

LETTING THINGS GO

NEWS



GRAM

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LETTING GO

By: Rick R.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

My name is Rick and I am an Addict. I was born into a family that I never felt connected to. I am the second last child born and have six sisters and three brothers. My earliest recollection was wondering when my real family was finally going to come pick me up, or when the UFOs were going to land and finally take me back home, so I could make my escape from these people. This feeling of not belonging continued until my first drug at age nine... three hits of purple microdot acid.

Looking back, I would have described that time as the best time of my 9 1/2 -year-old life.... This was the start of an addiction that would rob me of everything I would ever achieve or build up in my life. From acid to a full-blown hardcore crack and crystal meth addict in no time! My disease controlled every aspect of my waking life until I came into the rooms. I was totally out of control and my thinking and actions were an illustration of that. I was a train wreck.

I found the rooms of C.A. The people there suggested that I try to leave Rick's ego at the door every time I entered a C.A. room. They also suggested I follow directions to the best of my ability - directions which I could find outlined in the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*; I learned that my thinking will eventually kill me.

Today I no longer have to listen to those voices in my head, but I must follow the work outlined in that book because it's the only thing that ever seemed to help! There are thousands of others who have recovered from the same thing I seem to be suffering from by doing this same work!

You see, I truly am an addict of the type that I read about in the big book. I am without a mental defense against that first hit. I was told that if I was willing to do the work as outlined in the 12 Steps, guided by someone who has done and continues to do

the work, that I would experience a psychic change, or a profound alteration in my reactions to life. I would change.

I was hurting so much, and my life was such a mess that I was willing to go to any length. I wanted this! Period. So, I got me a sponsor who's is armed with the facts and I started to take guidance and do the work as outlined in our textbook. I learned I would have to forget self and do and "live" the Steps daily... and then change could happen. I was also taught I had to do service work -- be helpful to others -- take a position in the group from making coffee to greeting at the door.

I am learning to make Rick's ego small every morning and learning to allow this God of my own conception to be a part of my life now. I am listening to this new God's voice and follow directions to the best of my ability every day. I help newcomers.

And through this work, and being of service to C.A., I have started to experience this psychic change. I have begun to shed and let go of my old selfish ways and started living a life free from this disease which tried to kill me for the past 14 years, since I relapsed after 10 years sobriety. I know through my personal experience and the work I've done outlined in the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* that I am a miracle today. I should be high right now or dead.

I'm still learning daily how to forget my old ways by replacing them with the new ones. I'm learning and growing in this beautiful Fellowship called Cocaine Anonymous and for that I am so very grateful - and this is why I have to pass this message onto the new comer.

By letting go, I have opened my eyes to new possibilities and to this new way of life I have been given today.

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DRIVEN TO THE COMFORT AND EASE OF THAT FIRST ONE

By: Susan T.
 Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
 (Continued from page 6)

I jumped ship from another Fellowship a few years ago, and joined, "No Rock on Brock", a local C.A. group in my Region. One of the main reasons I left the other Twelve Step Fellowship, was because I wasn't receiving a clear-cut message about how to "recover from a seemly hopeless state of body and mind." I need to be around those who have done the work and are living free from the obsession to use, and who are living day to day, in the spiritual solution. My C.A. homegroup is my lifeline to the recipe on how to do this thing. Now I go not so much to hear the solution, but to clearly transmit the powerful message of a life changed as a result of the Steps.

I can't even imagine what life would be for me, had I not done the work. The Steps of C.A. are the solution to being able to let go and be free. If you haven't given yourself the opportunity to do them, I urge you to! Please do not miss the chance to give yourself the greatest gift that you can give yourself, which the Steps can bring into your life. Grab a willing person to take you through the Steps - and my prayer is that you seek the God of your understanding, now with all the desperation of a drowning man, so that you too can be set free!

God Bless you and keep you as we trudge this road to happy destiny, together.

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LETTING GO ALLOWS ME TO GROW

By: Justin C.
Lakeland, Florida, USA

I can't remember the first thing I "lost" in pursuit of the next high. It's been so long ago, during my mid teenage years, when I didn't really have a problem. At that time, I had no idea that I was embarking upon a journey which would bring me to places I could never have imagined I would be going; squatting in shacks, hiding in bushes and ditches, sleeping on the floor in overcrowded jail dorms, etc...Somehow, it wasn't all that difficult for me justify those losses during the insanity of my active addiction, in fact, it became increasingly easier over time. For many years I would continue to tell myself the lie, "I had lost my freedom...again" or, "I lost another job" or, "I lost another guitar in the pawn shop." I always found a way to blame others for these situations. I even continued to believe that I "lost" things during my early recovery. In reality, I had never really lost anything. My sponsor enlightened me one day with the glaring truth of the matter, pointing out that I, in fact, gave all those things away...I willingly let them go.

It is remarkable to me today that for someone as selfish as I, with such a distorted value system, always insisted and fought to hold on so tightly to what was harming me while at the same time giving away things which were blessings. I wanted to keep unhealthy people around me, using them for whatever I could. I collected paraphernalia, stashing pipes here and there, should the need for their utility arise, lest I have to improvise and use less than optimally preferred materials to smoke out of or off of. I held onto resentments, keeping score of who-did-what and how exactly I could get back at them for the perceived harm they absolutely and intentionally inflicted upon me. I gave away jobs that could have led me toward a young and fully vested retirement, another which allowed me to travel to exotic locations, and many other promising opportunities. I gave away healthy relationships, holidays with my family, and spending last moments with my dying grandparents. I let go of all these things so that I could hold on to the dope pipe.

In 2010 I sought help for the first time and entered a long episode of inpatient drug treatment. Consequently, this is where I encountered C.A. After a couple of weeks, I had been to some different meetings, but was still a little hazy and unsure of exactly how all this stuff was supposed to "fix" me. I was still under the impression that I could be taught how to stop smoking meth, yet still hold on to my drinking and marijuana smoking, you know, because I didn't really have a problem with either of those

things. One day, as I sat in the cafeteria at the treatment center I had a kind of stirring within myself. I asked God to please remove from me all that He could not use, leaving what He could, and I would begin to do my part. I had finally become willing to give my addiction to him. It was then that I truly surrendered. That was the first time I made the conscious decision to let go of my old ideals.

In the years that have passed I have learned that to have peace and serenity in my life, and to help others, it is better for me not to become attached to the things of this world. Today I look back at all the things which I gave up in the pursuit of the next high and ask myself what I am willing to give up to stay clean and sober. Would I be willing to let go of a job which put me in danger of losing my sobriety? Am I able to let go of an unhealthy people, places, things, and situations in pursuit of peace? Well, yes. But those are the easy answers. Am I just as willing to let go in the instances where my ego comes into play? Am I able to differentiate between the voice of my Higher Power and my own self-dialogue, insuring that when I feel led to take action that it is He rather than me who is guiding my actions. When working with others, do I instruct, or do I empower? When I am called upon to serve, do I choose to do so on my terms or do I allow myself to be guided by others, regardless of my perception of their level of experience? At my Home Group/District/Area Business Meeting when things appear to me to be going sideways do I feel the need to step in and regulate, or do I let go of my desire to help (control) the situation and give the current trusted servants the opportunity to grow and learn, handling things themselves? Do I assist and encourage new members of committees on which I serve to begin participating and take on responsibility right away, or do I insist on holding onto all the cards?

Letting things go allows me to grow. Not only that, but my letting go of things can also allow others around me to flourish and gain experience of their own. I couldn't get clean by holding on to things, and I can't stay clean by holding onto things either. Today I realize just how much in this world is temporary, on loan from God while I'm here working under His direction. Letting go ensures that, today, I am free from the misery, terror, and pain of addiction. When I surrender all, I gain even more. I can only keep what I have by giving it away. Letting go.

THE PROCESS OF LETTING GO

By: Denise B.
Pickering, Ontario, CANADA

It was the Friday before Mother's Day and I had decided that I had better go out that night and get my fix, so that I would not be hungover or still up from the night before when my five year-old son brought me breakfast in bed on Sunday morning. I was only fooling myself because I was rarely ever able to make it home when I said I would. My family was getting used to me saying that I would be home in a few hours and disappearing for three days at a time. I had told myself that I deserved this break, that I was a hard-working, downtrodden single mother who was entitled to party on Mother's Day weekend. "I was a mother, and wasn't Mother's Day for mothers?" I said to myself. I realize now that Mother's Day has absolutely nothing to do with me, that it is about showing gratitude to my mother and making my son feel special when he hands me the macaroni decorated jewelry box he made at daycare. I did not make it home until Sunday evening, still high, hiding my face from my family. I had so much shame and disgust for myself.

I had spent the entire day with a stranger, doing line after line, drinking beer after beer, trying to escape the guilt. My son kept calling my phone leaving messages, "Mommy, where are you?" That did not deter me from wanting more, buying more, doing more. In fact, it only spurred a bigger thirst to numb the insatiable itch I felt to get as high as one could possibly get, but it wasn't working. I could not escape the remorse I was feeling. At one point, I even threw up on my nice party clothes. What did I do? Changed my shirt and asked for another line. I could not stop no matter what the consequences were!

While watching cartoons with my son, crying and sitting in my cave of self-pity, I decided that this was it. I could not do this anymore. I was scared. I really had wanted to be home for Mother's Day, I really had intended on coming home Friday night. I called my old drug counsellor, who had gotten me into rehab previously, and left a message asking for help. By the time, he called me back the next day, I had already decided that I had made too big a deal out of the whole thing and that I would be able to quit the cocaine on my own. I did not call him back until nine months later.

This was the beginning of the end. For the next nine months, I proceeded to try every other method that I could think of to stop using on my own. I went to the doctor and he prescribed me antidepressants, then, when that did not work, I went to the psych ward where I was prescribed more medications and was referred to an outpatient program for harm reduction. With each attempt at sobriety, I would get a few days,

maybe a week, only find myself in a worse position than the last time. By this time, I had been put on leave from my job. I'm not sure if this helped or hindered me, but the instances of drug use only quickened. Still unable to admit that I needed to go back to 12 Step rooms, I tried another outpatient program, which encouraged me to stop all together and go to meetings. Advice that I did not follow. I still believed that I could somehow manage to stop on my own.

During this time, the counselors at the outpatient program saw I was struggling to stay clean and were forced to call Children's Aid Services. A file was opened, and I was warned that I needed to stop, or they were going to have to intervene. This put the fear in me, and I was able to string a few weeks together. I heard from CAS a couple of weeks later and they informed me they were closing my file. I was three weeks sober and decided that I had done well, that I deserved a treat. I really did not want to use anymore, but little did I know that I was not in control. I went out for one beer and did not make it home for a week. I disappeared into the abyss of drug addiction, into yet another basement with people I barely knew.

At some point throughout that week, I let go. I finally saw that I had no control and I began to use without any effort to slow down. I accepted my fate and decided to kill myself. There was no hope for me and all I was doing was hurting everyone around me. They would be better off without me, I told myself. By the time I got to the hotel room where I was going to drink myself silly and ingest all the medications which I had accumulated over the past nine months, the pills had disappeared. There was no choice left but to check myself into detox. I had run out of options.

In detox, I was introduced to Cocaine Anonymous. I had been to other 12 Step Fellowships but had never considered Cocaine Anonymous because I thought it was for a different kind of addict than me; I wasn't that bad yet, or so I thought. Turns out they were exactly like me. I would like to say that I stayed clean from this point on, but it took me a few months to gain my footing. I continuously slipped, but I also continuously kept coming back and picking up white key tags. I heard something in those meetings that gave me the hope and the determination to keep trying. I saw a sparkle in the eyes of the recovered members, and they shined with real genuine love and happiness. I wanted what they had. It has been five years and I have not had to pick up a drink or a drug. I am free! I am so grateful to C.A. and the members who so graciously carried me through

DON'T HATE THE ADDICT, HATE THE DISEASE

By: Kevin F.

Overland Park, Kansas, USA

Dear Addict Haters:

Hello, you may not know me well, but I'm an addict. I am one of the "junkies" you love to bash whenever someone mentions addiction on social media or hear it in conversation. I know it's hard to forgive the things we sometimes do because of our addiction, but I have a question for you. What is the worst thing you have ever done?

Obviously, I won't get an answer to this question but think about it. The thing that you hate that you did. You know, that one thing that not too many people even know about. Well, what if everyone knew about it? What if for the rest of your life you were labeled by that one act that you would erase in a second if you had the chance?

That is what being an addict is like, kind of. Now, I don't feel like being an addict is the worst thing a person can be or do. You, however, feel like it's a terrible thing. Don't get me wrong: If I could erase it from my life, I would. In an instant, it would be gone, but I don't have that option. I can't even do what you do and pretend that this thing I did didn't happen.

In order for me to ensure it never happens again, I have to work hard on making sure it doesn't. If I don't, my disease will tell me I can have a drink or do a line and not fall back into full-blown addiction, but I will.

Do you work hard to make sure your worst thing never happens again? Let me guess... you are thinking, Addiction is not a disease. It's a choice. Right?

Yes, all addiction starts with a choice - the same damn choice you made when you were young and hanging out with friends. You drank the same beer I drank. The same pot I smoked. You even tried the same line of white stuff someone put in front of you at a party. You were able to walk away and not take it to the extreme. Since I have the disease, I will spend the rest of my life either struggling to stay high or fighting to stay clean.

As children, we don't decide we would rather be an addict instead of a cop. You don't see children pretending that their dolls and stuffed animals are dope

sick. When is the last time you talked to a little girl who told you she couldn't wait to grow up so she could turn tricks to feed the insatiable hunger of her drug addiction?

My best friend didn't tell me about her exciting plans to become homeless - My good friend's dad, not one time, told his future wife to think twice before marrying him because he had high hopes of becoming an angry drunk - My lady friend didn't blow out the candles as a child wishing for a substance abuse disorder because she couldn't wait for the day her kids would go to foster care.

Nobody wants to have substance use disorder. Some of us just do. So always remember: You made those same choices too. You just got lucky that it was me and not you.

If you still have doubts, you can take those up with the Center for Disease Control or the United States Surgeon General. They have classified addiction as a disease, but then again... I am sure you know more about it than they do, right?

I pray that you don't have to reevaluate these opinions because you find out your child or parent is an addict. If you do, just know that we will accept you into our community. We will help your loved one. Do you know why we would do that? Because we are good people who just want the chance to live like everyone else.

So please, before you write another post bashing people who are suffering, think about it. Not only are you hurting the people who have the disease, you could be hurting everyone that loves them. You have people on your friends list or people that may overhear you at work who have children who are suffering right this moment from addiction. What did they do to deserve the awful things you put out into the universe that do nothing but perpetuate hate and judgment?

You have a right to your opinion. But no matter what, hurting people is wrong

Erratum

In the previous edition, Vol. 37 No.1, 1st Quarter 2019, there is a error on the front-page article, due to a wrong cut and paste that wasn't discovered during proofing. The last two paragraphs, that start with "After all the payoff..." and "The List of..." do not belong to the article by Pam G.

Please accept the Editor's apology for the error.

DIRIVEN TO THE COMFORT AND EASE OF THAT FIRST ONE

By: Susan T.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

My name is Susan, and I am definitely an addict of the hopeless variety described in the Big Book as the “Real Alcoholic (addict).” Without a profound psychic change and an alteration to my reaction to life, I WILL return time and time again to the ease and comfort which I felt at once from that first hit or drink. I wish I could tell you that I have all the answers on how not to pick up... but I don't. I think I have more experience in picking up and suffering complete incomprehensible demoralization after putting some mind-altering substance in my body, than knowing exactly how to stay clean.

I think sharing my story is more about sharing to what I did do, as opposed to what I didn't do. I believe that the fall, that the mess, the terrible low bottoms, and that the intense pain I suffered in my disease have been my greatest teachers of all. As a result of that pain that I have felt, and without the humiliation of the debauchery I made of my life due to this disease, and the gift of desperation that could not/ would not have not come, I have experienced first-hand the deepest guilt and shame that can only come from complete defeat. I have gone back out so many times, it's hard to even count. One thing I know is... I have gotten up more times than I have fallen down. It has only been through God's grace and His divine intervention through the extension of His loving hand which has miraculously brought me back onto the pathway of recovery!

I have had multiple years of recovery, only to return to that state of utter hopelessness. Why is that?

Time and time again, I find myself pounding on the bar, or in my case sucking on a crack pipe, or jamming a needle in my arm, with no way of getting out from underneath the grips of my addiction?

All I know is that I am the real deal. I have learned that I have an allergy of the body, compelled with the obsession of the mind, and that I cannot put something in my body without setting off the phenomena of craving. I have learned from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous that I do not know how to stay stopped once started. I am a classic case of the addict, alcoholic, that can't stop once they start. I have experienced time and time again the suffering and the progression of this disease.

How is that I am able to get up after the fall and get back on track and stay stopped? The answer to that is the whole purpose of me doing this gig that I have been freely given, this program of action that has been set before me. The answer is in the spiritual solution that can only be found in the twelve steps, at least for me. It is crucial, if I have any chance of staying stopped, that I MUST work the steps. I MUST not only

work the steps, I MUST apply, live, and walk in the freedom that can only come from the them.

This edition is all about the art of “Letting Go”. What a concept! Just how does one do that?

Once I let go and surrendered to the truth, I experienced complete freedom from my active alcoholism, the “ism” part of my disease, and also the freedom from those things that drove me time and time again back to the ease and comfort of that first one. I no longer feel the extreme guilt, shame, remorse, or regret that would drive me out to pick up. Better still, I could never even have fathomed how much I have gained as a result of the spiritual awakening within my soul; a direct result of the miraculous working power of these Steps. Doing the work gave me the courage and power to let go of needing everything to be ‘my way’, and to Trust that the God of my understanding could take care of my problems.

I was once famous in the area that I once came from, and I can assure you that I wasn't famous for something good. In fact, I was famous as a result of committing a heinous crime and my rise to stardom, or rather shall I say my fall, came after I had seven years clean and went back out. I made the headlines of the Toronto Sun with the caption which read.” Crack addicted Mother of two, steals gold off a dead corpse”! How's that for being famous! Famous alright, but famous for doing a despicable act.

I am thrilled to tell you that I no longer carry the weight and burden of that around. It's long behind me. I am free! I have been completely released from being a crappy Mom, who abandoned her kids to get high. I been completely free from being a low life crack head standing on a street corner at three am in minus 25 degrees to get her next fix. There is not one bit of dirt, or grime left on my soul, or flesh from that period in my active addiction. I have been set free from the bondage of self that always felt unworthy and never knew her place of significance in this world. I overdosed back in 2013 and was found dead on my bathroom floor by my son who was ten-years-old son at the time. What Mother would ever want her child to be traumatized and scared from that horrific experience? But praise God, I am now completely free from the obsession to use and to ultimately cause this type of pain and suffering for my family.

There is nothing like finally facing your life, your past, your guilt, and your shame and be able to look yourself, and others in the eyes, and know with very fiber of your being, that you are restored and set free from that garbage. WOW, what a great deal we got here!

(Continued on page 2)

LETTING GO AWAY

By: Ali M.
Ajax, Ontario, CANADA

I am an addict of the hopeless variety. This was not always evident to me. For a long time, I was wandering through life, lost, wondering when my personal hell would end. I remember always feeling out of place even before I found drugs and alcohol. I felt alone, even surrounded by loving friends and family. I didn't want to live from a very young age and that instantly changed the moment I took my first drink. It changed again after my first hit. The confidence that drugs and alcohol gave me was what I thought I was searching for my whole life.

Simply, drugs consumed me. I spent every day finding ways to get my next fix. Not caring about what I was losing; my friends, family, time and my sanity. But through it all my mind continued to tell me I was okay, that things would get better as I could just get high one more time.

My drug addiction was my first love. It consumed every aspect of my being. It was a safety blanket in a world I could not understand. It kept me warm in the coldest of times, wrapped me up tight in dark rooms. But before I knew it, I was suffocating.

I lived in misery for a long time. A constant circle of picking up, feeling lost, and wanting the end to come. I felt like there was no way out of my thoughts, that there was no way that I would make it out alive.

But then I found the program of cocaine anonymous. I was broken, closed minded and terrified, but I saw hope in the eyes of people who had been in the same dark places that I had been stuck in for so long. For the first time in my whole life I had faith that maybe there was a light at the end of the tunnel. So, I got honest, I opened my mind and I became willing to live. I got myself a sponsor and worked the 12 steps to the best of my ability. And for the first time, by the grace of God, I had freedom. All those years of questioning why I stayed alive, all the nights alone in my dark room using, hoping to not wake up, they all slipped away. I have been given my life back, one that I could have never imagined. Thanks to C.A, the 12 Steps and my higher power, I have finally let go.

(The A.A. Book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, the books *Hope Faith & Courage*, and *HFCII* and *A Quiet Peace* are used with permission.)

Trustee Corner

LEARNING TO LET GO

By: Chris R.
Atlantic South Regional Trustee
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Before I came into the rooms of Cocaine Anonymous, I'd never heard of "Letting Go." I continued to go to meetings – unwillingly. I was told I need to get a sponsor. So, I got a sponsor and he informed me that to stay sober I had to 'let go' of those old friends. At the time I was unwilling to do that. My sponsor told me that if I continued to go around them, they would get me high before I get them sober.

As the addict I am, I had to weigh it out - was it more important for me to stay sober or to have them as my friends? I choose to stay sober and get rid of those friends. This was the 1st time I ever had to let go of something, but not the last time. I started to work the Steps with my sponsor and found out I had a lot of resentments (such as courts systems, police, teachers, IRS, etc.)

My sponsor showed me how to put the resentment on paper and pray for those people or places that I had a resentment towards. As I continue to pray for the resentment, unwillingly I started to 'let go' of the resentment. I didn't know how much the resentment was affecting my life. Every time I was at a meeting and someone would talk about one of the resentments I had, my stomach would turn, so I continued to pray to 'let go' of the resentments and my life begin to change. My sponsor let me know that it was not the change that causes me the pain, but the resistance to change that causes me the pain.

Today in my sobriety, 'Letting Go' is easier than when I first got in the rooms, because I've worked some Steps and my own experience has shown me that it is easier to 'Let Go' than to hold on. I THANK MY HIGHER POWER FOR LETTING ME LEARN HOW TO LET GO!!



LETTING THINGS GO

By: Rick D.
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA

"Letting things go" was right up there with "turn it over" as sayings I often heard in meetings that sounded good. They sounded good, but they made no sense. It was when I went through the Steps and began to practice them that 'letting go' and 'turning it over' started to seem possible because I now had new tools.

Then I began to get into the Traditions. At first, I wanted to understand the Traditions to tell others how to behave. The more I tried to understand them, the more I saw that they were about my behavior. I learned that the Traditions were about me sacrificing my desires for the good of the group. As I tried to live up to this noble sounding statement, I discovered how much the opinion of others about me really mattered.

I needed to be right. I needed to be liked. When it came to sacrifice for the common good, I needed to explain myself. I needed you to understand why I did what I did. I loved being a part of C.A. I didn't want the people I cared so much for not to like me. Through a lot of inventory and discussion, through a lot of amends, and finally through lots of prayer and meditation I learned to let go of what others in the Fellowship thought about me. At least I began to make progress toward the goal.

I believe that the God of my understanding wants me to be more concerned about loving you than being concerned about what you think of me. It is by letting go of my selfish desires that I see you as someone I can love. I found with practice that this was something I could do at first only in the Fellowship. Then I was able to do it in my family. Then while out about in the world.

Some time ago it was suggested to me by a sponsor that it is important that I be willing to appear foolish for the benefit of others. This had required me to try and rely more on prayer and meditation to see what it is that God would have me do. All this of course is stuff I try to practice; I make progress. The joy that comes when I am free to love you without the worry what you think about be is wonderful. I think it allows me to become more efficient when carrying the message; to be more honest when sponsoring.

For me 'letting go' has become the way to freedom from the insecure voices that have always been a part of my mental voices. That voice that says they don't really like you. The voice that says you are stupid. The voice that says very loudly, if you don't prove that you are right, then they will think you are weak or a fool. When I can love instead, I feel a sense of rightness, a sense of wholeness.



A Quiet Peace

A Commemorative Limited Edition

The distinctive cover of this limited edition features a beautiful textured blue faux leather with silver lettering, as well as silver foil edged pages. The cover opens to an onion skin hand numbered page it also features a white satin ribbon page marker and comes in a glossy raised printed gift/ display box.

With only 1000 printed *** You will want to purchase this truly beautiful collector's item for only \$35.00 each. (Also available, a case of 16 books for just \$420.00)

SELF REFLECTION—GOOD FOR THE SOUL!

By: Vicky M.
St. Louis, Missouri USAA

It was almost time for this issue to go to press, and I found myself suffering from “writer’s block.” I should have asked someone to pen me a front-page article, but now it was too late, and I was needing to throw something together myself. Hoping for inspiration, I prayed for an intuitive thought. Instead, I got a phone call from a sponsee.

Getting out of self, I listened as she unloaded her current day’s issue. Afterwards, I remarked that what I was hearing seemed to constitute a pretty big resentment. Because this sponsee is far from a newcomer and has years of sobriety under her belt—I said, “You know exactly what you need to do with a resentment!” Within the next few minutes, between the two of us, we easily recognized “her part” and identified this particular resentment as an unrealized expectation. She was able to let it go and get back into the present moment, reclaiming her peace and serenity.

When she asked me what I was doing today, I told her how I was struggling with a good topic for this newsletter article. She immediately said, “Why not write about the Fourth Step? It’s the fourth month, and it’s always a good idea to stay in the Steps. Keep it simple.”

Brilliant! My prayer for an intuitive thought had been answered through my sponsee’s suggestion.

The Fourth Step exercise is such a crucial part of our recovery process. Self-examination is the key to letting go of blame, shame, resentment and fear. Once we learn how to go about doing it, it’s pretty hard to stay too long in any of those self-defeating frames of mind. In its chapter on Step Four, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions talks about the different types of inventories. For most of us, our first Fourth Step inventory is the biggie, where we clear away a large percentage of the wreckage of our past. Inevitably, however, as we mature in our spirituality, we discover pockets of behavior that necessitate another look.

My particular favorite type of inventory is described as the “spot-check” inventory. This is where I recognize something as it is happening and immediately launch into the process of discerning what’s causing me to lose my serenity; what part of my “self” is being affected; and where am I being selfish, dishonest or frightened in the situation. I differentiate this from my daily Tenth Step, which is a separate review done at the end of the day where I assess both the things I’ve done well along with the instances where my actions have been less than the best they could have been.

I’m grateful that my first Fourth Step was prescribed by my sponsor using the directions in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. I’m also grateful that I’ve had the opportunity to do other Fourth Steps since then, with other sponsors, some in other programs, using different workbooks or methodologies. My second sponsor had me do a Fourth Step using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. “Read the chapter,” she said, “And every time you come to a question, write it down and answer it!”

A vast number of tools are available for doing Fourth Step work—make use of them if you have the opportunity. Each and every time you decide to dig a little deeper into the excavation of your soul, you will reap huge rewards in the advancement of your conscious contact with God as you understand God; and in the process, get more and more comfortable in your own skin!

CELEBRATE AROUND THE WORLD

Are you talented?
Are you creative?
Your Fellowship needs you!

World Unity Committee is seeking submissions for the 2020 Celebrate Around The World LOGO

INTERESTED?
SEND YOUR IDEAS TO US

Any artwork used for the event cannot be signed
Art design must be sent to World Service Conference Unity Committee for approval
Artwork must be submitted in jpeg and/or jpg format
The Unity Committee will view all artwork and select on a piece to present to WSC for final approval.

Please submit your artwork to:

CAWSO
www.ca.org
c/o CAWSC UNITY COMMITTEE
21720 S. Wilmington Ave. Suite 304
Long Beach, CA 90810
USA

NewsGram Editorial Policy

The NewsGram publishes articles that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the editorial content, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts. The heart of The NewsGram is in the shared experience of individual C.A. members working the C.A. program and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or C.A. group may not always work for another. For this reason, from month to month, articles may be published that appear to contradict one another. Seeking neither to gloss over difficult issues, nor to present such issues in a harmful or contentious manner, The NewsGram tries to embody the widest possible view of the C.A. Fellowship.

The Charter of the World Service Conference guarantees The NewsGram editor the right to accept or reject material for publication. The NewsGram staff members evaluate articles and, while some editing is done for purposes of clarity, styling, length and content, the editors encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own unique way.

Articles are not intended to be statements of C.A. policy, nor does publication of any article constitute endorsement by either Cocaine Anonymous or The NewsGram. Articles are invited, although no payment can be made nor can material be returned.

Articles in the NewsGram express the individual opinions of C.A. members and not necessarily Cocaine Anonymous.



**PUT YOUR
SERVICE
SHOES
ON!**

The WSCIT COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!!!

Exciting news C.A. is continuing work on an app for our Fellowship! We are looking for your ideas and input to find out what the Fellowship would like to see. We have a list of ideas from referrals and committee work for possible content:

- *Sobriety Calculator (referral)*
- *Find a meeting (referral)*
- *Pre-amble*
- *Who is a Cocaine Addict?*
- *We Can Recover*
- *Serenity Prayer*
- *Link to CA.org*
- *12 Steps*
- *12 Traditions*
- *Vision for you*
- *Reaching Out*
- *Meeting Formats*
- *Find events: district, area, or international*

*Let us know what you would like to see,
send an email to itcommittee@ca.org*

Join us!!!

Do you have a passion for emerging technologies, would you like to get involved send us an email to join the committee.

Subscribe to the NewsGram

For the low price of \$10 U.S. per year, you can receive 10 copies of the NewsGram to share with your friends or your group. Complete this form and include your credit card information, or enclose a \$10 check or money order (U.S. dollars only) and send to: NewsGram, c/o CAWSO, 21720 S. Wilmington Ave., Ste. 304, Long Beach, C.A. 90810-1641. A subscription form is also available for download at www.ca.org.

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_____	.CRM CRIMSON	_____
_____	.EME EMERALD	_____
_____	.GRN GREEN	_____
_____	.OCN OCEAN BREEZE	_____
_____	.ORG ORANGE/BLACK	_____
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_____	.RED RED	_____
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_____	.VLT VIOLET	_____

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Long Beach, CA 90810-1641
Please allow 7-10 days for delivery



Share Your Experience, Strength & Hope in C.A.'s First 12 Steps & 12 Traditions Book and 12-Step Workbook

We need **YOU** to help make these books a reality! The Conference has approved the concepts, but as with all new C.A. books, the Literature, Chips, and Format Committee needs YOUR submissions.

Be a part of C.A. history and help write these books!

12-Step Workbook:

This workbook will be a tool to be used with a sponsor and in conjunction with literature approved for use at C.A. meetings as listed above. Submissions should be 1-2 pages long and include the following:

- Quotes or references to suggested readings from literature approved for use at C.A. meetings (C.A.'s meeting formats, pamphlets, HFC or HFC II, The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (US), The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, or Service Manual);
- Your personal experience on a Step;
- Four to twelve questions to help the reader have his or her own experience with the Step;
- A worksheet applicable to the Step (optional);
- A prayer or spiritual exercise to conclude the section on that Step.

C.A.'s 12 & 12

Help us write C.A.'s own 12 Steps & 12 Traditions book based on our Fellowship's experience with the Steps and Traditions. Provide 1000 - 2000 words on the Step/Tradition focusing on your own experience, strength and hope, with a closing paragraph summing up your gratitude for that particular Step/Tradition and how it relates to your recovery. For more information, please contact Jason L., Subcommittee Chair, via e-mail at jason_lmc@yahoo.co.uk.

Guidelines For All Submissions:

Don't worry about grammar, spelling or punctuation; we have people to help "polish" whatever you write. Other than cited quotes, each submission must be the author's original writing. In keeping with the 11th Tradition, submissions will be reviewed anonymously, and the authors of material ultimately selected for publication will be asked to maintain their anonymity. A reply will be sent when the selection process is complete for each project. Electronic submissions are preferred. Each submission also requires a properly executed release form (available at <https://ca.org/service/world-service-conference/cocaine-anonymous-newsgram/>). You may send your submission(s) and release via e-mail to submissions@ca.org or by regular mail to: CAWSO, Inc. Attention: LCF Committee, 21720 S. Wilmington Ave., Ste. 304, Long Beach. C.A. 90810 -1641. For more information, please call 310-559-5833.

Cocaine Anonymous Online Service Area

No transportation? Have the flu? Recovering from surgery? Homebound? No meetings where you live?

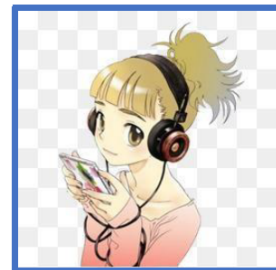
You can still get to a meeting at

www.CA-Online.org

If you have a phone, computer or tablet,
you can get to a meeting!



Email Meetings



VoIP Meetings

Download the OSA Meeting Directory at
<http://ca-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OSA-Meeting-Directory-Feb-2019.pdf>

C.A. WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

PUBLIC INFORMATION

North American PI Summary

Your North American Public Information team has been busy and productive in this first quarter of 2019, and I'm excited to share some of our triumphs with the Fellowship.

The North American PI Summit was hosted in and by the Phoenix, Arizona Area in mid-February. It was a wonderful event. Members attended from various Areas throughout the US and Canada (and the UK), to brainstorm and implement new, exciting ideas designed to raise awareness of C.A. to the public. The Summit was held in a beautiful spiritual retreat Center in Paradise Valley, and the local Fellowship were wonderful hosts. It was a great experience to visit Phoenix C.A. meetings.

The PI Committee got a great deal of work done and there are lots of great new events and ideas to be rolled out in coming months, not the least of which is our first ever global PI event, the 'Colour the World Green Campaign' to be held the first week of June!

Leading up to the Summit, in the last few months of 2018 and in early 2019, PI subcommittees made steady gains in their effort to grow the C.A. profile, for example: the National Association of Drug Court Professionals in the US has invited C.A. to submit a proposal that would enable C.A. to not only participate at the next drug court conference, but to also be presenters! The Canadian Drug Court is currently in the process of working with PI to also enable C.A. participation at the next Canadian Drug Court event.

We have created the first two of three organic public information calls spanning North America. The first call, established since May 2018, includes all areas in Canada and North Atlantic region, as well as participation from California, Arizona, and North Carolina. In March, we had a historic moment when we had a PI member or Chair from every area from West to East across Canada as well as several members from the North Atlantic region all on the phone at the same time-sharing ideas and inspirations regarding Public Information. The calls have been informative and inspiring. Every month we have a feature participant share for five or ten minutes about a Public Information initiative that has been successful in their Area. It has been a great opportunity for other Areas to learn and ask questions and then eventually implement those ideas in their own areas. The second call, currently in its third month, connects another ten to 15 PI members and/or Chairs throughout the Midwest and Atlantic South Areas. Again, the idea is to unify our PI members and to share ideas to help our Fellowship grow. Both calls have been positive, enthusiastic and inspirational! A third call connecting the Southwest and Pacific South Areas is scheduled to start in the coming weeks.

If you would like to participate in one of the monthly organic Public Information calls and learn of new ways to help your Area grow, please email us at pi@ca.org

Throughout North America, active PI Committees have participated in countless events, have set up booths and literature racks containing C.A. info in a multitude of venues and have all worked diligently in getting the C.A. word out to Professionals, as well as other addicts.

European and North American PI, under the coordination of our pi.ca.org Chair, Megan, and Trusted Servant, Michael in Tenerife, have developed an informative electronic PI Members page, <https://pi.ca.org/>. On this page members can access our great PI posters, get FREE material customized for their Area, and take advantage of the many other resources being offered.

So, as you can see, the Public Information team is doing great things! I hope many more of you will join us in getting our message out to the public. Hope to cross paths with you soon. Until then, keep walking in the Sunlight!

By Kimberley C.
North American Public Information Chair

C.A. WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

CONFERENCE

When asked to write an article for the NewsGram from the Conference Committee and the theme was "Letting Things Go," we wondered. After thinking over it a bit, we decided that we will remind you all of some things that have been let go as it pertains to the World Service Conference and the Conference Committee itself. Some of you probably won't even be able to relate to all the changes, having experienced the new and improved Conference. But here goes...

Remember when you had to mail in your registration and your check? Now we use RegOnline and snap! Your registration and credentials and payment have been received and you are in the system and that process begins.

Remember when we had to manually count the votes by raised hands and/or fists?? Now, the directive is made to 'prepare yourselves to vote.' Clickers in hand you place your vote and the vote is counted within seconds.

Remember when you were a new delegate and you showed up at your first conference and someone would greet you, kind of show you around and then kiss you on the forehead, shove you into the pack and wish you good luck? Now through New Delegate Orientations and Meet and Greets, you are welcomed and taught and shown the way.

Remember when we used to waste a forest or two of trees making copies for everyone, and then more copies when the reports were being edited, and then more copies when it was finished to distribute, only to realize that there was a mistake and it had to be recopied and distributed again? With the addition of jump drives and the Box files, we are doing our best to save the planet.

Remember Delegate Notebooks that you picked up and all those reports that were distributed were added into your notebook, and then you started fretting about how the heck you were going to get that thing in your suitcase and whether or not you were going to have to pay for heavy baggage to your airline? Good news! The delegate notebook is available electronically and you can still get your Delegate notebook (for a small fee...we are trying to save the planet here!) if you just like being old school.

Remember when we had to read everything into the microphone for taping purposes and we would listen to reports droning on so long that we could have easily fallen asleep? Today, just the facts, Ma'am! The condensed versions are presented at the microphone and the rest of the hard work is presented in written format.

Remember when we were never sure if we were going to make our Monday flights because we were still in session? Oh wait, that happened last year. Scratch that. But it is true that we have become much more efficient and have the ability to move much faster through the agenda, getting our very, very important work completely in the allotted time.

Over the past five or six years, we have been able to let go of some of our old ways and have had the wonderful opportunity to see our World Service Conference move in a new direction that is not only more efficient but fun. Working this way, we have more time to spend together and get to know each other...which we will never let go!

**GO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE!!
SEE YOU ALL IN AUGUST!**

HOPITALS & INSTITUTIONS

When I came into Cocaine Anonymous, I was a hopeless crack head. I just could not stop and did not know why?

I surrendered in January 2007 living in a dry house. I quickly got into service at group level then at 1 year I qualified to become a secretary in an H&I meeting. I loved this commitment as I was able to carry a message of hope to these men and women who didn't know there was a way out.

On the 24th January 2009 my brother died from this disease, I remember by phone pocket dialled the hospital where he had been admitted the day before and was in the Intensive Care Unit due to organ failure as a direct result of alcoholism. I was beside myself in my little flat when I heard the priest giving our Raymond his last rights!

I was not in control I had no alternative other than to let go and let God. He was the orchestra of this show now. I was broken hearted and felt alone all I had now was God.... I prayed on my knees all day and all night as that was the only comfort I had, drink and drugs did not enter my mind.

The very next day was my turn to take H&I meeting in the treatment centre - some people thought I was mad, but God had a plan; it just showed me that to carry the message is vital to my own recovery and with that off I went.

The subject that day was your understanding of God and all I know that God carried me through this stage in my recovery, my heart has healed somewhat, and I have let go of the past and look to future....all because back in January 2007 I went to a meeting to find some drugs.

I didn't. Instead I found a sponsor and went through the work which led me to God...I am now over 12 years of continuous sobriety and love Cocaine Anonymous.

Sarah T. Perivale, ENGLAND

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 4-8, 2019

CAWS 2019 35th Annual Convention

LOCATION:

Scandic Infra City
Stockholm, Sweden

August 2-4, 2019

CAMPVENTION 10

LOCATION:

Ford Street Farm
Braughing Ware Herts SG11 2Pn, England

October 25-27, 2019

2019 Midwest Regional

LOCATION:

Ramada Plaza Hotel
Omaha, Nebraska

WSO NEEDS YOU MAINTAINING YOUR MEETINGS ON CA.ORG

When was the last time you reviewed your Area contact info on the ca.org website?

Is the phone number on the Telephone Directory page correct for your Area?

Is the website address for your Area correct?

<https://ca.org/meetings/>

If you see any discrepancies, please ask your Area Delegate to provide the updated information to WSO.

Attn: Linda at doo@ca.org

THE NEWSGRAM

IS LOOKING FOR YOU!!!!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PUBLISHED??? DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY???

The NewsGram is looking for your article, recovery jokes, recovery poem, suggestions, ideas, recovery drawing, or spiritual thoughts.

This is YOUR publication!! We're looking for small items of 1 or 2 lines up to articles anywhere from 200 to 1100 words. If you write an item, you can upload it and sign the

release form online at

<https://tinyurl.com/y9yu92l3>

or snail mail it to:

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Long Beach, C.A. 90810, USA**

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NEWSGRAM THEME FOR OUR NEXT EDITION

TRAUMA & TRIGGERS

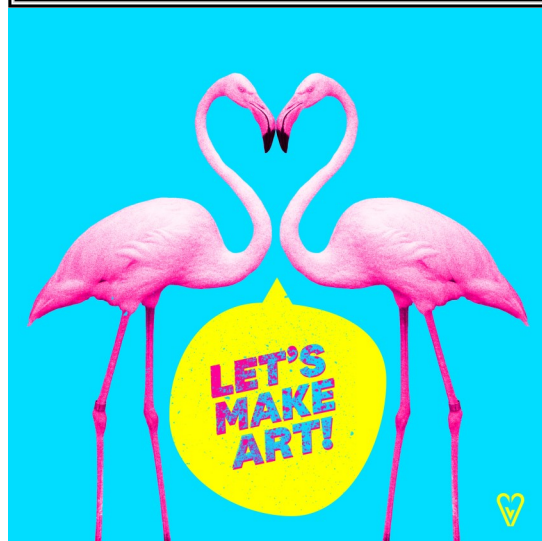
DEADLINE: JULY 1ST 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (PAGE 2)

STOCKHOLM SYNDROME

JULY 4—JULY 8, 2019

Stockholm. Sweden



Contribute to CAWS 2019 with YOUR artwork!

Is your passion making art? Are you a painter, illustrator, graphic designer, photographer, jewelry designer or sculptor? CAWS 2019 invites YOU to design artwork and contribute to the auction at the convention.

Selected submissions will be posted in the blog (www.caws2019.org) continuously. Some of the submissions will finally be selected for auction at the convention (in spirit of the 7th Tradition).

THEMES

- Stockholm Syndrome
- Recovery
- C.A.

How to submit

1. Pick one of the themes above
2. Create your artwork!
3. Send an image of your artwork to submission@caws2019.org, along with information about art technique used and original size. Also write your first name and country.

Guidelines

If you're not a digital artist, please digitalize your work by scanning or photographing it. The image of your artwork should be in JPG-format. You can submit up to 10 artworks during August 2nd 2018 to June 15th 2019. All submissions must be the artists original artwork.

By submitting your artwork to submission@caws2019.org you agree to let CAWS 2019 publish your artwork at www.caws2019.org. All submissions selected for auction will be contacted by email and artwork won't be auctioned out without agreement.

**TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT OF ALL RIGHTS,
TITLE AND INTEREST IN ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK
AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

(This form is intended for original material submitted to Cocaine Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc., and must accompany all submissions in order for such material to be published. All materials submitted become the property of Cocaine Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc.)

With this document, I, the undersigned Cocaine Anonymous (hereinafter referred to as "C.A.") member, hereby grant permission to COCAINE ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC., a California corporation (hereafter referred to as "CAWS") and COCAINE ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, INC., a California corporation (hereafter referred to as "CAWSO"), their successors, assigns, and those acting on their authority, to publish the attached material entitled or described as follows:

I further acknowledge and agree that:

1. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release CAWS and CAWSO from any claims by myself, my successors, and/or my assigns regarding the attached material.

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3. I am the author of this work, i.e. this work is completely original and I have not used any third party source(s), in part or in whole, to create this work unless said third party source or sources are given full credit within the body of this work and further that said third party or parties have given written permission for said use, copies of which are attached hereto.

4. CAWS and/or CAWSO may change, modify or revise this work to whatever extent either or both deem necessary. I understand that, if selected for publication, this material will be edited in keeping with C.A.'s understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Submissions will also be copyedited to ensure ease of comprehension and adherence to standard rules of grammar and punctuation as well as current CAWS and CAWSO style guidelines. In addition, editorial staff may also substitute different words and/or revise sentence structure for clarification. I further understand that this material may be retitled and/or reprinted in more than one CAWS or CAWSO publication.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

**7th Tradition January-March 2019
Category or Group**

LOCATION	NAME/CITY	TOTAL
CANADA		
Ontario	Saturday Nite Live (SNL) & The Phoenix Group Toronto	\$100.00
Québec	Wow It Works	\$50.00
EUROPE		
England	CA London	\$5 323.74
	CA UK Area	\$7 540.64
	Hants & Berks District CA	\$210.04
USA		
Arizona	Birds of a Feather LLC	\$180.17
	SNL Group	\$169.81
	Sun Valley Intergroup, Inc.	\$8 000.00
California	CA Northern AZ District	\$2 000.00
	CA Northbay Service Group	\$90.00
	One Puff, Too Tough	\$500.00
	CA Long Beach/ Compton	\$631.05
	CA Southbay Beach Cities Group	\$500.00
	WSH (CALA)	\$34.81
	Come Alive Group	\$230.00
	Inland Empire Area	\$125.00
	Men of the Garage Step Study Group	\$70.00
	SFVCACO, Inc.	\$147.61
	Sisters In Sobriety (SCD) Group	\$350.00
Colorado	San Gabriel Pomona Valley CA	\$377.46
	No More Pipe Dreams Group	\$5.00
	Old Timers, New Comers Group, San Fernando/ Pomona Valley	\$73.00
	WSOB	\$27.00
	CA Colorado, Whiteout Group	\$152.00
	CA of Colorado Inc.	\$439.65
Florida	H&I CA of Colorado Inc.	\$192.39
	Coconuts Denver Colorado	\$60.00
	Nirvana Group	\$692.00
	District of Fort Myers, FL	\$105.00
Georgia	Carry This Message Group	\$23.00
	Log Cabin Group	\$132.00
	Spearheads Group	\$24.00
Illinois	IACA Inc South & West Dist.	\$82.65
	IACA Inc.	\$200.00
	IACA Inc., North & West District	\$256.61
Massachusetts	MASS Area CA	\$42.00
Maryland	CA Area Service DC/MD/VA	\$25.00
Michigan	Saturday Morning Alive	\$70.00
Missouri	Greater St. Louis District of CA	\$100.00
New York	The Last Straw Group	\$100.00

**7th Tradition January-March 2019
Category or Group**

LOCATION	NAME/CITY	TOTAL
Ohio	AM Sunday Group	\$150.00
Oregon	CA of Oregon, & SW Washington	\$100.00
Pennsylvania	CA of PA, NJ, DE	\$300.00
South Carolina	Conway CA	\$123.48
Texas	Freedom & Hope Group Con-science	\$45.00
	Newcomers Group	\$60.00
Washington	Bladerunners	\$71.90
Wisconsin	First Things First	\$30.00
	Razors Edge Group	\$132.00
World Contri-bution Program	See form on page 7	\$6 464.82
Anonymous	Anonymous	\$517.37
S.M.A.R.T. Program	S.M.A.R.T. Program	\$585.00
Single Dona-tion	Keith E. - Celebrating 30 Years of Sobriety	\$30.00
Gratitude	Gratitude	\$438.12
Total 7th Tradition		\$38 479.32

GET \$M.A.R.T.

**SAVE MY A\$\$ RECOVERY
TRANSFER**

**DID THE FELLOWSHIP OF COCAINE
ANONYMOUS SAVE YOUR A\$\$? DO YOU WANT
TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION? JUST
FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS!!**

- * **STEP 1:** Log into your Bank Account
- * **STEP 2:** Go to "PAY BILLS"
- * **STEP 3:** Create a monthly recurring payment (\$2, \$5, \$10, ETC) AND
- * **SEND TO:** CAWSO
21720 S WILMINGTON AVE., STE. 304
LONG BEACH, C.A. 90810-1641 USA

**THAT'S IT!! JUST SET IT UP AND THEN YOU
DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT**

*Typically a free service with most bank accounts

(The A.A. Book Alcoholics Anonymous, the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, the books Hope Faith & Courage, and HFCII and A Quiet Peace are used with permission.)