

EVENTS

December 17, 2011 - MCCNA - Karaoke 9:30 pm Crossroads Club 1700 Lake Ida Road Delray Beach, FL 33445 Tickets Available \$5.00 per person. Pizza will be sold! For more information contact Julia - 561-702-2562

December 24-25, 2011 - Mid-Coast Area - Christmas 12 Hour Room 11pm to 7am at Crossroads Club, 1700 Lake Ida Road, Delray Beach Free For more information call Brian 561-860-113,

December 23, 2011-January 1, 2012 - South Dade Area - 24 Hr Room Youth Center, 3333 South Miami Ave., 33133 For more information contact Jorge 786-470-6623, Yami 786-970-6154, Sara B 305-790-8955

December 24, 2011-January 1, 2012 Gold Coast Area *Presents* 24 hr Room Marathon meetings held in between the regularly scheduled meetings Dances will be held on Christmas Eve & New Years Eve SERENITY BY THE SEA CLUBHOUSE, 3561 NW 9th Ave, Oakland Park, FL 33304 for more information: Jerry: 754.422.7538 Eve: 754.204.4957

Mid-Coast Area *Presents* New Year Day Picnic 10am to 3pm 2pm Speaker Lake Ida Park, Delray Beach Heron Pavilion Hot Dog, Hamburger, Chicken \$7 For more information call Brian 561-860-1132

February 19, 2012 - Architects of Adversity *Presents* East Coast Funday Fundraiser - East Coast 2012 Convention Fundraiser 8am-5pm \$5 Golf Tournament separate fees. Picnic at Lake Ida. Contact Kevin 561-313-6557 for more information

February 19, 2012 - Architects of Adversity *Presents* Golf Tournament of the East Coast Fundraiser Funday - 8 am at Ocean Breeze Golf Club, Boca Raton FL - range opens at 6:45 - free range tokens with registration of \$50. Lots of freebies with registration.

February 25, 2012 - Mid-Coast Area *Presents* Hooked On NA - \$30 Fishing includes picnic 8am to Noon at 301 Seabreeze Blvd, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316 followed by a picnic at Morikami, 4000 Morikami Park Road, Delray Beach off Jog Rd south of Linton Blvd. \$7 includes Hot Dog, Hamburger and hopefully a Fish Fry! Noon to 4pm 3pm meeting. For more information call Brian 561-860-1132

Anniversaries

April D. from Architects of Adversity is celebrating 15 years on Dec. 10th

Jeanne from Architects of Adversity is celebrating 23 years on Dec 15th

Steve H is celebrating 2 years (was in tytd, dont know current homegroup)

Sable A from vision of hope celebrates 2 years on Jan 11th, i think

James W. from vision of hope gets 1 year on Dec. 22nd

Greta 18 months

Submission Information

To submit an article, send it to midcoastnewsletter@gmail.com, Articles can be anything that is recovery related and remember we could edit the article to make it fit into a given space.

We meet the LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, at 6:00 pm at PANERA BREAD® in Delray (right at Linton and Federal)

We are **NOT affiliated with PANERA BREAD®

THE HEART OF NA

DECEMBER 2011, Edition 1- Mid-Coast

Setting up Large Fellowshiping Activities

My name is Andrew B. and I'm a recovering addict. I celebrated 10 years on December 5th, 2011 thanks in large part to the quality of other recovering addicts I'm blessed to be surrounded with in my life today. We all know the importance of fellowship and having fun in recovery. Perhaps you regularly go out to dinners in celebration of bellybutton birthdays and anniversaries, the group of addicts I'm involved with does as well. Perhaps you have a regular weekly get together with a few people before or after your home group or another regularly attended meeting; we certainly do that too. What I'm writing about today though is going even beyond that point with your large fellowshiping activities. In no way am I criticizing smaller fellowshiping activities ranging from sky diving with a couple of friends to coffee and a chess game with just one other addict because we also do all of those things and they're awesome in their own right. If you're already involved in large fellowshiping activities then, please, keep them going and start more. If you're not, this article is for you. There are basically two types of large fellowship activities. The first are sustainable weekly occurring activities. As an example we play glow-in-the-dark-ultimate-Frisbee on the beach every Tuesday and Thursday night. To make this happen first you need at least 14 addicts, online access to look up the rules and any stretch of public beach. Following that you need a L.E.D. light color changing Frisbee which you can obtain from a sporting goods store. Lastly you need glow bracelets which you can obtain from a party supply store in packs of 5. You initially want 3 colors of bracelets; we go red and blue for the players to distinguish team affiliation. The third color you leave unbent and mark out the entire field and end zones with (We have since replaced these with L.E.D. light glow sticks we got offline). It's incredibly fun even for the people that just show up and watch as well as relatively inexpensive. Most importantly though it's sustainable and happens every week so it keeps addicts involved in fellowshiping. The second type of activity is organizing one time parties or activities for a specific purpose. Probably the best example of this in my life is the massive firework parties we throw every year for New Year's Eve and the 4th of July. We generally have between 70 and 100 individuals ranging from their first day back up 30 plus years clean in attendance at one. While it may initially seem expensive and unmanageable to pull off an activity like this off it's actually surprisingly easy with a little effort from a core group of organizers. The first thing you need is a location. Ask around, Ideally your looking for someone who has a free standing house with a pool but the pool area at a complex will work as well. Start organizing the activity early so you can find out who is planning on throwing smaller parties a get them on board with collaboratively throwing one large fellowship activity. As far as financing the activity we've found it best to allocate the various components of what needs to be done to different people that are involved. See who has large grills they're willing to bring and set up at least 2 or 3 next to each other. You'll probably need to find a person with a truck to transport them. Ask the last two or three people you know that moved if you don't know someone with a large vehicle, they definitely will. If you're trying to distribute cost, which is generally more viable, whoever is in charge of food basically needs get four or five people together that are willing to supply food and drinks. Also, you want to mass text, use social media sites, etc. to get the word out that this event is happening and people should feel free to bring anything they want to. Whoever you have in charge of coordinating that will need to get a note pad because they'll rapidly be overwhelmed with people asking what they can bring and how they can help. We have a floating volleyball net for the pool from a previous such activity that we put up and people enjoy using during the day. If you can't find someone with one, they're pretty inexpensive and a nice donation to the house. We always have two people that are put in charge of getting two or three piñatas and filling them with candy. This may sound absolutely ridiculous but it's incredibly fun and entertaining for everyone there. We go with three swings and the person up to bat is allowed to choose whoever spins them. You won't have any problem finding someone with a laptop and reasonably large speakers to take care of the music for everyone. Lastly you need to take care of the fire works. This may seem like a lot but you'll be surprised how many little groups of addicts are already planning on doing this anyway and will be enthused at the prospect of getting even more fireworks. The important thing is that you make everything as one purchase instead of a bunch of smaller ones to save some money. We have found out by trial and error that the best way to go is nothing but large firework cakes. You can YouTube Delray fireworks catastrophe if you want to see what can happen if you let anyone with single shot mortars within 30 feet of your cake stack. String it all together and you have a Harry Potter magical time on your hands. More importantly the odds of anyone there relapsing on one of the most dangerous nights of the year for us go down significantly based on the amount of fun they're having with other addicts in recovery. Whatever the fellowship activity you set up though it's more important that you do it than what it is specifically that you do. This can't be stressed enough. Don't just sit around talking about what would be fun, go out and make it happen. Sitting in basements and dreaming of doing something is an activity reserved for the actively using. Based on the fact that you're reading this however you don't have that luxury. Also of note, this is South Florida so you'll be pretty hard pressed to find a basement even if you try. Living the dream and doing the deal in South Florida.

The Heart of NA is a newsletter written and published by addicts for addicts. The opinions, views, experience, etc. contained herein are those of the individual and not those of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole

STEP ARTICLE

Step 6:

By Steve N.

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. The spiritual principle behind this step is Willingness. For me, step 6 willingness is giving my consent to god. When giving consent to god, it means that I am no longer standing in god's way. To no longer stand in god's way means that I am no longer blocking the life force energy that flows from a loving creative force to me and back again from me to that creative force. I can then participate in a greater flow of cleansing energy. In my belief system, that energy consists of love. Where there is love, there is no resistance and no fear. Where there is no resistance or fear, the flow of energy can then be open to a greater change. For step six, this change encompasses defects of character. For most people, those defects generally include what is known as the "seven deadly sins".

Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities, that interferes with the individual's recognition of the grace of God.

Envy is the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation.

Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than that which one requires.

Lust is an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body.

Anger is manifested in the individual who spurns love and opts instead for fury.

Greed is the desire for material wealth or gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual.

Sloth is the avoidance of physical or spiritual work. In step six, we are prepared to embrace a new way of life. That life will no longer be heavy with the burden of having to do it ourselves, we are prepared to have god do it for us.

How cool is that? ☺

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Six Questions for

Steve A – Hebrides, Scotland (insert English accent)

When & where did you get clean?

Steve: I got clean in 1992. Somerset UK (the west country specifically Taunton). I'd actually been to a GP (General Practitioner) 'cause I thought I had a problem with compulsive lying. She didn't believe me. She did recognize that I might have a bit of drug problem so she got me in touch with a community psychiatric nurse. NA was not very ingrained in UK at that time. The nurse put me in touch with a Clinical Psychologist who put me on a Dexadrine script. My drug of choice at the end was amphetamines. I was going to him for months because he kept writing the scripts while he worked with me. He eventually talked me into going into a treatment center which is how I first found NA.

What has been the most important accomplishment in recovery?

Steve: Getting clean is the simple answer. Accepting the problem was me and not the drug. From a personal point of view; reuniting myself with my family. I went into treatment with the motivation of that's fine I'll stop sticking needles in my arms and everything will work out. I'll move back in with my wife and family and everything will be fine. I got disabused of that fairly quickly. The bottom line was I needed to deal with me first and if any of that came right it would be a bonus. Being able to rebuild my life.

What has been the most difficult obstacle to recovery to overcome?

Steve: Me. Acceptance. Acceptance of all the stuff I thought was comfortable. That familiarity of going to something even though you know it is damaging. That mindset was the most difficult thing for me. Giving up cannabis was the most difficult thing for me as I had smoked it most of my life.

How has Service or giving back helped you in your recovery?

Steve: Immensely. My early recovery was in a recovery town so it was easy. When I went back home the nearest meeting was 50 miles away in any direction. That's a hundred mile round trip. My own experience of realizing I needed a meeting and the only way that was going to happen was by setting one up. Probably the most rewarding thing I've done in recovery. I think Service keeps me honest. It keeps me challenging my stuff. A lot of my defects are around expectations of myself which I transfer onto other people. It's been a real learning curve for me to accept that I can't necessarily project my level of self expectation on other people. It's been an interesting journey. It keeps my recovery fresh. To me sponsoring people is Service as much as sitting in an RSC. That's the simplest and best kind of Service. And to just keep coming back.

What has been your most important accomplishment in Service or giving back?

Steve: Setting up my home group in Taunton. Which is still running today eighteen years later in an area where NA had never been. Almost certainly.

What do you see as the purpose of working the 12 Steps?

Steve: To map me. To understand me. To get to grips with the parts of me that led me into the insanity. Starting with Step One and the admission that I am powerless and unmanageable. The first three Steps are about examining the evidence of my life. The subsequent Steps overall about putting that into practice. I am also a firm believer that we don't just do the steps and kick the box and that's it. It's a constant presence one way or another. Things come up after nearly twenty years that I can apply to Steps four five six and seven to etc. It's like an escalator that keeps going round and round. Working the steps has become a life style choice.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

By: Jihong

God closes one door and opens another door. That was something that I have heard often since I came to NA program. I remember when I struggled to escape from a reality, but somehow I found myself back to where I was. One night I was in the closet of my room. I passed out. When I woke up in the morning, I saw the sun lights beam through the door. I didn't know how many hours I had been sleeping inside the closet. I remembered I had been in pain that the chemical left me inside. The guilty and shame magnified my physical sensitivity. I got out of the closet. The sun light was so strong that my eyes hurt so badly.

When I was little, I used to fall asleep in a closet or big chest, and my brother used to find me sleeping like a little nocturnal animal. He even took a picture of me sleeping inside the chest. Those tiny places gave me a sense of relief. I felt that I would be safe forever. Growing up with fears, I was always looking for means to feel relieved. Attics, chest, had been my own world to hide. The unknown fear kept me from opening myself to other people. I was one of the nicest people among friends. I like the fact that they accepted me even though I always felt different and afraid.

Not until did I come to this country 8 years ago, had I started using chemicals. Coming here for better educational chances, I struggled to feel accepted in the new society. The more I felt pressured, the stronger my isolation became. My dependency shifted from desire to be accepted to the fantasy that the chemical gave me. Next 4 years, I tried so hard to make my life better, but I felt nothing was changed. I kept failing. The only comfort that I got was what the chemical provided me. I betrayed people who trusted me. But one that I betrayed most was me. Whenever I felt guilty and shame for using, I always hid myself inside the closet of my room and did not get out until I see the sun light.

4 years passed. At this point, my bottom was that I was facing the two choices; I would either go back to using or go back to my country and leave everything behind here so that I could forget

about the 4 years of active using. I could start new life in my country. But then I realized that it was exactly the same reason that I moved to here from my country. I came here to start new life. Somehow I started thinking there should be a better way to live..

I came to the rooms of NA in July 2010. It has been fifteen months since then. The feeling of desperation and the sense of hopelessness seemed to have faded away even though I still remember those days.

Thinking back, I was always trying to escape from my reality and move from one to another area.. After coming to NA, I learned that the life was full of possibilities to take. People in NA room taught me how to live my life and be happy about who I was. Even though I feel that I missed the opportunities in the past, I know it is not late to start again. It is never too late. When God closes one door behind my back, he opens another door for the new possibilities to explore.

Traditions

Anonymous

It is said in our readings, at the beginning of every meeting, that our traditions are the guidelines that keep our fellowship alive and free. And that personal recovery depends on NA unity and that unity depends on how well we follow our traditions. Although our literature says we pick up information as we go along and visit various groups for me understanding the traditions and knowing the traditions are two separate ideas. My thoughts herein will express why following them to the best of my ability is so close to my heart. These few statements say so very much. Let's begin with the unity part. Unity in NA for me means: alike, together, sharing the same ideals & having a single purpose and that purpose for me is carrying "the" NA message of recovery to any addict that needs it, there have been times when I was that addict. Since the NA group is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying our message it seems to me that this is where we need to pay attention most to our traditions for if a group delivers a message that is blurred addicts can die. This might sound extreme to some or have we forgotten how extreme times can be when we are/were in active addiction and could have died. Our literature also goes on to say not use a speaker from another fellowship in our meetings (this carries that fellowships' message) that an NA member who works the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous will travel great distances to speak at an NA meeting in order to deliver "our" message. So if we don't stay unified in this ideal yes our/my recovery can be at jeopardy. Now, since my personal recovery depends on these traditions I believe it is prudent that I know these traditions before I can begin to understand them. Being the addict that I am I couldn't wait to gather information as I went along and visited various groups so I read the entire NA Book "It works How and Why" some call it the green and gold. It is here that NA elaborates on every step and tradition. Now as I go along and do service I can begin to get an understanding of why this is so invaluable to our recovery in NA. When difficulties arise in the course of doing service we can look at what our predecessors have already faced & begin to have a starting point for a solution or better yet avoid the difficulty altogether. One addicts continuing journey of understanding our NA traditions of which are not negotiable.