



News from the Web...

By: Bob D.

Bruce B. On-line Meetings

Hi there

The content of and interest in the SAA Web page continue to grow.

At the **SAA Store** we've added two new pieces of literature. Our first Spanish SAA literature, Adictos Al Sexo Anonimo, is an introduction to our program written in Spanish. Sexuality In Perspective is a book (that I understand was written by a SAA member) which is autobiographical and contains powerful insights into living with sexual addiction. You can order these and all SAA literature at the web page:

www.saa-recovery.org

and pay on-line with your credit card.

We've added a new section to the web page called **member functions**. It's for notices of workshops, outings, and other events sponsored by individual members or groups. Of course, you can't put up advertisements for as business or anything not related to SAA. But if you want to promote an activity to everyone on this planet, check out www.saa-recovery.org/functions.htm.

Not only does the content of the web page continue to grow, but interest has also increased through the summer. Back in June I figured we had a freak surge in interest in May when the visitor count jumped by 38% in one month. I attributed this to an Oprah Winfrey show on sex addiction.

But then visitor count was up another 18% in June, and hit 24,364 in July. Whew, a busy summer. While activity was down a little in August, we still had almost 10,000 more visitors that month than we did back at the 1st of the year. So we must be doing something right!

And we're always looking for your suggestions on how to use our Web site more effectively. A new way to help newcomers? Something that would serve the existing members? Send 'em in - No suggestions ignored. (Well... maybe there are a few we just can't consider!) Write me at

webmaster@saa-recovery.org.

SAA has two online meetings, Monday night 9:00 - 10:00 (topic meeting) and Thursday night 8:00 - 9:00 (step meeting), both Eastern Daylight Time. To attend them, aside from a desire to stop your compulsive sexual behavior, you need a computer, modem, internet provider (a way to get online), and some type of chat software (generally MIRC or IRC Gold for PCs and IRCLE or Snak for Macs). Once you have the chat software downloaded and installed, you get online, start up your chat software, choose one of the StarlinkIRC servers, and then join the #saa channel.

It can be a little challenging the first time, but once you have been there, it is very easy to get back. More details are available on the SAA online homepage

<http://www.saa-recovery.org/online.htm>

The idea for SAA to have online meetings came up as early as 1996 when other fellowships began experimenting in this area, but no one in our fellowship was really behind the idea. Some people feared that online meetings would compete with face to face (f2f) meetings, others feared that it would encourage more addicts to get online and act out, but mostly it lacked someone who had a "fire in the belly" about this issue - who really wanted to make it happen. As time went on, addicts who were brand new to 12 step recovery, and who lived in areas with no SAA meeting within driving distance, emailed Jerry at our service office.

They wanted a way to connect with other recovering addicts, particularly those who understood the SAA program. Jerry was stuck. He knew about the other fellowships' online meetings, but couldn't send folks to them because of the ISO Board's interpretations of traditions 5,6, & 10 as they relate to this issue. However, he knew that I had attended online meetings of other fellowships, so he told them that they could email me (another recovering addict, but with no direct relation to the ISO) if they wanted additional information on recovery resources available on the internet. As the numbers grew (from one per month to three or four a week), I got sick of sending out the same information, so I put up a homepage to which I could refer people:

<http://www3.shore.net/~sareco99/>

In 1998 the board gave permission for SAA to be associated with an online meeting, provided the steps and traditions were stressed at the meeting, and that someone who understood them was chairing. Unfortunately, the old-timers in our fellowship either were not interested in online outreach, or felt that they didn't have enough computer expertise, or they were already too tied up with other service work. I had already decided that I could not take on this project, and Jerry could not either. However, when no one else stepped forward, and I honestly sought my Higher Power's will in the matter, my path became clear.

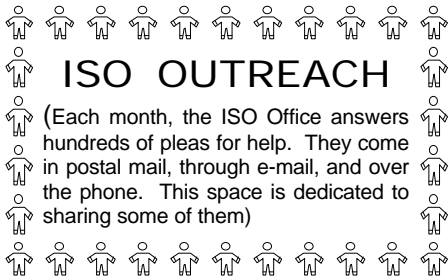
The first SAA online meeting met Monday 9/7/98. Ray G. and I had committed to meet online for two months, and some SLAA folks came over to support us our first few meetings. At the time, SLAA had eight online meetings and SCA had two, and I had attended online meetings of both fellowships periodically since they had begun several years earlier. SLAA was the pioneer in this area, so I had gone to the online old-timers in that fellowship to get the details of how to set up and run an online meeting; they were very helpful. Mike Z. started our Thursday night step meeting this spring.

If you do written step work, we need you. Our Monday meeting now boasts regular attendance at 18, and Thursday is at about 8 (and growing), but only a few of us have worked the steps or even been to a f2f meeting of any 12 step fellowship. These folks need to hear your ES&H and many of them still need sponsors. We also need some people to spell Mike and I (and Frank) so that we are not the only people chairing the meetings; it is tough not to dominate a group when you are the only person who chairs.

The next time I write about online meetings I'll talk a little about applying the traditions in this medium, and about the new options this forum provides for outreach.

In peace,

Bruce
sareco99@shore.net



ISO OUTREACH

(Each month, the ISO Office answers hundreds of pleas for help. They come in postal mail, through e-mail, and over the phone. This space is dedicated to sharing some of them)

Dear Robert,

Here is an article for the ISO outreach section. Hope it gets to you in time for this issue. If not, things must be going well because you are full already.

Love,
Jerry

She called the ISO office back in October 97. She had found out that her husband of 31 years cheated on her throughout the marriage. What she felt was a confusing mixture of anger, revenge, pain and desperation. Divorce seemed to be the only solution but then somebody mentioned an organization named SAA.

It took a lot of courage for her to make that call but she finally did. A man answered the phone and she told him her whole story. When she was finished she had learned about the purpose and mission of SAA and the 12-step program. However the man stressed that the initiative to get into the program would have to come from her husband.

Well, the husband did make the call that started him on his way to recovery. He ended up in a treatment center since his wife wanted more than regular SAA-Meetings, she wanted a total commitment to recovery. That was her condition to continue the marriage. She was willing to do her part and go to COSA and ALANON meetings.

By the grace of God, things worked out as planned. After his discharge from the treatment center, the husband attended daily meetings for 6 months. He still has a long way to go but things are much better now. He learned a lot through the program, rediscovered spirituality and found peace.

The marriage is better than ever with both partners working towards true intimacy.

He is very grateful to the program that saved his life and decided to get more involved and give back as much as he can. What he will never forget, is that magic day back in October 97 when a phone call to the ISO office turned his life around.

Klaus P.



Internet Recovery In SAA

I was recently speaking with a friend in the program. We discussed problems encountered by having access to the Internet. Years ago, when I was SE Region Rep to Litcom, I did not own a computer. Most members of Litcom did own computers and were on the Internet. Friends in my region pulled together and put a system together for me. I was "in touch with the world". At first, I was on Free-Net. I did not have full access to the Internet...everything but pictures. Then, I finally joined Bell South. It seemed like a dream world. No word I typed in would come up empty. There was always a suggested alternative. And there were pictures to go with the words.

For an addict with a weakness for pornography, the Internet with pictures was a land mine. Every time I turned on my computer and got connected, I would first read/answer my current e-mails. Curiosity killed the cat. My curiosity got the best of me. I was isolated, all alone, in my home. I had a keyboard at my fingertips and a screen to show and tell almost anything my mind could imagine. I can confess becoming addicted to the Internet. One day, with all of the different choices I made and all of the download time it took, I spent six hours on my day off surfing the net. There was the monkey on my back, once again. All I could feel was shame, knowing I had wasted time, and had been taken in, once more.

So, I asked myself, how does an addict recover from something like the Internet? It's always available 24/7. It's waiting day and night, at the flip of a button. Then, I realized the answer is to do the same thing all addicts have done to stay in recovery - CONNECT WITH ANOTHER AD-

DICTION IN RECOVERY! On the Internet, anyone can sign up for free on ICQ. In ICQ, one addict could put another on their User List. Then, whenever they both go Online, they are each notified that the other is on. I suggest this as an excellent Internet Tool for those that are having trouble on the Net. We all have to stay accountable to stay sober. This is a simple way to connect to another addict, check-in to what's going on, and do business on the Net in a healthy manner. Isolation is like a demon to the addict. This simple connection can help keep the addict in continuous sobriety.

We all have different schedules. I suggest that those that have struggles with the Net form a Hub of Users available for connection within their region. Then, individual times of use could be noted next to names. This list could be handed out at individual meetings. Announcements could be made concerning the "Net List" The sheet could be passed around so that everyone could have the opportunity to put their name on the list. Each member could contact several members on the list and ultimately have contact 24 hours, 7 days a week.

We can help one another with the Internet because this is a We program. All it takes is willingness and availability.

I hope these thoughts will be suggested at individual meetings, and intergroups. Please feel free to make other suggestions. I will be happy to leave my e-mail address for anyone that wishes to contact me to further discuss Internet Recovery: belltalk@bellsouth.net

Louis D.
SE Region ISOSAA



POET'S PAGE



The Ditch

Along every road lies a ditch.
 As an addict, relapse is falling into
 that ditch.
 Early in recovery, I meandered along
 an untracked narrow
 ridge between canyons, my
 behaviors sending
 me careening down steep slopes
 spending
 most of my time in the ditch.

Climbing and staying out has been a
 long process marred by error.
 It took years for me to admit, believe
 and surrender,
 even longer to reach rigorous hon-
 esty and be able to disclose fully,
 half measures, by the way, do not
 work.

It is not ironic it took recovery as first
 priority,
 several tumbles and their severe
 consequences convinced me to be
 willing
 each climbing out requiring lots of
 meetings, therapy faking it 'til I was
 making it, finally a sponsor.

Now, by comparison, I walk along a
 broad straight boulevard.
 Those ditches are still there on
 either side
 but they are wide shallow bogs filled
 with grass.
 Rich W.
 [Author retains copyright]

Amend

If you look on page 5 of the August/September issue of the PBR, you will notice the poem in the center column had no author. You may have guessed since his work has appeared before. No excuse however! The author is George S., and we make an amend to you George, for omitting it!
 Ed.

Focusing on my self-centeredness,
 [what else!]; still one of my most se-
 vere character defects.

Trapped In The Mirror

Again I catch myself wondering,
 Just as the rage has passed my lips
 And the stench of obscene
 declarations
 Chokes me and
 Causes all my senses to recoil
 In morbid self-loathing, self-pity and
 shame
 All bundled together in yet more
 rationalization and self-
 righteousness,
 Where did this come from?
 What threat did I perceive
 That caused this desperate need
 To force out such defensive hostility
 And seek so urgently to cause you
 hurt?

Is there some answer Beyond a sim-
 ple increase in my medication?
 Do I lack some dedication
 To a real releasing of my darker
 self?

And now I wallow in this abject, self-
 inflicted sorrow;
 "Oh, I have hurt you too much.
 "Poor me." "Poor me." "Poor me?!"
 Am I still so self-enthralled
 And lacking in compassion?
 Where is my empathy?
 Or my oh-so-frequently-and-easily-
 spoken-of love for you
 And God?

Have I hung Him on the tree again,
 All bloodied and newly broken
 For my fear of falling short
 Of worthy admiration and acclaim?
 Where is a Copernicus
 To displace me at my center,
 Or at least some Newton
 To teach me proper gravity
 So all my worlds
 Won't plunge down to their end?
 I am so weary and
 So self-consumed
 By this acting as a spiritual black
 hole.

Complacency

How subtle the fall, insidious
 gradual drifting from truth
 content again with less than my
 best.

This is the path towards relapse
 either the one of least resistance
 or lazy resistance extreme.

Driven by fear and lack of
 acceptance
 nurtured by progressive shame
 that smug delusion of control creeps
 back.

It is priority error
 lack of focus, letting go of the wrong
 things
 thoughtlessness leads the way
 as selfish willfulness mounts center
 stage.

For recovery's test is always failure
 complacency bolstered by the
 absence
 of specific commitments to others.

Richard W.
 [Author retains copyright]

God!

Release me from this mirror of de-
 feat.
 Let me shine again
 In the glory of your grace
 And reflect the love
 I know you have for me.
 Bill R.

 * Next month here: Robert S. *
 * [] Correctional Facility..... *

“A First Step Story.....Paul W.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE EDITED VERSION OF PAUL'S STORY....

TRUST IN HIM &
GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN

My inappropriate behavior began in Junior High School about age fifteen. I went to a detention home because I took a dare to break in to a small town country store. By age nineteen, I had acquired three D.W.I.'S, losing my driving privileges for three years. During this time I worked my way up from sniffing inhalants, smoking marijuana, to using more potent drugs. I started when I was eight years old. Sex and alcohol was my drug of choice, and the alcohol was a good excuse when I got in trouble. When I wasn't being sexually active, drinking, or using other drugs, I would seek attention by being a class clown, or by throwing temper tantrums. I was with both my parents, my brother, and three sisters. At this time I thought life was good, and that I was indestructible.

At age nineteen, I learned how to get the love, approval, and forgiveness from family or relatives. They finally became disgusted with my sexually deviant behavior and drinking. I admitted myself in a psychiatric ward once, frequented detox units, treatment centers, and even went to twelve step groups to quit drinking. I was like a Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde around others. I was in and out of jail several times for public intoxication and disorderly conduct. Attending twelve step groups was a quick way for me to get the love and approval back from others so I could drink again.

At age twenty, I was in a severe car accident, in a coma for two weeks, and pronounced dead. This was where God did for me what I couldn't do for myself. He had another plan for me. The driver and I were heavily intoxicated. Since I was the passenger, I was able to acquire eighty-eight thousand dollars for my emotional and physical damage. I chose to use most of this money destructively, buying friends, material items, and alcohol or drugs. As I continued to do what I wanted, when I wanted, or how I wanted, the following year, and in the same month, I was in another severe accident. Because of this accident, three fingers were almost completely cut off on my right hand, and only one could actually be saved.

As I continued to drink and use other drugs, every year something would happen. I was in and out of jails, in detox

and treatment centers, and twelve step groups. I was in and out of many relationships, not realizing that God would make good things happen if I relied more on His will.

When I was twenty-four, I thought getting married would solve my problems. Though I was dry for a small period of time, my mind was still clouded through smoking marijuana. Even before we married, I thought getting her pregnant, and being a father would help me to be more mature and responsible. At first, I was a good husband, and father to our child. I became obsessed with sex and drinking again, both relationships deteriorated quickly. I was given an ultimatum: choose family or alcohol. I chose the family at first, but eventually went back to drinking. I didn't think anyone had the right to tell me what to do. It had not yet registered in my mind that there was still something missing in my life.

In 1989 my life turned for the worst when my mother, whom I relied on so very much, passed away. Since I no longer had my mother or my ex-wife to depend on, I chose the next best thing, sex and alcohol. At first I isolated, then got involved in short-term relationships, and was in and out of twelve step groups.

“A couple of times I tried to kill myself in the county jail...”

Nothing seemed to work.

A year later my world came crashing down. My family, ex-wife, and son didn't know I existed. My last relationship was failing, and I was fired from my last job because of drinking. I continued to do what I wanted, when I wanted, and how I wanted. I was very heavily intoxicated the night I committed my offense. If I'd agree to treatment, all would be forgiven and forgotten.. A couple of times, I tried to kill myself in the county jail. I was crying out for help. It was at this point that I realized I couldn't repair things on my own. God then tried to show Himself through people that were coming in to share Scriptures with me.

After two years of being in prison, I started to attend S.A.A. meetings, where I met other recovering sex addicts. As I continued to attend these meetings, I became more involved in S.A.A. and the PBR. An S.A.A. member, who had been very helpful in my recovery, sug-

gested I get more involved in these meetings. After I did this, and my ways of thinking started to change, I began to see good things occur in my life, even as an inmate.

There were ten to twelve of us in the group, and I experienced a love that I had never felt before. When I first got involved in the S.A.A. meeting, I accepted God into my life. My obsession and compulsion to sexually act out, or drink, didn't seem important to me anymore. God replaced that drive with a desire to seek Him, to know Him, and to love Him. I began to seek other recovering sex addicts, and attended as many recovery functions as possible.

In 1991, my life took another turn. As I worked with others in helping them to deal with substance abuse issues, there was still something in my life that I needed to look at. For years, I denied that I had a problem with sex. I experienced not only sexual, but physical and emotional abuse from older family members, or other adults. When I asked certain family members about the abuse, I was told things like, "You're still using excuses for your behavior," or "You're still not wanting to take responsibility for your actions!" With my being in this twelve month sex offender's program, it was suggested that I trace the events of my past, which might help me overcome my addictions and compulsive sexual behavior.

This trauma may have very well contributed to how I was living my life. A great part of my anger was directed toward my father for what he didn't give me as a child. The anger that I had for him never left, even as an adult. When he and I were together, I seldom talked about my thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. I spent so much of my energy suppressing these thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, that when I got drunk, I'd act them out in all the wrong ways.

I was finally making progress in this sex offender's program. It seemed as though I still lacked trust. It was through these prayer-filled counseling sessions, that God helped me to see that good things will happen if I let Him be the director. Over time, He replaced my negative thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, with a love for my father that I never thought possible. For the first time in my life, I saw my father, other family members, and those that were abusive towards me, through God's eyes. Today, I have a very loving relationship with my God. I pray everyday that my family will turn to God and find deeper peace and healing. How God has changed my life, and the relationship I have with my son, cannot be expressed in words. His Grace and mercy have been endless. Through Him good things have come true in my life, and as long as I continue to trust in His will, "all will be well." I can now say that I am a grateful recovering sex addict, and alcoholic.

In fellowship and service,
Paul W. [London OH]

“SAA,

I am writing in gratitude for the existence of SAA and it's members. This organization has helped to save my life. You may publish this letter at your discretion, if you believe it will be helpful to others. However, my only intention in writing this letter is to tell the group thanks.”

Jeff

“Dear Jeff,

Thank you so much for sharing your story. I personally appreciated it a lot and was happy to have such a wonderful gift awaiting me this morning when I came to work. I am copying this to Robert S., the editor of the Plain Brown Rapper, for his consideration.

Glad to be walking with you,

Jerry B.
Office Manager”

+++++

“As a child, I often felt alone, isolated, different and fearful. I never recognized it. I felt these things, but did not see them as odd. I just knew I sometimes felt alone. I also knew no one would accept me. No female, anyway. The fear I had about approaching and talking to pretty girls in my classes growing up was extraordinary.

My addiction had stunted my ability to communicate or connect with members of the opposite sex. I liked a cheerleader in the 7th grade so instead of going up and talking to her, I would dress up like a cheerleader at home and pretend she was there. You can begin to see how alone I felt. I had a girlfriend a few years and after we broke up I was so depressed that I rubbed my own feces on myself and imagined her having sex with other men and telling me she wished she had never dated me. The pain was hardly bearable. I would finish acting out and wonder why I did it and why it turned me on so much. I would say that I should find something less degrading to do, since I believed it to be my choice, but the more degrading the better.

The most baffling thing about this disease to me is that I never recognized it as a disease until recently. Looking back, it was so insane and it brought me so much pain

in addition to the pain I already felt, that I am stunned I didn't know what was going on. I had spiritual blindfolds on. It never occurred to me that I needed help. The saying, "If they knew everything about me, they wouldn't accept me", never reached my consciousness, but rather was displayed in the insane way I lived my life.

Then something happened. I made a deal with God and things have not been the same. I told him, okay, I believe in you, now help me with the fact that I don't believe in you. It was my leap of faith, or baby step of faith, but it began a process of change. My life from that day forth, my life has been radically different and I was still 11 months away from walking into an SAA meeting. That is how buried the addiction was in me.

God was reaching deep down inside me, pulling the addiction out from the depths of my soul until I saw it again for the first time. How hideous it looked from the eyes of recovery. I tried to stop on my own. You know how that works. Then I made a decision to tell somebody I had a problem. It was the first time I had ever told anyone my "bottom line" behaviors. The most degrading behaviors were taken away from me that day and by the grace of God have not reentered my life since.

But, I continued to struggle, especially with masturbation and fantasy, so I knew the admission was not enough. I knew that I needed to change in big way to be able to deal with this addiction. A pastor recommended me to SAA and the first meeting I went to I knew I was a sex addict. It was a big meeting and there was a first step that night. The gentleman reading his first step that night might as well have been

reading mine. I was very fortunate that someone approached me after the meeting and became my sponsor. Since then I have struggled at times, but I have been growing and walking a life of recovery.

I am becoming the person God intended me to be, little by little. The SAA program has given me so many things that lead me to a loving connection to God, others and myself. These gifts I gratefully accept from the SAA program and I thank you.”

Jeff

From Tom:

Congratulations on another excellent issue! It was the best one I've seen. I appreciate how much neater it looks, and the quality of the writing was impressive.

I do have to say that I don't understand how including sexist humor is enhancing to recovery. The "Top Ten List" didn't seem to address recovery issues at all. I realize that our fellowship is 90 per cent male and that laughing at ourselves can be healthy, but negative male stereotypes are still sexist, and I really don't think sexist humor has any place in the PBR.

Thanks, again, for all your hard work.

love, Tom

“Manipulation may start as a defensive maneuver... but sooner or later it takes on a life of its own. The addict manipulates just to manipulate, lies just to lie... Years of addictive thinking do not melt away overnight. In spite of addicts' protests of sincerity, they are manipulating.”

[Addictive Thinking, Abraham J. Twerski, MD]

Dear Robert:

This article might irritate some people but it comes from my heart. I was slipping in this program for 6 years and though I kept coming back, it was at times incredibly difficult. I wrote this to acknowledge the legions of "slippers" who keep coming back but may be neglected because members with time don't have the knowledge, patience, or time to reach out to them.

What do you think?

Sincerely,

Jim H.

Sex addiction is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It is a progressive illness which can take away everything precious and meaningful in the sex addict's life. Yet it is a disease of denial which holds the sufferer in the mistaken belief that the next time will be different, that acting out does have a worthwhile payoff. This is true for both newcomers and veteran members. Most people in SAA have had at least one slip. Many have had multiple slips and after repeated attempts and a large dosage of God's grace have been able to experience a stable abstinence. This means that there many veteran SAAs who are still suffering the insanity and self-destruction of active sex addiction. Unfortunately, it is easy to overlook these members because they have been around a while. It is sometimes assumed that they have the wherewithal to reach out and find recovery again. The purpose of this pamphlet is to acknowledge the member in relapse and to encourage other members to make an active effort to reach out and carry the message of love, understanding, and hope to those who are still struggling. Here are some feelings expressed by fellow sex addicts in relapse:

"I went to meetings, got a sponsor, called him/[her] regularly, and started working the steps. I had just gotten my 90 day chip when I fell. I've been too ashamed to go back to meetings and nobody has called me. I got desperate enough to make a couple of calls but none of my calls were returned."

"I just got sick of going to meetings and reporting my next slip. Members tried to be supportive but no one approached me and made any special effort to understand and help me. Finally, I just stopped going and my slip turned into a binge that cost me my career and the love of my family."

"Every time I shared about a slip in a meeting someone would come up after the meeting and try to tell me how to work the program or how they did it and were successful. I know they meant well, but I kept getting the feeling we were in church and I was hearing a bunch of empty dogma. I never got the feeling that anyone genuinely cared about me and empathized with my failures."

"After a while, I built up a big resentment against SAA and felt letdown just as I had everywhere else I'd tried to get help."

"No one actually came out and said it, but I got the feeling that some members thought they were better than me because they were maintaining sobriety."

•••••
• **"Twelve Stepping The Slipper"** •
•••••

"When they say the disease is progressive, they're not kidding. In the 8 years I've been in SAA my acting out has gone from obsessive masturbation to cruising for victims. Even though I tried to "work the program" to the best of my ability, it wasn't enough until I got some serious legal consequences, started taking Prozac, and redid the steps with a second sponsor. I hope members who are not currently struggling with the addiction (that includes me at this moment!) will understand that being restored to sanity is by the grace of God and validate and encourage the slippers efforts at recovery."

"My impression, real or imagined, was that people who maintained sobriety thought they were "holier than thou". They were working the program the right way as evidenced by their continued abstinence. It seems like they felt that if I would just do it like them, I'd get better."

"I wish that members with stable abstinence would be extra sensitive to those of us who are struggling. Preaching brings out my worst attitudes of defiance and shame. Listening to members speak from the heart is what helped me connect back up with abstinence and my Higher Power."

While some of these perceptions of uncaring or holier-than-thou attitudes may be engendered by the acting out addict's own feelings of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization, they are expressed often enough that it is likely they have substance. Whether these perceptions are in fact real or imagined, they do constitute real concerns for many slippers.

Here are some of the things we have found to be effective in 12-stepping the slipper.

We ask them if there is anything we can do for them.

We tell them we love them.

We listen to them.

SMILE
Smiling is infectious,
catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile
then I realized its worth,
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected.
[a recent e-mail from a special grand-
daughter to an old SAAer]

We ask them empathic, non-judgemental, thought-provoking questions about their acting out.

We share only experience, strength and hope.

We don't forget to share our failures as well as our successes.

We call them just to see how they're doing and invite them to do something "safe".

We try to be of genuine service to them without being codependent.

We offer to sponsor them at least temporarily.

It's amazing how member's in relapse appreciate the offer of sponsorship. It's not an ego-feeding proposition. It's an act of love and service. It's helping the downtrodden when they don't know how to help themselves. It lets them know they are worth your time. It is said that "love is an action". Sponsoring the slipper is love in action.

Any way we know how, we need to express this idea: Do not be discouraged. You are not forgotten. Keep coming back. We ask them how they are doing, letting them share their frustrations, fears, and the consequences they are suffering.

We warmly encourage the struggling member to keep coming back, reassuring them that they are welcome, and their struggle is appreciated. We let them know that we have been their too by relating our feelings and thoughts from when we have slipped and fell. We listen with the heart, and avoid being judgmental of their efforts at recovery. We take the attitude that the disease is powerful. Everyone is on a different path and comes to SAA with different levels of willingness, with different life experiences and with different genetic predispositions. Recovery may be relatively "easy" for one addict who comes into the program ready to surrender the addiction. Another person may take a while to hit bottom.

Why all this validation for the slipper even if he may be a criminal or just a "bad example" of recovery? The simple answer is that without this type of unconditional love many a chronic relapser's defenses remain high, and the seeds of a potential spiritual awakening may never take root.

We hope that in no way will this pamphlet lead members or newcomers to believe that we are not capable of "tough love". On the contrary, it is sometimes effective to tell the slipper things like "if you keep hanging out in slippery places, you're going to slip." However, we do encourage the membership to make an effort to empathize, validate, and humbly share experience, strength, and hope. Reminding ourselves that after all it is mostly by the grace of God that we are sober today. By reaching out to the suffering slipper with an open heart, we can truly grow in recovery and maybe (with the grace of God) make a difference in another person's life.

Jim H.

We tend to use words and phrases without agreeing on exactly what they mean. This is no less true in the fellowship. Often I hear the terms "objectify" or "objectifying" in meetings, but I've discovered that different people employ these words in different ways.

Most commonly it seems to be a process that goes on in our minds. We look at someone else and think about him or her in terms solely related to sexual aspects. For example, if I see someone – perhaps a stranger, perhaps someone I know – and my thoughts focus on the sexual attractiveness of that person's body, or parts of his or her body, or if I imagine that person without clothes, at the same time not really considering other aspects of that person which do not relate to his or her sexual attractiveness - then in a general sense I say I have been "objectifying" that person.

You can see that there is a lot of room for ambiguity here. In the context of our disease it means losing ourselves in the obsession with sex and the compulsion to act out. In a wider social context I've heard it used in reference to media and the general cultural attitude towards sex: such as when a billboard advertisement of someone in a bikini is said to objectify women – in other words, uses sexual attractiveness in order to sell something. I've even heard it used to refer to dress (a certain type of clothing is called "objectifying," i.e. sexually provocative) or behavior (someone's attitude towards others is "objectifying," i.e. treats them as sexual objects).

"When I focus on someone's sexual aspects exclusively, it is as if I am seeing that person as an *object*."

I believe that, as recovering addicts in SAA, using these latter definitions – which refer to how *other* people are talking or behaving – can be risky, and often falls outside of our purpose. It seems to me that when we talk about objectifying in SAA, we are primarily talking about something we are doing, something that aggravates our disease process, to which we need to apply the Steps.

A clue in the word itself has brought me to a new insight. When I focus on someone's sexual aspects exclusively, it is as if I am seeing that person as an *object*. What does that mean? For me, it means the opposite of

OBJECTIFYING... by Chris D.

objectify (ca 1836) : to treat as or cause to have objective reality; esp : to give expression to (as an abstract notion, feeling, or ideal) in a form that can be experienced by others...

subject, which is soul, spirit, thought, imagination, desire – everything that makes up the experience of *self*. In objectifying, I ignore all that and act as if the person has no self at all, but is merely a thing, *a bunch of stuff out there*, so to speak. And it is in this ignoring of soul, this pretending that there is no subject in the other person, that a crucial nature of my disease reveals itself. It is a spiritual disease, a disease of denial – a denial of spirituality itself.

Further meditation reveals a more startling fact. Not only do I objectify others in a sexual sense – but in my everyday, casual, behavior, the way I act according to my conditioning, I treat everything as if it was an object, without spirit, without consciousness, just stuff out there that I am encountering. In other words, *without conscious contact with a Power greater than me*, my general attitude towards the world (not just my sexual attitude) is one of objectification. On still further meditation, the most troubling fact of all is revealed – that I myself am included in this attitude – *that I objectify myself*, consider myself without spirit or soul, only as a thing or an object "out there." This is the kernel of my spiritual malaise, the denial of my true self.

One of my sponsors taught me to include in my Sixth Step the practicing of behaviors that were the opposites of my defects of character. What, then, is the opposite of objectifying? Here I introduce a new word – "*subjectifying*."

Subjectifying is a two-fold practice. First, I meditate on myself as spirit, with all that this implies – awareness, feeling, thinking, dreaming, hoping – but most of all the very fact of being a subject, the miracle of being awake and alive, with everything that happens in life happening in my experience, not as some material occurrence that is just happening "out there" – but an event which is significant because there is always a soul experiencing it, with joy or suffering or love or conflict, or whatever spiritual quality of which my soul partakes in that experience. Secondly, I meditate on others as *exactly the same*, that is, as spiritual beings, subjects in just the same way I have known myself. They do not experience themselves as anyone's object, but as the subject of

their own lives, with all their thoughts, dreams, feelings and desires. There is no crowd, always only one person in the crowd. When I find myself objectifying someone, sexually or otherwise, I can practice this by bringing to mind that the other person is a subject, not a thing – and I can imagine that person experiencing life in just the same way that I experience life, as self, spirit.

I have found that subjectifying helps to prepare me for the grace of a Power greater than me. Denial is just an illusion, acting as *if* we were objects. Subjectifying is aligning myself with the actual truth, and the truth will set me free. By this constant practice of remembering spirit – remembering my own nature of spirit and the identical nature of everyone else – I help myself stay in the process of recovery and open myself to the possibility of conscious contact with a Higher Power. Through this conscious contact, and its improvement through the Steps, may we continuously shed the denial which keeps us bound – the belief in our thinghood which blocks us from knowing our truth as spiritual beings, children of God.

Chris D.

OUTSIDE ISSUES ..?

E-mail is a wonderful convenience; you can forward "junk" to everyone on your list. I have a special young relative that picks out selections for me. I think the words are: Take what you can use and leave the rest

1. First rule of holes: If you're in one, stop digging.
2. I started out with nothing... I still have most of it.
3. If God wanted me to touch my toes, God would have put them on my knees.
4. It's hard for me to make a comeback; I haven't been anywhere.
5. Strange, I don't remember being absent minded...
6. If all is not lost, where is it???

**PEREGRINATING
PETER [B]
SENDS RECOVERY
FROM THE ROAD**

Hey Robert,
The convention just ended and I'm on my way to a job in Iowa. You asked for an article, and I've got this little laptop, so here goes:

Right here, I guess. I'm sitting on my motorcycle, waiting for the Four Corners Monument to open. It's the exact spot where Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico meet. I guess it's kind of dumb, but I've been hearing about this place all my life and I was passing by last night on my way to Iowa and... Another night under the star's nothing new here. My life has been a little hectic lately. The week before the convention, I was stage managing two (clothed) Go Go dancers on an industrial show for a liquor company. And I don't drink, never mind the sex stuff... That ended Friday with no slips and surprisingly little time in the Bubble (hey, maybe I am getting better!). Then I went directly (do not pass go, do not collect \$200, do not take any phone numbers) to the Alumni Reunion at the Sexual Dependency Unit of Del Amo Hospital. Talk about going from the sublime to the ridiculous! (or was it the other way 'round?)

The weekend was great. It was such a treat to see the staff that were a part of saving my life. It brought up a lot of gratitude and a lot of love for these people who are on the cutting edge of the Sexual Addiction treatment movement. It ended with an exercise where all 26 of us alumni sat in a big circle that had an empty chair in the middle. We were all given a sheet of blank adhesive labels. Then, one by one, we sat in the chair in the middle, closed our eyes and everyone else wrote down something about the person that we had learned or intuited during the

**LITERATURE COMMITTEE
GOALS DEFINED FOR COMING
YEAR**

First LitCom Teleconference held in August. Letter from Jeff W., LitCom Chair, outlines hopes and expectations for serving the SAA Fellowship this year.

Dear members of SAA,

We had our first teleconference of the year and got off to an excellent start. We set our priorities for what pieces we want to concentrate on as well as what we want to encourage the fellowship to write. Before we get to the priorities themselves, let

me provide a little background. In the past, we had no priorities; we simply responded to whatever people submitted to us. This left us feeling overwhelmed by our workload and unfocused in our efforts. We had a difficult time getting work accomplished. We currently are reviewing about 25 submissions. We didn't even have time to discuss them all at the last teleconference, let alone review them for publication. So, we decided to set priorities on what we would consider this year. We had two criteria:

1. What the fellowship needs the most at this time
2. What has a the best chance of becoming published as Conference Approved Literature.

For the first criterion, we know that we need just about all of our literature. Nonetheless, we decided that we need literature that speaks to the particular needs of our fellowship, rather than general Twelve-Step literature. We decided that general Twelve Step literature was needed less because it can be provided by other sources and oral

(Continued on page 11)

NEW TONIC FOR ALL SAA MEMBERS' PROBLEMS

Andrew

From Andrew

I have condemned myself for a very long time. My sponsor is amazed at the size of the bat I can swing at myself. And my batting average is quite high.

I learned to do for myself since I had no connection at home growing up. I learned not to reach out because my desire for help was never received and understood. Trusting is a process I am learning and I can begin to see myself and others realistically, even through the pain. I know that I now can reach out and it doesn't matter what I get. I am not shamed because it is not what I want or expect. Clarity and dignity are coming into view, if ever so slowly.

I reconnected with my wife after last night's meeting. We continued our discussion of her embarrassment about me, and I didn't withdraw. I stayed connected and I expressed myself in genuine emotion. I was also honest about stuff of hers that bugged me. I don't do that and I realized it was acceptable since it didn't minimize either of us. I hurt, but I didn't act out and I feel great this morning. I'm not sure why, but it could possibly be that I am starting to emerge in real form and I like who I am.

Emotional baggage is very heavy and airlines don't let you carry it on - you have to check it and let go of it to fly. There is tremendous freedom in letting go and allowing ourselves to heal and trust.

Part of the marvelous discussion last night touched me deeply. With my high expectations from porn, there is no woman or sexual experience that could satisfy me. It would never be good enough. The graven images on my mind were idealistic and could never be

achieved. I like what Ken L. said last night: "Maybe what I have (he listed a few examples) is good enough."

Perfectionism, while pursued vigorously by many sex addicts, especially me, is one big [.....] lie! I have been running hard to an unachievable goal. I am stepping back today and looking at me and life on more realistic terms.

I am beginning to touch it and see it and feel it, and it is good. Have a great day!

Andrew

P.S. I liked something that Charlie shared this morning: "**just being Charlie, flaws and all.**" It struck a chord in me. It was quite catchy and my creative juices began to flow. I thought we could create a product to sell and distribute through SAA.

FLAWSINOL:

The new tonic that allows you to be accepted just as you are. Give it to someone who hates, loathes or resents you. Or drink it yourself - you'll see life in a whole new light!

LITERATURE COMMITTEE...CONT

(Continued from page 10)

tradition. We made two exceptions to this policy, the Large Book and the Group Guide. We are exploring rewriting the Group Guide because it contains literature which we are prohibited from using by Alcoholics Anonymous.

For the second criterion, we decided that pamphlets that address topics specific to SAA members have a better chance of passing a delegate vote than literature which defines who we are and how we work the program. The last delegate convention reinforced this idea. The Women's Pamphlet, which provides information on how to handle mixed gender SAA meetings, passed its

straw poll unanimously. On the other hand, the Abstinence Pamphlet, which attempted to define a core concept in the program, passed by a fairly narrow margin.

With these ideas in mind, we decided to focus on the following works this year (June 1999 - May 2000):

1. Plain Brown Rapper
2. The Women's Pamphlet
3. Translating our Conference-Approved literature into Spanish
4. The Large Book
5. The Literature Committee Handbook.

These are the works that we will spend our greatest attention on this year. We will still have active subcommittees for the other pieces and will proceed with them as time permits.

We want to encourage members to continue to write and develop literature for our fellowship. We decided that we need the following literature by the fellowship:

1. Stories, writing on the Steps and Traditions, and any other inspired writing for the Plain Brown Rapper.
2. Informational literature on special topics that will not likely be covered by the Large Book. For example:
 - A. An Internet pamphlet
 - B. A pamphlet for members who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

We want to encourage all members of the fellowship who are inspired, to write literature for our fellowship. We can say from experience that the process is a healing, creative, and excellent service to your fellow addicts.

Thank you for your help.

Jeff W.

Chairperson of the 1999 - 2000 Literature Committee

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TAKE ADVANTAGE !!!

The new Literature Catalog [July 99] has been distributed to all groups; it includes the Audio Tape list. Your American Express, Discovery, MasterCard and Visa can be used to order. Use the 800 number or order from the website or by e-mail. Remember, as much as 40% of our bills are paid out of proceeds from literature sales. Each of these pieces will enhance your personal and group recovery. Learn from the experience of others as you read and listen. Then use it in your own 12th step work! Spread Recovery!

SERVICE WORK ! WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT SERVICE WORK?!?!? WHO CARES ABOUT IT? *Louis D. does*

Hello Robert.
 I hope that this e-mail finds you well. I recently wrote an e-mail to a fellow member of the program and out came the thought of SERVICE WORK. I'm forwarding this e-mail to you in hope that there is something of merit in the e-mail that might help another addict to stay sober. Please feel free to edit this as you choose. I think you have done an excellent job as editor of The Plain Brown Rapper. It seems to me almost an impossible task to regularly have the material you use to make up the whole of the newsletter. You have my thoughts and prayers for your success. Take care, and God bless.
 Louis D.

Thank you Bill.
 I miss the meetings....I realize what a source of comfort they can be to the struggling addict. I will have to see how I can regularly attend meetings, as it is a WE program. I don't have to struggle and be alone with these fears, compulsions, and self-loathing feelings. No one understands an addict like another addict. Even in THE BIG BOOK, around page 69 which speaks of our sexual compulsions, it is said that if one is struggling with their sexual compulsions...to do service work.
 I remember in early sobriety our INTERGROUP spoke on this very subject. I supposed this would be helpful to me, as I am

struggling at sorting out my compulsions. I find that **I am always helped when I give help.** It's a very simple thing, and yet it is a very powerful tool that the addict can use in helping his own recovery. And, service work keeps a healthy flow of interaction between members in the program. Service work allows goals to be achieved. I have found that **whenever I do service work, the rewards come back multiplied.** Service work can be as simple as setting up chairs before a meeting. I find that being a part of THE INTERGROUP is an excellent way to integrate service work into my life. Service work can help to keep one connected, out of isolation, and give one a feeling of hopefulness. I know that whenever I disconnect, feel isolated and hopeless, I'm setting up the addict in me for a slip. One day at a time. It's not all or nothing anymore. That doesn't seem to work. I suppose what I'm telling myself here is to try to find some way that I can be of service to the fellowship. I know that this will help me to connect, and **connection is a big part of recovery.**
 I feel a bit empowered by the thought that **I can get out of my own craziness by getting connected to the program through service work.** I am grateful for the tools that keep my addict under arrest.
 Louis D..

Now!! You can order materials and make donations, using your VISA, MC, Discovery or AMEX !!!!

WILL YOU PLEASE? Remember the needs of the SAA Fellowship at the international level? This newsletter was provided for you by those doing their own Step Twelve and Tradition Five work. And by one full/one half time, paid staff member. There are important programs of outreach, many of which are represented in this publication. Outreach of all kinds, prison and all other. Materials are provided free to those who cannot afford them; i.e., prisoners. It costs dollars to maintain the central facility through which our efforts are maintained. For you who downloaded this, or have received it via "snail mail", we hope you will strongly consider sending your periodic contributions to the ISO office. **YOU** are the answer to total Outreach! Thanks !!