

# BRING YOUR MEETING TO L.A!

Delegates to the Annual World Service Conference in Los Angeles April 21 - 23 are asked to bring their meeting formats (and samples of their smobriety chips, if available) to share with other delegates in a special Workshop on Meeting Formats. Other workshops will address the subjects of Sponsorship, SA Traditions, Outreach and Public Information and the SA Big Book.

World Service Officers set the Conference agenda at their third-quarter meeting in Palo Alto CA January 28. The agenda calls for a Friday night Gratitude meeting, Saturday morning workshops and Saturday afternoon workshop re-

## SEVEN MINUTES

a forum for smokers  
who don't smoke

ports and WSO business (including literature approval - bring any new literature your group has written). There will be a Banquet Saturday night and Breakfast Sunday morning. For information, call Conference Chairman Paul C. at (213) 826-9330. Registration insert is in this issue of SEVEN MINUTES.

Vol. II, No. 1

The Smokers Anonymous Quarterly

FIRST QUARTER 1989

## BIG BOOK EDIT STARTS IN S.F.

Nearly 30 completed Big Book questionnaires have been received by the SA Big Book Committee, according to it's chairman Jay L. The group, currently numbering five, has devised a flexible method of writing, rewriting and editing that permits inclusion of new questionnaires as they arrive.

"Too long," is the comment most frequently voiced. The Committee suggests that respondents gloss over questions they find irritating, but give full answers to those they find truly relevant to their experience.

Some of the long responses received will probably be written into the Big Book in their entirety. This is in keeping with the ideal that, to the greatest degree possible, the Big Book should be the exact words of all the members of SA.

Please send in your completed questionnaire soon!

## SA IN NEWS, ON TV

Smokers Anonymous made an appearance on British television this month in connection with England's national Non-Smoking Day, March 6. Paul Reizin, writer /producer for **TV-AM**, a breakfast show, saw Marin County, California, SA members on CBS-TV's **48 Hours** last September, contacted the group and filmed them in February. According to Joe T. and Noreen T., members of the Mill Valley group, Mr. Reizin found the **48 Hours** SA segment "very moving."

To avoid the dissension and violation of SA Traditions that accompanied September's filming, the group insisted that their anonymity be preserved and that filming take place at a special meeting so that members who did not want to be filmed could feel comfortable in their regular meeting.

September's **48 Hours** broadcast was entitled "The War Between Smokers and Non-Smokers" and was an overview of the effects of civic and private smoking bans. SA viewers seemed to agree that the SA segment was, as one of us put it, "an island of serenity in a sea of insanity."

Also last September, Long Island NY members Oscar and Joanne C. and Scott J. appeared on Andy Malincoff's **Making a Difference** on WHPC radio and gave a very thorough description of

SA and how it works.

SA was in print in the January 17 edition of **The Atlanta Constitution** under the headline "Smokers Anonymous members try to snuff out Nicotine Addiction." And **Sober Times** of San Diego carried a long history of SA in their January issue.

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*Profile . . .*

GROUP: (Rebecca's Group)

PLACE: Omaha NE

FOUNDED: September 12, 1988

**Editors' note: We've heard this story, of the birth-struggles of a group, many times before, but seldom so well-told as in this version by Rebecca P. of Omaha, Nebraska**

I quit smoking through a smoking cessation group. At the end of our group meetings, I shared that I needed support to stay off cigarettes and that I wanted to start a 12-Step meeting. The suggestion met with high approval, so I proceeded to initiate a group.

When I first decided to quit smoking, I looked for a 12-Step group in Omaha. There had been one, but it folded due to lack of interest. So, I began calling around for a meeting room. I found a room with no fees at a library. The library was not centrally located, nor regularly visited by 12-Step people. As I have learned, these are major drawbacks.

Then I made up flyers and tried to distribute them. Doctors' offices were receptive. Hospitals, surprisingly, were not. I have since learned that it is important to establish a contact at the hospital and ask them to make people aware of the program. I also put an ad in the paper for a month.

The first month was encouraging. Attendance ranged from two to five each week. I got three responses from the ads and one from the flyers. One person showed up from my original smoking cessation group. After the first month, the numbers dwindled until, finally, December arrived and no one came at all.

I kept vigil until Christmas week, at which time I took three weeks off for the holidays. During that time, I talked to my Higher Power and I talked to my sponsor in my other 12-Step program. My questions were: "Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?" and "Maybe this is not meant to be right now... Am I

supposed to be concentrating my efforts elsewhere?"

Then I asked: "Please send me a sign. Please let me know if I should carry on with this. If I should, send help. I don't feel I can do this alone. Also, please send courage and inspiration."

Soon after that another 12-Step person came to the meeting. Then I learned about another SA meeting in Omaha. (Hooray!) And, finally, I received a call from an editor from **SEVEN MINUTES**. She had read my letter to World Services asking for help starting a meeting. She wanted to publish it in the newsletter.

She also asked me to write this article. And she congratulated me on my six-month birthday, which I had forgotten about! She praised my struggle to keep this meeting alive. And I felt inspired and not alone and I knew that my Higher Power wanted me to carry on.

And so I will. I have met the people at the other SA group and we are merging our meetings. Together, I feel, we will get a meeting off the ground one way or another.

I have learned from this experience: some dos and don'ts of starting a meeting; that I can make a commitment and keep it; and that my Higher Power is listening and will help me if I ask and remain willing. Please pray for me and the rest of us here in Omaha who have recognized the need for a Smokers Anonymous 12-Step meeting and are working to start one. It's nice to know there is a fellowship already.

Thank you, **SEVEN MINUTES**, for calling me. Thank you, World Services, for directing me and providing a fellowship. Thank you, God, for always being there, listening to our prayers and answering them.

KEEP COMING BACK, IT WORKS!!

## About Nic-anon

NIC-ANON offers a place where family and friends of smokers can share their feelings about living with smokers. Members learn that addiction to control is just as life-threatening as addiction to a substance.

"Fixing" other people (smokers) is one way to avoid self-focus. Attending meetings and working the steps helps members find peace whether the smoker stops or not.

For more information, write NIC-ANON, 511 Sir Francis Drake C170, Greenbrae CA 94904 or call (415) 461-3949.

## A.A. Requests . . .

The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous has requested that SA include a credit line whenever printing its preamble, which is adapted from one used by A.A. The credit line is: **The Preamble reprinted for adaptation with permission of the AA Grapevine.**

The Preamble is item 3 on the WSO *Format for Conducting a Smokers Anonymous Meeting* and begins: "Smokers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to quit smoking." The *Format* will be revised.

# A MEETING THAT SURVIVED

by Kay C., Santa Cruz CA

What's it take to start a meeting? Theoretically, it takes two people and an SA starter kit. What's it take to keep a meeting going? That's another story...

In Santa Cruz, CA (a small community 80 miles south of San Francisco) it took one willing-to-go-to-any-lengths newly exed-smoker, a format adapted from the parent A.A. program, a small kitchen table, a box of Smoker's Tea and a strong commitment from Jimmy B. to hold a meeting every Monday evening.

Five or six on-again, off-again smokers came and went sporadically, drinking tea around Jimmy B's table and listening to his story over and over. Week after week we went back, mildly surprised to find him still there, still cigarette-less.

Sometimes the others came and sometimes they didn't. Five was a standing room only crowd then. Average attendance was more like two or three - most of whom stepped outside with "it works" still ringing in their ears and lit up before the door even closed on Jimmy's meeting.

As for me, I smoked as many cigarettes as I could in the short drive home, against the remote possibility this quirky program might actually work.

Finally, they started coming - the ex-smokers. One had smoked 31 years, one for 42. One had smoked in the shower. One had skied miles in the middle of a snowstorm for a cigarette. If these people now lived without cigarettes, maybe I could too.

The Santa Cruz chapter of SA, started in September of 1985, survived and thrived and now supports three regular meetings a week.

Meetings that survive have at least one member who sticks no matter what.

New meetings can be slow to start. Newcomers want evidence that SA works. They're easily convinced that nothing can help them stop smoking. They may not really want to find a solution. So one or two hopeful people around a kitchen table may not bring them back.

That first person needs to be prepared and willing to sit through as many empty or tiny meetings as it takes before something happens - some dynamite connection, some combination of circumstances that makes a meeting GO! - and people begin to return week after week. Once that happens, the meeting's got a chance. The names and faces of the committed ones can, and probably will, change through meeting's

history. But the meeting's need for commitment won't ever go away.

Some tips while you're waiting for your meeting to take off:

- Get help. Ask ex-smokers (preferably from other 12-Step programs) to chair your meeting. Ask them to help get the meeting off the ground by coming back each week.
- List meetings in "Weekly Events" sections of your local newspaper.
- List your meeting with local Heart/Lung Associations, Cancer Society, hospitals, etc. Call back every month to make sure they have your meeting still listed.
- List meeting with quit-smoking programs in your town.
- Post signs in laundromats, bookstore and college bulletin boards.
- Remember...People are looking for SA meetings. Make it easy for them to find one.

*"I smoked as many cigarettes as I could, against the remote possibility this quirky program might actually work.."*

## SA CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Jim S. of Portland Or, author of *The Serenity Prayer for Smokers*, has put his Laserwriter to work producing Smobriety Certificates. One might think of them as smobriety chips for the wall. Or diplomas, though Jim would be the first to disabuse recipients of the notion they had "graduated" from SA. Like diplomas, however, they can be framed and hung on the wall as a highly visible reminder of one's progress.

Tentative plans call for certificates for 1 day, 1 week, 1, 3, SEVEN MINUTES

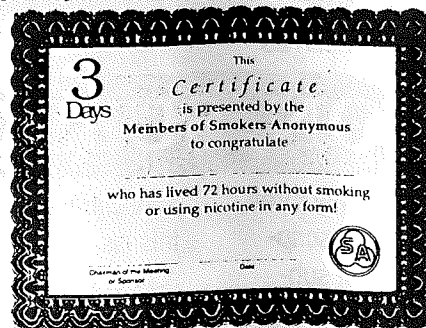
6, and 9 months, and 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years of smobriety. Jim

is planning to offer a Starter Certificate Award Pack of 165 certificates with 30 one-day and five 5-year certificates and a full range in between for \$40 plus \$2 postage and handling. He'll adjust ordering policies to demand.

To inquire or order, write to: Jim Selig, 8736 S.E. 58th Avenue, Portland OR

97206. Telephone number is (503) 777 - 1183.

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# MEDITATION PRACTICES

by Janell M., San Francisco CA

A calming aid as you become a permanent ex-smoker is meditation. In **SEVEN MINUTES** in this and the next two issues, I will discuss three different meditation practices: heart-centered, mind-centered and gut-centered meditation.

You are in need of heart-centered meditation when you find yourself (1) caretaking a great deal, (2) overworking from fear of failure or (3) overwhelmed by feelings of sadness or melancholy.

Begin heart-centered meditation by calming your body. Focus on breathing and muscle relaxation throughout your body. Now, imagine going to a private place that you find comforting. Notice what you are feeling and let your imagination bring you random pictures, body sensations, thoughts, sounds and dreamlike visions. Stay with your feelings and images, allowing new information - calming and healing - to emerge.

One client described her meditation experience: She saw

an image of the moon moving through the sky to the ocean's edge and down through the ocean. She felt relieved as the moon gently landed on the ocean's bottom and sat there in glorious splendor. She had a feeling of spaciousness as she saw the sky, water and earth suspended together. Her intuition told her that all was well as a bird, from a dream she'd had the night before, soared.

This meditation, centered on feelings, helps heal images or intensify our emotions. It is especially effective for those of us who seek others' approval and feel frustrated in obtaining this approval. By focusing instead on feelings and intuition, we can enhance recovery. This is a way to improve our conscious contact with a Higher Power.

*Janell Moon is a Certified Hypnotherapist in private practice in San Francisco. Her address is 1213 Sanchez Street, San Francisco CA 94114.*

## DAY AT A TIME BOOK PLANNED

"One Day At a Time in Smokers Anonymous" is the working title for a new publication proposed by Annette A. of Lawrenceville, NJ. SMODAT is the working acronym, as in Smoker's Day At a Time.

Annette contacted Publications Director Bill H. through the SA World Services message phone in San Francisco, then sent a week's worth of Days At a Time to him. He has distributed copies to Literature Coordinator Chris J. (Hermosa Beach), SA Serenity Prayer brochure author Jim S. (Portland OR) and members of the SA Big Book Committee for review and ideas.

The SMODAT page format includes a 3 to 4 paragraph discussion, a single paragraph "Today's Reminder," and a brief quotation. Here's a sample of part of a day's reading:

*In some ways my addicted self was "smarter" than my thinking now. When I smoked, I planned ahead so that my nicotine supply would be secure. If I am projecting feelings of fear into situations that haven't occurred yet, I can "think smarter." I can plan ways to get through a trying situation as*

*comfortably as possible. I can wear a piece of jewelry or carry a small stone for my hands to fidget with as I chat. I can plan to look for healthful foods to nibble on to maintain my weight. I can plan on asking for non-alcoholic drinks, to avoid weakening my resolve in this pressured situation. With several helpful ideas in mind, I can begin to anticipate the event with confidence.*

### TODAY'S REMINDER

*What a satisfying and proud feeling it is to handle a difficult situation well, without the crutch of smoking. I want to savor the victory of getting through a challenge successfully.*

**"Think."**

Annette has agreed to edit the SMODAT project, but feels it should be a project for all SA. Anyone who cares to write a day's reading (or more) or to submit a quotation with its source is invited to send his or her contribution to:

**Annette M. Arnold  
37 Cypress Court  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648**

## ATTENTION, SUBSCRIBERS!

Dear subscriber: Due to the fact that there were only three issues of **SEVEN MINUTES** published in 1988, all subscriptions have been extended one issue forward. The first subscriptions, which would have ended with the last issue of 1988, end with this issue, the First Quarter of 1989. These

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subscribers will note a special label, on the mailing cover of this issue, which notifies them it's time to renew. Later subscribers will be notified in the same manner at the appropriate time. Vol. I, No. 4 - Third Quarter 1988 was, indeed, the last issue of 1988 and the one directly before this current issue.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

**SMOKELESS IN GAZA**

Givatayim ISRAEL January 1989

When I surrendered drugs four -and-a-half years ago, my H.P. made it clear to me that cigarettes would have to go, too. That decision branded me a wierdo among my fellow addicts at smoke-filled meetings. For three "clean and smober" years, I've fantasized that a Smokers Anonymous would someday appear. Finally, a Self-help Clearinghouse here in Israel listed the address of SA.

The 12-Step community here finds my attitude toward nicotine addiction eccentric - the level of smoking in Israel is astonishing. A local newspaper grants me free ads and people, total newcomers, come and go at the weekly meetings at my place. I request moral support and encouragement from members in the States. Smokers Anonymous is international!

**Larry L. P.O.Box 223  
Givatayim, Israel**

**FROM LA TO L.A.**

Metairie LA 24 December 1988

This is Ruth M. wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Smokeless New Year. I am enclosing a \$50 check from our groups here in Metairie and New Orleans for our support of World Services. We'd appreciate information on the upcoming Conference. I will be there!

I know \$50 isn't much, but we will be just a year old in February and we have growing pains. I know it will get better.

Is World Services the same as the Central Office? Is there a breakdown of contributions, if there is a Central Office?

**Ruth M., Chairperson  
Louisiana Intergroup**

Dear Ruth,

Thanks for your letter, your contribution and your question. The Central Service Committee (or Central Office) used

to function as SA's central organization before Smokers Anonymous World Services was established at the 1988 Conference. Your support funds were directed correctly.

Congratulations to the Metairie group on its one-year birthday! See you in April in Los Angeles.

**CONNECTICUT YANKEE**

Meriden CT 19 February 1989

Enclosed is my check for \$5.00 to renew my subscription. I'm still reading **SEVEN MINUTES**; it's my link to SA everywhere.

We have only the one meeting in Connecticut and I get discouraged at times. People stop, but don't stay stopped. Fortunately for me, I've hit three years this month. I feel good and don't want to smoke.

I call myself a non-smoker instead of an ex-smoker because I feel freedom from smoking and am comfortable with not smoking. When I was an ex-smoker, I wasn't comfortable and it was just a matter of time before I smoked again. Thanks to my Higher Power and SA, I've finally become a non-smoker.

I'm looking for information about the World Conference this year. I wasn't able to make it last year, but have saved all year to make it this time. **Jane D.**

**LOMPOC FRESH START**

Lompoc CA, January 1989

I found SA when I was desperate to quit. I tried several times on my own and guess how that went!

I quit November 14, 1988. I go to meetings and I took the American Cancer Society's Fresh Start program. It really strengthened my resolve and helped with stress management. And I will be teaching it in March!

I was so afraid to live without cigarettes. Now I know it's the only way to live. **June B.**



SEVEN MINUTES is the quarterly of Smokers Anonymous, a nonprofit organization with offices at 2118 Greenwich Street, San Francisco CA 94123 (Phone: 415.922.8575)

Letters to the editor and articles or graphics for inclusion in SEVEN MINUTES should be sent to:

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SEVEN MINUTES  
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Santa Cruz CA 95062

Subscription, circulation and meeting list matters should be directed to:

William Halderman,  
Managing Editor  
SEVEN MINUTES  
2118 Greenwich Street  
San Francisco CA94123

Thanks to Rodney of Maynard MA for the SA logo atop our masthead.

**Dan Webster,  
Sponsor**

(continued from page 6)

I remembered that another friend used to describe the course of recovery as "from the head to the heart to the feet." She meant that I had to recognize my defect with my mind, **accept** it with my heart, then do the footwork - praying for relief, admitting to others my wrong if I did them harm, trying to behave humanely even when I don't feel humane.

The key concept, I realized, is that **acceptance** is an act of compassion and love and is done with the heart. If I can love myself as I am and others as they are, I need suffer no more.



## Dan Webster, Sponsor

Dan Webster here, alive and unabridged. Our word this issue is "accept."

**accept** *vb* [ME *accepten*, fr. MF *accepter*, fr. L *acceptare*, fr. *acceptus*, pp. of *accipere* to receive, fr. *ad* + *capere* to take] **vt** 1: to receive with consent < ~ a gift> 2: to give admittance or approval to < ~ her as one of the group> 3 **a**: to endure without protest < ~ poor living conditions> **b**: to regard as proper, normal, or inevitable <the ideas of universal education is widely ~ed> **c**: to receive as true <refused to ~ the hypothesis> **d**: to receive into the mind: UNDERSTAND <users of a language ~ words to mean certain things>.

I've had a lot of trouble in sobriety with character defects, those of others and my own. In relationships, I've often been given the choice "Would you rather be right or happy?" Before SA, I would have fought to the death to be right. I'm a little more relaxed now, with less ego to defend, and I've had the experience of being wrong and promptly admitting it (Step 10) enough times to know that admitting I'm wrong is frequently more right than fighting to be right.

I'm more forgiving of other people these days than I am of myself. It's very easy, when I catch myself in the self-centered fear that shows up as anger or greed, to get so scared or mad at myself that I just want to give up trying to "live

right" and throw in the towel and be self-destructive - as in smoking.

This happened to me the other day, and I told a SA friend how I felt. She said that to resist this part of me just made matters worse, but that accepting my anger (that day's defect) as an integral part of myself was the first step toward lessening it or redirecting it.

Continued on page 5

## A WEDDING

An historical SA event will take place April 16 when Georgie S. of Foster City Ca and David M. of San Francisco are married in San Francisco's Calvary Presbyterian Church.

David started the first Smokers Anonymous meeting in northern California on March 7, 1983. Georgie moved from New York City to Canoga Park CA and began an A.A. for non-smokers meeting there in April 1984, then met the Beverly Hills SA people and converted her meeting to SA.

Georgie and David met at the first Statewide SA meeting in Bakersfield CA in March of 1986, then lost touch with each other. They met again at a meeting in San Francisco last Fall.

They will honeymoon in Greece and at the SA World Service Conference in Los Angeles.

## Events & Announcements

### SA BATTERS UP APRIL 8 IN GOLDEN GATE PARK

SA members from all over the San Francisco Bay Area will slug it out on Saturday, April 8, in the SA softball season opener in Golden Gate Park. For details, contact organizer Christopher at (415) 668-4923 evenings.

### POINT REYES SCENE OF OUTDOOR MEET

Last Fall, Bay Area SAers took a hike at Point Reyes National Seashore, just north of San Francisco, and had a meeting beneath a massive oak tree in a meadow. Twenty-five members participated in the event organized by the Wednesday night Potrero Hill group.

### FIRST SA SNOWBALL FIGHT

Five SA hiking enthusiasts fought the first recorded SA snowball fight atop Point Reyes' Mount Wittenberg February 4. They then went on to complete a 13-mile hike.

### OFFICERS START '89 RUNNING

Four SA officers ran the **First Run**, a 5K race that began at the stroke of midnight New Year's Eve at San Francisco's Presidio. All four finished.

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