

The Nicotine Anonymous Quarterly

# SEVEN



# Minutes

A Forum for Nicotine Users Who Don't Use

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## *Chairperson's Report...*

Hello family.

It has been a privilege to serve you as World Services Chair for the past year. I passed the gavel on to Bonnie H. in Albuquerque. Let me assure you that our fellowship is in very good hands with Bonnie at the helm. She brings a sense of energy and focus to the position that impresses everyone who has gotten to work with her. I am very excited to see what she does.

I am relieved to pass into my Sunset Year, where I may finally have time to deal with some of the projects I've mentioned over the months, particularly involving the website. I am also proud to have overseen what I hope will have been one of our finer conferences. We did a lot. Two new pieces of literature were submitted to the delegates and approved: the perennially-delayed Newcomers Booklet, and a wonderful CD produced by our members in Ohio. I hope that both will be in the fellowship's hands within the year.

More importantly, we dealt with a controversy that has caused much strife in our small fellowship over the years. Years ago, in an effort to make the program more approachable and comfortable for some members, the fellowship voted to make our basic text (The Book) neutral with regard to gender. This was a relatively uncontroversial decision; however, the following proposal, to do the same to the Steps and Traditions, met with much resistance.

This issue has been litigated to death,

and the bad blood around it has caused a real attrition in conference attendance. Last year the conference decided to have the board conduct a survey, to take the temperature of the fellowship and find out how important this issue actually is to the members, and where they stand. The conclusion that was drawn and shared with this year's delegates was simple: there is a stark division among the membership, and people aren't budging. Further campaigning on this issue isn't likely to change anyone's opinions at this point; it has a better chance of creating more strife. What, then, to do?

Sometimes when faced with an impasse, it's important to step back and remember why we are here, who we serve, and how best we can serve them. Our goal is to help our members have a life-saving spiritual experience, and making the Steps and Traditions gender-neutral was one way proposed to further that aim. Knowing that we could not gather the consensus to move forward in that way, and in a spirit of Love and Fellowship, we found a Way Out On Which We Could Agree. Out of a workshop whose membership was split down the middle on the gender question emerged a solid consensus: to create a new piece of literature addressing spirituality in NicA. A feeling of profound healing descended on the conference from that point forward. What form this literature will take I don't know. We all have conversations with new members helping them to approach the spiritual program of NicA: how can we express those thoughts in writing?

*Continued on page 3*

### **The Twelve Steps of Nicotine Anonymous**

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 and Twelve Traditions reprinted and adapted here with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions 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 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 Traditions of Nicotine Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon Nicotine Anonymous unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for Nicotine Anonymous membership is a desire to stop using nicotine.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Nicotine Anonymous as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the nicotine addict who still suffers.
6. A Nicotine Anonymous group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the Nicotine Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every Nicotine Anonymous group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Nicotine Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Nicotine Anonymous, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Nicotine Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Nicotine Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

### **The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
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### **Our Preamble**

Nicotine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to 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. There are no dues or fees for Nicotine Anonymous membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. 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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## Chairperson's Report

*continued...*

In a fellowship as small as ours, with as few meetings as we have, our literature is the most effective way to communicate with our membership. Let's take those conversations we have every day in our home groups and put them in a booklet, so that every newcomer can understand the basic facts some of us have internalized so well, but which can be so painfully elusive:

- That we had an ailment that only a spiritual experience could solve
- That such an experience is available to anyone
- That we need not adopt any other member's dogma or way of spiritual thinking
- And That It's Going To Be OK!

We have a bright future as a fellowship, and I look forward to being a part of it. Thank you for allowing me to be of service: it has been genuinely life-changing.

Yours,  
Mike B.  
Emeritus  
Chair



## Ten Years Nicotine-Free!

I recently heard something like this at a meeting on Step 11: "I used to come to meetings because I thought I would use nicotine. Now I come to meetings to get in touch with my Higher Power." That night, those words really resonated with me.

Before I walked into the meeting that night, I had left a phone message for my sponsor saying I had a "plan" for solving a problem, but it seemed a little crazy and convoluted. Yet I was also obsessed with the need to follow

obsessed with the need to follow through with the plan immediately. That is my disease's favorite style, so when I go on a tangent with that kind of thinking, it's usually a tell-tale sign I'm not in my recovery. You know the "I must have it now" tape? That was playing loud and clear that night. That voice reminds me of how I felt about nicotine – you know the way I'd sink my claws into the idea that I just HAD to have a hit of nicotine in order to go on? It seems a little crazy, but that night before the Step 11 meeting, my claws had sunk into my "plan" so deeply that I really believed that I *had* to make a move about the situation right then and there. It was after 8 pm at night and taking any further action on the matter really did not make sense. I have heard from others whose recovery I admire that big actions usually don't happen after 7 or 8 pm...

That night, I had forgotten all about that because I was in my will, not God's. Going to the meeting helped me take a break from my insane thinking, a break from my obsession. It was very much like the way meetings used to take my mind off my crazy thinking about nicotine when I first got free. Now the meeting was helping with my crazy thinking in general. Pretty cool!

Back in 2001, when I came into Nicotine Anonymous, I was in active addiction and pretty obsessed about using the drug. I believed I HAD to have it, or else. After twenty years of nicotine use, I had been trying to heal from a nasty bout of bronchitis. That was a difficult feat because I was still stuffing smoke into my lungs! I did have an ounce of willingness to stop though, and was told to keep coming to the meeting with that little ounce of willingness. That teeny ounce was probably due to the intense pain I felt every time I breathed. It felt as if Edward Scissorhands was cutting up my lungs.

Ouch! And the coughing! Yuck! I could easily clear a room with the terrible sound!

One night I was in a tiny little restaurant hacking by the counter and the other patrons looked disgusted, as if they were about to get up and leave because of my gross hacking in such close quarters. I felt like a complete idiot and I was totally ashamed. That's when it happened: my first Nicotine Anonymous miracle. A woman I knew as an acquaintance came over to me. This woman said something like "Sounds pretty bad." Then she asked, "Are you still smoking?" I sheepishly answered, "Yes." Here's the miracle: she said, "You know there's Nicotine Anonymous. That's how I got free."

On some level I did know there was something for people trying to quit smoking because years before, someone who cares about me had sent me a pamphlet and a schedule for some kind of smoking cessation program (maybe even NicA). Of course I dutifully went once and vowed never to return because "those people" were so square! I eventually tossed the literature. But this time it was different. This woman standing in front of me in this little restaurant I had almost cleared with my hacking, was not just someone who wanted me to quit and would try anything to convince me I *should* quit. She simply offered me *what had worked for her*. She had been in the trenches herself and survived. All the months I had known her acquaintance I thought she seemed pretty sane, happy and confident. I, on the other hand, was not sane, happy or confident. This woman also seemed healthy. Clearly, I was not healthy since I was in terrible pain when I breathed and continued to fight the hacking throughout our conversation. Perhaps I could give what she did a try. The fact that this woman said she would go to a meeting with me just blew my mind. Why would she

care about *me*? Now I understand: she cared for me in the same way I can now care about nicotine addicts who are still suffering. Here was someone I barely knew who was willing to go out of her way and give up a Sunday night for me, for little old me. I hadn't even been to a NicA meeting yet and here was a taste of the unconditional love I would soon find my Higher Power sending me through all of you!

Within a week and a half I did get to one of the 2 meetings in my county. I didn't even wait for the woman to go with me, probably out of embarrassment, but it doesn't matter. When I walked into the meeting, I immediately felt understood. That was huge! For the first time in my life I felt like I belonged somewhere! For the first few weeks I brought things to the meeting: my desire to smoke *and* my desire not to smoke, and I shared about both.

After a few weeks I got a service commitment and, though I had no idea at the time, it's part of what kept me coming back.

A few weeks later I was freed from my addiction. By the grace of God through Nicotine Anonymous, I have not had to use nicotine since January 8, 2002. I am ever grateful, one day at a time! These first 10 years free of nicotine have been quite a trip for me! Life has been a new adventure, going through things I never imagined, including embarking on a new career. The best parts of the adventure have been working the Steps, uncovering my character defects, developing a wonderful relationship with a Higher Power and even learning to have wonderful relationships with other humans - imagine that! Since starting the Steps, my recovery has really taken off. In the beginning, I considered myself gratefully free of nicotine. That was a miracle which continues in my life!!!

And now, another miracle: I can say that I am a grateful recovering person in many other aspects of life, too! I am

happy to say that time, meetings, service, phone calls and my Higher Power have shown me that I can have a life free of nicotine. In addition, the 12 Steps have shown me I can have a *rich, happy and serene* life free of nicotine.

I am currently working my first 8th and 9th Step, and see that there are many amends to make to others. However, as those who go before me have taught me, there are also important amends to be made to myself. Who would have thought? I get to grow every day.

Being willing to be freed from my crazy obsessive thinking is one of those amends. Obsession lifts when I pray and ask for help, call women in the program, and as I heard at one of my first NicA meetings in NY: "Move a muscle, change a thought." I get to apply the same tools to my obsessions today as I applied to my nicotine addiction during those first days and months free of the drug. Thank you God for helping me find and maintain serenity from nicotine addiction - and many other things - through the tools of the program. I know if I continue to apply the NicA principles to everything else, I will be guided as well.

I tried twice before to work the Steps with my sponsors, but for some reason I thought I could skirt by Steps 1, 2 and 3. I don't recommend that! It seems I ended up with a metaphorical "Charlie horse" in my leg from trying to skip the early steps: even though I tried Steps 4 and 5, not addressing Steps 1, 2 and 3 (besides what we read at our weekly reading of the step in our NicA book) kept me from being able to land on Steps 4 and 5 with any sure footing - I "fell." I fell into self-righteousness and denial that there was anything my Higher Power could do to help me with challenges that occur in daily life.

Thanks to desperation with my character defects and the excellent role model of my sponsor, I finally became willing to study all of the Steps, i.e. to really

## Seven Minutes Meditation

Today I thank God for the program and the Fellowship that encourages me to keep coming back.

- from *90 Days, 90 Ways*



"work" them and let God work in my life. So far I have written on and shared my work on Steps 1-8 with my sponsor, and I constantly apply Steps 1, 2, and 3 - also Step 10. I now have an amazing Higher Power. My understanding of and relationship with that Higher Power keeps getting better and better. (My understanding of and relationship with *me* keeps getting better and better, too!) My relationship with my Higher Power is definitely the best relationship I have had, with the unconditional love from my sponsor and all of you in NicA being a close second!

At meetings I heard "I used to come to meetings because I thought I would use nicotine. Now I come to get in touch with my Higher Power." There was a time when I could never imagine going to a Nicotine Anonymous meeting to connect with my Higher Power. Originally I just came to "quit." Ironically, I still have not "quit." Instead, ten years ago I was *freed* from my addiction. This way has been much easier than every time I tried to "quit" in the past! Both parts of that statement I heard are now true for me today: I used to come to meetings because I thought I would use nicotine. And, now I come to get in touch with my Higher Power. However, don't want to lead myself to think I

*Continued on page 9*

## I Say Goodbye...

I always thought of each cigarette as a friend, one who was non-judgmental. I have said goodbye to the cigarettes and old friends and replaced them with the 4 D's: delay, deep breathing, drinking water and distraction. I don't need a friend who would cause so many problems!

In addition to many other chemicals, cigarette smoke contains nicotine. It is the nicotine I was addicted to, especially in a boring situation and during stressful periods.

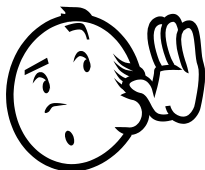
Both my eye doctor and my general practitioner want me to be a non-smoker - plus, where I live is a smoke-free environment. We are not allowed to be smokers on or off the property. If they smell smoke on us, we are in big trouble!

So, I say goodbye to my smoking addiction. If nicotine is not made available to the brain, withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, frustration, anger, anxiety, difficulty in concentrating and restlessness appear. Nicotine addiction is one of the most difficult drug addictions to break, but I say goodbye.

Maggie  
British Columbia, Canada

## Heard it at a meeting...

Shared by Jim K:  
"I need a lot more God  
and a lot less Jim."



## From Roz, Your Roving Reporter...

Roz interviews Lynne, NicA member from Petoskey, MI.

Q. How old were you when you first used nicotine? What form did you use?

A. I was fourteen when I picked up cigarettes.

Q. Do you remember why you used nicotine at that time? What was going on in your life?

A. My best friend was spending the night and the cool fellow across the street came over and offered us a cigarette. We accepted! Can't say anything different was going on in my life. I believe I accepted the cigarette just to see what it was like.

Q. How did it make you feel?

A. I have always felt a sense of calmness and smoothness when inhaling nicotine. I can remember how cool the nicotine felt as I inhaled it.

Q. Anything else you remember from that time?

A. Yes. It never occurred to me NOT to smoke again. I was now a smoker.

Q. Did you have any negative consequences from using nicotine?

A. Not at first. Later in life - many, many consequences.



Q. How were you getting your nicotine?

A. Sometimes I bought cigarettes. A LOT of the time I stole my mother's cigarettes. As a teen I never got into trouble for using nicotine. My mother told me that if I was going to smoke, she would rather I smoked in front of her than behind her back. To me that was permission to smoke in the house!

Q. Did you smoke alone or with someone?

A. At first, I only smoked with others. As time passed I smoked whenever I wanted to - with someone or alone.

Q. Why did you continue to smoke?

A. Looking back, I thought I continued to smoke only because I wanted to.

Looking deeper, I believe I was addicted right from the get-go. I began to smoke regularly at 18.

Q. What was going on in your life at that time? Do you think the nicotine helped you run away from feelings?

A. I had graduated high school and gone on to business school (didn't smoke at all) and lived with my father.

He was transferred so I returned to live with my mother and stepfather. I wasn't working - stayed home and took care of the house for my mom and smoked away. Looking back, I can see that I ate a lot, was overweight and smoked.

But when living with my father, I had lost weight and didn't smoke. No craving to eat OR smoke. Hmm...that should tell me something! When I was bored, I smoked (a biggy for me).

When I was angry, I smoked. When I was sad, I smoked. When I was happy, I smoked. My stepfather and I didn't get along. He favored my sister, so my mother favored me (guilt). I was hooked on nicotine and used it to stuff negative feelings and enhance positive ones.

Q. How did nicotine affect your feelings?

A. I THOUGHT that I was no longer sad when I smoked. This wasn't true. I had simply distracted my feeling of sadness through the ritual of getting the cigarette, finding the lighter, getting the ashtray, then lighting the cigarette. I just exchanged one feeling for another.

Something else I found out was that using nicotine would change the way my mind thought. Example: in 1994 I had carotid artery surgery and was told to stop using nicotine and stay away from second-hand smoke. I stopped for 3 weeks, always reminding myself I would need the surgery again if I didn't stop using nicotine. This can be life-threatening, but as usual, I picked up again. And after awhile I'd think, "Oh my gosh, what about my carotid artery? Oh well, if I have to, I will just have the surgery over." No thought of the life-threatening warnings at all!

Q. What caused you to think maybe you needed to quit?



A. In 1982 during a physical I was told I had the early signs of emphysema and immediately stopped using nicotine - for a week. Then in 2000 I started trying to stop on my own again. I had many, many 10 day quits, but picked up again - a week here and a week there. Finally in 2002 I was diagnosed with lung cancer. I didn't stop at first. I would go to chemo, leave, get in the car and light a cigarette. I would go to radiation, leave, get in the car and light up. Finally I got a quit going for 3 WHOLE months!! But I picked up again over some bad news.

Q. Did you find yourself smoking in situations where it was forbidden and could cause you problems?

A. Yes, I actually got fired for taking an unauthorized work break. I was actually taking a smoke break.

Q. How did you feel smoking around children, animals, and people who had health problems?

A. To my shame, I never gave it a second thought!

Q. Have you ever started a fire or burned holes in things?

A. As a teen I burned a hole in a mattress. A neighbor had to drag the mattress out of the house for us. I burned a hole in a mattress as an adult too. This time I had to drag the mattress out!

Q. Did you spend money on nicotine instead of living expenses?

A. Yes, I spent my money in this order: cigarettes, rent, living expenses, food.

Q. What other health problems came from your nicotine use?

A. Besides the lung cancer, I was later diagnosed with a stomach aneurysm, and then in 2009 I was diagnosed with a completely different type of lung cancer.

Q. What happened that helped you turn the corner on deciding to quit?

A. I had a design for living that stressed honesty. This is what made me put the nicotine down. I was buying my cigs online to avoid paying state income tax. I had no intention of declaring the purchase on my state tax return. When I realized how dishonest I was being, and that I was breaking the law and could go to jail, I was devastated. Coming into the apartment one day, cigarettes in

one hand and lighter in the other hand, this thought went through my mind: "It's time to put the nicotine down." That wasn't my thought... At midnight that night when I stubbed out what is hopefully my last cigarette, I thought to myself: "What can I do that I have never done before when putting the cigs down?"



Q. Did you use NRT's?

A. People gave them to me - just didn't use them. I never could understand using nicotine to stop using nicotine. That's just me though.

Q. Are you or have you ever been on oxygen, used inhalers, etc?

A. I am on an inhaler now due to lung damage.

Q. Did you develop a hacking cough? Pee your pants? Any other embarrassing things caused by smoking?

A. Yes, I developed a hacking cough in my early thirty's. I had to prop myself up on pillows so I could sleep. The coughing caused me to wet my pants which was more embarrassing than the cough. I went to great lengths to cover that up - jacket around the waist, going straight home, never stayed overnight at another person's house because of coughing when sleeping. I also went to great lengths to prove I didn't have chronic bronchitis. I got meds for the bronchitis, but two weeks later I still had the wheezing cough. Back to the doctor I went, demanding to know why the bronchitis wasn't cleared up. The doctor said, "Perhaps you didn't have bronchitis. Maybe you had allergies." From then on I told everyone in the medical field that I didn't have chronic bronchitis. I had allergies. The worst part of it was THEY BELIEVED ME!!!! And now that I have COPD, I have bronchitis (excess phlegm) in my throat.

Q. Have you rationalized about quitting because it just wasn't the right time?

A. Of course - I am an addict! I can lie

with the best of them!!

Q. Did you believe you would never be able to quit smoking?

A. For years, I felt that I had smoked too long and too much to be able to stop. I looked at all the times I had stopped, and would think to myself: I always return to using nicotine! Then it dawned on me...that is the behavior of a nicotine addict. That's when thoughts came to me about going to Nicotine Anonymous. That is exactly what I did!!!! And...I stopped using nicotine in April 2005.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Online Post

yes, i am a nicotine addict  
i love the emotional honesty  
in the meetings  
without it i will continue to turn to  
cigarettes

how often i stood outside my house  
puffing away, talking to God  
taking deep breaths  
sure that I was "talking out" all my stuff

all i was doing was stuffing it,  
getting angrier,  
judging anyone and everything

only after i stopped  
put the smokes down  
and stood shaking in my boots  
did my helplessness and desperation  
surface

without these rooms i would still  
be smoking  
if i couldn't come cry rage scream  
be silent storm off  
i would never have walked through  
those awful moments

those who've known me will remember  
those early days  
ooh they were yucky  
on this end  
and at times on yours

have felt the range of emotions  
as have we all  
but i came through

my dad had a stroke a month ago  
smoking was not the first thing  
i thought of  
not even the 10<sup>th</sup>  
it did become a thought after  
some fights with brothers  
all i really wished for and wanted  
was an internet connection  
to come back to all of you

when i got home, i logged in  
and found you again  
i am just celebrating 1 year  
and 3 months  
life rocks smober  
i'd take any smober crisis  
over a good smoking day

Allana  
Voices of Nicotine Recovery  
(VONR)

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## NicA Meetings in Prison...

*Our program reaches people everywhere, even those behind prison walls. Members of the Saturday meeting in San Francisco are communicating with and supporting Tim M. in his recovery— and in carrying the message to his fellow inmates.*

*Below, a note from Tim to one of the Saturday members:*

"Hello! How's the outside life? And how is everyone at the NicA meeting?"

"I read all the pamphlets you sent, and for the last month I have been running NicA meetings using the pamphlets twice a week here at the prison. I'm pretty impressed with myself and it's also helping my recovery. Nobody is really working

don't need meetings just because the Steps, but 10-15 people show up every Tuesday and Thursday. How awesome is that?!"

"I have 4½ months left. I'm getting nervous. I've been incarcerated for 8 years now and the world out there is different. Scary."

"Anyway I'm hoping to keep in touch and have a sponsor as soon as I'm out so I can have some immediate support."


*Tim's release from prison occurs mid-June. He expects to make the Saturday San Francisco meeting his home meeting. They have sent him NicA brochures and a copy of A Year of Miracles and Nicotine Anonymous: The Book.*

*A recent update from Tim:*  
"The meetings here are going great. There is another inmate named Chris who is taking it more seriously than I ever expected. He's going to be taking over once I'm out. I'll be writing him & sending inspirational things. I may even get him in contact with someone at the NicA meeting."

"I hope to hear from you soon with another *Seven Minutes* issue. The group loved it. A few guys saw an address to send a letter or statement, so it may be

### Quote Corner

"Only those who can see the invisible can do the impossible."  
- Albert Einstein



## Can't Get to a Face to Face Meeting?

Here are some great options:  
Go to [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)  
Click on **Meetings**. In that link, click on **Telephone Meetings** (left side of the page). You'll find information for accessing 2-3 phone meetings a day.

There is also a link for **Internet Meetings**. Click that to find two live links for these home pages:

1. **Unofficial Nicanon:**  
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/unofficialnicanon>  
This has type share meetings.

2. **Voices of Nicotine Recovery:**  
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/voicesofnicotinerecovery>  
This has voice share meetings 5 times daily.

[www.voicesofnicotinerecovery.com](http://www.voicesofnicotinerecovery.com) is a newcomer site which shows how to access the voice online meetings using PalTalk. It also has information about nicotine addiction and a link to listen to speaker shares in the privacy of your own home.

Both sites have a Message Posting Board — you can post a message and get a response generally within the same day. You just have to join either **VONR** (Voices of Nicotine Recovery) or **Unofficial Nicanon**.

Note: You can go to meetings without joining either site, though joining does allow you to search out files and post messages. All it takes is to become a Yahoo member, then register with a user name and password. That's all there is to it!



## Today I Have Three Days...

I have relapsed many, many times since I first joined VONR in 2004. There were a few times that I got so angry at myself that I resigned from the group. But every time I left, something would call me back.

There are a lot of new voices in the rooms since 2004, but the message has stayed the same – that it is possible to stop smoking, one day at a time, with the 12 Steps.

Every time I had a "practice" quit, there were two things that went drastically wrong.

- 1) For some stupid reason, there were cigarettes in the house where I could get to them.
- 2) I would forget that I don't have to quit forever. I just have to quit for today. Sometimes I just have to quit for the next few seconds – whatever it takes to get through the current 24 hour period.

I'm tired of re-setting my quit meter after only a few days of sobriety. I'm tired of not being able to get past the first week.

I'm not tired of the meetings. I'm not tired of listening to your experiences, strengths, and hopes. For the first time in a long time, I feel it's time for me to give back what I have freely received.

Thank each and every one of you for being here and keeping the meetings open where many nicotine addicts can come for help.

Thanks for teaching me that I, too, can live nicotine-free.

Today I have stopped using nicotine for three days, 16 hours and 31 minutes.

Vic  
VONR

## To postpone it, phone it!



## To the Newcomer...

I had to accept that I was going to have cravings for as long as it took and that having cravings did not mean anything was wrong. It helped me not add fear and resentment to the cravings.

Accepting the cravings, and reading the *Serenity Prayer for Nicotine Users* pamphlet over and over really helped me. Here is what I would think of: I would remember that if I fought an ocean wave and tried to hold my ground, that wave would just toss me all over the place. BUT if I dove straight INTO the wave, I was able to swim out to the other side and find calm water. So rather than run from it, I would do the opposite and dive into that wall of water.

I would see that image in my head when I had a strong craving.

Remember: you NEVER have to do this week over again as long as you don't smoke. Keep noticing how the cravings are coming less often. For me they were constant in the first days, then I felt jolted by them in the second and third week because they were NOT constant anymore. They would hit me out of the blue.

It is going to get better – and we are not smoking today! What a gift that is. Focusing on that, on the miracle of a nicotine addict like me not smoking, helped me through some of the tougher moments.

Susan S  
VONR

## New Literature Project!



A book titled "The Best of Seven Minutes" is being compiled, featuring the best articles from all the issues — yet another source of experience, strength and hope for nicotine addicts!

We have issues from 1994 to 2011, but are missing the earliest ones which began in 1988. **If you have any of the earlier Seven Minutes issues, please share!**

Send a copy via email to Robin: [oscarthepenguin@yahoo.com](mailto:oscarthepenguin@yahoo.com). If you prefer snail mail, email Robin to obtain her address. If you have several issues, please put them on a disk to be mailed.

*Note: Several NicA groups are reading the issues to put the chosen articles into categories for the book. If your group would like to help, it would be appreciated! Email Robin to obtain the format being used to tally the results. (The articles can also be used as discussion topics for your meetings!)*

**Your assistance with  
this project is  
appreciated!**



## **10 Years Nicotine-Free**

*continued from page 4...*

don't need meetings, because my addiction is always looking to get me arrogant so it can say "Forget all these Steps, service positions, phone calls, literature and meetings! What do you need them for anyway?" I do not want to give my disease a microphone! I have heard one too many people share about going out and how the slip happened long before they picked up. I take their experience to heart. May they be free from their addiction. May all nicotine addicts be free from this addiction.

I will always be a nicotine addict, so I had better keep going to meetings. My schedule has been tight lately, and I have been blessed with opportunity for recovery in other areas, but I want to remember to be willing to go to any length to nurture and keep the freedom and recovery I have. Without it, everything else wonderful in my life would be lost. A dear woman I once sponsored used to remind me of when I was serving as secretary for a NicA phone meeting. When my schedule changed, I would chair the meeting while riding on a public bus in New York City! This woman said that I was an example to her of being willing to go to any length. I thank her for reminding me of that miraculous willingness! I don't want to throw my recovery away because I get overzealous about other things! So, with you, dear reader as my witness, I commit to continuing to do what it takes to live free of nicotine, one day at a time, no matter what other wonderful things I am pursuing. And I know that meetings are one of the many tools I use to stay free and serene. I do come to meetings to get in touch with my Higher Power. And, though I don't *think* I will use nicotine - as long as I use the tools - I still come to meetings because I don't *want* to use nicotine.

Recently I read in *Seven Minutes* that someone felt they were having their

heart massaged by Nicotine Anonymous. To me that sounded so right on! To go from knives in my chest to feeling my heart being massaged by my Higher Power and the people in this program...I am ever grateful!

Thank you all. I hope you have a happy, joyous and free day free of nicotine!

In gratitude,  
*Judi-Ahavah D*  
*Sherman Oaks, CA*  
*(nee Judi D, Woodstock & New Paltz, NY)*



## ***Becoming a Newcomer Again...***

I don't think it is a matter of not being ready - well, at least it was not that for me when I kept smoking and quitting, smoking and quitting. It was a very painful time.

Step One is admitting I am powerless over nicotine and that my life has become unmanageable. My sponsor in another program explained to me that Step One does NOT mean I can never use again - it means that I WILL use again barring divine intervention - and that is why there are 11 more Steps.

When I got toward the end of my year and half smoking in Nicotine Anonymous, I realized that I had to do something different or I would keep getting the same results. I had been sober in AA for a number of years before coming to NicA (and still am sober). I have heard some people say that they think those of us from AA have an advantage. For me, it was NOT an advantage, as I had this belief that I really got the program, that I understood the Steps, and basically knew all about the program.

Well, that was not true because if it were, as soon as I applied this beautiful program to nicotine, I would have been able to remain abstinent.

To get and stay nicotine-free I had to open myself to being a newcomer - to let go of everything I thought I knew about God, this program and myself, and open my heart to a new understanding and willingness to do the things that people who were nicotine-free in the program were doing. Monkey see, monkey do works very well for me in recovery.

So, I went to meetings like the other hard core nic addicts who were free of nicotine did, including meetings on the phone and online through Paltalk. (The Paltalk meetings can be attended by downloading the software or going to Paltalk Express where you don't need to download anything to attend.) I got a sponsor, read the literature regularly and took the 12 Steps - one at a time, in order.

Action, action and more action. I could not think or will myself out of smoking.

*Susan S - free today*  
*VONR*



***Nicotine Anonymous:  
The Book***

now available  
in Kindle version on  
Amazon.com

Only \$7.99!

## *Sober, Clean and Smober...*

I have been a NicA member in Wisconsin since 2001. I have been tobacco and nicotine-free since October 1963. I am alive because of that. No smoker in my family has lived to be 70. I am 77 now and 55 years in recovery.

When I got smober there were no Nicotine or Smokers Anonymous programs I knew about. Getting and staying smober in the tobacco cultures of the 12-Step program I was in was a challenge, and I am not sure how it happened. I think I somehow knew to fold my smobriety in with my sobriety, and later into my "clean" program in NA where I have been a member since 1986.

I asked for help to stop smoking and gave thanks when I did stop, one day at a time. I was a 2-pack a day smoker by then.

I had tried many times to quit; did quit and always started again. It took being trapped in a stalled car on a railroad track as a train travelling at 50 miles an hour smashed into my car to get me smober. How we survived that crash I don't know. Was it God or was it geometry? Did a Higher Power spare me and the other two trapped in the car? Did the angle the car was on the railway track in relation to the oncoming train account for the miracle of our survival? I have always felt gratitude for the miracle of my survival. I have not done much whining since my life was spared that day.

I was a relatively strong 28-year-old when this happened to me. As I recovered from the injuries of the car/train crash, I was not very well. I became ill with double pneumonia and pleurisy while in a hip high cast. I lost a lot of weight and was being considered for placement in a respiratory sanitarium. Yet, I continued to smoke away. Finally

I got it. Every drag on a cigarette was like having a knife thrust into my back; cause and effect was discovered. I got it. My smoking was bringing me intolerable pain. I knew I had to stop, and I did. I had no idea at the time I was being set free from this killer addiction.



I remembered smoking was not enjoyable while taking mint cough candies, so I had my kid sister buy me some. They helped compensate for not smoking. I still have a fondness for mint-flavored candies.

My father, who was a 3-pack a day smoker in recovery for 22 years, died from lung cancer when he was 67. My mother died 3 years later from spending all those years with her chain-smoking husband and 2 smoking sons. She had a severe asthma condition and I believe she died from decades of being exposed to tobacco smoke. So tobacco took the lives of both my parents. Sadly, there are so many of us with similar stories and histories.

I didn't get into NicA to preserve my smobriety (never heard that word before coming to meetings.) I came to do 12-Step work. I worked at a Midwest hospital as an addiction specialist. Our hospital went smoke-free in 2001. I was assigned to develop a program for employees who needed to stop smoking.

My 12-Step friend, Robert, and I developed a recovery program called No More Nicotine. We had a small grant to create and staff this program. We decided to include a 12-Step approach and

learned about Nicotine Anonymous from online research. We purchased literature and a new meeting kit and set everything up for the program.

Fifteen people come to our first orientation session. We asked them if they believed they were addicted/dependent on nicotine. They all agreed they were and had many quit attempts. We knew we had the right people there.

Robert and I presented the addiction concept as we had planned. While all the participants said they were addicted to nicotine they could not identify themselves as "addicts" like alcoholics and other drug addicts. None came back for the rest of the sessions.

However, we had started the Nicotine Anonymous meeting called the Last Gasp Group. We changed that to the New Hope Group. We functioned in Baraboo, Wisconsin for several years while I was working in the area. Then Robert moved to Madison and started the New Freedom Group.

There were no members of the New Hope Group to carry on the meetings when I later moved to Madison, so that group folded. I joined Robert in the New Freedom Group. We have 2 meetings a week with a few regular members. We have not grown much even though we are the only meetings in this rather large city. Still we persevere and probably will continue on for the rest of our lives trying to carry this message.

Robert and I attended the World Conference in Chicago a few years ago and met some NicA people. There weren't many compared to the attendance at AA and NA World Conferences, but I was impressed with the people I met in Chicago. I have learned much from the people who come to NicA. It is a very difficult addiction to recover from, so I am doubly grateful for my own recovery from nicotine dependence.

Mostly we get people from other 12 Step programs and a few who have never been to one. Successful recovery from alcohol and other drug dependence does not easily translate into tobacco and nicotine recovery. We found that to be true, as many from AA and NA could not seem to recover from their nicotine dependence even when they knew the truth of their tobacco addiction.

Personally, my experience with Nicotine Anonymous has been a challenge. It caused me to question my belief in the 12-Step approach to recovery after all these years. Could it be that a trustworthy Higher Power would help us recover from alcoholism and other addictions, but would not help us stay smober? Could it be that a group of men and women can help each other stay clean and sober but it won't work for smokers and other tobacco users?

Of course, I came to believe the problem is not with a Higher Power or a support group of like-minded people striving to overcome a common problem. It is with the motivation and willingness of the nicotine addict to be ready to do the program work that produces the recovery I see some of us making.

So, I go to meetings. I design posters encouraging others to get smober because "Tobacco Recovery Makes Other Recovery Better." I get the room ready for a meeting, make some coffee, put out some literature and participate in our meetings no matter who comes.

**I am alive because I am smober; no doubt about that in my mind. I have a son, sister, daughter and granddaughter who smoke cigarettes. It is true that half of those who smoke cigarettes and don't quit by middle age die from tobacco-caused diseases. That means it is probable that some of the family members I love will die from tobacco. I pray they will find the solution I have found with my NicA friends.**

Besides being a dedicated NicA member, I went to the Mayo Nicotine Training program in Rochester, Minnesota some years ago and became the first Wisconsin addiction counselor to be certified as a tobacco treatment specialist. I am working with Robert to convince Wisconsin to integrate tobacco and nicotine treatment into our addiction and mental health services. I am not a tobacco treatment specialist when I go to my NicA meetings. I am just Mac, grateful recovering nicotine addict.

Thank you to NicA pioneers who opened the door for the rest of us. May NicA grow to help many! May we all stay smober until our life here is finished, and may none of us die from tobacco-caused disease.

Dave "Mac" M  
Middleton, WI

\*\*\*\*\*

*The craving will pass.*

*Meanwhile, I could...*

*Pray/meditate/practice*

*deep breathing*

*Blow bubbles*

*Do a jigsaw puzzle*

*or crossword*

*Draw, paint or color*

*Listen to music*

*or make music*

*Go to a movie*

*Pet my dog or cat*

*Rearrange my closet*

*Offer to help some-*

*one do something*

*Call someone in Program*

*Write in my journal*

*Make a gratitude list*

*Swim/run/jog/bike*

*Do the dishes*

*Have a cup of tea/coffee*

*Read some*

*program literature*

*Do a home improvement*

*task*

*Do yoga or*

*gentle stretching*

*Go to a meeting*

*Make a card*

*for someone*

*Get outside and*

*observe nature*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Nicotine Anonymous** **7th Step Prayer**

My Higher Power,  
I place myself in your hands  
and humbly ask that my  
character defects  
be lifted from me so that I may  
help others.  
Please grant me willingness,  
courage, and strength  
so that through my actions  
I may reflect your love  
and wisdom.

**NAWSO**  
**Profit & Loss YTD Comparison**  
**January through March 2012**

	<u>Jan - Mar</u> <u>'12</u>	<u>Jan - Mar</u> <u>'11</u>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
49900 Uncategorized Income	-	6.88
4000 · Donations	1,513.48	1,659.16
4100 · Literature Sales	12,125.52	9,060.33
4290 · Shipping & Handling	1,476.99	1,682.05
4299 · Conference Profit	-	750.55
Total Income	<u>16,379.94</u>	<u>13,158.97</u>
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>		
5000 · COGS	<u>5,757.74</u>	<u>4,447.26</u>
5102 Inventory	-430.57	
Total COGS	5,327.17	4,447.26
<b>Gross Profit</b>	11,052.77	8,711.71
<b>Expense</b>		
6960 Moving Expense - CA to TX	-	1,925.10
6000 · Office Expenses	5,755.30	4,274.03
6600 · WSO Expenses	849.60	3,686.33
6900 Other Operating Expenses	21.03	1,826.60
Total Expense	<u>6,625.93</u>	<u>11,712.16</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	4,426.84	-3,000.35
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>		
Other Income		
8000 · Interest Income	<u>.09</u>	<u>3.32</u>
Total Other Income	.09	3.32
8030 · Interest Expense	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Other Expense	-	-
Net Other Income	<u>.09</u>	<u>3.32</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><b>4,426.93</b></u>	<u><b>- 2,997.0</b></u>

# Nicotine Anonymous Give and Live Program

## Nicotine Anonymous announces the **Give and Live** member donation program

Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition states that “Every Nicotine Anonymous group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” Nicotine Anonymous World Services encourages members to support the fellowship by giving back through voluntary contributions.

Our recovery program teaches us that we can’t keep it unless we give it away. World Services is committed to spreading the message. In order to expand our outreach to the still suffering nicotine addict, we need our members’ financial support.

World Services has established a new program called “Give and Live”. Members of the fellowship can gracefully make a financial pledge to the fellowship. This can be done in a number of ways.

**NOTE! Members who donate at least \$5 a month receive a free copy of *Seven Minutes* in thanks for your ongoing support!**

### One time or multiple donations

- Make a contribution directly on our website at the Nicotine Anonymous Store (<https://www.nicotine-anonymous.org/store.php>)
  - Send our donation directly to World Services via paper check

### Automatic contribution via bank transfer

- Complete an Automatic Electronic Bank Transfer (EBT) from your bank to World Services. The dollar amount and time intervals to be determined by the individual member.

The process of setting up an automatic Electronic Bank Transfer (EBT) may differ from bank to bank. To complete the automatic bank transfer, the individual must have the ability to pay bills on-line. The following information may be required by your bank to complete the automatic bill pay process.

1. Select a *Company without an account number*
2. When requested, enter the following information:

Billor Name: Nicotine Anonymous World Services  
Billor Address: 6333 E. Mockingbird Ln.,  
Suite #147-817  
Dallas, TX 75214  
Telephone No.: 877-879-6422



# Service is the Key

Nicotine Anonymous World Services is in need of volunteers  
to take on the following open positions:

## TELEPHONE AND E-MAIL SERVANTS

From the comfort of your own home, you can respond to  
telephone calls and e-mails from those who are just starting out  
on their path to freedom



## TRANSLATORS

Help us spread the word by translating our literature, or step up to the plate when  
foreign-speaking inquiries come to our attention



For further information about any of these service positions,  
please contact:

Nicotine Anonymous World Services  
6333 E. Mockingbird Lane  
#147-817  
Dallas, TX 75214

Or e-mail [chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org)

# ***BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS!***

*Pat G. – May 24, 1989*

*Judi-Ahavah D. – January 8, 2002*

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## ***Birthday Announcement***

N A M E \_\_\_\_\_

The above-named member of Nicotine Anonymous stopped using nicotine

on \_\_\_\_\_ and has \_\_\_\_\_ years of freedom!

Mail to: Nicotine Anonymous World Services  
6333 E. Mockingbird Lane  
#147-817  
Dallas, TX 75214

OR

Email to: [sevenminuteseditor@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:sevenminuteseditor@nicotine-anonymous.org)

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### ***Give Back!***

You Can't Keep it Unless You Give It Away

Nicotine Anonymous World Services is seeking servants for a variety of positions within the fellowship. Please see the contact information below if you would like to learn more about these service opportunities.

**E-Mail Volunteers** - Share your experience, strength and hope with people around the world who email us. Help them find meetings and answer questions about NicA. Provide about thirty minutes a week from your home or office computer.

**Telephone Servants** - Respond to telephone calls from people taking their first step on the journey. One day of service per week from the comfort of your own home.

**Email/Penpal Coordinator** - Responsible for receiving email requests for pen pals, adding names to the email pen pal list and sending out the list.

For further information about any of these service positions, please contact:

E-mail: [info@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:info@nicotine-anonymous.org)  
or write: Nicotine Anonymous World Services  
6333 E. Mockingbird Lane  
#147-817  
Dallas, TX 75214

**Please copy this page and share with your group**

# *Seven Minutes*

## **NAWSO**

6333 E. Mockingbird Lane  
#147-817  
Dallas, TX 75214

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### **Publication Dates and Deadlines for Submissions for 2011**

<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Deadline Date for Submissions</b>
<b>March 20</b>	<b>February 1</b>
<b>June 20</b>	<b>May 1</b>
<b>September 20</b>	<b>August 1</b>
<b>December 20</b>	<b>November 1</b>

### **My Address Has Changed!**

**Don't miss an issue!!! Complete this form and mail it to:  
NAWSO, 6333 E. Mockingbird Lane, #147-817, Dallas, TX 75214 USA**

*My new address and phone is:*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (WITH AREA CODE) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

*My old address was:*

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_