



SEVENMINUTES

The Nicotine Anonymous Quarterly
A Forum for Nicotine Users Who Don't Use

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TEEN NICOTINE ANONYMOUS GROUP TO BE FORMED IN PHOENIXVILLE, PA

Jan S., Phoenixville, PA

This past May, while our group was in the process of celebrating not only my tenth anniversary of continuous smobriety, but that of **Ray N.** (six years) and **Mike B.** (seven years) as well, a teen-aged member of St. Johns Church, where we meet, timidly approached the meeting. Afraid to come in because the room was filled with adults, **Greg S.** and I went out into the hallway with her and her mother. We encouraged her, gave her literature, and assured her that she would be welcome any time.

About two weeks later, the church pastor asked our group to start a group for teenagers who wish to stop smoking. The young lady had gone to her and begged her to do whatever she could to help get a group started where she could be among her peers.

Five of the members from our Phoenixville group (**Ray, Greg, John, Jim and Jan**) met with the church pastor and the teenager. We discussed various issues, such as the time of the meeting, the place, and adult sponsorship. It was strongly felt that the meeting should be held off school grounds, in case a football coach might see a young person entering the meeting and then realize his team member had been smoking! Other considerations would be transportation (working parents can't drive young people to meetings right after school), part-time jobs, Saturdays, etc. She eventually did come to our meeting, and it was then, in the sacred light of meeting sharing, that it became really obvious that teens do have their own issues and that they desperately need a meeting of their own.

We have also recently heard from a private, Quaker boarding school in the area which is begging for information, as they have students from all over the world. Different cultures (Japan, for instance) have entirely different views on smoking than our own. And students at this particular school are not even allowed to smoke off-campus. Obviously, the school is very excited about this meeting being formed.

In addition, another church in town has recently opened "Club Jam" for local teenagers with a lounge and activities where they can gather in an uplifting setting. It has been met with resounding success! The chances for getting the word out for the meeting will be greatly increased through this, as we can have flyers placed there.

So, like everything else in our fellowship, it's the timing of our Higher Power. When all the details are finalized, we will put the word out through the fellowship. We are grateful to have been approached for this pioneering effort, and would like you all to pray for us as we navigate uncharted waters.

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Our Preamble

Nicotine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to quit smoking and live our lives free of nicotine. We share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may be free from this powerful addiction. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using nicotine. Nicotine Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. Our primary purpose is to offer support to those who are trying to gain freedom from nicotine.

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Your trusted servants - Kim J., editor
 Mike K, subscriptions

THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over nicotine--that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other nicotine users and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps reprinted and adapted here with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism - use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise. The original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are reprinted above.

Message from the Chair



Well, we are in the third quarter of my year as Chairperson. I just wanted to let you all know that we now have a cyberoffice of sorts. We have a secretarial service in Pennsylvania, that deposits checks, disperses mail to appropriate people, and inputs orders into the computer. She then sends the orders that she receives to the fulfillment center, where they are then filled and shipped out. We have experienced a few problems in the transition such as delays and missing orders. I do want to apologize for the inconvenience. We tried to make sure everything was covered, but everything wasn't. We hope to have most of the problems aired out by the time you receive this newsletter.

I know that there has been a lot of discussion on the closing of the traditional office in San Francisco. It was done to streamline costs. The office in San Francisco was getting expensive. Our literature sales and donations were not expanding at a large enough rate to keep up with the expense. We felt that if we could decrease the expense of rent, it would allow us to use the money for getting the word out. To that end, we hope to get an 800 number to allow more calls from all over the country.

I would like to put a plug in for service work . . . It is gratitude in action. It is something that reminds you of your commitment to stay a non smoker. There are lots of opportunities for service work at world services, as well as at your local level. It is the small things that people do that receive the most satisfaction. If you are looking for another structure to keep you from smoking and remind you why you quit, look to your local groups, intergroup, and world service to see where you can make a contribution whether it is chairing a meeting, putting together packets, or being an officers in your local group, intergroup, or world services. The service work is what keeps me from picking up a cigarette. It reminds me of my commitment to quit smoking. I then have to deal with whatever caused the craving to hit me and continue on without picking one up. It has me coming to meetings even when I don't want to. Look for **John's** minutes from the officers meeting in this issue, look at our help wanted section, and enjoy this issue of *SevenMinutes*.

Camille

NOTES FROM THE OCTOBER OFFICERS MEETING

The officers met in Chicago on Saturday, October 15 and the foremost topic of conversation was the transformation that was completed on September 30 when our San Francisco office was closed. Literature is now being distributed by a fulfillment house in Massachusetts and this is going quite well. There was a problem, however with the secretarial service we had contracted with in Virginia. At the last moment, she raised our quoted price by *six times* to over \$2000 a month. Because of this, **Bill P.** has graciously offered to fill in as a stop gap office manager until we can secure other services. This is giving us the opportunity to get a real, first hand look at the workings of our office.

Fortunately, there is another service who has quoted us a very agreeable price in Harrisburg that looks quite promising. **Lynn R.**, our treasurer, and **Bill P.** are working to secure that the new service will be appropriate for our needs. This should be finalized by the beginning of November.

What this means to the members of our fellowship is that all systems should be running smoothly and without noticeable difficulty. We did have a delay in shipping literature due to the UPS strike when the majority of our literature was stuck in Chicago. Fortunately, we were able to start shipping again right after the strike. We have also had some delay in printing some pamphlets because our San Francisco printer has inexplicably been unable to supply us with our originals, since we are now printing our literature in Massachusetts. Because of this, **Sarah B.**, our printing coordinator, has had to re-scan our literature for printing. Overall, our new systems should provide us greater efficiency due to the amount of automation used to track orders, donations, subscriptions, etc. Unfortunately, we will no longer have the personal touch of our office manager **Dan M.**, of San Francisco. We thank him very much for his service to our fellowship.

Good news came with our treasurer's report that showed expenses to be down, assets up, and our cash situation improved. This is all while we have yet to realize the savings of closing the office. Unfortunately, donations

and literature sales remain flat. This year, we are running at a surplus of over \$3000, as opposed to a deficit of over \$7000 in the same period last year.

Another hot topic of conversation was the implementation of a toll free World Services hotline number. We want to use the savings from the office closing to get the word out and we feel we would reach many more people this way. **Rodger F.** is gathering the numbers on this and we will decide the feasibility in January. We are making a concerted effort to spread our teleservants across the U.S. We may even employ a mailbox system where a caller would go to different mailboxes for the East, West and Central US. Since our callers only leave messages, the cost of the toll free calls should be minimal.

There was also much discussion about improving our literature. We spoke about printing our pamphlets on glossy stock and updating the graphics, which would increase the quality and value of our literature. We also came up with some great ideas for improving the existing Nicotine Anonymous Book. We decided on a maroon laminated cover with embossed printing for a subtler title to protect the anonymity of those who carried the book around. We also saw a need to improve the binding of the book, as pages have come out of current copies. At the same time, **Leslie S.** of VA is finishing the proofreading of the "Stories" section of the booklet that will hopefully be available at the early part of 1998. We will need a cover for the booklet.

There was a proposal forwarded by the NJ/PA intergroup to delete the words "quit smoking and" from our preamble so that the first line would read "Nicotine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to live our lives be free of nicotine." This proposal was unanimously approved by the officers and will come before the fellowship at the conference in Dallas.

Many other reports and topics were discussed at the meeting. Minutes will be available soon and sent to all intergroups. This report is not endorsed by World Services, but merely the ramblings of one board member.

In service and sobriety,
John O., Alternate Chairperson
NYMAI World Services Liaison

CLEAN IN THE CATSKILLS 1997 ***Martha K., Westhampton Beach, NY***

I have just returned from the Fourth Annual *Clean in the Catskills* Weekend sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Area Intergroup of Nicotine Anonymous. Words escape me but I'm going to try to capture some of the emotions and events that we experienced over the past few days.

We had a record turnout of fifty-five people. In addition to "the regulars," we were fortunate to have many newcomers from the Northeast and two from the South: Gina from Atlanta whom we met at the Chicago Conference and **Trudy** from Memphis who learned about the weekend in *Seven Minutes*.

Bill C. and **Paul S.** were first to arrive. (Thanks for setting up the lobby and for acting as the official Welcome Wagon.) I drove up on my own, straight from work and arrived at the Villa at about 7:00. My timing was perfect as dinner was just being served. (I have that knack.) Following the first of many lavish and highly caloric but deliciously prepared meals, we held our first meeting, led by **Chester** of Woodstock, New York on the topic of "Commitment." It was a truly inspiring meeting where we had the opportunity to meet each other and renew past friendships. **Chester** wowed us all at the end of the meeting by calling each of us by name and making a specific comment related to our sharing. **Bob** was especially impressed.

A comment about the room itself. Not a contestant for "House Beautiful," this room is in the basement and to say it lacks ambiance is not an understatement. However, **Checko** collected the most beautiful branches, gourds, flowers and stone and spread the arrangement in the middle of our circle. The beauty of that collection was only enhanced by his loving tribute of a lit candle for the addict who still suffers. The centerpiece was then transported outdoors and became a focal point for our Saturday morning meeting on the Fourth Step, led by **Clare** of New Jersey. Her unusual dissection of the step from the end to the beginning gave us a unique look at the process of taking inventory. Many in the group shared their fears and joys that the fourth step brings. Quite a few who are participating in the Wantagh Step Study group are looking forward to finally undertaking or completing their fourth step.

Let me backtrack a moment to describe how Saturday began for some of us who were undaunted by the early hour. Back in June at the NJ/PA Funday, **Meyer R.** had

volunteered to lead Qi Gong for us in the Catskills. This is an ancient Chinese technique for restoring the body's balance and creating a feeling of serenity. I have to say that following the experience I felt a tremendous surge of energy and joy. Thank you, **Meyer**, for sharing yourself with us this weekend.

Once again we were blessed with incredible weather (God surely loves us!) We proceeded to North Lake where the majority of the group hiked up the mountain which has become a metaphor for our fellowship: people helping each other to do what we cannot do alone; being able to overcome our fears and doubts and feel the triumph of accomplishment. These are gifts we get from fellowship and recovery. I opted for my first canoe ride. (I've led a sheltered life.) As luck would have it, there were no doubles left. The choice was to wait for a boat to come back or to take a chance and canoe by myself. My wonderful friend, **Bill C.**, offered to ride alongside me and help me get the hang of things. It's not by coincidence that he was selected to speak on Tradition One later that afternoon when both groups had returned from their respective outings. I kept thinking to myself how perfect it was that **Bill** would be our speaker as the canoe ride became a metaphor for unity, as well. He stayed by my side, ever-patient in spite of my lack of coordination. We did it together! Thanks, **Bill**.

Yet another wonderful experience followed later at the Drum Circle held outside by the bonfire. A chance to let loose and have fun. And fun we had! Thanks to **Pat L.** for making the arrangements for **Neil** to join us once again. Following that lively episode, I spoke on the Third Step Prayer. Back at the Beach Day, when **Checko** first raised the idea of a meeting on this topic, I exclaimed how much I love that prayer and recite it at least daily, if not more often. He replied, "Good. You lead the meeting." My attempts to wriggle out of that assignment failed. You were stuck with me. All kidding aside, thanks for giving me the opportunity to lead that meeting. Just about everyone related how close this prayer is to his heart. To me it really captures every aspect of recovery. One of the highpoints of that meeting was seeing **Kathleen G.** receive her first 24-hour chip. Congratulations, **Kathleen**. Keep coming back! A beautiful evening with only one thing missing: marshmallows. Next year, we come prepared. Right, **Michelle**?

The evening was topped off by a dip in the jacuzzi where some of us congregated. As we relaxed in the warm water, we were greeted by the news that pizza was arriving at 11:30. The anticipation and excitement grew.

Unfortunately, it was gone by 11:31 and only those of us lucky enough to have gotten out of the hottub to make a quick phone call (I told you I have that knack) were rewarded with a slice.

Now I come to today, Sunday, September 28. The Gratitude meeting led by **Julia M.** and **Chris G.** of New Jersey was for many of us the emotional highpoint of the weekend. The love and recovery that they embody was awe-inspiring. Their ability to retain a remarkable sense of humor in spite of so much fear and sadness is an unbelievable gift. I can't really capture how beautiful these two people are and how much I got from being in their presence. Thank you, **Julia** and **Chris**, for sharing yourselves so honestly with us. You touched all of us more deeply than words can say. We continue to send you our prayers.

And now I'm home. Just like that it's over. Something I've looked forward to since I left last year. It occurs to me that the reason I sat down to write this is not simply because I'm obsessive and I told **Michelle** that I'd definitely write something for the newsletter. The real reason is because I felt such loss and loneliness after I left. This is a way to relive those moments and to preserve the connection. I miss you, friends, and wish you well.

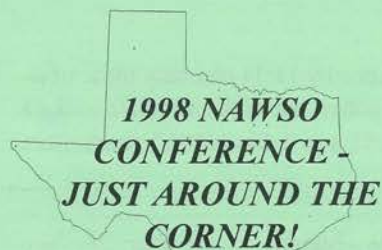
So circle your calendars for next year's *Clean in the Catskills* weekend: October 2-4, 1998. Bring a costume for an early Halloween Party. (Don't blame me, I voted against it.)

SERVICE

Want to be involved and help at the World Service level? We are currently looking for :

- People who speak more than one language to make themselves available to correspond, both by e-mail and regular letter, with our friends around the world.
- Someone to collect e-mail addresses for all the groups and intergroups so that we can communicate and transmit information more efficiently.

If you'd be interested in helping in these or other areas, contact NAWSO at either the postal or e-mail address on page 2.



**1998 NAWSO
CONFERENCE -
JUST AROUND THE
CORNER!**

Make your plans now for Conference XIII, April 24-26 in the home of the world famous Dallas Cowboys - Irving, Texas. Just minutes from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, the Holiday Inn will cost you only \$59 a night for up to four people. The hotel offers free airport shuttle service, as well as such amenities as hair dryers and irons in the rooms. And, if you come on American Airlines, you can receive a 7% discount on their lowest fare.

The conference itself promises to be an inspirational journey for your recovery, beginning with the traditional Gratitude meeting Friday night and ending with the Spirituality breakfast on Sunday morning. In between there will be workshops, election of officers, selection of the 2000 conference site, and the Saturday night banquet - a real Texas barbecue. Both meals include speakers. And after the conference is over, stay and ride an old-fashioned steam train to the historic stockyards in Ft. Worth. The trip will be from 1-5:30 Sunday afternoon and costs only \$16.

See the enclosed registration form for phone numbers and additional information. Ya'll come!

RESOLUTIONS OF AN EX-SMOKER

*David J., Weston, MA
Quit date - August 19, 1993*

I shall not smoke today.

And with the help of my Higher Power, I shall not smoke tomorrow.

After tomorrow, I will take one day at a time, and I will do my best to continue to be an ex-smoker.

I shall always be grateful for the help I received when I made my decision to quit. That help came from my Higher Power, from the support I received from fellow addicts through Nicotine Anonymous, and from my family and friends.

I commit my help and support to anyone who wants to quit smoking.

I will never belittle or look down on smokers; I was there once and I know how they feel. I will not soon forget the gut-wrenching need for nicotine that they are still experiencing. If I can help them, I will; but I will never despise them or feel superior to them. . .

I commit myself to do whatever positive things I can do to discourage people from smoking, particularly the young who can quit now without the torture that I had to go through.

And if my Higher Power is listening to this, then let it be a prayer of thanks for His help so far, and of petition that I can stay free of this addiction.

At least one day at a time.

THE SMOKER'S CURE

*Nelson T., East Newport, NY
Dedicated to Scott J.*

The smokers craze for the nicotine remains.

A draw can only lead us upon any charred sensation.

Hey, wasn't it when the cigarette was lit that the lie began?

Her source impress; that is never fully forgotten,

her pleasure excites, as for feelings the crave never quench.

Reaching bottom when our ways no longer equal the means,

this value becomes the remedy of our cure,

Nicotine Anonymous friend!

"THEY SENT ME HOME TO DIE"

Mary C., Sylmar, CA

My name is Mary and I'm a nicotine addict! I have been tobacco-free since February 3, 1989 and I give all the credit to attending Nicotine Anonymous meetings and receiving the strength to whip this addiction. Among those that were especially helpful was **Jim H.**, who began the first meetings at the V.A. Hospital. He sat alone, then I drifted in, then he and I sat by ourselves and shared. Then came Henry, and pretty soon we had to move to a larger room.

Jim told me that the most important thing to do, as far as he was concerned was to call people on the phone as often as possible. I attended these meetings (when I wasn't in the hospital) every Wednesday for nine months. However as soon as the meeting was over, I was out the door smoking, because at that time I didn't think I could live without a cigarette. Now I know I can.

I smoked two packs of unfiltered cigarettes every day for 48 years, and from 1984 to 1989 I was in the hospital three or four times a year for ten days to two weeks at a time because I was so sick and short of breath. While in the hospital I was in the bathroom smoking every chance I got. My last stay in the hospital was for three weeks, and I continued to smoke. I would lean against the sink and promise God if I could get back to my oxygen I would never smoke again. Within an hour I was back in the bathroom smoking, which made me feel very guilty, yet I had to have that cigarette. Toward the end of the three weeks I was unable to walk, so I *dragged* myself to the bathroom for that cigarette. The doctor brought a walker to my room and told me to go home because he could not do anything to help me. I knew I was going home to die. I called a friend to come and get me. When I arrived at my apartment, I had two packs of cigarettes and a butt. I stood at the walker and said to myself, "shall I light this butt standing at the walker or sitting on the couch? If I sit on the couch and reach to the coffee table for an ash try I won't be able to breathe" So I stood there and put the butt in my mouth. Just before I lit it, I took a good long look at what I was doing, and I thought, I am killing myself an inch at a time. So, I said, "screw it" and

threw the butt in the ashtray. Then I got on the phone to Jim. I called him every time I craved a cigarette, which was very often. I don't remember what he said to me, but I cried a lot and felt very angry. I started going to meetings again as soon as I got off the walker. Gradually my confidence and belief in myself came back and with the help of my friends in Nicotine Anonymous I am free of tobacco, One Day at a Time.

Now that smoking cigarettes is not my main goal in life, I can enjoy shopping, socializing and especially breathing.

I visited my doctor March 15, 1993 and she said if I had not gone to Nicotine Anonymous and received the help and support they gave me I would have died. She said it was a miracle I was alive today - from forty-eight years of heavy smoking and near death due to it. I am more than eight and a half years free of this obsessive habit. For me Nicotine Anonymous has been a life saver and a personal triumph for which I am grateful and thankful to God and the people in Nicotine Anonymous.

From the Editor



QUESTION: *How do you eat an elephant?*

ANSWER: *One bite at a time.*

That bit of folk wisdom is basically the essence of our tried and true slogan - *One Day at a Time*. I've found that to be one of the most important pieces of advice that we offer newcomers. Until we can master *One Day at a Time*, we often find ourselves floundering in our attempts to quit using nicotine. That's because the process of quitting this awful addiction looms at us so daunting and so huge just like that elephant we're trying to eat. When we find out we can take it in little pieces it then becomes manageable. I find I need to take many things in life "one bite at a time." I'm glad to know that's an option. And how do we do *One Day at a Time*? For me, it starts with a prayer. As part of my 11th step meditation time, I ask God, as I understand Him, for the willingness not to smoke *today*. He then takes that simple little prayer and works miracles - He does for me what I cannot do for myself.

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