

# CleanTimes

October - December 2006

Serving the West Tennessee Area of Narcotics Anonymous

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*Happy Holidays Season Greetings Happy New Year*



## ***From the Chair***

My name is Trinity P. and I am an addict. I wanted to say that first and then say thank you to this area for electing me to chair this Newsletter. This is my first "long term" position of service around here and I am grateful to be allowed to serve. So far I have gotten great responses for articles and other types of submissions and I am excited to see the experience, strength, and hope that we have to offer each other! By the time this is out, many of you will have heard me announce that we are looking for submissions, but I will say it here to hopefully reach those of you I do not get to see a lot of. The Newsletter will be taking all types of submissions, articles, interviews, poetry, prose, cartoons, anything that shares ESH. Get creative! Anything that involves sharing ESH will be considered. My goal for this thing is to get the solutions out there, and to help us see one another in new ways. Also to allow addicts to express themselves and their recovery in new and creative ways. We are a talented and creative bunch of people. Sorry, no personal ads. But if you have something you want to submit, you can either email it to [NewsletterNA@yahoo.com](mailto:NewsletterNA@yahoo.com) or you can give it to me whenever you see me. I look forward to serving the West Tennessee Area of Narcotics Anonymous, the place where I got clean and got a life!  
In Grateful Loving Service, Trinity P.

### ***Spiritually Uncertain***

Interestingly enough, I don't feel so rough after things had been so tough. So, I won't get completely buff, but I'm feeling pretty good about my self-image. Imagine that. I sat in a pool of pity pondering my problems pathetically prolonging any prevailing of the spirit inside. And all around me I wanted so much to see into the abyss of absolute uncertainty, but I was certainly too afraid of what I would find in me. Who are we really meant to be? Understandably, it were just my inhibitions tugging at the strings of my pride. "Just hide; just hide." You need no love, no passion or truth. But my life was nuttier than the nuttiest Baby Ruth. Well, I want to be an Almond Joy. Sometimes you feel like a nut; sometimes you don't. I won't walk the Mounds with pounds on my back any longer. I know I am stronger, but I'm still so weak. But that's okay on this day. Who knows about next week??? Gary G.

It's a beautiful morning, and as I sit here with my first cup of coffee I'm reflecting on my life in recovery. There's been many changes; both exciting and frightening over the past couple of years, and yet I'm sitting here full of gratitude for all the lessons I've learned no matter how painful they've been.

You see, relapse has been a reality for me in recovery. I won't say that it is unfortunate in my case because I am here today to share it with you. I am a miracle. So many don't survive relapse and *that* is unfortunate. What it did for me was open my eyes, and strip some excruciatingly painful layers of denial away. I was living in an illusion of how I thought life was supposed to be, and how I was supposed to feel.

I thought I had "arrived". That warm blanket of denial kept me safe from feeling the pain of loss of my marriage, and I needed a distraction to avoid the pain of grieving that loss. I was working on a step that required me to take an honest look at the defects of character that had repeatedly caused me so much misery all my life. Instead of gathering the troops (women), hunkering down, and doing what was suggested, I turned to what was most familiar to me. I got into a relationship. Need I say more?

Any honesty that I had begun to practice throughout my first year clean was no longer possible. I had to protect the "drug". It felt wonderful to be loved and pampered, but at what cost? I was compromising the very principles I had begun to live and value. I knew in my gut that it was not healthy, but I couldn't stop myself. I couldn't live with the feeling inside that I was doing something wrong for me and I had to "use" to numb the pain of knowing I had compromised what I valued the most.

My sponsor let me go because she knew I wasn't being honest, and that did me in. I couldn't handle the pain of losing someone that I had come to love so dearly and had begun to let into my life. Getting back to the rooms was difficult, but it had to be done. I learned one of the most important lessons of my life through this experience: You can't save your face and your ass at the same time. It was time to get honest and do something different.

I have just celebrated one year clean again. Although I have not had a real desire to use over this past year, I have had a real desire to give up at times. I've wanted to throw in the towel and act out on my disease, but I know that as soon as I start compromising I will use drugs. I feel so much better about what I value most in my life,

myself when I'm able to do the right things for the right reasons. The principles of honesty, open mindedness, and willingness work and I am living proof.

Relapse is not a requirement, but it certainly has been a reality for this recovering addict. It is ugly, painful, and most importantly, difficult to come back from. It doesn't have to be your reality if you just put one foot in front of the other, do the next right thing, and don't use no matter what! A very grateful recovering addict,  
Shelly L.

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### ***Struggling through the first year***

My name is Kristi and I am an addict. First I would like to thank the newsletter for giving me this opportunity to write on this topic. I am very grateful to be clean today. I remember when I walked back into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I was broken. I weighed about a hundred pounds, dark circles under my eyes, where I had not slept in days. Just out of the hospital from an overdose back into the rooms. People that had known me before, put their arms around me and said "Welcome Home". My first few weeks, I found a Sponsor, went to as many meetings as possible, a least one a day. I hung out with people in recovery and cried a lot. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days, and did that for 9 months. I started working the 12 steps at 90 days clean. The reason I waited was because It was all I could do, not to put dope in my body for the first 90 days. I worked on something good for my recovery everyday. I have gone through tough times in recovery. I struggled with a relationship that I had been in for about 6 years. I lost my dog after 30 days clean. I was at a meeting and she had jumped a fence and broke her neck. Thank god for night meetings and women in the fellowship. I buried myself in work & recovery. For whatever reason, I went back to the relationship that I had struggled with and let him move back in with me, only to find out a couple of months later, that he was selling & doing dope behind my back. I was in such denial. So, I left that relationship for the last time. I have lost jobs, lost relationships, and lost friends in recovery. But no matter what I don't have to use today. I have faith today that my higher power is with me all the time and if I do the next right thing, everything will work out. I have a choice today. I call women in the fellowship, I work the

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## ***How My Higher Power Has Evolved***

When I got clean on January 6th, 2004 I was an agnostic: someone who is not committed to believe in either the existence or nonexistence of God or a God. My Higher Power until then had been drugs, my mother or my daughter, Tiffany. None of these could keep my clean.

I was faced with a dilemma. How could an agnostic recover using a 12 step program. Fortunately, I was able to separate religion from spirituality. I defined my own Higher Power. It's only requirement was that it has to be loving, caring and greater than me.

So, I started out with something concrete. My first Higher Power was the treatment center and the professionals who worked there. By my third month clean, it has evolved to include the groups and the program of Narcotics Anonymous. Finally, something that I could believe in.

I continued to recover and as time went on, so did my Higher Power continue to evolve. I continued to be open-minded. I saw amazing things happening around me. I lost the desire to use. This was a result of my willingness and my loving and caring Higher Power.

It became easier for me to feel my Higher Power around me. The phenomenon of addicts losing the desire to use and find a new way of life gave me hope.

I completed the second step and had faith that my Higher Power could restore me to sanity. As I started working the Third Step, I began thinking of my Higher Power as a positive energy of the meetings, my sponsor, my support network and the program. Relying on this I could really start turning my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power.

During the last 3 months, I have been able to start addressing some of my core issues. These had earlier been something that I thought I would never share with anyone, not even my sponsor. I am truly living the Third Step. I continue receiving gifts I never dreamed possible and for that I am grateful to my Higher Power.  
Glen H.

### ***NA Literature Quote of the Day:***

If we accept empathy as the capacity to see ourselves in others knowingly, without losing our own identity, then we recognize a sameness in both. If we have accepted ourselves, how can we reject another?"  
-IP No. 5 "Another Look"

*"I think that the converse is also true. If I can accept others how can I reject myself?"*  
Mia N.

*If you would like to submit a favorite quote from our literature and explain what it means to you or why you like it please let me know. You can email it to me at NewsletterNA@yahoo.com. All submissions would be appreciated.*

### **Area Level Service Positions Available Service Helps Keep You Clean!**

#### ***Positions Available:***

**Vice-Chair**

**Alt. Treasurer**

**NA in May Chair**

**H & I Chair**

**Policy Chair**

### **NEW MEETING IN HORN LAKE, MS**

*New Beginnings II*

**SATURDAY EVENINGS  
4:30 PM**

**Recovery Club  
1953 Sartain  
Horn Lake, MS**

*We need your support!*

# Birthdays and Anniversaries

## OCTOBER

T.J. B. - 10/? - 4 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
Bill B. - 10/2 - 16 Years - Primary Purpose  
Mike G. - 10/4 - 16 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Coleman M. - 10/9 - 1 Year - Desire  
Leigh P. - 10/9 - 1 Year - Desire  
Karl S. - 10/13 - 14 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Tom B. - 10/15 - 3 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Dave. L. - 10/18 - 3 Years - Farfromusen  
Mark R. - 10/20 - 9 Years - Primary Purpose  
Brian J. - 10/21 - 1 Year - Harmony  
Jackie P. - 10/26 - 1 Year - Desire

## NOVEMBER

Eddie P. - 11/? - 1 Year - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
Whitley S. - 11/? - 1 Year - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
Jeremy M. - 11/? - 1 Year - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
Robin L. - 11/? - 18 Years - Clean A.I.R. Jackson  
Mark Mc - 11/11 - 11 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Ross N. - 11/14 - 1 Year - Farfromusen  
Nick - 11/20 - 1 Year - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Justine R. - 11/25 - 9 Years - Harmony  
Pam R. - 11/28 - 12 Years - Primary Purpose  
Connie G. - 11/30 - 4 Years - Desire

## DECEMBER

Juanita J. - 12/? - 4 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
Troy R. - 12/? - 2 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Jackson  
John M. - 12/2 - 1 Year - Desire  
Carol S. - 12/10 - 3 Years - Clean A.I.R. of Memphis  
Tony T. - 12/12 - 8 Years - Lunch Bunch  
Debbie B. - 12/21 - 15 Years - Desire  
Phillip W. - 12/30 - 3 Years - Lunch Bunch

*Editors Note:* I apologize if your birthday has been omitted. Please get with your GSR of your Home Group and have them contact me, Trinity P. at NewsletterNA@yahoo.com for the next issue. Please note these are actual clean dates and birthdays may be celebrated on a different day. Listen for announcements in meetings for exact date of celebration.

## VRC XXIV

### *Sowing the Seeds of Recovery*

November 22-26, 2006  
Sheraton Music City Hotel  
777 McGavock Pike  
Phone: 615-885-2200

For more information you can go online at  
<http://www.vrc24.com>

*All we did was sow some seeds and worked and wrought to make this work, so we and others could live in Peace, in Freedom and in Love.*  
Jimmy K. 1982

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12 Steps, I still go to meetings as much as I can, at least 5 to 6 a week. Sometimes more. I keep up with a gratitude list and journal more than I used to. I call my sponsor everyday and when I feel squirmy, I stay real close to the fellowship. My next year, I will continue to go to meetings and just take this one day at a time. I plan to do the same things I did the first year. If it works, don't fix it, keep working it.

## Potluck

### ***"For the Hell of It"*** **Solutions Group**

October 15, 2006

Eat - 5:00

Meeting - 6:00

*Bring something or just yourself!  
Everybody welcome*

Solutions Group is needing support!  
Please come out and join us!



***If you have a group you would like showcased in the Cleantimes Newsletter, or have an article, cartoon, poetry, or whatever sharing experience, strength and hope, please contact me, Trinity P., at NewsletterNA@yahoo.com.***