

The Nicotine Anonymous Quarterly

# SEVEN



# Minutes

A Forum for Nicotine Users Who Don't Use

Volume XXIII

September 2013

Number 3

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c/o NAWSO  
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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## ***Chairperson's Report...***

Thank you for electing me to the World Services Chair. I have asked my Higher Power for help to serve you with competence and humility, just as our previous Chairs have. NicA is the fellowship that gave me back my life, my relationship with my Higher Power, and restored me to rationality, and it is faced with some pressing needs.

My first 3 months have been spent in **learning curve, and at 65 I don't travel** that curve as quickly as I did a few years ago. Truthfully, it's not always fun or easy. What keeps me going? For one thing, I have absolute faith that everyone involved with the World Services Board has a deep love and gratitude for NicA. I truly believe in all who work on the board, as committee chairs, as members and as coordinators of the many aspects of our fellowship. Another motivator for me is my undying gratitude for everyone who volunteers at a grass-roots NicA group meeting as chair, secretary or treasurer or to set out literature or candy or in any way to keep the doors open for the still-suffering nicotine addict. It is because of folks like you that I received the help I desperately needed and am able to breathe without smoke or cravings for the past 22½ years.

Please understand that during the next **7 months and with my Higher Power's** guidance, I will make decisions that are within my office as Chair to the best of

my ability, and in the interest of the fellowship. Members may not always like what I decide to do. For people such as you who voice opposition and concern while rolling up your sleeves and devoting time and effort, I will cooperate, listen, compromise, learn from you, and give you every courtesy. To people who **complain and do nothing to help, I'll** smile and say thank you. I believe that the hands that help are holier than the lips that pray and mightier than any angry complaint. Everyone has an opportunity to dig in - to attend at least one conference, work from home or run for an office and be a part of the cure. If **someone doesn't like a decision, please** get in and get dirty. Even if we disagree, we will love you for it. If you can help from home, let us know. If you can, attend a World Services Conference and speak constructively over the microphone or in workshops. In that way, you will be heard.

### Report from August 4, 2013

In my learning curve I have made some errors. Three in particular will hopefully **be corrected by my following NicA's Policies & Procedures**, the 12 Traditions and good common sense. In this I ask your help. One correction is that only NicA-approved literature and works in process will be read over a microphone at official functions like the Conference. Another is that, other than brief replies about meeting locations and incidental business, I will only approve communications that conform to the 12 Traditions or have been passed by the Traditions

*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.
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.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
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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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## Twelve Steps to a Miracle...

I started smoking when I was 17 years old. Smoking was not allowed in my house, so I had to "sneak" smokes. In my late 20's I started quitting. First, I made it 9 months, then 3 months, then shorter and shorter periods until I was lucky if I made it 3 hours. For years I continued to quit and re-start. Finally I just gave up, looked up, smiled and said out loud, "God, it's going to take a miracle." Then I totally wiped quitting from my mind.

A short time later, I was in the garage trying to put a motorcycle on its center stand, and I pulled something in my neck. The next morning I was messed up. When I would start to light up, I would cough, which would blow up my brain and leave me nauseous. I was working in the oilfield that day, attempting to smoke while driving up to a tank battery. My head sparked again and I was once again nauseous. I threw 3/4 of a cigarette out the window. As I got closer to the tank battery, I saw my fellow crew members working there, and without thinking, walked up to one who I knew smoked and handed him my pack. That was the last time I smoked for 7 years. That was my first miracle.

Had I known of Nicotine Anonymous back then, I probably would have stayed quit. But without a steady dose of remembering the horrors of nicotine addiction, I slipped into complacency and took that first miracle for granted. One night, while sitting out gazing at stars with my fiancé and a friend, watching them light up, I felt left out. I asked for a cigarette, thinking one wouldn't kill me. That started 13 years of trying to quit again - 13 years of hell. I tried everything - hypnosis, injections into my nose, swearing off on special days only to find myself pilfering butts out of public ashtrays. I became an expert butt bandit, knowing the most plentiful ashtrays in a 20-mile radius. I was tor-

mented, miserable, kicking myself for wasting that miracle so carelessly.

My bottom came in 2004. I had adopted a new system; I would pray the rosary every time I smoked. Early in the game, when I was coming down from over a pack a day, I smoked more than I could pray a rosary for, so I chalked them up. I built up quite a debt of rosary prayers, but I was down to one or two a day. My patience was wearing very thin though, since I had **struggled for months to resist the "call" to smoke every few minutes. I hadn't** bought cigarettes in quite awhile, only sneaking butts from public ashtrays, so I decided that a really short butt would **n't require a rosary prayer. I knew I** was slipping from the latest program, and I was secretly ashamed. I was living a life of torment until one summer day when I decided to take a trip with some friends who were moving. I would drive one of their moving trucks. It took only one stretch of highway to **convince myself that I shouldn't quit smoking altogether because I couldn't be** having nicotine fits while with my **friends. I would "have to" buy a pack** when our little caravan stopped since I **couldn't pull into every town along the** way and go in search of butts. Well, of course I was smoking at every "call" after that for the duration of the trip and several days afterward.

I began weaning myself off of the cigarettes again, and I was in agony. I could do very little but watch the clock and pace the floors, anxiously awaiting the time for my next cigarette. I **admitted to myself that I couldn't any** more quit smoking than my husband could - I was powerless. I came to a point of seriously thinking of giving up the notion of quitting altogether, but I **knew in my heart I couldn't live with** smoking. It was utter torture.

At that time I was about six months into the 12 Steps for another addiction, which was working wonderfully. I had no problem believing that a Higher Power could restore me to sanity - after

Heard it at a meeting...

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_  
and I am the victim of many  
things that never happened...



all, I had been miraculously "cured" of smoking several years before that, and I was being miraculously "cured" of my other addiction even then. But I had blown my first miracle. I told myself it would be too much to ask for another.

Then a very sane thought came clearly into my mind, bringing immediate peace with it. I thought, "Wait a minute; we're talking Higher Power here. Higher Power is surely capable of unlimited miracles. I'm powerless, and Higher Power can and surely will grant me another miracle." I looked Him straight in the eye and humbly asked Him to relieve me of my desire to smoke, even venturing to tell Him I needed it soon - I was so miserable. I said, "Please don't let it be death or a disease which would land me in the hospital where I couldn't smoke, suffering for the rest of my life." Instantly I was glowing with tranquility, knowing that He would grant my request. That wonderful feeling was almost shattered when reality started slipping back and I starting wondering what I should do next, but the answer came instantly: I needed to just do what I had been doing - trying to go 24 hours between cigarettes and chalking up another rosary prayer after I smoked - until more answers came.

I tried to go to a NicA meeting the next day, but the time had changed from what was posted on the website, so I had to wait another week. During that time I was in a public place and I happened to notice what looked like a **good butt. I didn't want to smoke it,** but I decided to take it home and keep it in my garage, just in case I might

*continued next page*

want to smoke.

The next Saturday I made it to the **Nicotine Anonymous meeting**. **I don't think anyone believed me when I told them I hadn't smoked in a week. I didn't really feel free with that butt in my garage, so I decided to smoke it when I got home. I didn't really want it, but I wasn't afraid of getting hooked; I knew I was done.** After all, I had months of rosary prayers to occupy my mind.

When I lit that half-inch butt filled with dried, loose tobacco, it turned into a tiny sparkler and burnt my lip. I was really mad at smoking then! I threw that butt down while screaming a curse, and stomped it into oblivion. That was the last time I attempted to smoke. I had developed an aversion to smoking which is still with me - nothing short of a miracle, my second miracle. That was September 11, 2004.

Sherry B  
Laughlin, NV

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## Travels with Tracy E...

For this issue Tracy interviews Sam who shares his journey with nicotine.

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

A. I was 18 years old.

Q. Do you remember what was going on in your life at that time?

A. I remember feeling pressured to smoke. I was a patient in a state-run mental hospital. The only place the patients hung out during the day was in the smoking lounge. One afternoon my roommate handed me a cigarette across the table. I lit it and smoked it like a pro. I had tried to smoke when I was 15 years old but I did not know how and couldn't keep the cigarette lit. But after hanging out with the patients who smoked, I watched and learned.

Q. Did you get in trouble?

A. No, smoking was permitted and the staff bought me my first carton after I gave them some money.

Q. Do you remember anything else from that time?

A. I remember thinking, "Okay, I'm going to start smoking but I will quit before it does me any real damage." I thought it would be as easy to quit smoking as it was to start. I also knew how damaging smoking was to a person's health. There were a lot of efforts to educate students about the dangers of smoking while I was in high school.

Q. Did you have any negative consequences from smoking?

A. I remember one evening while I was still in the mental hospital, I was smoking right up to the last minute before the smoking lounge closed for the evening. One of the staff told me to put my cigarette out and leave immediately. I just kept on smoking because I hadn't finished my cigarette. She warned me several times, then raised her voice. I was put on unit restriction as punishment.

Q. How did you get your nicotine?

A. For most of my smoking career I had help buying nicotine. I lived on a social security disability check. For the first half of the month I bought my own nicotine. By the middle of the month I was usually out of money so I would go get money from my parents to buy nicotine.

Towards the end of my smoking career I was just stealing my parent's cigarettes and lighters. After joining NicA, I realized that nothing would stop me from getting my hands on nicotine - not any laws or standards of human decency.

Q. Did you smoke with anyone?

A. I usually smoked with other smokers if I could because there is safety in numbers. I smoked anywhere and everywhere. I smoked in smoke-free zones. I smoked around babies. I lit up a cigarette in my friend's new car after she asked me not to. I didn't care and I had

no conscience about smoking. I had no regard for other's well-being.

Q. Why did you continue to smoke?

A. I continued because I could not stop. I tried to quit about 6 months after I started. After that first quit attempt I learned I did not have the power to not smoke. I went back to smoking after 2 and a half weeks.

Q. When do you think you began to smoke on a regular basis?

A. At 18 I was a regular pack a day smoker. I took right to it. Smoking, dipping and snuff were 3 legal ways to drug myself and I was old enough to buy it. It was a real party.

Q. Looking back, do you think nicotine helped you escape your feelings?

A. Nicotine definitely helped me escape my feelings. I was scared. I had dropped out of high school. I had become disabled but was not yet on social security disability. I was 18 and was being treated as an adult but I didn't have a clue about being an adult. Smoking made me a man. I could now handle adult situations because I could smoke. As a smoker I could make tough decisions and deal with the consequences. Smoking made me independent which is exactly what I needed to be. I had no support system. Smoking was my support system.

Q. How did it affect your feelings?

A. Nicotine numbed out a lot of my fear. A few months after I started smoking, I **moved out of my parents' house. I moved into a one bedroom apartment and lived by myself. I didn't have any pets. I had never lived alone. I was scared. At night, my apartment was quiet. I did not keep in close contact with friends I'd had growing up. I was lonely and smoking became my trusted friend. Smoking never let me down.**

Q. How long was it before you thought maybe you needed to quit? What were your reasons?

A. I first tried to quite about 6 months

after I started. I had gained weight after I started smoking. I had played sports in high school but my new fun activity was to sit and smoke. I became sedentary. So I tried to quit smoking and went on a diet at the same time. I lasted 2½ weeks before I smoked and went off the diet. But that became my New Year's resolution every year for many years - to quit smoking and lose weight.

Q. Were people pressuring you to quit?

A. My doctor never pressured me to quit. Everyone in my immediate family smoked through everything. Smoking at holiday get-togethers was a family tradition as much as turkey. My father used to say, "Let's go weed off." So we'd all go stand outside on my Grandma's front porch at Christmas and smoke. I did feel pressure in later years when people here started pushing to outlaw smoking in public places. That really scared me that people were so against me as a smoker. I couldn't escape that pressure and finally I agreed with them. My second-hand smoke was as bad as they said it was.

Q. Did you smoke around people with health problems, babies or animals? How did that make you feel?

A. I smoked with a friend who was on oxygen because she had one lung and still smoked. I blew smoke in a baby's face once purposely trying to addict it to nicotine. I lived with a girlfriend once and we had a cat. The cat was always trying to escape the apartment but I never gave it much thought. Looking back now, I see how I was wrong to subject a helpless baby and animals to my smoke. The best amends I can make is to stay in recovery and not subject any more innocent beings to my smoke.

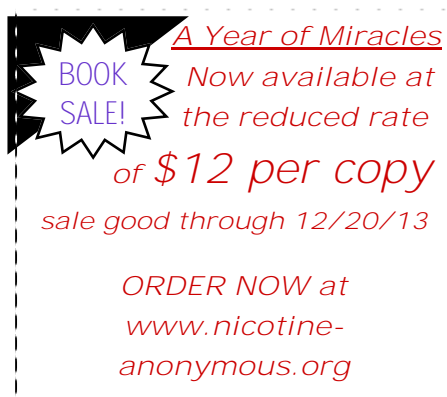
Q. Did you ever start a fire?

A. I had close calls and frantic moments. My car was usually a mess of papers and discarded fast food wrappers. I would be driving and smoking and would toss my cigarette out the window when I was done. Sometimes it would fly back in the rear window. I would pull over and frantically search through the stuff in the back seat to find the lit cigarette. In later years I started getting up in the night to

smoke. I would sit down at my desk, light a cigarette and put it between my fingers. Then I would doze off. I would awaken a few minutes later when the cigarette started burning me. I burned a hole in the front of my nice new winter coat. I burned a hole in the fabric of my mother's new shiny car. I used to burn things on purpose to amuse myself. Watching things burn became a dangerous form of fun. I'm grateful not to burn anything today.

Q. Did you spend money on nicotine when it needed to go to other living expenses such as food?

A. Definitely. After God showed me that nothing would stop me from getting my hands on nicotine, I started buying it before food to make sure I didn't run out. One cold February evening, I enjoyed a cigarette and a glass of ice water for dinner. I had no food but I had nicotine. Food and other financial responsibilities were way down on my list of priorities...



**BOOK SALE!** *A Year of Miracles*  
Now available at  
the reduced rate  
of \$12 per copy  
sale good through 12/20/13  
ORDER NOW at  
[www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)

### *What Self-Supporting Really Means...*

When I was new in recovery, I was part of a Twelve Step group focused on working through each of the Twelve Steps over the course of six months, and since we were associated with another meeting in the same fellowship, our rent was free. Like our regular meetings, we also passed the basket, and after a few months, collected a nice sum of money. With most of us new and relatively unin-

formed on our Twelve Traditions, as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous, we began to discuss what to do with the money, especially since our group would end in a few months. Should we buy literature for our home group, or buy food for a barbecue to promote our fellowship? We later voted to use the money to offset our personal expenses to celebrate all our hard work on the Steps. **As a group, we signed up for a "booze cruise," dinner and dance on the bay in San Diego, CA.**

A few years later, I began to learn about **the Tradition of "self-support",** and what it means to my recovery, my home group, and the fellowship as a whole. As a member of a group, or as a group, we are to be self-supporting, and decline contributions from outside the group. By being self-supporting, the group is free to decide its own business without outside influences or obligations.

Thankfully, this same principle is practiced in my Nicotine Anonymous group as well, and I am so grateful that we understand it that way. When the group started four years ago, we struggled to make our expenses, and even had to move due to low attendance. We always passed the basket, and many would put in roughly the cost of a pack of cigarettes just to help with expenses. It took over a year for the group to achieve **what we call "self-supporting,"** where not only our group expenses were paid, but we also helped support the service areas of Nicotine Anonymous. We even decided to curb some expenses, so our donations to service areas of NicA could help even further. By becoming self-supporting, we finally became connected to Nicotine Anonymous as a whole!

This connection to our fellowship also helps our group realize another dimension of our primary purpose as well. We **"carry the message" within our groups,** Intergroups, and World Service Office. Within our own group we readily see what those expenses are. But we also have to remember our World Services Office and Intergroups also have

expenses, aligned with our primary purpose. It is through their services, along with our own outreach activities, that newcomers hear about us, and finally **come to their first meeting. That's what we're all about, no more, no less!**

As I experience the miracle of freedom from nicotine, I realize I will never be **able to pay back what I've been given in this program.** But it sure helps to be part of it!

Jeff M  
Joshua Tree, CA

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## Gratitude in Action...

I have learned over the years to show gratitude by my actions. When I came to NicA I was a mess beyond description. Even though I fought tooth and nail the first few days when I arrived, I finally began to listen. I had no choice, either I listen and do what is suggested or I would die on the spot. One of the greatest things I did was step out and do some service work. That truly got me out of myself and I felt important to myself. It felt good to do something for someone else rather than be the taker all the time.

I slightly overdid in my first year but it kept me smober. I was a Treasurer of two meetings, Secretary for two meetings and I started a meeting. **After 6 months it failed, but I didn't smoke and that was the main thing.** It felt good to take a member to a meeting 3-4 times a week as well. When I got my 1 year chip, I joined my intergroup of Southern California. To this day I am a member of the intergroup. I became chair of the retreat committee for 2 years and started the now-annual all day Marathon Meeting we have each October. I was on this committee for 3 years. In 2003 I was on the planning committee for the Santa Monica Conference. I think it was there I took over the position of *Seven Minutes* publisher and had that position for several years.

I did a one year stint of telephone outreach and **found that wasn't my thing.** I am now a web email servant for Monday nights and have been doing that for years. I have been a sponsor through this avenue and my sponsee is still smober for over 6 years. **It's very satisfying to know I had a part in someone's life.**

This has happened many times either through email, the penpal program or at face to face, online, or telephone meetings. Being a web mail servant has been satisfying as I have kept contact with some of the people who sent emails asking questions. There have been times I turn them on to phone meetings or our online meetings at VONR (Voices of Nicotine Recovery). I met one member **who was my roommate at this year's conference in Long Beach.**

Being a servant of Nicotine Anonymous has made me practice the 12 Steps and apply them in my life. I often say I do not want to be called the Dead Sea as the Dead Sea always takes and never gives. That used to be my life. During my first 5-6 years of smobriety, I went to an average of 5 face-to-face meetings a week. Then I came aboard to VONR and that suited me just fine. Night driving was becoming an issue and it was hard to afford the gas to drive all over.

I became involved with the VONR online meetings and started chairing a lot of meetings. I have been on a couple of committees and sponsored a lot of members there. At first it was awkward **as you couldn't see anyone, but you could talk to them on microphone and that was neat.** Over the years I have met conservatively 30 people face to face who are members through VONR. That is a great experience which has opened up a whole new horizon of fellowship. In the beginning VONR was looked down on, but now it is the wave of the future. We currently have 4 members on the NAWS board who are part of the online group. That is amazing, I must say.

In 2010 I became a member of the board as Treasurer and that has been

some experience. My first year tested my character as I was forced into some **confrontations I didn't like, but I did it in good fashion and it worked out ok.** I could speak up for myself many times **and that felt good. I wasn't always right but that's not the point. I had the courage of my convictions and learned to listen to other viewpoints.** Many times I conceded as they were right. My thinking **was flawed and that's ok too. This is my last year on the board as Officer at Large.** I think I reached my limit, especially after being on the planning committee for the Long Beach Conference. I slightly overdid myself but I am so glad I had the experience.

As I look back over the years I have met so many members all over the US as well as overseas. From being a hider in a garage smoking myself to death, wondering what I was doing just taking up space, to being used by God as a voice for the nicotine addict is amazing for me. Now I realize my purpose on this earth for the rest of my life, however long that will be. In my 14½ years of nicotine clean time, I have come a long way.

Without this Fellowship, God and the support of this program I would have truly been buried over 14 years ago. I now have my life back and am living it to the fullest. I can do anything, be anything, say anything, go anywhere and not have to worry about lighting up a cigarette. But I know I am an addict and being in service reminds me of that big time.

If you want to be a part of this fantastic fellowship — jump in, get involved! You **won't regret it.**

Always in Service,  
Gary M  
Inglewood, CA



*We can't keep it  
unless we give it away!*



## Quote Corner

"It is never too late to become who you might have been."



- George Eliot

## Ten Years Smober...

I was diagnosed with early COPD in 1993 and battered myself into quitting smoking to the point where I could have gotten a ticket for domestic violence. I was unreasonably hard on myself in trying to quit smoking. The more I told myself I had to quit or I'd die, the more I'd smoke. That game went on until 2002 when I decided I would love myself whether I smoked or not. And within about two weeks I quit. During the 8 years I quit and relapsed, I even quit my job as an addictions counselor because I felt like a hypocrite telling people with AOD problems how to cope with sobriety when I was smoking 4 packs of cigarettes a day to deal with every uncomfortable, unpleasant and frightening emotion and thought or experience I had. I managed to quit 6 weeks and then relapsed and that summer ended up on a psych ward for depression because I'd relapsed. Walking the talk eventually served to be the real nugget in quitting, and was more authentic to me than quitting because of my COPD.

I learned a lot in the 8 years of quitting and relapsing. I learned we go through different stages in the quitting process - almost like the developmental stages of children and adolescents. We can go through an adolescent period of defiance. There was a point in the mid-1990s when we would smoke after the meetings and laugh at the tools of the program and undo the entire meeting we just had. We were never irreverent enough to light up cigarettes at meetings or to sabotage another's recovery.

It was an unwritten rule that if someone was smart enough to stop smoking, they had your absolute respect and support even though you might have felt left behind.

There's another stage where you are desperate enough to go to any lengths to quit smoking, and all but give up hope until "somebody, something, some power" comes to help. Then you finally get the peace and well-being.

There are other stages I passed through, like letting go of my identity as a smoker, and then in recovery developing a new identity without cigarettes. *I think there's still another one to be developed - that of a human being unattached to either cigarettes or recovery.*

I also went through a stage where I had to look at what I gained in recovery and not what I lost when I gave up cigarettes. That entailed replacing nicotine with something better - new playmates and playpens. I picked up photography, writing, wrote a book and my counseling skills vastly improved when I was clean from nicotine. Gradually these things provided me with a nicer sense of well-being than I ever had with cigarettes. I became more productive, more assertive, more friendly and playful, more funny and nicer to be around. I made a better friend. I became less aggressive and more considerate and much more creative and productive, "sometimes to the temporary peril of those around" me.

When I first came into Nicotine Anonymous in 1993 I listened to people share their "happily ever after stories" where they were driving new cars, getting married, getting new jobs, starting school and generally seemed to be pretty happy. In my cynical smoker self I thought, "These people are lying. No one can ever really quit these things. They must be actors from the lung association trying to get people to stop smoking. This isn't possible." It is possible and I did quit smoking. I can't say I lived happily ever after, but I did do a

lot of work to make recovery possible and fulfilling. I had to challenge a lot of coyote logic; a lot of addictive logic and belief systems. And even though I did all that work, somehow it was the Higher Power that got me over the finish line into a real recovery. And I'm totally humble about all this, even 10 years into smobriety. People have relapsed after 8 and 10 years, so it is important to be ever mindful that we never really "arrive."

So there's different stages in quitting and then again in recovery. First the behavioral coping skill stage where rubber meets the road and it's just you and the next minute, hour, day or week without your old behavior; then thinking skills and a new recovery logic after rebuilding your identity; then you replace old behaviors with new hobbies and people and then different levels of service at the meetings and in the community and perhaps for NAWS. As I peer over the horizon I am seeing the development of still another stage where I can be a human being and not attached to either cigarettes or recovery; where I truly become who I am capable of being. It's a spiritual stage where you develop a more mature relationship to a Higher Power instead of to a Santa Claus that will remove your desire to smoke and do whatever you are constantly asking this power. Instead of prayers of petition, the prayer turns to gratitude and service. You find yourself looking around for ways to serve in many areas of your life instead of asking a Higher Power for a ton of presents for "our little plans and designs."

Some of the tasks for 10 years smober have more to do with service at deeper levels and giving up the character defects that made you want to smoke to begin with such as negativity, thinking errors and self-righteousness - and being too self-absorbed.

Jean M  
Colorado Springs, CO



## *Honoring Old Hippy Dude...*

*As was shared in the June issue of Seven Minutes, Nicotine Anonymous recently lost its treasured member, John R, aka Old Hippy Dude. On June 1 members of New Mexico's NicA group held a memorial service at the park by John's home in Albuquerque. Aimee C shared the following thoughts that day as the group gathered to pay tribute.*

My fellow addicts in recovery,

We seem to be looking at the bigger issues of our lives right now, especially since John R/OldHippyDude's spirit soars free now. John and several others were the ones who hoisted me up onto the wagon of recovery 8 1/2 years ago and opened the doors of perception in recovery, so that I could see the expansive possibilities of life without nicotine. Not once has that wagon, this program of recovery, failed me. The tenacity and courage of my pals, who believed in us and me have kept me growing and going along this path.

Thanks to John and a few others for starting Voices of Nicotine Recovery, VONR. I and many addicts have found the support we have needed for quitting our use of nicotine. One of our early face-to-face "gatherings" before being acknowledged by Nicotine Anonymous took place at John's in Albuquerque, NM, in spring of 2005. There were just a few of us - John, Roz, Grace, and Roz's sweet sister (and of course doggies, John's kitty, Smokey, and the turtles). We stayed at a nearby hotel. We had our first face-to-face online meeting in John's living room. We met in person and online for most of VONR's meetings all weekend. The whole weekend was like one big meeting. Man, it was the best kind of recovery. The most bestest ever was Saturday night, because of the great conversation we all had in the meeting about what it was like to meet face to face with people we had known only online. It was all about those voices of recovery.

Saturday night we had a cookout at John's, and enjoyed learning about the herd of turtles that John raised in his backyard. They all had names. He also grew tomatoes, chiles, catnip, and a few culinary herbs in his tortoise haven. We had a fun Sunday brunch at his place after the Hour of Power with pancakes flying. And then we took the pictures of the 4 of us with our foil hats. I remember being sore from laughing so hard. John cracked joke after joke.

All weekend we had been joking about how we were obviously (and obnoxiously) connected to cyberspace by having face-to-face online meetings. And we joked how NicA thought it was strange to meet online using "voice." How can you do that on a computer? How could you meet online and have an effective meeting? And we realized we were already doing it. The foil hats were our connection to each other and our cyberspace of recovery.

And our membership was growing. For a decade, John poured over the statistics and reported milestones in the growth of VONR and our relationship with NicA. I'm unsure how he managed all those years to set up regular daily posts in the VONR Yahoo Group's message board, which he called "hippyspam." He figured out how to automate this daily hippyspam, which informed newcomers how to access meetings and all the details needed to succeed in recovery. Somehow our ol' friend John was a wizard with computers, at least he was for Nicotine Anonymous and recovery. He chaired the Sunday "Workshop" and Sunday Night meetings from the beginning of VONR.

A few years after the gathering in Albuquerque, another VONR gathering was held in Hutchinson, KS, hosted by Roz. I picked up John in Albuquerque, and we drove to Wichita to pick up several folks flying in, then back to Hutchinson. John's and my chats across the rolling and lush flatlands of KS included much sharing about VONR and Nicotine Anonymous. John was truly dedicated to the group's growth and success. We spoke about issues, situations, and the principles of the program. John knew a lot about 12 Step work and applying the Traditions. I grew in magnetometers by sharing during that two days' travel: awed at his humility, vision, and, of course humor. At every chance he threw in a pun or clever twist of words. Kept us all giggling!

We spent three amazing days at Roz's place with VONR folks who joined us from around the country and around the world. We all stayed in a hotel in downtown Hutchinson, and drove out to Roz's place. We had several online and face-to-face meetings over that weekend in a variety of formats. I remember the chills of a powerful moment holding hands in



a circle with these beautiful "voices of nicotine recovery" saying the Serenity Prayer. We enjoyed each other and the surroundings in fellowship and being nicotine-free.

John was instrumental and courageous in getting VONR recognized by Nicotine Anonymous World Services. He soon became Chairperson Elect, served as acting Chair, then Chair Emeritus for World Services. His dedication to service never wavered. His work over the years has affected thousands of addicts, many of whom are reading this and are nicotine-free right now because he stepped up to service.

I say we are looking at the bigger issues of our lives right now, because that's what was modeled by our friend John. I really loved his solidity, and ways that his perception was based in love and compassion with the 12 Steps and Traditions as guides. I know John had a temper and low capacity for frustration like I often do. On so many levels I relate to his brilliance, cleverness and interest in moving forward with grace and dignity. I relate to his death as one of family, a deep and enduring relationship, as I know many who knew him do. Grieving is hard work. Acceptance brings peace.

Please let us treat each other with patience, tolerance, kindness and love, like John would have treated us and wanted us to treat each other.

Blessings for our recovery,

*Aimee C*  
VONR

## Seven Minutes Meditation

Just for today, I am grateful to those who lit the path  
that others might find a way out of the darkness.

Just for today, I am blessed God did for me what  
I could not do for myself.

Just for today, I pray for those who struggle still.

*To the memory of Lois, Joni, and Donna*



*- Patty G.  
Chandler, AZ*

# 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!

*Jean M - November 19, 2002*

*Nicole M - October 17, 2010*

*Ed T - April 3, 1989*

*Emil L - December 20, 1989*

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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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### **Fall 2013 Nicotine Anonymous Events Around the U.S.**

**September 21** *Ohio Picnic Fun Day*  
North Olmsted, OH  
sponsored by Ohio Intergroup

**October 4-6** *Clean in the Catskills retreat*  
Tannersville, NY  
sponsored by NYMA Intergroup

**November 3** *Annual Fall Picnic*  
Phoenix, AZ  
sponsored by Arizona Intergroup

*Flyers with event details are located  
on the NicA website*

[www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)



NAWSO  
Profit & Loss YTD Comparison  
January through June 2013

	<u>Jan - Jun</u> <b>'13</b>	<u>Jan - Jun</u> <b>'12</b>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
49900 Non Profit Income	-10.50	-
4000 · Donations	9,370.53	2,934.16
4100 · Literature Sales	20,308.98	19,651.66
4290 · Shipping & Handling	2,915.61	2,673.86
4299 · Conference Profit (Loss)	<u>-2,761.92</u>	<u>-1,865.26</u>
Total Income	29,822.70	24,659.24
 Cost of Goods Sold		
5000 · COGS	<u>8,743.44</u>	<u>9,873.58</u>
5102 Inventory + Shrinkage	-	-395.28
Total COGS	8,743.44	9,478.30
Gross Profit	21,079.26	15,180.94
 Expense		
6000 · Office Expense	10,497.89	11,347.94
6600 · WSO Expense	3,630.75	1,892.20
6900 Other Operating Expense	<u>17.34</u>	<u>102.74</u>
Total Expense	<u>14,145.98</u>	<u>13,342.88</u>
Net Operating Income	6,933.28	1,838.06
 Other Income/Expense		
Other Income — miscellaneous	-	
8000 · Interest Income	<u>.79</u>	<u>.29</u>
Total Other Income	.79	6.73
8030 · Interest Expense	88.23	0.00
<b>8031 · Reconciliation Discrepancies</b>	<u>-1.82</u>	
Total Other Expense	<u>86.41</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Other Income	<u>-85.62</u>	<u>6.73</u>
Net Income	<u><u>6,847.66</u></u>	<u><u>1,844.79</u></u>

# ♥ My Gift of Gratitude ♥

## Nicotine Anonymous Member Gratitude Program

Where would we nicotine addicts be without Nicotine Anonymous;  
without the literature and the support of the volunteers?

***PROBABLY STILL USING NICOTINE!***

Nicotine Anonymous has always been all about helping addicts and saving lives.  
But it has come to the point where we addicts need to give back with

***MY GIFT OF GRATITUDE***

If 200 nicotine addicts or groups shared only \$10 a month each to  
Nicotine Anonymous World Services  
then the organization we depend on for our freedom from nicotine, our literature,  
our volunteers, would make its monthly operating expenses and have more resources for outreach.

***Nicotine Anonymous World Services***

6333 E. Mockingbird Lane, Suite #147-817, Dallas, TX 75214 or call 877-TRY-NICA

### ***WAYS TO DONATE***

- ♥ Donate on our website in the online store (<https://www.nicotine-anonymous.org>)
- ♥ Send your donation directly to World Services via paper check (see address above)
- ♥ Set up online monthly bill pay at your bank. You determine the amount and date.  
Select a *Company without an account number* (Insert ***My Gift of Gratitude***  
in place of Account Number). Set up Nicotine Anonymous as company and  
list address above.
- ♥ Set up recurring monthly payment thru your PayPal account to  
[shipping@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:shipping@nicotine-anonymous.org)

All gifts may be tax deductible as 501(c)(3) donations.



### ***WHERE TO GET THE MONEY?***

- ♥ put the cost of one pack of cigarettes in a jar monthly
- ♥ empty pockets or purse of coins daily into a jar
- ♥ on your anniversary, send \$10 for each year of freedom

Whatever you give, will be given back to addicts through Nicotine Anonymous

***All members who share a gift of \$10.00 per month will receive  
a complimentary subscription to Seven Minutes.***

***HELP US CONTINUE TO HELP SAVE LIVES!***

Status update on the "My Gift of Gratitude" program:

Good  
News!

May 2013: 4 monthly donors  
August 2013: 39 monthly donors



Let's Keep  
It Going!

# Service is the Key

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

## TELEPHONE SERVANTS

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



## 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)

*Outreach Idea:*

When printing business cards for use in your local area, use the contact information of either Nicotine Anonymous or your Inter-group on the front of the card. Then on the back put the date, time, and location of your meeting. Now newcomers know where you are and it's in their pocket!

- From Jeff in CA



## Chairperson's Report

continued from page 1...

Committee, whenever I have doubt. The third is I will be more careful in phrasing my replies to inquiries. It occurred to me after writing a reply that I had thanked an inquirer, who was a filmmaker, for the work he was doing to help people quit smoking. I can see how someone could use a simple thank you as an endorsement, and Tradition 6 tells us that we do not endorse. Language is important, especially when it is written or recorded.

The October 12 WSO face-to-face board meeting will take place in San Leandro, CA. The July, January and March meetings are held online to save expenses. The meeting choice is based on meeting site availability and the need to save the fellowship money. Only board members vote, but any member may attend.

The 2014 World Service Conference will take place in Ocean City, NJ. Plans are proceeding. It is a beautiful location on the Jersey Shore, where we will discuss and plan fellowship business, hold marathon meetings and enjoy fellowship. Please attend; we need your voice. Planning is also underway by the NorCal Intergroup to hold the 2015 Conference in northern California.

Website improvements have been made in The Store and the World Wide Meeting List (WWML). We are in need of an experienced programmer, and also need a webservant to take on the tasks of uploading and maintaining documents. If you have such skills and want to help, please contact me at [Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org)

We still do not have a volunteer to chair the Outreach Committee. Candidates do not have to be very experienced, but creativity, energy and a willingness to learn how to work within the 12 Traditions would be a plus. If you are interested, please send me an e-mail.

I am pleased to report that there have

been some improvements in our financial status due to increased donations through our Gift of Gratitude program (see below), but we are still in need. Please see the Profit and Loss chart on page 12.

When I took the gavel as World Services Chair this past April, I had no concept of just how much we do. To give you an idea of the complexity of NicA World Services, there are at least 21 coordinators and committees providing many different types of service. With the exception of our office manager who coordinates and takes care of NicA's daily business, all of our workers are volunteers who give freely of their time. Some tasks are practically full-time jobs on their own. I am grateful to all for their service, as I am sure we all are.

Every dollar from Nicotine Anonymous donations and literature sales goes to **support and maintain our "primary purpose," as written in the 5<sup>th</sup> Tradition.** We are also governed by our 7<sup>th</sup> tradition which states "Every Nicotine Anonymous group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." **We may not solicit or accept donations, financial or otherwise, from nonmember individuals or agencies.** What can we do? NicA has established an easy and convenient way for members to donate. It is called Gift of Gratitude. There are several ways to donate, and all gifts may be tax deductible as 501(3)c donations. I found it easy to set up a monthly donation through my bank which will give me a written record of my donations, but there are other options as well – please see the flyer on page 13. If only 200 members would set up a \$10 per month donation, Nicotine Anonymous would have enough resources to continue to reach out and help the still-suffering nicotine addict. **That's all we need: 200 members giving \$10 per month!** This is one of our goals. Please help if you can.

**The fellowship's most pressing needs** continue to be outreach, membership, internet expertise and revenues. We

currently have an outreach committee without a chair. Members are helping to operate the website, but we still do not have a webservant or programmer. Again, if you have the specialized skills we need, please e-mail me: [Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org](mailto:Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org)

**As one final thought, the fellowship's** need for membership can only be partially attended to by the outreach efforts we do as an international organization and in our various intergroups. It is on the individual and local group level that new members find acceptance, welcome, understanding and the fellowship that can lead to recovery. If this addict were looking for help to gain freedom from nicotine in 2013 rather than 1991, I might very well be swayed by all the one-step cures and treatments that seem to pervade media. Ask me as an active addict if I would rather take a pill or find some other easy way as opposed to attending regular meetings, and the addict in me would always look for the **easy way, even if it isn't the best way.**

How about this? Take one smoker to a meeting every year. If you attend weekly meetings or go more frequently, **it shouldn't be that hard to find one each year.** If enough people did that, it would affect our membership. Yes, there will be some who will object or find ways to voice resistance. After all, that is our nature. Try inviting a smoker to help you celebrate your anniversary, so they **wouldn't feel put on the spot or singled out.** They would be attending to support you, and hopefully one or two of them would experience the recovery that we all seek as smokers. Taking a smoker to a meeting is yet another form of service, another way to work our 12<sup>th</sup> Step and after all, our primary purpose. And if a brand new member ever asks if she or he can help by setting up or packing up, always say yes, because as we have all learned: service is not only one of our 5 tools, it is an insurance policy for our recovery.

*In service,  
Michael B.  
WSO Chair*



*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**