me to make this work. I attended a graduation for my fellow students. The Director from Tallahassee of the Inpatient program had attended. Being the overbearing and persistent inmate, I approached him and explained that recovery was the lifestyle change that I needed, could he please help me get into the program? Two days later, I was reclassified to the program.

The program was 6 months. With my eagerness to figure continued on pg. 3 ...

It's Okay To Be New

When I first came to NA, I was a train wreck. I had come from a life of prisons, jails, and hoe strolls. Only house I had ever lived in. as an adult, was a crack house. I did not know our lingo. I got up and down, wore clothes that I thought would make me look sexy, I had sex, smoked cigarettes, and I cussed. For me, at that time, "f*#@#", "damn" and "shit" were emotions. The places I came from we were not asked to identify a feeling. It was bust a b*%ch in the head before they bust you in the head.

When I came to the rooms I was told, "just don't use for today". If I had been told I had to quit smoking, abstain from sex, and not to cuss; I would not have stayed. It was a full time job to not get high. It took everything in me just not to use. As of late, I have heard people cross talk in meetings, calling people by name and criticizing their usage of profanity. I have also heard people share at somebody for doing the very same "taboo" things they have done, I have done, many of us have done and will continue to do. It's okay to be new and do what newcomers do.

Let's afford the newcomer the same opportunity that we were given. Let's share the message, "just don't use for today".

It was only after working the steps the first time on the dope that I discovered things about me that were contrary to my morals and values; to also learn how to identify a feeling. At NA events I observed other addicts and did what they did, this is how I developed my social skills. During those early, fragile times I was told "It's Okay To Be New". That freedom to just be new was priceless. If you are reading this and you are new, just don't use and the rest will work out, I promise.

-Ira B.



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Clean Time Counts

What an amazing night! I just left the Clean Time Counts meeting. Wow, it was standing room only! It began as usual with a moment of silence followed by the serenity prayer. We then read the readings and offered key tags. The rest of the meeting was for presentations. Man, it was truly a wealth of experience, strength, and hope. To hear those celebrating share where they came from and how they did it was awesome. We heard a husband presenting his wife and watched as the words spoken brought tears of gratitude. Sponsors reflected upon and shared how much work their celebrating sponsee had done. It was truly a meeting of fun, experience, strength, and hope. T-shirts were available to purchase and the concession stand was open offering snacks, iced coffee, sodas, and-

more. I am looking forward to August's Clean Time Counts.

Clean Time Counts, meets the last Saturday of every month at 8:30 PM. It is held at The New Meeting Place, 811 E 131st Ave Tampa, FL 33612. This Home group is looking for trusted servants.



Thank You Old Timers

Thank you to every old timer who told me when I was new:

1. We are clean, not sober around here.
2. Sit down and shut up.
3. Don't come into the meeting late and act like a debutante greeting all of your friends.
4. Respect the room you are in.
5. Be of service. Stop being a taker.
6. Greet the newcomer because someone greeted you when you were new.

7. (When I had less than a year) That guy that is trying to get in your pants would give you time to get a year if he really cared.

8. (When I was brand new and thought I knew it all) You should be quiet and listen. If we want to know how to get loaded, we'll ask you a question.

9. It isn't about you all the time.

10. That hurt your feelings? It's called pulling your covers. We love you too much to pretend what you're doing is ok.



Whether you are an NA member, a professional who works with recovering addicts, an incarcerated member, or a member who carries the message via service with Hospital and Institutions; the Reaching Out newsletter curated by NA World Services 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 have 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. The Reaching Out publication is seeking paid subscribers to assist in supporting our continued efforts to distribute the magazine to our members housed in state and federal facilities. Ask your home group to subscribe and help us carry the message.

Contact Gilber O. at 813.245.5399 or via email at gbs92101@hotmail.com.

#HeardInAMeeting Time takes Time.

11. You think you're a princess and the rules don't apply to you like they do to everyone else.

12. No you can't give up that commitment just because you don't feel like doing it anymore. A year isn't going to kill you, however, it may help you learn how to live.

...and countless other golden things that helped and still help to pull my head out of my ass. Please don't stop telling us newer people the truth and teaching us about the real Narcotics Anonymous. Please.

-Nadine W.



Trials and Tribulations...continued from Page 1

out my addiction, the program wanted me to graduate after only 4 months. It wasn't enough for me. I needed more and still was fighting with the urge to go out doing old behaviors. The NA meetings became more frequent and then I got myself a sponsor onsite and in the mail. I was a fighter and the sponsors that I had kept telling me to stop trying to figure out the basic text and just do the work. What I didn't realize was that my self controlling ways and lack of real spirituality were prohibiting me from moving forward with exactly what I knew was necessary....**RECOVERY.**

I was a mess and I needed to surrender in order to make progress. It wasn't until I began working my steps that the revelations started to unravel. The sense of understanding, vulnerability, and freedom from such was without words. I reached a point where what was happening to me was something I couldn't help, but I wanted to share with every other struggling inmate around me. The meetings and sponsors had offered me an out to my continual cycle of destruction and it was surreal. The God of my understanding was now, on His time, giving me exactly what I had prayed for and when I surrendered to His will; He answered. Then I asked the program to be a peer facilitator because I knew that I wasn't finished and I could help others have hope. It was working for me and I wanted to give that away. For me to be able to have that sense of peace and serenity in my life in the

most desperate of situations meant that only the best was to arrive when I was released two years later. I have currently been out of the Department of Corrections for 3 months and the results of doing exactly what was instructed to me has offered me more opportunity than ever imaginable with continuing surprises daily. I got released with the attitude that I was given a gift behind the walls and my God had the utmost faith in me to put it to work. I faced very trying situations within two hours of my release and because NA has taught me the importance of people, places, and things; I knew I had to take that first step. I moved to Tampa without knowing the area, the people, with no car, no job, a record, and the shock and awe factor of being dumped back in to society after years of segregation. After making the decision to walk away clean from people that were using and moving into a transitional house, I knew I was home. I was now on my way to implementing exactly what I needed to do. Within minutes of my arrival into the house things started happening. I went to my first NA meeting on the outside 2 hours later and I was welcomed with open arms. I just knew the initial sense of overwhelming emotions was my God, wrapping His arms around me, and telling me; you are in the right place and thank you for receiving me. It was beautiful. After that first meeting, the amount of people that approached me with genuine love, hugs, wanting to help

in any way they could, offering numbers for me to call, and the sense of belonging made the greatest impression on me. I was without words. I have sunk myself into two or three meetings daily, work with a sponsor, gotten two jobs, and really appreciate all of my housemates. The gifts of recovery far surpass what I had ever thought possible given the totality of all that I had managed to screw up. I tell myself on a daily basis all the slogans and I really believe in them. I did not wreck my life in one day and to salvage from that wreckage will take just as long to reconstruct.

I am a work in progress and have now understood the importance of working the program. In being allowed to hear others' processes, it allows me to remain teachable and open-minded to what can help me understand more. I, by no means, have all the answers and today I am okay with that. However, I do know one thing, I know that if I continue to move forward in my recovery, give back all the gifts that have been given to me, and stay honest with myself, then a world of success is for my taking.

The NA program and my God have shown me that with each and every single day, I am blessed to be alive. Recovery is truly a lifestyle change and with that change comes more blessings than imaginable. Blessings that will leave you shaking your head, wondering, what took you so long to receive them?

-Saesha

Writing Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)

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 now helped introduce 23 self-sufficient NA meetings in FL and beyond; including, Coleman Federal Penn, Alabama, NW FL, Georgia, and South Carolina. 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 further 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.

If you are interested in gaining a State or Federal clearance or for more information and guidelines on the program, contact Gilbert O. at 813.245.5399.

FRCNA 33

I heard awesome messages this weekend, which again prove we do in fact, "see God in one another". This year, the message of recovery at FRCNA was loud and clear. I had so many spiritual awakenings I felt like I was being transformed repeatedly.

The power behind the messages was immeasurable. The attitude of gratitude was humbly spoken. The honesty, the open-mindedness, and the clarity of the NA message was monumental.

All I know is that God was "in the house". I could feel His presence all weekend as never before.

After the convention, I returned home physically exhausted, but spiritually exploding. Filled now with another shot of absolute hope, I am ready to face another day.

More has been revealed!

Thank you to everyone that made FRCNA a reality. You have once again ensured not only that

I heard an awesome message of recovery, but also that I was able to glimpse what can come to me if I continue in my journey of living a life of recovery.

I live life just for today, but I know now that if I pay attention, if I listen to the messages of recovery, I will continue to hear God's voice through others. I will continue to be guided toward God's Will for my life. I will continue to feel the presence of a Power greater than myself. I will continue to replace fear with faith, denial with acceptance, and despair with hope.

My future continues to be revealed to me, one day at a time, but I know the direction I must continue to follow. No matter how enticing the fork in the road may be, I will continue the path of living the NA way—one minute and one second at a time. I am certain this is the life for me! Thank you NA, HP you rock!

—Taryn T

More Will Be Revealed..

I can honestly say that I had high expectations of FRCNA 33. I thought that it was going to be a day of listening to powerful speakers and being spiritually fed via a microphone. That was the experience I received at the last FRCNA (FRCNA 31) I attended. I left that convention as a six month old newcomer. I was spiritually filled, tear-soaked, and hopeful for a bright new future completely engulfed in every facet of NA. I left on a pink cloud and went into Orlando just knowing the same was about to happen.

Well, as usual, my expectations went unfulfilled. I didn't hear my message from any of the speakers or workshops. My message came from within the fellowship. While in Orlando at FRCNA 33, I saw people from all over the

Florida region. I ran into people I knew from South Florida, Bay Area, and the Heartland area that I hadn't seen in quite some time. I met and exchanged numbers with new faces.

The true gift I received was in watching a sponsee's reaction to it all. I had the privilege of seeing her flit and flutter through the hotel. I watched her soak up all that NA had to offer and leave bubbling over with excitement and exhaustion. I watched her riding on the pink cloud which sometimes is a bit elusive to some of us that have been here for a little while. That my friends is the miracle of this program. Sometimes it isn't about what I can gain from a situation, but in what I can give back. In summation, I will say that going to FRCNA has been like reading the basic text for me thus far... Every time I re-read a section, I get something different from it.

—Bridgitte W.



Oct 3rd to 5th

Contact Info:
Audrey C., Registration Chair (813) 508-1646
Steve C., FACNA Chair (813) 629-3532
Wade W., Merchandising Chair (813) 352-8534

For Additional Information Visit Our Website
www.tampa-na.org

Register Online by Oct 2nd for \$25.00
www.tampa-na.org/facna-registration/

or Print and Mail in Your Form
www.tampa-na.org/documents/

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FACNA
2014
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The longer I stay clean the more I come to enjoy and appreciate different traditions; not just the ones that we work after the steps. You know, traditions, something that happens at the same time of year, in the same way, often at the same place. You feel excited and happy just thinking about the memories already made. You experience a comfortable, homey feeling when it's time for that tradition again. For me NA 180's Karaoke and Spaghetti fundraiser is one of those traditions. Homemade spaghetti sauce made by a true Italian Mom, the freshly baked peanut butter cookies made by that hot girl, the laughter of watching people sing their hearts out regardless of the sound. I am still surprised when somebody can sing and it reminds me not to judge. Children of addicts are safe to run around and be kids. My closest friends are there with me. I watch the little kids and free up the Momma to sing duets with her older daughter. It's amazing how just staying clean allows me to be a part of traditions and these traditions do not lead to jails, institutions, or death. Thank you NA 180 for providing another tradition for me to be a part of on this journey of recovery.

-Ira B. & Deborah N.

Karaoke



**NA 180 Karaoke and
Spaghetti Dinner**

August 16th, 2014

6pm till ????

**Oak Grove Church of God,
6830 N. Habana Ave.
Tampa, FL 33614**

Bring your friends for food, fellowship, fun and dinner!!

\$5.00 for entry, plate of pasta, & a drink

Anniversaries - July & August

A New Way

Josie C. 7/10/2010 4 Yrs.
Ross L. 8/28/2008 6 Yrs.
Shannen H. 8/24/2008 6 Yrs.

Arc Of Hope

Steve L. 8/2/2011 3 Yrs.

Brandon At Noon

Donald C. 7/14/2012 2 Yrs.
Kenny R. 8/12/2012 2 Yrs.
Jean B. 8/22/2010 4 Yrs.
Jacob Y. 8/24/20102 2 Yrs.

Choices

Emily C. 8/22/2010 4 Yrs.

Daily Recovery

Beth P. 8/3/2007 7 Yrs.
Billy E. 8/19/2009 5 Yrs.
Janice B. 7/7/2005 9 Yrs.
Lisa J. 7/1/2007 7 Yrs.
Melissa M. 7/11/2009 5 Yrs.

Grow or Go

Bruce M. 7/19/1986 28 Yrs.
Josh P. 7/27/2012 2 Yrs.
David L. 8/13/2005 9 Yrs.

High Lie

Leslie M. 7/4/2005 9 Yrs.
Jackie M. 7/10/2010 4 Yrs.
Craig C. 7/23/2003 11 Yrs.
Mary S. 7/30/2008 6 Yrs.
John Y. 8/8/1988 26 Yrs.
Jil B. 8/14/2010 4 Yrs.

High Noon Hope

Chris Mc. 7/18/2010 4 Yrs.

Hope In Lutz

Chris D. 7/10/2002 12 Yrs.
John B. 7/21/2008 6 Yrs.
Eric O. 8/19/1984 30 Yrs.

Hyde Park NA

Andrew L. 7/14/2013 1 Yr.
Anita O. 7/27/2010 4 Yrs.
Reggie R. 8/19/2011 3 Yrs.

In The Middle

Mike G. 7/23/2009 5 Yrs.
Deborah N. 8/23/2010 4 Yrs.

Live Or Die

Michael J. 8/15/1990 24 Yrs.

Monday Meditation

Dee Dee T. 8/24/2011 3 Yrs.
Heather Q. 8/16/2010 4 Yrs.

More Hope I & II

Alfred M. 8/10/2000 14 Yrs.

NA 180

Chris M. 7/2/1987 27 Yrs.
Julie S. 7/10/1993 21 Yrs.
Garrett B. 8/3/1990 24 Yrs.
Channing L. 8/31/2011 3 Yrs.

Never Too Young To Recover

Kevin C. 7/11/2013 1 Yr.

New Beginnings

Fern B. 7/17/2000 14 Yrs.

New Bite Of Serenity

Cassandra H. 8/4/1992 22 Yrs.

New Tampa NA

Jason L. 8/7/2007 7 Yrs.
Joshua M. 8/9/2013 1 Yr.
Timothy L. 8/18/2013 1 Yr.

Old-Timers

Anthony R. 8/10/2009 5 Yrs.
Lisa E. 8/2/1996 18 Yrs.
Milli O. 8/26/1988 26 Yrs.
Millie D. 8/26/1998 16 Yrs.

Quest For Serenity

Cheryl H. 7/13/2006 8 Yrs.
Aloha B. 7/15/2005 9 Yrs.

Squeaky Clean

Eric J. 7/10/1974 40 Yrs.
Tom C. 7/26/1986 28 Yrs.
Dave C. 7/27/2000 14 Yrs.

The Message

Doug C. 7/27/2011 3 Yrs.

THE SANCTUARY

George B. 7/5/1997 17 Yrs.
Dave R. 7/11/06 8 Yrs.
Roy A. 8/18/2011 3 Yrs.

The Truth

Chis M. 7/2/1987 27 Yrs.
Jason L. 8/7/2007 7 Yrs.

The War Is Over

Anthony D. 7/4/2010 4 Yrs.
Brian M. 7/17/2007 7 Yrs.
Claude H. 7/6/2008 6 Yrs.
Crystal H. 7/1/2010 4 Yrs.
Dave L. 8/13/2005 9 Yrs.
Eddie C. 7/28/2007 7 Yrs.
Jay T. 7/16/2007 7 Yrs.
Jeff R. 8/5/2005 9 Yrs.
Jenna B. 7/8/2010 4 Yrs.
John M. 8/13/1984 30 Yrs.
Kenny A. 8/9/2006 8 Yrs.
Mike D. 7/8/2010 4 Yrs.
Russell G. 7/10/2003 11 Yrs.

Together We Can

Margaret 7/5/2013 1 Yr.
Marie R. 7/18/1989 25 Yrs.

Triple M

Joe Nathen B. 7/26/1988 26 Yrs.
Reggie A. 8/22/1998 16 Yrs.

TTNA

Bob M. 7/6/1987 27 Yrs.

Welcome Home

Casey R. 7/18/2010 4 Yrs.
Casey G. 7/16/2010 4 Yrs.
George R. 7/16/1998 16 Yrs.

Women Do Recover

Valarie A. 7/2/2000 14 Yrs.
Elvieta K. 8/2/2007 7 Yrs.
Pam S. 8/5/2010 4 Yrs.

Women's Hope

Anna M. 7/20/2005 9 Yrs.
Patti C. 7/28/2003 11 Yrs.
Sandy O. 8/14/2006 8 Yrs.
Shannon H. 8/25/2002 12 Yrs.

CORRECTIONS:

A New Way

Russ N 6/23/2003 11 Yrs.

Emergency Room

Bruce G. 5/21/2008 6 Yrs.

Monday Meditation

Savannah D. 6/5/2011 3 Yrs.

New Bite of Serenity

Barbara R. 6/19/2012 2 Yrs.

Note from the Clean Times:

*The calls are beginning
and we will be reaching out
to the GSRs representing
home groups who have
not provided current
anniversary list. Be ready.
Here at the Clean Times, we
prefer not to have empty
columns of space yearning
to showcase miraculous
anniversaries*

Thanks for your Help!

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.