



**Meeting Makers Monthly**  
**Gulf Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous**  
 Volume 23 December, 2011



*The Twelve Days of Recovery*



*On the first day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, a program of recovery*  
*On the second day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, a feeling of hope*  
*On the third day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, three special workers*  
*On the fourth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, a 4<sup>th</sup> Step guide*  
*On the fifth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, five moral things*  
*On the sixth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, six glaring defects*  
*On the seventh day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, completely self supporting*  
*On the eighth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, eight amends to make*  
*On the ninth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, nine service boards*  
*On the tenth day of recovery my sponsor gave to me, ten outside issues*  
*from the December, 2010 newsletter*



HOW LARGE THE UNIVERSE

To see how small one is  
 And remember what one should know  
 To be large inside one's soul  
 How large the universe?  
 Seen from other ways  
 The size of what we are  
 And to be able to still move on  
 Is quite a gift from afar  
 For even though so small  
 In this giant universe  
 We each can move the stars  
 When we pray and fill with strength  
 How large the universe?  
 We are but small and grand  
 No one less the man  
 When he takes an honest stand  
 To fell small is humility  
 To stand tall with faith is good  
 How large the universe?  
 Being one with all we should

Gary S.

PRAYER

God, thank you for your direction, whenever I ask.

Gary S

Decisions

Decisions made for expediency, not in the spirit of policy  
 and tradition, often cause more harm than good.

Gary S

## Principles Before Personalities

When I first walked into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I really had no idea what to expect. Before that first meeting, I'd gone through the questions on the IP No. 7 pamphlet, "Am I an Addict?" and had answered yes to 22 out of 29 questions. So I knew I was in the right place, I knew I was addicted to drugs, I had faith that the program could work for me, and I was completely ready to surrender and go to whatever lengths it took for me to get the help I desperately needed to overcome my drug addiction. (Incidentally, I answered yes to 26 of 29 of the questions after revisiting the pamphlet three months into my recovery.)

But as far as the people I'd be meeting and the stories they'd be sharing, I really had no idea what to expect. My crazy foggy mind could only conjure up images of rough tattooed bikers, skid row bums, skeletal freaks of nature, homeless basket cases who would be sharing rock-bottom stories of these characters laying in gutters and living in cardboard boxes with needles sticking out of their arms and crack pipes permanently stuck between their lips. I knew inside that was a silly caricatured stereotype of who is an addict, but I had no other points of reference to work with before then. My drugs of choice did not involve needles, I never found myself homeless throughout my 25 years of active addiction, and I had never once associated my drug habits with the word 'narcotics'.

As I walk into the doors to that first meeting, my brain still foggy from my last high less than a day ago, I was greeted by a soft-spoken frail gray-haired elderly woman who welcomed me and made me feel right at home. Any stereotypes I may have had before then were completely blown away and left outside the doors. Mary (not her real name) was the chairperson of that first meeting, and when she opened the meeting and asked if there were any newcomers, I raised my hand and said, "My name is Matt and I am an addict. I'm here because I have a problem with drugs and I need some help."

I don't recall too much of what was said in that first meeting, but one part of the readings stuck out like a big flashing neon sign. From the How It Works reading, "This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once. We didn't become addicted in one day, so remember - easy does it. There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Three of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. With these we are well on our way."

Honesty, open-mindedness, willingness; sounds pretty simple, I thought. I can work with those. And with these I was well on my way.

At the end of the meeting they handed out key tags. A young clean-cut man wearing a tie who looked like he just got out of a business meeting offered up the white key tag, and I had tears in my eyes as I walked up there and he gave me a hug. We then circled up and said the serenity prayer. It was a very emotional experience for me, as I knew these wonderful people would help me get the help that I so desperately sought. My silly stereotype of who is an addict was completely shattered to pieces that evening.

As the meeting closed, Mary offered a few suggestions for the newcomer: make ninety meetings in ninety days, get phone numbers and use them, find a home group, find a sponsor, and don't pick up no matter what. They gave me a meeting list with some phone numbers on it. Another addict, an older fellow with a ponytail, went through the meeting list with me and pointed out a few other meetings that I might want to visit throughout the week. I told Mary I needed some literature and purchased my Basic Text. As I left the meeting I could feel the ball and chain of addiction getting lighter.

Over the next week or two, as I went to a meeting every day and met new people, I couldn't help but to wonder to myself what brought all these people into this program? I knew what my story was, and I knew darn well that I was addicted to my drugs of choice. But my mind was intrigued by the vast differences of all the people in the rooms: young attractive people, muscle-bound athletic types, middle-aged well-to-do folks, older distinguished men and women, and yes even a few tattooed bikers. Many of them spoke very little about their drug 'war stories' or even mentioned what drugs they used, especially the ones who had been in the program for a while. Instead, they talked about how the program has helped them become better people, and how they use what they've learned in the program to handle their daily affairs in a positive way to help prevent them from going back to their old ways.

Of course, I did hear plenty of war stories about drug usage, too. I met people who were addicted to drugs that I would have never used myself, and I heard stories of thievery, violence, murder, acts that I had never committed and couldn't fathom myself as ever stooping that low. I found myself thinking thoughts like, "I wasn't that bad off, I never did this, I never did that," and occasionally caught myself thinking that maybe I didn't really belong in this program.

But good old soft-spoken Mary had said in one of my first meetings, "Try it for 90 days, and if you don't like it we'll gladly refund your misery." So I kept on coming back, regardless of whatever crazy fleeting thoughts might have floated through my brain in those first few weeks.

One of the most valuable lessons I learned from Mary in my first few weeks was not to fall into the trap of comparing differences between my addictions to other people's addictions. For if I do this, my sick mind will try to play those tricks on me, try to tell me that I wasn't that bad off. This lesson also ties back into getting over my silly stereotypical view of who is an addict. I know all the hell that I've been through, I know how badly I was hooked on drugs, and I am learning day by day, week by week, month by month, to not be tempted into making those comparisons between my addiction and other peoples.

Doing a very thorough first step with my sponsor has helped me to reinforce this. If I am ever in doubt about how bad off I really was, I have my first step experiences written out that describe in vivid detail how powerless I was over my addiction, and how unmanageable my life had become.

Mary recently celebrated 28 years of being clean. She spoke at her celebration, and it was the most I've ever heard her share at one time. Most everything she shared concerned her experiences in the program over the years. However she did open up her speech with a little info about what she did to get herself into the program. "I came to NA because I used too much."

Tradition Twelve tells us "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." In recovery in NA, we are all equal. We are different people with different backgrounds and different stories, but it is what we all have in common that brings us together. Gaining an understanding of this important tradition has helped me get beyond those first few weeks when my addiction was fighting back against me.

My name is Matt, and I am an addict.

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***from the Editor***

**Everything** that occurs in the course of NA service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

*from NA Basic Text, page xxvi*

**Step 12** – Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**Newsletter Guidelines;** Purpose – To be a forum to share experience, strength and hope to the area from NA members. *from Gulf Coast Area of NA Policy*

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The message of recovery is something that every addict should hear and be reminded of on a regular basis. When I first got to the rooms of NA, I was immediately attracted to the message of hope that I heard from others from all the meetings I attended - and I still look forward to hearing this message after almost three years now. I need to be reminded regularly that I have a disease that wants to destroy me and that without the NA program; this disease would have won this battle.

My view of this newsletter is that it is a way for us to share what we have learned and gained from NA to all the other addicts in our Area and beyond. One of our closing statements is to have a moment of silence for the addict who still suffers inside and outside of the rooms. Well, here is a way to reach those who still suffer. But in order to reach them, we need to share our message.

If no one contributes to this newsletter, there is no message to share with others. The newsletter needs your support and I humbly ask that you please take a moment to write a quick paragraph or two of how recovery has affected you. Those of you with significant clean time often have the best message to share with other addicts – I know because I am always amazed and inspired by the depth of your wisdom and experience of being in recovery.

I need your help for the newsletter. This is a 'we' program and I cannot do the newsletter without the support of our Area. Thank you.

*ILS, Tom F*

# Anniversaries

## December

Daryl W 1 year  
Stacy S 1 year  
Heidi L 3 years  
Jeff L 3 years  
Joe G 3 years  
Danny K 4 years  
Lannette D 3 years  
Evan G 20 years

## January

Jose L 1 year  
Katy L 1 year  
Margie S 1 year  
Ron S 1 year  
Gary S 18 years  
Dominic 19 years  
Dutch 39 years

## February

Alex J 4 years  
Darla L 10 years

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**JANUARY 27, 28 & 29, 2012 - SWAMP RECOVERY 28** is being held at Markham Park 16001 W. State Road 84 Weston, FL - Bring your own equipment NO PETS ALLOWED!!! Registration cost is the purchase of a T-Shirt and it gets you a camping site for two nights Short Sleeve - \$20.00 Long Sleeve - \$25.00  
See [southbrowardna.org/activities](http://southbrowardna.org/activities) for more information

## **August 31-September 3, 2012 - South Florida Region - SFRCA XVIII**

SFRCA XVIII August 31 - September 3, 2011 Hyatt Regency Bonaventure Conference Center & Spa 250 Racquet Club Road, Weston, Florida, USA 33326

# Announcements

The Treasurer has asked that, if possible, to please bring money for literature orders and Area donations to be in large bills.

The Monday night **Show Me How To Live** group is no longer be meeting due to lack of participation.

The Saturday night group **We Are One** group is in need of trusted servants – multiple service positions are available.

We want your ideas, articles, poems, graphics and anniversaries.  
Please submit them to one of the following addresses: [GCANANews@comcast.net](mailto:GCANANews@comcast.net) OR  
Service Committee (ASC), Attn: Newsletter, PO Box 50375, Ft Myers, FL 33994

*The views expressed in the newsletter are not those of the Gulf Coast Area of NA  
nor those of Narcotics Anonymous*