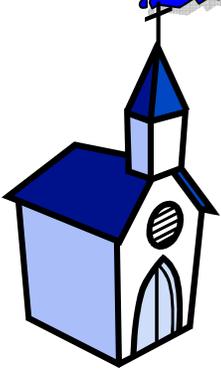


SANITY

Sanity

NOVEMBER 2008

Newsletter of the New Jersey Region



... grant me the Serenity ...



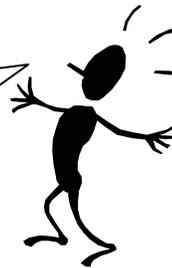
I'm an addict named Otto. Welcome to the November Sanity issue of NA. I would like to introduce as our featured speaker this month, Nicky N. We have not seen Nicky in a while, so please give him a warm welcome.



My Name is Nicky and I am an addict!

I celebrated eleven years in October

How'd Ya Do That?



My story of recovery began on October 28, 1987 when I walked into my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting. I should be celebrating 21 years, but my story did not go that way.

I got a Sponsor right away who taught me how to work the Steps to the best of his ability. I really respected my Sponsor and tried to be a good Sponsee. I remember early in my recovery when my Sponsor insisted I get a job and move out of my parent's house. I thought he was nuts. That was a hard thing for me to consider because I was used to staying up all night and sleeping half the day. It would mean that I would have to completely change my ways and get up in the morning and become a productive individual. It seemed impossible.

It's TIME FOR CHANGE !!!



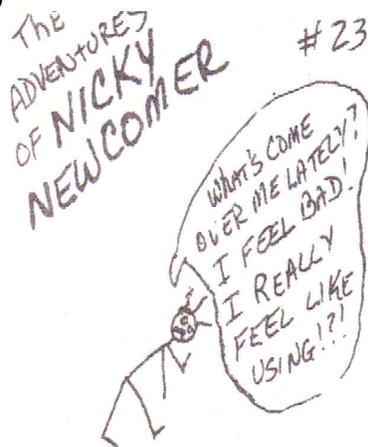
I called my Sponsor regularly, took his suggestions seriously and I wanted to get involved. When I had six months clean, I got sick and took Nite Nite for my cold. It affected me terribly and my Sponsor said that it was like I relapsed. I don't think I did because it was only cough medicine, but it made me aware that I needed to be careful.

I remember going to the fourth Regional convention of NA in Newark at the Vista when Sanity celebrated two years. It was a great convention with lots of recovery.

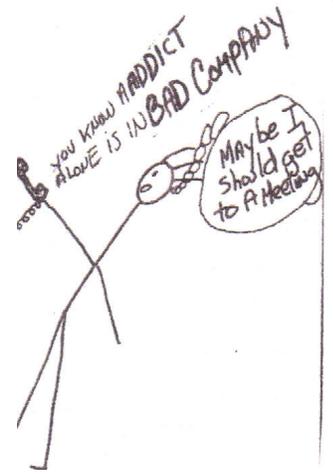


Soon after the convention I found a new Sponsor named Ray. He was a cool dude with a mullet and big boots. He did an excellent job of working Steps with me, but I was having a hard time and thought about using all the time.

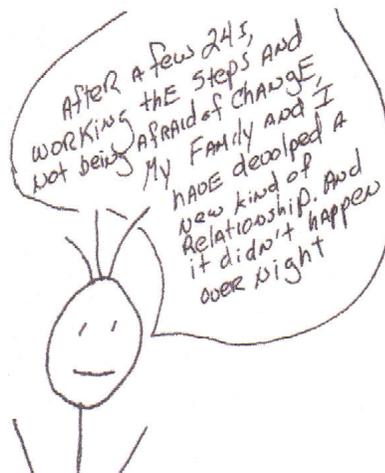
While I was struggling with the desire to use, my Sponsor worked me through the pain and the constant thoughts of using. It was a hard time for me, but we did it together and I came out okay. My Sponsor is a key factor in my recovery and I loved talking with him.



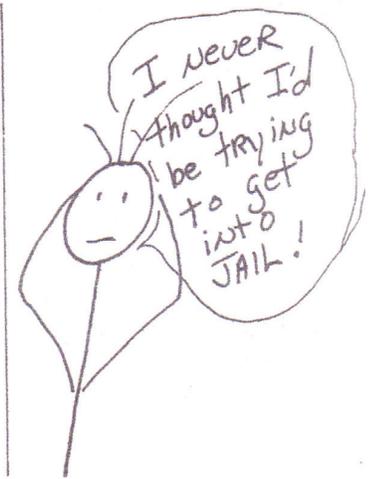
When I had a little cleantime, my past caught up with me and I had to go to court. My Sponsor and my network were right there by my side to help me through it. I don't think I could have gotten through it without them to help me. Ray always had good advice and also helped me through the holidays because they made me feel really depressed.



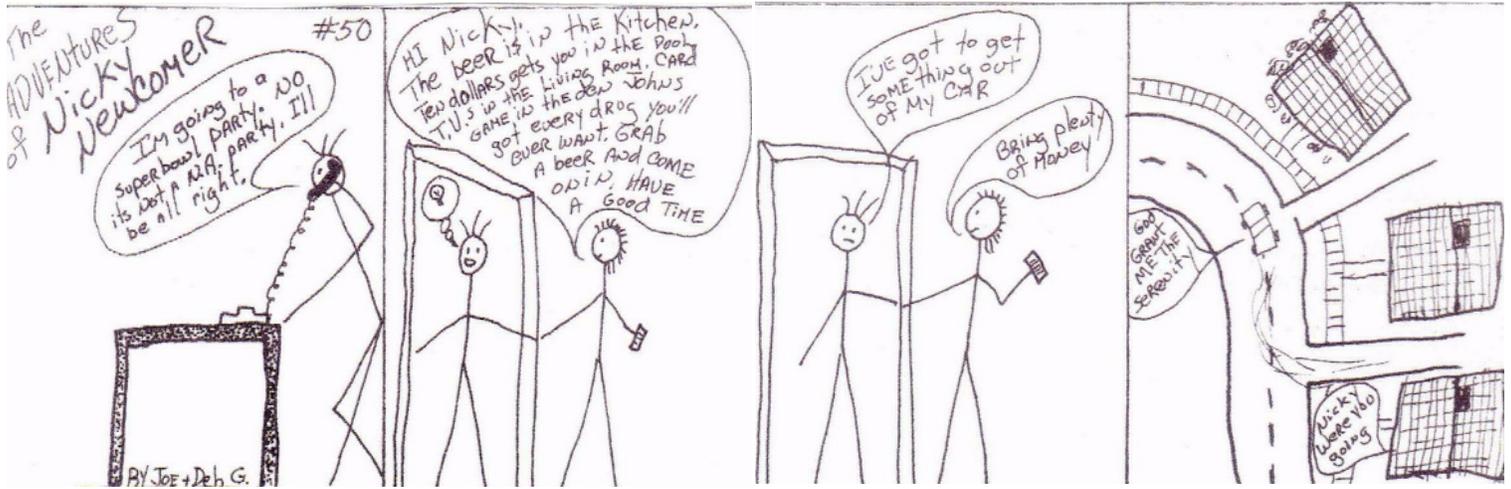
Shortly after that, I actually became a Sponsor myself. It was a wonderful experience for me. My Sponsee was having a difficult time with family issues. I could really relate to him because my past was similar to his. I helped him get through Steps Eight and Nine. Once he made amends and showed his family that he was becoming a productive member of society, they welcomed him back into the family and forgave the past exactly like it had happened to me. My Sponsee was elated and I felt good myself for helping him.



When I had four years clean, I thought about becoming involved in H & I. I didn't join H & I, but I learned how important it is to hold commitments and pass the message of recovery.



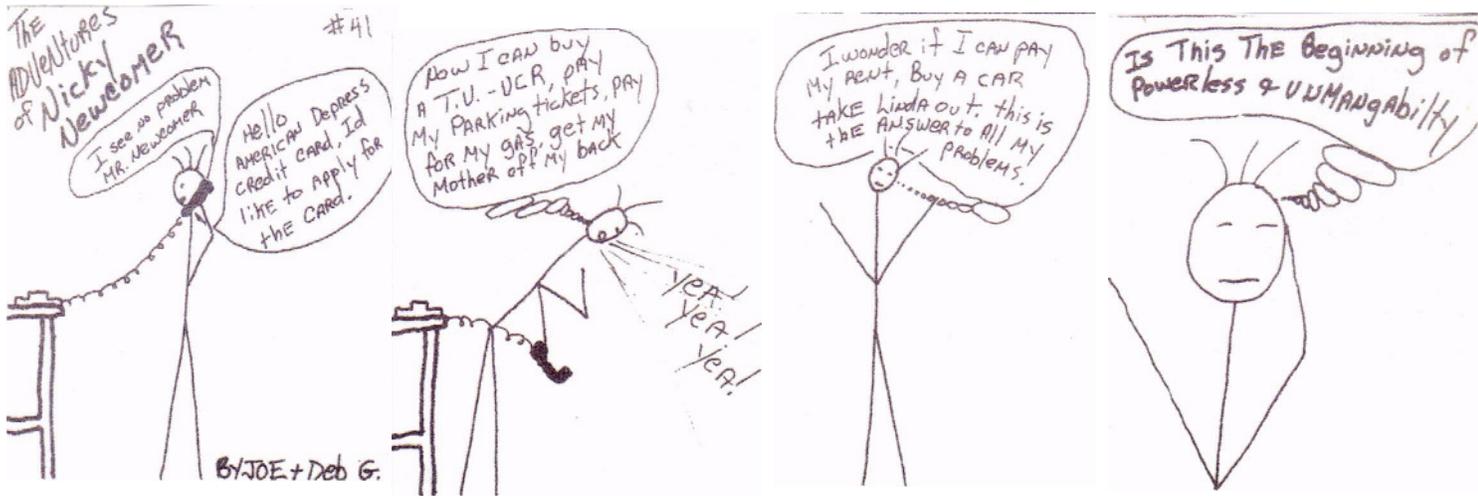
That same year, I got through the holidays okay. It was much easier than the previous year when I was so depressed. Ray had really helped me work through that. I did have a new obstacle in my way that winter, though. I went to a Superbowl party where they had tons of drugs. I had heard that I should stay away from old people, places and things, so I beat-foot and made a rapid exit. It was a really scary incident because everyone was using and drinking and they tried to get me to join them. I was strong and got the hell out of there as soon as I realized the situation. The disease was staring me in the face, but I did the right thing.



Then another time I was invited to a party and really wanted to go. I was torn apart over what to do and didn't know if I had enough willpower if I did go. I wanted desperately to go to the party, but knew in my heart that I should not. I drove my Sponsor crazy calling him about it. At least I did the right thing and talked about it before I did it. Sponsors sure can have a lot of patience. As it turned out, I did not go to the party and it was okay.



Even though I had three years clean, my brain still harbored thoughts of unmanageability. Like the time I wanted to get a credit card. I don't know what I was thinking at the time, but they were the beginning thoughts of unmanageability that had to cease. Getting a credit card would have caused more problems. I had visions of grand purchases and thought it would be the answer to all my problems. Then I really paid attention to what my Higher Power told me and realized that a credit card would be the beginning of my problems, not the end. I listened to my better judgment and did not do it.



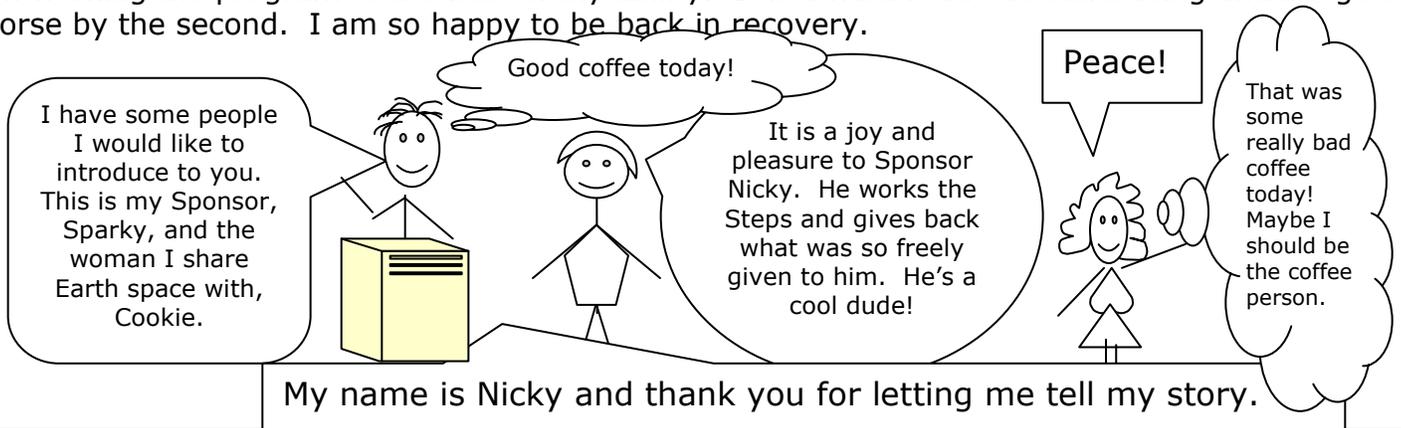
In April of 1992, I got another Sponsee. His name was Chuckie and he was a nice young man with enthusiasm for the program. It was a big thrill to have another Sponsee because I could give away what was so freely given to me by Ray. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. I helped my Sponsee with the Steps, which in turn helped myself.

Then, in May of 1992 all Hell broke loose in my life. A new kid on the block appeared and ripped the rug out from under me mentally and emotionally. He called himself Recovery Man. He tortured me verbally and emotionally by calling me names. He told me that I was nothing as a stick figure. I had always had an inferiority complex about my stickness and had always fought it in my mind, but it tortured me when he called me names. After all, I had gone to Stick High School and Stick College; I had a Stick dog, Stick friends, and Stick Sponsees, yet Recovery Man felt that I had nothing to contribute any longer and demeaned me constantly.

A culmination of years of feeling inferior due to my Stickness blossomed into anger and rage and I turned to drugs.



I stayed out until October of 1997. After spending that entire summer high, I knew I needed to return to NA. That was eleven years ago and I have been back in the rooms since then and I am working the program to the best of my ability. It is a hard road out there using and life gets worse by the second. I am so happy to be back in recovery.



This issue of Sanity was a labor of love. There have been several requests to bring back Nicky Newcomer. As part of the Website committee, I received an email from Tom P of north Jersey who had been the Sanity Chair for many years until 1993. He wanted to donate his old Sanity newsletters to the Regional Archives. I had him send them to me prior to putting them in the archives and I began researching Nicky Newcomer. In addition, Eve E. provided me some Nicky history and I contacted Bob, our previous Newsletter Chair for help to find the missing link, which was: when did Nicky come back the last time? He was unable to locate the date, but the answer was discovered quite incredibly by accident by me when I was tossing out old paperwork from ten years of service work. I came across a file from Central Jersey Area. I opened the file and the first paper I saw was the Sanity issue from September / October 1997. I turned to the middle page and Nicky was being welcomed back into the rooms after a relapse. I was ecstatic with joy to find the answer.

The most difficult part in returning Nicky is re-creating the stick figures. Making them on the computer and is a bit time consuming, but thoroughly enjoyable. I hope all who enjoyed Nicky in the past will continue to enjoy his antics in the future.

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Sanity is published every two months as a service of the New Jersey Region for its Groups and Members. Input and articles are welcome on all recovery related topics.

Opinions expressed here are those of individual addicts, not NA as a whole.

Issues of SANITY can be downloaded from the NJ Statewide Website at www.nani.org



Words of Wisdom:

Learn to live the Twelve Steps in your life.