

The Nicotine Anonymous Quarterly

SEVEN



Minutes

A Forum for Nicotine Users Who Don't Use

Volume XXV

June 2014

Number 2

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6333 E. Mockingbird Lane
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Chairperson's Report: A Rebirth of Energy and Enthusiasm...

Hello to my sisters and brothers in fellowship. It is my pleasure and privilege to serve as your chair for one more year. This quarterly report contains a brief description of the Nicotine Anonymous World Services Conference (WSC) in Ocean City, NJ and a request for you to step up and volunteer.

The WSC was indeed a joyous weekend although there were a few times we **were so occupied that we couldn't see** just how successful it was until the end, when we all had a chance to breathe and debrief a bit. The NJ/PA Intergroup team - with conference co-chairs Annette A and Joe F - deserves the highest praise for their professional level of organization and preparation, and also for being ever-present to attend to the needs of the delegates and other participants. This was the most successful WSC in recent memory. For the first time in years, we realized a gain which will be added to our treasury to be used for our Primary Purpose. All the conversations I have had and e-mails I have received were filled with praise for the delegate work that was accomplished, the marathon meetings, the entertainment and **fun provided by NJ/PA and the "warm and fuzzy" feelings we all left with. I am** thankful to our guest speakers for the inspiration they provided and to all our members who worked diligently toward our common goals and our Primary Pur-

pose, and to everyone who shared strength, hope, experience and gratitude throughout the weekend. I thank the 67 participants and 44 delegates for their contributions of time, energy and wisdom. I would like to view the 2014 World Services Conference as a sort of rebirth of the energy in Nicotine Anonymous. I wish I could thank everyone individually, but there is not enough room in this brief article.

Elections were held for new board officers, and the delegates chose to retain me as chair for one more year. I would like to thank Bonnie H, Chair Emeritus and Gary M, Treasurer Emeritus, who are rotating off the board, for their enduring service over the years. Robin L, Secretary-Emeritus has generously accepted the position of officer at large acting as Chair-Emeritus and will remain on the Board advising the chair for this upcoming term. Congratulations to our elect officers, who have rotated into active positions: Sherry B, Treasurer and Jean M, Secretary. Congratulations to our newly elected officers: Andy A, Chair-Elect; Sarah B, Treasurer-Elect and Zulma G, Secretary-Elect. Thank you all for agreeing to serve our fellowship.

Since the last WSC in Long Beach, California, our treasury has increased for the first time in recent memory. Nicotine Anonymous is alive and well and growing stronger. Although income from book sales is down, donations to Nicotine Anonymous World Services more than tripled from \$5,705.93 in 2012 to

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

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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The Execution of the NicoDemon...

It was October 3, 2012 - 11:45 pm, to be exact - a chilly dark night in a small town in Southwestern Ontario. The serial killer who had stalked his victim for 45 years was about to be executed. He had been in solitary, the only one left in his pack, for the last couple of hours. Slowly he was brought free of the paper cell in which he had awaited his execution.

As usual he was lit on fire, a procedure he much enjoyed. Feasting on his last meal, he spread his poison through his **victim's body for one last time. Oh, the delight!** Worth dying for!

As time passed and the end drew near, he recounted all of the damage he had done throughout the years. His pride was evident by the smoke that rose from his last few breaths as he travelled back through time, remembering the many years he and his victim spent together. The bad breath, the cough, the damaged lungs, the time lost, the friends lost, the wonderful things never bought, because he had controlled his victim so well!

He had done his job - he had belonged to an army of serial killers; each with a job to do, a death to cause, a life to destroy.

And here he was at the end of the road. His victim had smartened up, had stopped listening to his lies. His victim had discovered there was no way he could remain in her life. He had to go. Earlier he had been able to convince her **that he wasn't that dangerous; that he** was her only friend, her only escape from the frustrations of life. As that began to fail, he tried a different strategy. He convinced her that she was all powerful, a strong determined person, who could never be controlled by a small white terror. This also worked, for awhile, because he allowed it. After awhile he would convince her that she

could control how often she interacted with him, and if it began to be too often, they could agree to yet another temporary separation, as they had done off and on for many years.

He was a patient killer who knew she would be in pain as the army of cancerous cells invaded her lungs. She would need him more than ever - now she would be stressed and afraid. He had always pretended to be her friend, and he would do so now.

Even while dying she would run to him. **When she couldn't reach for him anymore**, he would tease her with his presence. He would lie next to her on the table, be the perfume she smelled on her visitors, or the longing in her soul as she tried to sleep at night.

But on this October night, his victim had changed. The blinders were off. In an effort to save her life, she had decided that this time it must be him that would die. Like a heroine in a thriller movie, she had found strength. She had for the first time seen him as the killer he really was. She had decided that in order for her to live, her abuser must be executed.

Without great ceremony she began the execution. She remembered the many times she had tried to escape him, and the many times he had lured her back. This time she would break free. She crushed his still-burning head into the **ashtray...again...and again...and again.** To be sure he was dead, she poured water onto him, and heard his last breath.

It was done. For the first time in years, she felt free. Nervous? Yes. Afraid? A bit. Sad? Of course. But most of all, she felt free. She had found an army of her own to join - Nicotine Anonymous. It is in this army that she stays safe and free of the monster nicotine.

Geri K
*Voices of Nicotine Recovery (VONR),
Unofficial Nicanon*

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*

No Longer Alone...

I am a few days away from having 8 months free of nicotine. Sometimes I **catch myself thinking, "Yeah! Six months! I'm done, I'm free, I don't need meetings or a group anymore!"** The truth is that for the past four years I stopped and started smoking many, many times. I finally realized I could not STAY quit without help. The other truth is that my almost 8 months has been helped along with bouts of other unhealthy habits such as overeating. Now that I have been refraining from as many overindulgences as I can, I feel an emptiness at times that wants to be filled with a cigarette.

Before I joined this program, I MIGHT have let such a craving pass, but I would have been telling myself some **lies at the same time, like "if I can let this craving pass, I must not really be addicted" and "isn't it nice I am so powerful to be able to go bum one when I want to and not have to buy them?"** Of course, eventually I always ended up having to buy them.

But now I am not alone. When a craving flits through my mind, the next thoughts are about my VONR friends in Nicotine **Anonymous. It's pretty automatic. What a relief!**

Laurie G
VONR

Travels with Tracy E...

For this edition Tracey interviews Aimee C who shares what she's learned about herself, her addiction and her recovery.

Tracey's note: "Aimee C has been a huge help to finding and connecting with an HP. She leads with love and a helpful word or gesture for a fellow addict. She is without a doubt one of the best people I have met in my recovery."

If you could go back and talk to your newbie self, what would you say?

Begin again at the beginning. Go back to **Step One whenever you're getting squirrely, whenever the craves hit, and whenever there's nowhere else to go.**

For me, Step One is the basis of my recovery, and the foundation of my **spiritual progress. When I admit I'm powerless, I become stronger because I've just given up the struggle, and I can put my energy where it can do me some good.** Step One brings me zooming back into the present, giving me the strength and hope I need to accomplish the next right thing.

What have been your greatest lessons learned?

I am accountable for my choices, including **how I respond to life on life's terms. I get to choose where I'm going to put my energy.** I can spend my precious life energy on anything I want, except smoking. If I knew I could not fail, where would I put my energy? Right here in this present moment.

What has helped you the most? My relationship with my Higher Power (HP) has helped me explore relationships, trust and see synchronicity in new ways. We have grown our relationship, me and HP. Like in any relationship, I get to spend time participating and communicating with my HP. Most important for me has been focused listening **and observing. It's amazing how this relationship has helped me with other relationships.**

What has helped you the least?

Hmmm...what I thought was hindering me or helping the least has actually been a great teacher. For example, my **emotionality. I've gotten into great trou-**

ble because I tend to overreact without first thinking. I have had to become **aware of how I'm in such a hurry to respond, and find ways to catch myself before I blurt out something I'll regret. I believe working with my sponsor on this issue and being in relationship with my HP has helped me practice this new behavior. I can forgive myself now if I blow it, because I'm accountable for my choices. There is no blame. I'm human.** How important is sponsorship? Sponsorship is my lifeline of recovery and progress along my spiritual path. **It's the kind of one-on-one work that has made me accountable, humble, honest, and even more able to listen to my HP. I need these relationships because I need their gifts. Sponsorship is the form of service that is the most meaningful for me because of the close relationships I have formed.**

What kind of a sponsor are you?

I listen, then bring the discussion back to the Twelve Steps. I am patient, tolerant and kind, and then hold up the mirror by telling you what I heard you say. I'm the kind of sponsor who helps you find the next right thing, and then lets go for you and your Higher Power to work through changes. I learn more about my own recovery from helping you than I ever dreamt possible.

What kind of a sponsee are you?

I work the Twelve Steps with my sponsor and consult with her regularly to reason things out. From having kind, **patient and tolerant sponsors, I've learned that sometimes I just need to be heard. I don't dump all my emotional baggage on her, but I do appreciate being heard, listening to her insight and applying the principles of the program to whatever is occurring in my life.**

After years of smobriety, why do you stay so involved and do so much service?

My clever Higher Power put these thoughts of support for my quit in my ravaged, smokey brain when I hit bottom late summer 2004. Laying there in the fetal position sobbing, hurting and desperate, I pleaded - no, implored my Higher Power to help me find a way to stop smoking. I had lost a 7 year quit and had smoked another 5 years.

A wee small inner voice said that this time I really needed to find support for my quit. Once I found the online Nicotine Anonymous meetings and was able to quit a few months later, I jumped right into service, hearing that service supports quits. That was 9 1/2 years ago. Not only does service help me refocus my energy, I feel a sense of belonging, and I am accountable. I need this to stay away from nicotine. The Promises really do come true - I haven't given up anything at all. By stepping away from nicotine and being of service, I am given everything, including my life. What do you think made you relapse after 7 years?

I know it was because I was mentally, physically, and spiritually bankrupt. I was depleted in every possible way. I had quit for 7 years by using the Twelve Steps and getting support in AI-Anon. As I drifted away from AI-Anon for a few years, my relationship with my Higher Power ebbed, and I was not working with a sponsor, attending meetings or doing service work. I had no "program" of recovery. I wasn't accountable. The old stinking thinking behaviors flared, and ol' nicodemon dug in the claws of addictive behavior. What a monster! I think there is a stigma about relapse that keeps people from coming back, and I believe this is shame driven...what do you think?

I was pretty ashamed when I came back to Nicotine Anonymous after smoking another 5 years. You know what happened? The miracle began. I was greeted and treated with kindness, even when I admitted my horrible relapse. Unconditional love and acceptance is what I found for this still-suffering addict who had the willingness to be willing. You loved me and supported me by being there for me, and I was able to put the sickarettes down one day at a time. Today I have 9 1/2 years free of nicotine.

What advice do you have for a person who has relapsed?

Breathe! Drink water, discuss, delay and distract. Experiment, ask HP for help, and see what happens. And stay in the middle of the herd. You'll get your miracle.

Quote Corner

*"It is in our faults and
failings, not in our virtues,
that we touch one another
and find sympathy."*

Jerome K. Jerome



Remembering Jack...

My friend Jack was a life-long smoker who only stopped smoking when he could no longer breathe when smoking.

The pains and discomfort of stopping smoking are NOTHING compared to what Jack lived through in the last 3 years of his life. He struggled for breath even while on 24/7 oxygen. The rest of his body deteriorated because of his low oxygen levels. He was not a candidate for a lung transplant because his heart was so damaged from lung disease.

Last night my friend Jack died at age 62. He died in ICU, on a ventilator. Even on a vent, they could not get his lungs to expand enough to bring his oxygen saturation to more than 50%.

Jack was such a good man, one of the kindest and most compassionate people I have ever known. He was loved by so many.

Jack did not smoke for so long because he was a bad man or was lacking in some way. He smoked because he was so addicted to nicotine.

In my own active addiction to nicotine, I know that I could not even think straight about stopping because the addiction told me incessantly that I NEEDED the substance.

The ironic thing is that Jack had to quit eventually because he literally could no longer breathe and smoke.

I hate this disease. I hate that the voice of the addiction is often stronger than the medley of voices of the many recovering nicotine addicts, assuring people that this is doable and that life without nicotine is actually much better and easier.

There are things much harder than the pangs of nicotine withdrawal. I watched that unfold with my friend Jack for the past years. I have watched friends go through lung cancer surgery, chemo and radiation. I have seen other friends die at early ages due to lung disease.

This is deadly stuff. I know you cannot scare an addict BUT as active nicotine addicts, we SHOULD be scared- scared of continuing to smoke rather than scared to stop. NOTHING bad is going to happen from NOT using nicotine. Temporary pain and discomfort are the only price to pay to stop and we don't have to go through that alone, thank you Nicotine Anonymous.

This is NOT a gentle, soft addiction. It is a matter of life and death. When I sought recovery for drug and alcohol addiction, I was told "get a sponsor and work the Steps or die." When I would try to expound on my theories about recovery, my musings about God and the changes I thought should be made to the program, I was told to shut my mouth, listen and learn from the experience of others who had actually been walking the walk.

Those of us who have been able to stop and stay stopped in this program are here to help, just as we were helped. I urge you to abandon yourself to this simple Twelve Step program COMPLETELY. Trust that it works, just as it worked for us hard-core smokers who are free today.

Jack, you will never be forgotten. May your memory be a blessing.

Susan S
VONR and Unofficial Nicanon

Nicotine Anonymous
The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using nicotine.

Meeting Options:
Face-to-face meetings
Telephone meetings
Online meetings

To find face-to-face meetings:

Go to www.nicotine-anonymous.org

Click on Meetings and search by state.



For phone meetings:

Go to www.nicotine-anonymous.org

Click on Meetings, then Telephone Meetings.



For online meetings:

Go to www.nicotine-anonymous.org

Click on Meetings, then

Internet Meetings. Find two live links for the following home pages:

1. Unofficial Nicanon:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/unofficialnicanon>

This site has type share meetings.

2. Voices of Nicotine Recovery:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/voicesofnicotinerecovery>

This site has voice share meetings.



www.voicesofnicotinerecovery.com is a newcomer site showing how to access the voice online meetings using PalTalk. It also has information about nicotine addiction and a link to listen to speaker shares. → Both sites have a Message Posting Board to post messages and get a response. You must first 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. First become a Yahoo member, then register with a user name and password.

Thoughts on Relapse...

Why don't we talk more about relapse? Not talking about it doesn't make it less of an issue for many of us. For this addict, who now has 100 days from my two year anniversary, and who has had problems with chronic relapsing, I wonder **and worry about why we don't talk** about it more. There seems to be a lot of shame and guilt attached to relapsing. I say this from my own experience and in talking to many others who have relapsed. But for many of us, relapsing is how we get our final quit. It is part of our path. It is not the easier way. It is painful. It is isolating. I think it is why many leave the program and never come back. Perhaps they feel, as I did **at one time, that they don't belong or aren't accepted.**

For this struggling addict, it took multiple attempts to get clean. For me, and others like me, time spent in meetings is always better spent talking about HOW members were successful in keeping the quit and less on what amount of time people have. It is the reason I **came to meetings late...after people had** shared their time off nicotine. I know for many people sharing clean time is sharing hope, but it is not always motivational for those of us who are trying to quit. It can create the atmosphere of haves and have-nots. Even if this is not intended, my experience is that it still hurts.

Don't get me wrong...I am NOT saying relapse is a good thing. It isn't. This is a

Heard it at a meeting

"When God solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when God doesn't solve your problems, He has faith in YOUR abilities."



deadly disease. The longer we use nicotine, the worse our overall health gets. We suffer physically, mentally and emotionally. By not talking about our struggle to get clean and stay clean, we **aren't helping ourselves. The silence** feeds the shame, guilt and isolation. The Third Tradition tells us that the ONLY requirement for membership is a DE-SIRE to become nicotine-free. As it states in our Nicotine Anonymous book, **page 122: "In this way, Tradition Three** also protects us from getting caught up in making injurious judgments of others, especially of those of us still (or **relapsed) in the powerful grip of nicotine."**

Relapse is a very common problem. The following data comes from publichealthlawcenter.org:

- **Nicotine dependence is a chronic condition** that usually requires repeated interventions.¹
- **On average, smokers make between 8-11 quit attempts** before successfully quitting.²
- **Most untreated smokers relapse within eight days** after trying to quit. 24-51% are abstinent at one week. 5-28% are abstinent at one month. 10-20% are abstinent at 3 months.³
- **Smokers, especially women, relapse** because of a fear of weight gain.¹

¹ Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. *Treating tobacco use and dependence: 2008 update*. Clinical practice guideline. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service; 2008.

² U.S. Department of Health Human Services. *Women and smoking: A report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, Center for Chronic Disease, Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2001.

³ Hughes JR, Keely J, Naud S. Shape of the relapse curve and long-term abstinence among untreated smokers. *Addiction* 2004; 99: 29-38.

What kept me coming back was HOPE - hope that others who struggled and were successful shared with me. HOPE became an acronym for the following: HELP - I had to reach out and ask for help. I had to set the shame, guilt and isolation aside and ask to talk about **other's experience with relapse. I** brought up the topic at meetings and searched outside sources on the topic. I had to let go of my ego because my self will kept me relapsing.

OPTIMISM - I had to stop telling myself **I couldn't quit or stay quit. I had to** change the negative tape and turn the positive one on. I believe we do become what we tell ourselves. It did me NO good to compare myself to others who had time off nicotine. Just because I struggled did not mean I was bad...I was very sick.

PATIENCE - I had to be patient with myself and not give up; to not quit quitting. The only way any of us can truly fail is to stop trying. I needed to do all **the things that didn't work to find out what did. And lastly...**

EFFORT - I had to really, really work at getting and staying free of nicotine. I had to put as much effort into staying clean as I did in seeking my next fix. I attended lots of meetings, posted on the online boards, worked the Steps and stayed connected, especially to my sponsor and my support network which **I call 'my circle of women'....even when the disease told me I didn't belong. My** disease told me to isolate. It told me I was shameful because I relapsed. It took me a long, long time to accept that my HP loved me no matter what. And if my HP loved me no matter what, then I **needed to love and accept myself...** exactly where I was at.

Relapse isn't easy to talk about; it's not easy to share our failings, vulnerabilities and weaknesses. But not talking about it **doesn't make it less of a problem. If you** are struggling - **don't give up! You are** worth it! The miracle is there for each **and every one of us....keep HOPE alive.**

*Tracyintucson
VONR and Unofficial Nicanon*

More shares on relapse...

I am a nicotine addict called Naveen. I am 26 years old and came to my first Nicotine Anonymous meeting in June 2012 when I was 24 years old. Today I am 4 days, 1 hour and 26 minutes clean **due to God's will and the help of the** fellowship and program. I quit nicotine every other day after my first meeting in Nicotine Anonymous and relapsed every day too. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired of quitting smoking, but one thing I knew was that if other nicotine addicts can quit, I could too. So I kept coming back and kept working on the slogan Never Quit Quitting. Finally after 1 year and 9 months, I can say I am feeling confident and am not using - one day at a time, even one moment at a time, when my mind tells me I should smoke just one.

Naveen

VONR and Unofficial Nicanon

I relapsed many times before I got a good quit of 7 months, and then relapsed again. Not until this last time did I feel shame, and that I had let down the people in my VONR group. And I feared letting them know that I had fallen back into addictive behavior.

As I looked at my response, I realized that it was EGO. I was afraid that I would get less of the support that I had had, due to not being perfect at this quit. Why do I feel I have nothing to share at meetings after relapse? I have failed. If I had worked my program the correct way, I wouldn't have relapsed. How can the newcomers trust me now? How can anyone get anything out of my experience and shares? So why don't people share more about relapse? Feelings of failure and embarrassment, not wanting others in the meetings to judge, **to look at me and say "what a shame."** EGO is thinking that my shares were so

important to others, that they will point a finger and say, "she sounded so good and she couldn't keep her quit" or thinking that it could happen to them too. I see now that this is ego talking instead of humility.

I couldn't hide for very long. I needed the meetings, I needed to be honest and take whatever came. So I humbled myself and admitted that I had slipped and found that I got a loving response. It made me feel wonderful and closer to my NicA friends in the VONR group than I had ever felt. I belonged!

Tess

VONR and Unofficial Nicanon

I started smoking at the age of 14. By the age of 21 most of my friends were stopping -- it had just been a temporary thing for most of them. I knew at this point that I was unable to stop. I knew then that cigarettes had me and I was down for the count. The idea was suggested often that I should quit, try to quit, do whatever it took...and believe me -- I did. I tried and could never even get one day nicotine-free. Cigarettes had become my best friend at age 14, and nothing and nobody ever came close to providing the comfort, support, company, reliability or solace. And yet I never stopped dreaming, although in my heart I believed I would die with a cigarette in my hand.

In 2003 I found the online NicA group, Voices of Nicotine Recovery (VONR). Today, in 2014, I am celebrating 3 years and 7 months of sobriety. It is not my first quit in VONR, it is in fact my 3rd major quit. Every other time I did not get that I could not have one puff. I did not get, believe, accept or admit that I was powerless over nicotine. I believed they kept me calm. I believed they were my best friend -- so at the

first sign of trouble, I looked for them again. After one major quit, I also wandered away from meetings, figuring that I had this thing in the bag... Within a year I was smoking again. This time I am not going anywhere. This quit started with the desire to smoke being taken from me, for the first time in my life. I was granted my miracle!! I didn't leave 5 minutes before my miracle this time, and I just pray that I continue to turn to a meeting and not a cigarette now and every day. For today, I feel surrounded, safe from the urge to smoke, and know I will choose program tools before I find myself walking to the store at any point during this next 24 hour period. That is all I know. And for today, I know that it's enough.

Allana M
VONR



Relapse is a fairly common experience among members in the fellowship. I relapsed probably 8 times before I began my current quit of almost 10 months. I think that I was guilty of 'stinking thinking', believing that I could just have 1 puff or 1 cigarette and then resume my quit. One puff led to another and then another cigarette and then to another pack, and before a day was over, I was back in my previous stinking habits. Once I bought a pack, then I had to buy another, etc. It took me another 2 years before I quit again. One of the reasons that relapsed nic users are excused is that everyone knows how powerful the nicotine addiction is. Many addicts with histories of multiple addictions have testified that nicotine addiction is one of the hardest to overcome; it is powerful both physically and psychologically. The pack of cigarettes, too easily available at the drug store, is irrationally considered an inseparable 'friend' whom one could not survive

Continued next page

without. This flawed and incorrect thinking is also common among relapsed nicotine users - myself included. Thank God there is a way out of the cycle of active nicotine habitual use. Nicotine Anonymous and the 12 Steps offer a path to sanity and recovery that thousands have successfully utilized - one day at a time. I hope to stay quit likewise - one day at a time and to be of service to others who still struggle with this powerful addiction. Every day.

DaveCoun
VONR

When I relapsed I felt like a failure and I felt scared and ashamed. My thoughts during that time were... "I am such a failure," "why do I keep giving in?!" "when am I ever going to quit for good?!" My hopes for success are direct **and to the point...NEVER...I...MEAN...NEVER...** pick up a cigarette again! Also, praise myself for getting through today, reward myself when I need it and want it.

What keeps me coming back is the love I feel for my NicA friends and my new family that totally understand my anxiety and depression AND...I know IF I don't keep coming back, I WILL pick up again, because I am not strong enough within myself NOT to pick up again.

HAVING STROKES IS NOT WORTH A CIGARETTE! I had a stroke on the 9th. I am in rehab now. I am sending this from my bed as I am pretty much bed-ridden unless in a wheelchair... completely dependent on full assistance... ALL DUE TO NICOTINE! But, I will not give up...

Kendra
VONR and Unofficial Nicanon

I've had many relapses while being in Nicotine Anonymous. There have been various reasons. I just wanted to smoke again. I forgot how bad it was when I did smoke. I wasn't working the program like it was meant to be worked. I minimized my successes because I felt I should have been doing more in my recovery. I relapsed because I felt nicotine would help me with my depression. I've relapsed because of self-will. I've relapsed because I didn't really believe that I was an addict (denial). It is only by the grace of God and NicA that I'm here to write this. Thanks be to God and NicA.

Bob R
VONR and Unofficial Nicanon

I relapsed because I didn't care about myself anymore after a break-up. I gave into the obsessive behavior out of anger, sadness and boredom. It was easier to give in than not. Someone actually high-fived me when I told them I gave in. She thought she got her smoking buddy back. I have worked on getting my mind back to where it needs to be. Today is day one... again.

Jasmine L
Unofficial Nicanon

I relapsed because I stopped doing the things I was supposed to do to stay smoke-free. I stopped reading the Nicotine Anonymous book, hanging around smoke-free people, but most of all, I gave into the obsession and compulsion to smoke.

Suki
Unofficial Nicanon

**Keep coming back!
It works
if you work it!**

From the *Nicotine Anonymous New-comers Booklet*, pages 49-50:



Careful about Relapse Worksheet

Sometimes after we have not used nicotine for awhile, delusion sets in and we begin to think **in crazy ways, i.e., "I feel sorry for myself because I had to give up something I really enjoyed. Using nicotine was one of my few pleasures." "It isn't fair, why should I suffer like this? I feel deprived."** These are examples of how a slip or relapse starts in our heads even before nicotine gets in our hands. To dig more deeply into these ideas, we can answer the following questions. Feel free to expand on them on an additional sheet of paper.

What are the pleasures you are being deprived of?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What are the negative consequences of using nicotine that you are now free of?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

"It was relatively easy to quit. I've got that licked. I can handle nicotine now. I can smoke once in a while now." Explain why this is deluded thinking.

As time accumulates, the pain of quitting lessens and lessens, and soon you will be able to spend hours, days, and even weeks without thinking about nicotine.

The craving will pass.

Meanwhile, I could...



Draw, paint or color

Pray/meditate/practice deep breathing

Do a jigsaw puzzle or crossword

Go to a movie

Pet my dog or cat

Rearrange my closet

Offer to help someone do something

Call someone in program

Write in my journal

Make a gratitude list

Swim/run/jog/bike



Blow bubbles

Listen to music or make music



Summer 2014 Nicotine Anonymous Events Around the U.S.

July 11-13 Annual Funweekend - Phoenixville, PA
“iRecover” - sponsored by NJ/PA Intergroup

July 12 Northern California One-Day NicA Retreat
Samuel P. Taylor State Park

July 26-27 Nicotine Anonymous Retreat - Southern California
Joshua Tree Retreat Center

August 10 Annual Beach Day - speaker meeting at Jones Beach
sponsored by New York Metropolitan Area Intergroup

Flyers with event details are located on the NicA website

www.nicotine-anonymous.org

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

Coordinates and connects penpals who want to communicate via snail mail.

PenPal Coordinator Email PenPalCoordinatorEmail@nicotine-anonymous.org

Coordinates and connects penpals 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

Jeff M – April 6, 2009

Kay M – April 6, 2009

Lonnie N – March 22, 2010

Wes MacI – June 8, 2010

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

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

Calling all writers!



Only you can tell your story.

What was your life like as an active addict? What happened to get you in the door? What is your life like now?

Send your personal stories and poems or even jokes pertaining to nicotine, nicotine recovery and Nicotine Anonymous to:

SevenMinutesEditor@nicotine-anonymous.org

or by snail mail to:

Seven Minutes c/o NAWSO
6330 E. Mockingbird Lane
#147-817
Dallas, TX 75214

NAWSO
Profit & Loss YTD Comparison
January through March 2014

| | <u>Jan - Mar</u> '14 | <u>Jan - Mar</u> '13 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | |
| Income | | |
| 4000 · Donations | 3,405.95 | 3,251.28 |
| 4100 · Literature Sales | 2,507.64 | 3,702.27 |
| 4290 · Shipping & Handling | 1,157.68 | 1,532.16 |
| 4297 · Conference Profit/Loss) | -750.00 | - |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total Income | 11,625.62 | 15,304.67 |
| Cost of Goods Sold | | |
| 5000 · COGS | <u>3,197.21</u> | <u>4,736.86</u> |
| 5102 Inventory + Shrinkage | 0 | -700.00 |
| Total COGS | 3,197.21 | 4,036.86 |
| Gross Profit | 8,428.41 | 11,267.81 |
| Expense | | |
| 6000 · Office Expense | 6,073.95 | 5,071.29 |
| 6600 · WSO Expense | 1,773.30 | 2,369.67 |
| 6900 Other Operating Expense | 95.64 | 17.34 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total Expense | 7,942.89 | 7,458.80 |
| Net Operating Income | 485.52 | 3,809.01 |
| Other Income/Expense | | |
| 8000 · Interest Income | .12 | .69 |
| Total Other Income | <u>.12</u> | <u>.69</u> |
| 8030 · Interest Expense | - | 30.03 |
| Total Other Expense | 0 | 30.03 |
| Net Other Income | <u>.12</u> | <u>-29.34</u> |
| Net Income | <u><u>485.64</u></u> | <u><u>3,779.67</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

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!

Service is the Key

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



TELEPHONE AND E-MAIL SERVANTS

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

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

Chairperson's Report

continued from page 1...

\$18,573.33 in 2013. For this I thank all who worked so hard and contributed so generously. Please see the Gift of Gratitude link on the front page of our website to find out how easy it is to make a monthly, tax-deductible donation. We need additional funds to continue to reach out to the still-suffering, and it would make a big difference if you could donate just \$10 per month.

VONR (Voices of Nicotine Recovery) web based meetings and our telephone meetings are still going strong and several members were in attendance at the WSC to offer their experience, strength and hope. Our website and World Wide Meeting List (WWML) are running better, but we are still in need of a webmaster. Please be sure to update your meeting information on the WWML website link Meeting Change Form or by going to the **website and clicking on the "Start A Meeting" link and following the directions.** NicA will benefit, and there will be fewer occurrences of someone going without a meeting or going to a meeting and finding nobody home.

Many of you have given so much throughout the years that I hardly have the right to ask you to do any more, but **I will anyway. I'm OK with that because I am not asking for myself; I am asking for the members across the world and for the still-suffering nicotine addicts who haven't found us yet. More than a few of us, myself included, are still alive because of our fellowship and are enjoying a better quality of life than if we had never found NicA. Even our friends who have passed on had clean time to enjoy and a closer connection with their Higher Power and their families because of Nicotine Anonymous.**

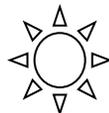
NicA thrives on the dedication and gratitude of our volunteer members, and service is our nicorecovery insurance policy. Members left the WSC with renewed enthusiasm to go with a plethora of goals and tasks for the future. We need volunteers in the areas of encouraging

and fostering international participation, bylaws editing, outreach, informing the medical community, protecting the Nicotine Anonymous name, expanding our intergroup list, writing and editing literature, increasing sales and donations, studying websites, redefining the officers' tasks and descriptions, and much more. As well as the 12 written Traditions, we have unwritten traditions. One of them is rotation of service. A fellowship needs an infusion of new ideas and an ability to think outside the box along with the wisdom of veteran members in order to grow and thrive. Help breathe that new life into NicA. To volunteer, contact the respective committee chairs on our contact page at NicA Contact Us, or go to our website and click on Contact Us just below the flags. If you are unsure who to contact, e-mail me at Chairperson@nicotine-anonymous.org.

You will be happy to hear that the Step Study Guide was approved at the conference. Please be on the lookout to see it in print.

I want you to know if you don't know already that what you do matters. The miracles keep happening. They often happen when we least expect them. Nicotine Anonymous is the only place I go to where I can expect to see miracles. I just never know exactly when, but they will keep happening. It isn't always easy to see it, but your work bears fruit. You make it safe for people to ask for the help they desperately need. To know that, just think about yourself and how you were received and welcomed when you most needed it. It's not our way to keep statistics. We are our own proof. So if your hands are already dirty with the soil that nurtures Nicotine Anonymous, come on in and get them even dirtier. I won't promise you it will be easy or even that you'll always be appreciated. I will promise you that you'll get back 10 times what you put into it, just as I have.

In service and YFIR,
Michael B.
WSO Chair



Outreach Idea:

Take a flyer for your NicA meeting to a location where other 12 Step groups meet. Ask if there is a bulletin board with non-AA/NA/etc. announcements that would be OK for a flyer. If so, post it there, and check on it every month or so to make sure it's still there and approved to be there.

For assistance with creating a flyer, send an email to OutreachCoordinator@nicotine-anonymous.org

Interested in outreach?

Consider attending the monthly teleconference meeting of the NicA Outreach Committee.

When: 3rd Saturday of each month

Time: 12:00PM EST

Contact the Outreach Coordinator for details.

Seven Minutes

Meditation

I believe today is going to be a wonderful day.

I believe I can, with God's power, accept and successfully handle any problem that might arise today.

I feel good physically.

I feel good mentally...

alert, positive,
knowledgeable and wise.

I feel good emotionally...

serene and courageous,
faith over fear.

And I feel good spiritually...

God is with me, God is with me,
God is with me.

It's wonderful to be alive.

I'm grateful for all that I've had, for all that I have today, and for all that I shall have in the future.

Kent B

Happy Jack, AZ



Seven Minutes

NAWSO

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

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

| Publication Date | Deadline Date for Submissions |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| March 20 | February 1 |
| June 20 | May 1 |
| September 20 | August 1 |
| December 20 | November 1 |

My Address Has Changed!

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

My new address and phone is:

NAME _____ PHONE (WITH AREA CODE) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

My old address was:

ADDRESS _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____