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ARTICLES & FEATURES:

"My Mountain Meditation"  
by Lenna M.....Pgs. 3-4

*Travels with Tracy E.*.....Pgs. 4

"Am I Entirely Ready?"  
By Theresa N.....Pgs. 5-6

*Quote Corner*.....Pg. 6

"An Unusual Angel"  
By Martha B.....Pgs. 6-7

"Showing Up Means I Never Know"  
By Ray S.....Pg 7

*Online Post*.....Pgs. 7-8

"Smokeless Hope Fiend"  
By Susan S.....Pg. 8

*Profit & Loss YTD Comparison*.....Pg. 12

"Poem from a Newcomer"  
By Anonymous.....Pg. 15

## Chairperson's Report...

Hello to my sisters and brothers in fellowship. This quarterly report contains board progress as well as gaps and vacancies the fellowship still needs to fill.

Once again I wish to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve our fellowship. I would like to send special thanks to the board members (Marguerite B, Secretary; Chick P, Treasurer; Bonnie H, Chair Emeritus; Robin L, Secretary Emeritus; Gary M, Treasurer Emeritus; Jean M, Secretary Elect; and Sherry B, Treasurer Elect) and Teresa I, our Office Manager, for all their support and the hard work they have put in. The October 12 WSO Board meeting in San Leandro, CA was a successful and cooperative event. Thanks, too, to Ed T for hosting and for his terrific hospitality throughout. Thanks to all the committee chairs and coordinators who have been working diligently to provide and bolster board services. In fact, there are too many people to thank in this small report, but listen for me to do so personally and publicly at the next World Services Conference (WSC). We may be smaller than some other fellowships, but we are no less energetic.

Your board has been able to make inroads in the areas of website management, store operations, the Worldwide Meeting List, continual connections with worldwide groups, donations, literature translations, 2014 WSC planning, 2015 WSC planning and outreach, but we need to keep improving. We still need volunteers in key areas. Dedicated vol-

unteers are holding the fort, but we need an experienced webmaster. We have also sustained the challenge of other websites popping up on the internet and using the Nicotine Anonymous name. This is an ongoing task, worked on by experienced NicA members.

Nicotine Anonymous is creating and testing a new member-powered website that should speed and simplify usage, and the next World Services Conference is planning reports and workshops on proposed enhancements to our operations, nicotine delivery systems/abstinence, a Nicotine Anonymous endowment and more.

One of our biggest needs right now is for someone to fill the board-appointed Officer at Large position leading to active Chair in April 2014. The Chair Elect resigned the position which left us with a gap. If you receive Two-Way-Talk messages from our Inreach Coordinator, you may have read my emails asking for someone to step up. (If you do not already receive Two-Way-Talk, e-mail or click here: [twowaytalk@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:twowaytalk@nicotine-anonymous.org) to request to be added.) The Officer at Large will perform the functions of the Chair Elect, which are straight-forward and uncomplicated, and will study the job of Chairperson with me and other Board members until taking the gavel as active Chair in April 2014, if ratified by the delegates. For more information about the Officer at Large appointment and tasks of the active Chair, e-mail me at [Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org).

*continued on page 15*

*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.
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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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## My Mountain Meditation...

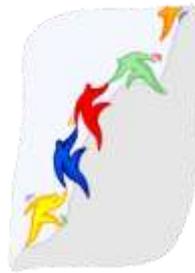
Hi, my name is Lenna and I am a grateful recovering nicotine addict. I want to share my experience at Clean in the Catskills this year, October 2013. I had been planning to get to that retreat for many years. As of August 12, I celebrated 24 years off of nicotine with the help of this program and my Higher Power. Normally my partner and I attend the NicA conference, however, this year we were unable to attend. So, we decided to travel to Clean in the Catskills instead. I was much relieved to find that several of my dear friends from the conferences who live in the New York area were already there. It was so good to see them after having missed their smiling faces in April. I was also delighted to find that there was a gratitude meeting the first night, similar to the one at the conference, which helped me feel even more at home.

The theme of the retreat this year was **"Conscious Contact,"** a phrase right out of my favorite Step – Eleven. Most all of the meetings were centered on something related to Step Eleven as well. I was enjoying the retreat, but I was worried whether I would be able to join in on the Mountain Top meeting after lunch on Saturday. I am a native Texan and **where I come from, we don't really have mountains.** I do walk every day, however, I was not even close to confident that I could hike up a mountain. My friends told me they would help me and they were sure we could do it. They stated that everyone who ever wanted to go up to that meeting had made it with their help.

I finally decided to go out to the mountain to at least look at it and then make my decision. They told me that the worst part was right near the bottom and I could decide then. There were 20 of us who headed toward that mountain. When I looked at that difficult area near the bottom, I was more certain than **ever that I wouldn't be able to physically do it.** I looked up at the rocks and then **looked at my friend and said, "I don't**

**think I can do this."** He replied, **"Just take it one step at a time. Can you put your foot up here and pull yourself up?"** With one person pushing me from behind and two pulling me from in front, I was able to make that step. And it was indeed the very hardest one.

From that moment on, I was on a walking meditation. I was fully present each and every moment. The past and the future did not mean a thing to me during those moments. I found I had to stay focused on each step almost all the way up. Even when I was not concerned about falling, I was watching to be sure I did not bruise my feet, which are not accustomed to rocky ground. I found **that I kept asking myself, "Where is the next right step?"** I also kept having conversations with my friends as they assisted me up the mountain, suggesting where to step, what to hold on to, etc.



At one point during the hike I witnessed one of the other members take a slight fall on the top of one of the more difficult rock formations. I am sure I had fear on my face when I looked at the friend nearest to me. He stated very **emphatically, "That is not going to happen to you!"** I was amazed to find that I actually believed him. The real miracle is that I kept accepting the help. Almost every time someone put their hand out to steady me or give me help getting up the next rock, I took it. I also felt the pure presence of my HP in those moments, as it seemed like there was almost always a tree or a rock to cling to when I needed it. I prayed silently and **at times out loud, both for God's help** and in gratitude for each small success. I felt completely surrounded by and engulfed in my HP as I had not felt since I was a very small child.

At the top of the mountain everyone who had climbed up with me applauded my arrival. I told them perhaps they should not get too excited, as we still had to get me back down the mountain. Then we sat down, to my great relief, to have the meeting. That was the most refreshing meeting I have experienced to date. We were surrounded by clouds which kept brushing over and gently landing on me like a cool mist, which I desperately needed after that long hot climb. Others lamented the fact that I did not get to see the view from the summit. But I know that HP sent me exactly what I needed in the cool touch of those clouds.

I had a very similar experience on my way back down, though that turned out to be much easier than the climb up had been. I was tutored in a sit and slide action which really helped. Also, much to my surprise, when we reached that final large rocky section, it actually was the very last hard patch.

Returning to the meetings at the Villa later, I heard the member who had fallen share about that fall. It sounded to me that if she had taken the helping hand that was offered, she would not have fallen either. Hearing this was yet another precious moment for me, as I have been working for all the 24 years of my recovery to fully learn to accept help. It was in that moment that I realized just how much help I was able to receive on that hike. I guess I am making more progress than I had realized.

Many members expressed amazement that I traveled all the way to New York for the retreat. The fact is this experience, like so many others in my recovery - putting down the nicotine, working the Steps - serving on the NAWS board, sponsoring people I was pretty sure I **didn't even like and a host of others** - is how I receive the gifts that God sends me, which fill up my heart and allow me to continue living in recovery each day.

Thank you, each of you who walked with me up that mountain. You were the voice and the hand of my HP that day. You left me with words and images that will stay with me going forward and will continue to support me

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for years. I could not have done it without you. Also, thank you to all of you who walk each day with me through this life of recovery, sharing through your experiences the things I need to know to keep trudging this road of happy destiny. May all of you experience the love and support I have received and never travel alone.

Lenna M  
Houston, TX



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## Travels with Tracy E...

*This time Tracy caught up with Lorne before his annual trip to Switzerland!*

Q. How old were you when you first used nicotine?

A. 14 or 15. I used all types - dip and pipe for decades and then cigarettes.

Q. When did you begin using on a regular basis?

A. I was a serious nicotine user from the beginning. At 30 years old I quit for 2 or 3 years and also had a couple of other short quits, but they were unsuccessful for any long period.

Q. How much nicotine did you use?

A. It is hard to pinpoint how much I was using with the pipe and dip, but I would say an awful lot. When smoking, it was 2 packs a day. I started using cigs as a way to quit using the pipe and dip. Pipe smoking and dip is even harder to quit than smoking, in my opinion.

Q. Do you remember why you started?

A. Everyone did it back then. You learned to drive a car and learned to smoke and/or use nicotine. It was a rite of passage.

Q. How long was it before you began to think maybe you needed to quit?

A. Age 30.

Q. What were your reasons?

A. I was an active hiker and skier and a **volunteer fitness instructor at the Y...** even in my denial, it seemed unusual to be a smoker.

Q. What type of health problems have you had from nicotine use?

A. From smoking the pipe, my gums receded and produced a hole in my

gums. The way the pipe rested in my mouth, the stem would suck hot air onto my gums and it became very painful.

That is why I switched to cigs. After I quit, my femoral artery became clogged and now I walk with a crutch. These health issues were definitely caused from all the years of using nicotine.

Q. When you tried quitting in the past, how did it make you feel when you **weren't successful?**

A. I felt ashamed of picking up again but also felt resigned that I would always be using. I tried a quit in 2002. This was a very serious attempt. I had a trip planned around the world and the morning I left, I put on the nicotine patch.

**4.5 hours into the trip I didn't smoke** and felt good about it. Then before a 10 hour plane ride, I bummed two cigs.

After that, I bummed cigs the rest of the trip at each stop. When I finally got to my destination, I said screw it and **bought a pack. Willpower alone didn't**

work for me. I was resolved that I was a smoker.

Q. Do you remember how many times you tried to quit?

A. Ten or more times.

Q. Have you ever felt/believed you would never be able to quit?

A. Many **times...I felt resigned that I was** a smoker and tried to tell myself that I liked it.

Q. Did you ever use nicotine replacements or anything else to help you quit?

A. Yes, I tried the patches and **prescription meds. I wish I hadn't. It caused a** lot of anxiety and vivid dreams. I became very serious about quitting nicotine - not just quitting smoking. I had faith that the AA program had helped me (a long time member since the **1960's). And then several friends had** been successful in NicA.

Q. How long have you been off nicotine?

A. Since January 26, 2010 at 10 am.

Q. What was different about that time?

A. Eight years after the 2002 attempt, I went to a NicA meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand. I had been going to AA there for 12 years and really knew these people. I had a strong emotional response when I entered the room because I knew I would quit here, with these people supporting me. I was among others who had quit and I caught their hope.

The difference was I finally believed in the power of the group.

Q. How do you feel different about yourself being a non-smoker?

A. Freedom is first and foremost. Not being a slave to nicotine is wonderful... not wondering if I have my smokes, or finding a place to smoke. And I feel ok **being around other smokers too. I don't** tell others what to do. That never worked for me.

Q. What was the hardest thing for you about quitting nicotine?

A. Getting over that huge wall of fear. I was afraid of learning to live with the **cravings. That fear doesn't leave until** you try 24 hours.

Q. What do you believe helped you the most from the NicA program?

A. People who did it before me gave me hope and faith that I could do it too. A friend told me that when a situation or a feeling came about that made him *think* he wanted to use, it was just a trick to get him to start using again, and he **wasn't going to fall for it. I use that** same thinking all the time.

Q. How often do you attend meetings and where?

A. I use the Unofficial Nicanon board frequently. It is available 24/7 and from any part of the world I am in. I get so much support there. Now I am very active in helping and supporting others via the board.

Q. Have you worked the Steps?

A. Yes, I worked them with friends in the program.

Q. Is working the Steps in NicA different?

A. Yes, very different. For example, in Step 3 it is every 8 to 12 minutes you are turning your life and will over with nicotine addiction.

Q. What advice do you have for newcomers?

A. Come in as a nicotine user. Let the **program get you. Don't use and go to** meetings, or use the board which is like a 24/7 meeting. You will find hundreds of **"quit buddies" and you will find a** story similar to your own.

Q. What else would you like to share?

A. I have not smoked 27,719 cigs. I like focusing on the number of cigs not smoked. I visualize all those cigarettes— **that would be some huge ashtray...LOL**

## 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:

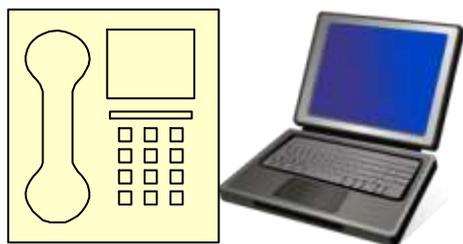
<http://www.voicesofnicotinerecovery.com>

This has voice share meetings 5 times daily.

[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!



## Am I Entirely Ready?

I have known for years now that smoking no longer suited me. It saw me through much healing and growth over many years – or did it? When I **look at the recovery and growth I've had** while still smoking in another 12 Step program, I imagine how much more will come as I put them down at last. I will learn to look into myself and to God to satisfy my needs, and finally get past a life full of fantasy and fear.

**At my sponsor's brilliant direction on Step 6,** I looked at my smoking addiction as a defect of character. I had needed my cigarettes. Certainly they never let me down; they were always there for me. At first they did give me a sense of belonging, independence and control of my life, yet somewhere along my smoking career, they began controlling me. *Now cigarettes seem like another on a list of unhealthy bad choices for getting my needs met.*

Yes, smoking brought me pleasure and satisfaction. It gave me something I needed when I did not know what to do. It helped me deal with stress. I could withdraw from people, places and things; enjoy some peace with them. That is part of the grand hoax for me. *Instead of cigarettes protecting me as I perceived they had in the past, and bringing me joy, they began isolating me and giving me only unhappiness. They became a shame and embarrassment.*

I know other people suffered from my addiction. How ashamed I was I could not defeat this habit when my two closest friends had lost their husbands to lung cancer. One I comforted and supported, sneaking out to smoke as her husband was dying of lung cancer and alcohol-related illnesses. The second loved me and never judged me for my addiction, which only added to my guilt, shame and feelings of weakness and unworthiness.

**I was always ignoring my family's concerns.** My oldest and dearest friend

who introduced me to 12 Step programs was always adamantly pleading for me to stop, much to my chagrin. I understood how deeply she loves and cares for me as she confessed that she feared losing me someday to this addiction.

I am done with being afraid to feel or just scratching the surface; of shutting down my emotions and always acting as if everything was okay. Like finally admitting I was powerless over the alcoholic in my life, I am grateful I decided to admit I am an addict. I suffer from **this "disease of more," as my sponsor calls it,** and I continue hurting myself. Whatever makes me feel good—or not feel at all—I need to have more of, yet I still cannot find the happiness I seek.

I realize now how selfish and self-centered I have been, always looking to other people, places or things to meet my needs and to give me the feeling of worthiness I lacked. I was under the belief that other people were responsible for my happiness and sense of worth, and was constantly in pursuit of someone or something to satisfy my urges or take away the pain. And, when all else failed, there was always my faithful companion, cigarettes.

Like alcohol to the alcoholic, my addiction to cigarettes has impaired my emotional and spiritual growth, as I have **never been able to accept life on life's terms.** I struggled for weeks and weeks early in my program on an assignment from my sponsor for Step 4, when she **asked what would give me the "happily ever after" I so desperately sought. I could have given her the pat recovery-speak answers like "letting go and letting God," "surrender," "seeking His will, not mine" or "accept life on life's terms"** - stuff that might satisfy most sponsors, yet I knew this was not my truth. Then I suddenly realized, and I asked her, **"Could it be walking through this muck?" Yes, that was it!**

Being willing to have God remove my addiction to smoking means to me: **NOT DEPENDING ON A "THING" OR PERSON TO TAKE AWAY MY FEARS AND**

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ANXIETIES – FACING THEM INSTEAD.  
FACING ALL THE HEARTACHE AND PAIN,  
FINALLY AND FULLY!

So yes, I am entirely ready to have God remove the desire to smoke from my life, and He already has! Yet that is not where the story ends.

Although God had already removed the obsession and my desire to smoke earlier than I ever thought possible, I have to remind myself what a miracle it is. I was so miserable the first six months of **smobriety that I couldn't give credit** where credit was due. I know I never, never could have put them down as an act of pure will on my part!

As I heal the broken places, I am experiencing feelings of unworthiness and disconnection from Him, but I know *it is the underlying cause, the facing of my past that will enable me to keep my sanity and smobriety and bring me closer to my Higher Power.*

I finally am beginning to have clearing eyes to see. Where there was once the **"muck of denial," under the fog of** smoke are the painful tears yearning for the eventual liberation and freedom. As I trust the 12 Step process, I realize that *if I continue to think my happily ever after depends on anything other than my relationship with myself and my Higher Power, I might as well be smoking.*

Theresa N  
*Voices of Nicotine Recovery (VONR)*

### Quote Corner

"Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles, it takes away today's peace."

- Anonymous



## *An Unusual Angel...*

**I can't really remember the first time I** smoked a cigarette. My older sister smoked and so I must have thought that **was "cool."** **I remember once when we** were on a family vacation, I stole some cigarettes from her and was hiding outside puffing away when she saw me. I must have been about 8 or 9. She **couldn't tell on me because then she** would be telling on herself – **she wasn't** supposed to smoke either! But she used that against me for a long time. We **haven't ever had an easy relationship,** but it is interesting to realize today what an effect she had on me in terms of wanting to be like her.

Later smoking became something to do with my girlfriends. We would scrape some money together and buy cigarettes from the drugstore, saying our mothers had sent us. Those were **different times! We didn't inhale, but we** would hide in the bushes and smoke one after the other. I can still remember how it tasted and smelled. I loved the smell back then!

In the spring when I was 11, my younger brother died of cancer. He was my best friend, and losing him was terrible. He was the only biological child in our family; my sister, my brother, and I were all adopted. This tragedy tore my fragile family apart, and what I remember was a hollow silence after he died. **I was desperate, couldn't sleep, and had** no one to talk to about it.

That summer, I started wanting to hang **out with some of the "rouger" kids.**

Before that I loved school and sports and playing the piano and French horn. But that summer I changed. I can still remember the day I inhaled cigarette smoke for the first time. I coughed and coughed and the older kids made fun of me. That made me determined to become a **"cool" smoker. I quickly learned** to inhale, and within just a few weeks, I was hooked.

I remember how that first inhale felt,

almost 40 years ago. It was a feeling of rebellious triumph, and also of deep **shame. The shame didn't stop me** though, and I kept on smoking, more and more.

**For me, nicotine was a "gateway drug"** that soon opened the door to other drugs and alcohol. My adolescence was a complete mess, but somehow I **managed to graduate from high school...My adult life is another chapter that I won't** go into.

What is important to share is that by the time I found the strength to quit nicotine, I had been smoking continuously for 39 years, pretty much a pack a day. I had tried a few times to quit, but never made it past a couple of days. It seemed impossible for me to quit, and to live without cigarettes was unthinkable! **I didn't really want to, to be perfectly** honest, but I was beginning to have problems breathing. I knew that if I wanted to move into the later years of my life and live relatively decently, I had to make a decision.

The 12 Steps had already saved my life once. I figured they might be able to do so again, though I was not sure! It really seemed impossible for me to quit.

But – I did, and my first day without cigarettes or nicotine was April 23, 2012. I went completely cold turkey.

A very strange thing happened. A few weeks after I quit, a woman I know in another 12 Step program asked me to sponsor her. It seemed a bit odd to me, because she has more time in that program than me, but she insisted that I **"had what she wanted."** **I said yes, and** within a few weeks, her mother who had smoked for most of her life, was diagnosed with lung cancer.

It ended up that for the next 3 months, while her mother was dying, and while I was going through the worst part of my **withdrawals, I had a "task" to be there** for this other woman, and help her through this difficult loss.

I now realize what an incredible gift this was. Every time I was tempted to fall back and smoke - and there were many rough days of extreme emotions, deep grief and rage - this friend/sponsee would be there, telling me about what it was like to help her mother face the end of life because of lung cancer. I had the feeling I was being shown what my other option was. It helped me to choose to just wait, and get through the next moment, the next hour, the next day, by reaching out to someone in the program.

I also felt I was being shown what **"service" really is: being there for others** means that we are essentially being there for ourselves! It means a kind of sharing that helps us reach deeper and deeper levels of compassion, understanding, health and love, as we learn how connected we all truly are.

**My sponsee's mother died, quite young,** at the end of September. My heart was, and still is, deeply touched by this odd connection: by how this woman helped me during the hardest months of my withdrawals, even though it was not in the cards for her to get free from smoking. **She was certainly not a "bad" person because she couldn't stop** - she had a good life, and was deeply loved by her husband, children and grandchildren. **But I can't help but think that although** there is no judgment towards her, they all would have liked to have her around a bit longer. For me, she will always be my **"unusual angel," a form of help that I couldn't have imagined on my own!**

As I write this, it is 9 months since my last cigarette. I must admit I am happy, but also a bit shocked! I never thought I could make it this far, and it has taken awhile for me to feel somewhat **"normal" again. I have made "sobriety" my absolute priority,** and my Higher Power has seen me through, making sure I have the resources I need to survive while I recover.

Being connected to the program, working the 12 Steps, having a sponsor, and

**reading others' thoughts online has** made all the difference. I could not have come this far alone, and I plan on sticking around so I continue getting better, one day at a time.

I send best wishes to all those who are trudging this path, no matter where you are in your recovery. It is such a gift to get free of this powerful addiction - and it is a gift to share it with all of you!

Martha B.  
Unofficial NicAnon



## *Keep Showing Up Means "I Never Know..."*

**At the time of this writing, I'm celebrating 30 days being nicotine-free.**

After smoking for 28 years with only two mini-quits during that time, 30 days is a **huge milestone. It wasn't easy, but it's doable.** One of the main reasons why I have been able to be nicotine-free has been my ability to attend as many meetings as possible. I do this for several reasons. **One, it gets me "out of my head."** My focus is on the shares and celebrations within the meeting and not on my cravings. Service work within the meetings has also been key because greeting people or doing a reading takes my mind off cravings. It puts my focus on recovery rather than a relapse.

But probably the biggest reason why I attend as many meetings as possible is **the "You Never Know" factor.**

I never know when I might hear something that'll change my life forever. I never know if what I say might change someone else's life forever. I never **know who I'm going to see. I never know who I'm going to meet. I never know what I'm going to share.**

**It's really the "You Never Know" that** makes for a meeting full of surprises and keeps me on my toes. It takes my focus away from my past life as a

smoker and into my new one as a non-smoker. **With smoking, I know what's going to happen—** fatigue, smelling bad, costly expenses. The list goes on and on. But without smoking, who knows? **I haven't experienced life as a non-smoker in so long that I really don't** know what to expect. These surprises keep me coming back. Breathing easier, having more money, being approachable **are just some of the "surprises"** that I have gained by attending meetings.

If I were to suggest anything to anyone attempting to quit nicotine, be it their first time or their fiftieth, I would say attend as many meetings as possible. **Because you never know...**

Ray S.  
VONR

## *Online Post*

There is no magic day when thinking about a cigarette suddenly stops, as far as I know. It is a journey, as far as I can tell. I do believe there will come a time that the only reminder that I smoked is when I go to a meeting; it will also be a lucid reminder that I am still an addict. Both are crucial to my experience on the journey to not wanting a cigarette and not thinking about one. I have already experienced both.

We hear a lot about replacing those cravings and 'wantings.' We hear about the 'void' that quitting leaves behind. We talk about how smokers will be quit for years, start again, and then seek out a recovery group...again.

I, myself, tried to stray from the process of recovery and I found that I started wiggling out and all I could think about was wanting to smoke. It was insane for a short spell there. Then, like magic or by miracle, I embraced the latter - I started to be more mindful of my program. Of course, for me this is working the 12 Steps. It is being a part of a group that gets my addiction and the addict.

*continued next page*

It is giving back and helping other addicts to and through recovery.

Yes, I tried to grin and bear it on my own for a short spell, sure did. It was not at all what I expected. Thought I had my addiction and my life all figured out as a non-smoker. But no. Ego and pride almost ruined my quit. And then I finally thought to myself, what is so bad about going to meetings? Nothing. What is so bad about helping fellow addicts in recovery? Absolutely nothing! Both are awesome!

So I was done trying to grin and bear it. I made a commitment to the treatment of my disease to smile and do it. There were huge leaps and bounds of recovery after that, let me tell you. I'm back to not thinking about cigarettes unless I have a trigger that I have not encountered before, or something a little too overwhelming hits me. I'm back to not wanting or craving a cigarette for the same reasons. But the biggest part of sticking to the treatment of my disease with this 12 Step recovery program is that I don't feel that 'emptiness' either.

I have a disease. If we have a disease, then we learn how to treat it the best way possible if we are going to live long, happy, and productive lives. If I had another disease, I could not stop taking medication, or stop my regular check-ups with a doctor and expect that things **would improve. It's more likely they would decline** over time. I look at 'my program' as the treatment for my disease. I can't come and go, float in and out of 'my program,' my treatment, and expect that life will not be a roller coaster. I look at my recovery now and I'm so grateful for it. I am not willing to walk away from it again, knowing what I know now. And, I'm sure my doctor is pretty happy about that too - the HP himself!

I have moments when I want a cigarette, but because of 'my program' the thought is quickly replaced with "no way Jose." I have times when I just crave one for some reason, but because of

'my program,' I don't want to get in my car and go buy the lie. I go to a meeting, I help another addict, I work a Step, I pray, and crazy as it sounds, I discover the trigger of that craving somewhere along the way. That gives me more spiritual knowledge for the next one, if it comes along.

It is a journey, as far as I can tell. Some grin and bear it, others smile and do it. I'm smiling for sure.

Carole  
VONR



## Smokeless Hope Fiend...

Today is my 8 year anniversary of being nicotine-free. I really do not believe that I would have been able to stop smoking and stay stopped without VONR. Thank you all so much. When I came in here, I was so scared - scared that I would never be able to stop, and also terrified of what life would be like without smoking. I had tried to stop so many times. Many quits lasting for an hour, some for a day, once for a month - but I always smoked again. Until this time.

I am not someone who came into Nicotine Anonymous and stopped smoking right away. I was in and out of NicA for about a year and half before I was able to stop. The groups online saved my life and my sanity.

The first thing that surprised me was how accepting you all were of me - even when I relapsed time after time. I was sure you would get fed up with me, give up on me...but you never did.

I had been so full of self-hatred and shame around my smoking and my failed attempts to stop, so the love and acceptance I felt in here was so healing. I was never criticized or shamed or rejected and I had been doing all of those things to myself for so long.

One of the reasons that I am not fond of telling my story is that I really cannot say what was different this time from all the other times I tried. I did not have some brilliant plan and I did not have new "tools." I had not found some painless way to stop using nicotine. I wish there was some secret handshake I could share to make the process easier for those trying to stop right now.

There were things that were different inside me. The changes were born out of my own desperation rather than any virtue. My increasing realization of just how powerless I was over my nicotine use combined with the encouragement gained through listening to the experience of others who had been able to let go of nicotine helped me to let go - to let go of my ideas of how to stop, what would happen to me if I stopped and what nicotine "did for me."

For me, getting willing to feel uncomfortable, to go a little crazy and let go of the idea of a painless recovery was essential. It is doable and the pain is temporary. After trying to stop so many times, and not being able to stop gave me a deep sense of gratitude - all the way to my core - for each day of not having to suck nicotine into my body.

Thank you all for being here for me, encouraging me but sharing your own experiences as hard core nicotine addicts and your journey out of that prison. Nicotine Anonymous and VONR truly saved my life. Words cannot express how much thankful I am to all of you.

**Let's all go for another day** - whether it be day 1 or day 10,000 - we are all nicotine addicts in recovery helping one another.

Thank you, Nicotine Anonymous. Thank you VONR.

Susan S

Former hopeless smoke fiend, now smokeless hope fiend



## Write a Meditation for a Future Nicotine Anonymous Meditation Book!

Please send your 100-200 word meditation for consideration in an email or Word file to:

[DailyMeditations@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:DailyMeditations@nicotine-anonymous.org)

Subject line 'NicA Meditation'

or

Attn: Daily Meditations Coordinator

Nicotine Anonymous WSO

6333 E. Mockingbird #147-817

Dallas, TX 75214

Please include your telephone number, email and snail mail address — to be used only in case we have questions. (All contact info and authorship will be kept confidential in accordance with the 11<sup>th</sup> Tradition.)

If you have a quote to match your meditation, please send it along, but it is not necessary.

We will also accept general submissions on any topic related to your freedom and recovery from nicotine and how NicA has helped you get there.

*Please note:*

- Contributors waive their right to financial compensation and grant all rights to Nicotine Anonymous.
- Meditations submitted may be edited as necessary for grammar and content.

Thank you for your service!

We appreciate your contributions!

# Connections



Nicotine Anonymous invites you to connect with our

## Penpal Program

Who: Someone like you, who is interested in service work.

What: These are examples of our requests: "I am a suffering nicotine addict and I am addicted to chewing tobacco. I would appreciate any help I can get." Another might be from a person wanting to help others: "I have been smober for a year, after smoking for 42 years, and the one day at a time program worked for me." Or, "I am having a hard time staying quit, and I also have COPD." They provide their e-mail address and a brief blurb about their situation.

When: As soon as possible, and whenever you can provide some support. The e-mails and letters are sent out to connect with them as soon as members request to join. This is about once a week.

Where: E-mails are sent to

PenPal Coordinator Paper [PenPalCoordinatorPaper@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:PenPalCoordinatorPaper@nicotine-anonymous.org)

Coordinates and hooks up pen pals who want to communicate via snail mail.

PenPal Coordinator Email [PenPalCoordinatorEmail@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:PenPalCoordinatorEmail@nicotine-anonymous.org)

Coordinates and hooks up pen pals who want to communicate via email.



Why: Not everyone has access to meetings. This is a great way to connect with other addicts from around the world.



How: Contact either email address above to begin connecting.

# BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

*Lenna M – August 12, 1989*

*Chris H – April 20, 1992*

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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)

*Please make copies  
of this announcement  
to share with your  
group!*

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## **Nicotine Anonymous**

### **2014 World Services Conference XXIX**

***Make your plans  
today!***



***Recovery...  
Service...  
Fellowship...  
Fun!***

**Dates: April 25 - 27, 2014**

**Location: Ocean City, New Jersey**

***Registration flyer available at [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)***

NAWSO  
Profit & Loss YTD Comparison  
January through September 2013

	<u>Jan - Sept</u> <b>'13</b>	<u>Jan - Sept</u> <b>'12</b>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
49900 Non Profit Income	-10.50	1,271.51
4000 · Donations	15,688.12	4,231.88
4100 · Literature Sales	29,403.34	26,907.72
4290 · Shipping & Handling	4,151.93	3,783.01
4298 · upcoming Conference Profit (Loss)	-810.95	-
4299 · previous Conference Profit (Loss)	<u>-2,261.92</u>	<u>-1,865.26</u>
Total Income	46,160.02	34,328.86
 Cost of Goods Sold		
5000 · COGS	<u>12,304.88</u>	<u>13,844.09</u>
5102 Inventory + Shrinkage	0	-1,234.28
Total COGS	12,304.88	12,609.81
Gross Profit	33,855.14	21,719.05
 Expense		
6000 · Office Expense	16,015.33	16,055.58
6600 · WSO Expense	7,167.99	4,490.69
6900 Other Operating Expense	<u>17.34</u>	<u>42.73</u>
Total Expense	<u>23,200.66</u>	<u>20,589.00</u>
Net Operating Income	10,654.48	1,130.05
 Other Income/Expense		
8000 · Interest Income	.91	.29
Total Other Income	<u>.91</u>	<u>.29</u>
8030 · Interest Expense	142.46	0
Total Other Expense	142.46	0
Net Other Income	<u>-141.55</u>	<u>.29</u>
Net Income	<u><u>10,512.93</u></u>	<u><u>1,130.34</u></u>

# ♥ My Gift of Gratitude ♥

## **NICOTINE ANONYMOUS MEMBER GRATITUDE PROGRAM**

Nicotine Anonymous has always been about helping addicts and saving lives. But it has come to the point where the heart of our organization needs our help. Nicotine Anonymous World Services needs our help to meet its monthly operating expenses. In addition, our contributions would help reach even more addicts through outreach and distribution of NicA literature.

### **HOW WORLD SERVICES SERVES THE NICOTINE ADDICT**

- ♥ Maintains the World-wide meeting list
- ♥ Prints and distributes literature
- ♥ Distributes free Meeting Starter Kits
- ♥ Maintains the web site
- ♥ Publishes our quarterly newsletter, Seven Minutes
- ♥ Supports the conducting of the necessary business of the Fellowship at quarterly Board meetings, three of which are conducted via web-conference to conserve our resources

### **CONSIDER GIVING BACK TO THE ORGANIZATION THAT HELPED YOU QUIT TOBACCO**

Your Gift of Gratitude will help those nicotine addicts who are still suffering. It is another way you can work the steps by giving back; and allows World Services to continue functioning through the Seventh Tradition.

### **GET A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO *SEVEN MINUTES* NEWSLETTER!**

You will receive the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping an organization that has helped thousands of people including you! And if you give the gift of \$10 a month you will receive a complimentary subscription to *Seven Minutes*.

### **BUT I CAN'T AFFORD IT!**

Yes, times are tough. That's why NAWS needs your help. Here are some ways you can give back:

- ♥ Every week, put the cost of one pack of cigarettes in a container
- ♥ Set aside each day's loose change and save in a gratitude jar
- ♥ On your anniversary, send \$10 for each year of freedom (or as much as you can spare!)

### **WAYS TO DONATE**

- ♥ Donate on the website at the online store: (nicotine-anonymous.org)
- ♥ Send your donation directly to World Services via paper check
- ♥ Set up online monthly bill pay at your bank. (You determine the amount and date of payment. Follow your bank's instructions for setting up recurring payments to payees with no account number.)
- ♥ Set up recurring monthly payment through your PayPal account to shipping@nicotine-anonymous.org
- ♥ All gifts are tax deductible as 501(c)3 donations.



**Current status**  
As of November 2013:  
43 monthly donors

**Gift of Gratitude  
Program Goal:**  
200 monthly donors

# Service is the Key

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



## TELEPHONE SERVANTS—ESPECIALLY NEEDED!

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

## TELEPHONE SPONSORS

Share your experience, strength and hope by being a telephone sponsor.



## TRANSLATORS

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

## IN-REACH COORDINATOR

Responsible for contacting those members on the electronic mailing list with newsletters and other e-mail blasts.



## WEBSERVANT

The webservant oversees the functioning of the NicA web site. He/she is responsible for keeping the web site up-to-date with approved flyers and necessary information.

To volunteer or get more 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)

## Chairperson's Report

*continued from page 1...*

The 2014 WSC needs you to attend and pitch in. Join us in Ocean City, NJ and roll up your sleeves. Many of you have given so much time and effort; this will be an opportunity to give even more. (Yes, good work is rewarded with more work.) Please click here: [NicAWSC2014](#) or go to our website at [nicotine-anonymous.org](#) and click on the World Services Conference flyer in the "What's New!" menu. Delegate information is on the second page. Register for the conference as soon as you can. Size really does matter, and we need a big turnout.

A very big thank you goes out to all 42 members who have contributed regular or automated donations through My Gift of Gratitude. However, this is still far short of the 200 members we need to send in \$10 or more per month to sustain our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition prevents outside contributions, so it's up to us as members. To learn how to set up your tax deductible 501(c)3 donation, click here: [My Gift of Gratitude](#) or access the flyer link on the home page of our website.

When I was desperately in the throes of my active addiction to nicotine, there were long-time members holding a welcoming door open for me and willing to give me what they had gained – freely and without question. They never criticized me for smoking; they made me feel good for attending and trying. It is because of them that I have recovery. I believe it is because of them that I am alive. Let us all make sure that those doors, websites and phone lines are always kept open. It is entirely up to us as members. With our respective Higher Powers, we are a special force, and what we do really does matter.

In Service,  
Michael B  
WSO Chair



### Poem from a Newcomer...

Here I am, and 40 now  
I did not expect to make it  
Dad is breathing like Darth Vader  
I don't think he can shake it  
He began smoking at nine  
I started at thirteen  
Soon I will be just like him  
with teeth of brownish green  
with a cough that never ends  
my white hair turning tan  
and a stench inside my house  
inside my porch  
and in my van  
which will drive away my kids  
and prevent holiday friends  
from coming  
and wind up with an oxygen tank  
always heavy  
always humming  
I will be just like him  
clutching my chest each time  
I smoke  
I hope to quit very soon  
not be like that foolish bloke

- Anonymous

### Upcoming NicA Event:

#### Winter Potluck



February 22, 2014  
San Rafael, California

Flyer located  
on the NicA website  
[www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)

Available  
in Kindle  
version on  
Amazon.com:

*Nicotine Anonymous:  
The Book - \$7.99*  
*Our Path to Freedom -  
\$4.50*  
*A Year of Miracles -  
\$9.99*  
*90 Days, 90 Ways -  
\$4.50*



### Holiday Outreach Idea:

*Have you considered doing an outreach activity during the holidays? For many of us who used nicotine, the holidays were something to endure rather than enjoy... It's that time of year where we meet with family, friends, and others. We no longer smoke or chew, but others do. We understand, more than anyone else, how they feel. Take some time out to tell them about Nicotine Anonymous. Pass on a few pamphlets or a small flyer for meetings in your area. You never know who you may touch during the holiday season!*

*Seven Minutes*

**NAWSO**

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

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**Publication Dates and  
Deadlines for  
Seven Minutes Submissions:**

<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:*

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**NAME** **PHONE (WITH AREA CODE)**

---

**ADDRESS**

---

**CITY** **STATE** **ZIP CODE**

*My old address was:*

---

**ADDRESS** **STATE** **ZIP CODE**