

The Plain Brown Rapper

The official newsletter of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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THE ISO ENCOURAGES GROUPS TO REPRODUCE THE PLAIN BROWN RAPPER SO THAT COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS. THE PLAIN BROWN RAPPER IS MAILED FREE TO ALL WHO REQUEST IT.

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Literature Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of the PBR reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.

"After reading my old Higher Power Classified Ad, I realize that my perception of God has evolved.."

See Page 10

"However, let us not forget that right thinking does not translate into right actions, but that right actions, over time, will translate into right thinking."

See Page 15

Return to Minneapolis

By Mike L.

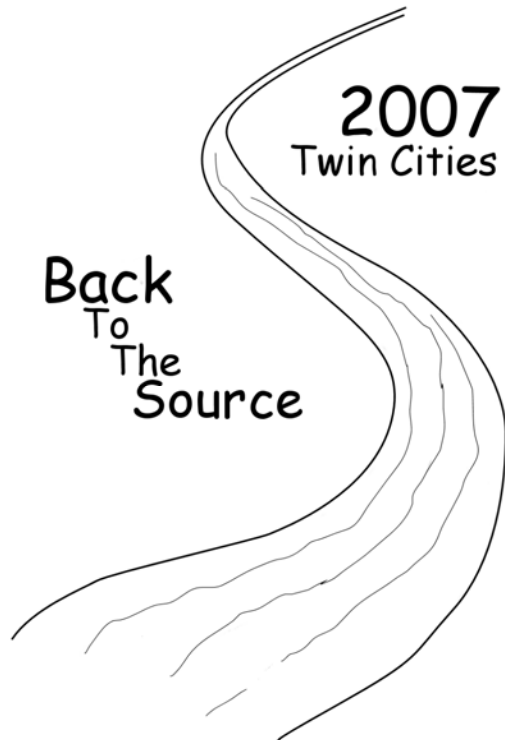
I've been fortunate enough to attend every SAA convention since the 1995 convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with the exception of the 2005 convention in New Orleans. However, this year's convention in Minneapolis represented my first opportunity to do a repeat visit to another city. Fortunately, I have many fond memories of the 1996 convention in Minneapolis, particularly the large workshop that bounced around ideas for what would become our basic text, not to mention of the wonderful city itself, so I was very eager to get back there again.

As is our normal practice, things got started for those of us on the Board and the Literature Committee on the Tuesday evening before the convention with our usual joint dinner. Often we go to a restaurant; this year, one of the members of the local fellowship welcomed us into his home, where we were treated with a number of local specialties, including wild rice soup.

One of the highlights for me each year is the check-in at the beginning of our two days of Literature Committee meetings. This is probably because preparing for this part of the meeting gives me an opportunity to look back over the last year and decide which events of the year were the most sig-

nificant for me. This is my annual opportunity to put things into perspective, an activity that I want to take advantage of more often during the year.

We had over 150 delegates at the delegate meeting this year, many more than we have had in previous years. So the meeting room was more crowded than I'm normally used to. A highlight for me was addressing the delegates for the final time as prisoner outreach chair, and an even greater highlight was having the opportunity to present the new



Return to Minneapolis Continued

name of the SAA Newsletter, "The Outer Circle," to the accompaniment of vocal drum rolls from a number of the delegates.

I was disappointed that our basic text did not get the blessing for conference approval from the delegates after a close vote. And I recognize that Higher Power is in charge and that this was a "not yet," rather than a "no," vote.

While I was certainly tired after three and a half days of business meetings, I still took advantage of opportunities to renew acquaintances with long-time members and to meet members who were new, or at least new to me.

Another highlight was the trip to Lake Harriet and the opportunity to walk the three miles around it that the founders of our fellowship did 30 years ago. The two guys who put together the catered dinner did a fantastic job, and I was happy to find that the dog who was wandering around the grounds and to whom I gave an entire brat (a type of sausage we don't have in Houston) had just wandered off from his owner, another SAA member.

And as if all of this were not enough, I took some time to see the city. I saw the beautiful Basilica of St. Mary; I think I'd have to go to Europe (or at least New York City) to see another church as beautiful, even if I chose to go to Saint Olaf for

Mass on Sunday, since we have gotten the broadcasts of their choir on the radio every Christmas for as long as I can remember. I had the chance to visit the wonderful Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and only managed to drag

myself away from there by reminding myself that we would certainly be coming back to Minneapolis again before long. And finally I got back and saw the Mississippi River, which was just as wonderful as I remembered it to be.

So it was a great week, both in terms of recovery and in terms of recharging my batteries. Next year it's back to looking forward to seeing a city I haven't visited before. Hope to see you there!



The Gift of Addiction?

By Rick F., Lubbock, Texas

I have been thinking lately about this journey called recovery. There are times when I am overwhelmed with gratitude and the love of my Higher Power. There are times when I am discouraged and filled with a sense of futility.

Recently, I was able to spend a day with another recovering soul, someone who has had a journey remarkably similar to my own. I am probably not different from many others who are struggling with addiction. I do not have a clear perspective of my own character defects and the victories my Higher Power has graciously bestowed over them, so I tend to wallow in difficult times and neglect the times when I am encouraged and grateful.

In sharing my story with another, I was able to step back and get a better view of where I had been and where I am now. One spiritual writer spoke of a "thorn" in his flesh, which he prayed to have removed "three times." The response to these prayers was not to have the "thorn" removed, but for him to begin to understand God's grace was sufficient for recovery. God's power is "made perfect in weakness."

I am learning to be grateful for the "gift" of addiction. It is where I am broken that my Higher Power is strongest. The power of Step 7 (Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings) is in the asking, not in the result (Sex Addicts Anonymous, pp. 43-44). Like the writer I mentioned, I can humbly ask my Higher Power to remove my

"thorn." I can do this whenever I feel my addiction "calling to me." Sometimes, I must ask for help several times a day. My prayer goes something like this: "God, I am feeling my thorn again. I surrender it to you to do as you will. In all things, I ask that your will be done."

Changes occur in God's time, not mine. I was introduced to the Twelve Steps seven years ago this past March. The grace my Higher Power granted me has been an ever-evolving and deepening intimate relationship with Him. This grace has led me through the death of both parents, my son's struggles with substance abuse and incarceration, a period of separation from my wife, financial difficulties, the loss of a career, and several relapses. Through it all, my Higher Power has been there when I have surrendered and returned to Him.

I am learning my "thorn" can be useful to others. When I attend meetings, conferences, retreats, or simply work one-on-one with another in recovery, I can empathize with their suffering and reach out by sharing my own experience, strength and hope.

In a play I read, a physician who has been suffering with depression comes periodically to the pool of Bethesda, hoping to be healed in the water. The tradition was that an angel of the Lord would appear at the pool and stir the water. The first person in the water after that would be cured. The physician approached the pool one day as the angel appeared. The angel blocked the physician the moment he was

ready to step into the pool to be healed, telling him that the moment and healing were not for him. The angel said that without his wound, he would not have his power to reach the hearts of others.

Hope can be elusive. Sometimes it comes to us in the midst of our pain. The writer I mentioned

earlier, a man who, I am convinced, understood addiction, talked about how we rejoice in our sufferings because of the character it builds. God can use our addiction, just as he used the writer's "thorn in the flesh," to increase our reliance on God's grace and power and spread that grace and power to others.

Why I Do Spiritual Practice

By Tim E.

I am so grateful for patience, even as I know how impatient I have been concerning my spiritual growth, because today I see how profoundly and subtly God or Higher Power has changed me into someone more aware of myself and more aware of what is outside of me. I have a thinking problem, and that contributed greatly to my active sex addiction and ultimately to my coming home to SAA in 1997. I don't have a thinking problem because I am bad, or because I had bad parents or circumstances—I have it because I am human. I now see that we all have problems with thinking that for some of us lead to destructive behavior.

Years ago as I approached Step Eleven and heard some admired program friends talking about the benefits of a meditation practice, I knew I wanted to start—after all, everything else that had been recommended to me in SAA had worked for me, at least to some degree. So I got some instruction, went on an occasional retreat, and finally settled in to a regular daily practice, perhaps five

or six years ago. I spent my first several years of meditation fighting myself, because I wanted to do it right and get some elusive yet concrete kind of benefit from it, but all I could do was sit and think, and then judge. I felt like I didn't have the ability to attend to even a single cycle of "breathe in, breathe out."

And when I first began, I had a modest goal; it was all I could do to stay seated for three minutes. But I stayed with it, again because other sober and respected members were sticking with it and I knew there was something for me to learn. Later I read an article by a teacher who said that when he started his meditation practice twenty or so years ago, ninety-five percent of the time was spent in discursive thought; after twenty years now, it is down to seventy-five percent! That gave me a more realistic view of what could happen to me with my own practice. I also heard of another teacher who said that if we find it absolutely necessary to judge our meditation practice, we should do it no more frequently than once every ten years!

What I have learned over the years has been sometimes painful,

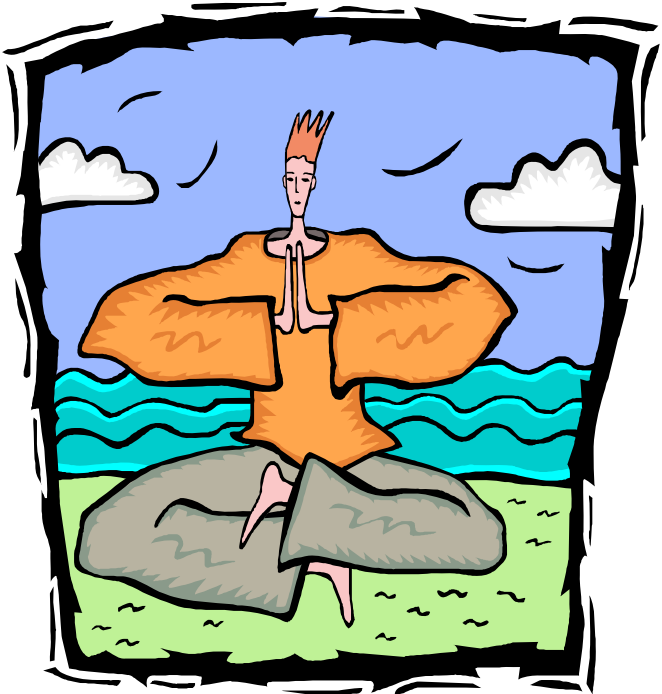
but never fruitless. Painful to see how deep are my habits of seeking perfection, wanting control, and punishing myself. And slowly, day by day, over the months and years, I have seen those habits begin to transform: not to go away, but to be accompanied by a reflexive "Oh yeah, that again!," and then the ability to let go, and come back to something more real and more meaningful than my thoughts and criticisms. And I feel like I have just begun to notice and appreciate my thinking habit, my tendency to rely too much on that habit to shape my world and my feelings about the world.

It's not that I have daily transcendent and beautiful experiences when I sit; for me it is more about coming awake in a more literal sense, and getting to know myself more intimately. My belief is that

this knowing helps me to be available to others and to myself, to my program. I also have believed all along that doing my practice does contribute directly to my sustained abstinence from inner-circle be-

havior: from the start I learned that I was able to have all kinds of thoughts that in my previous life would have immediately resulted in action (for example, and especially, sexually acting-out), but that now I could just sit through and watch without any need to do anything.

Sitting every day has been a gift; at one point I thought that getting up half an hour early to do my practice was crazy, as I didn't have that kind of time. After all, I have a busy life



and I need the sleep that I can get. Today as I prayed, though, I sincerely thanked God for giving me the time to do my practice today; turns out that it wasn't really my time in the first place.

The Third Place

By Bill M.

I was struck by something I heard recently. I was attending an open house at a literary center for aspiring writers here in town and heard one of the writing instructors refer to her part-time job as the “third place” in her life. She said everyone has a first place: that’s home, “...where they have to take you in.” Your second place, she said, was your job, where you spend most of your time working to support yourself and your family. And then, there’s your third place; for her that third place was teaching students how to write and express themselves in poetry, short essays or whatever form of expression the written word took for them. This particular instructor was teaching a course entitled “Attentiveness in a Creative and Spiritual Life” which I was drawn to investigate.

I am a man who is experiencing a transition in his life. I’m fifty-six years old, and about ten years ago I began to feel that something—I couldn’t put my finger on it—was missing in my life. At the time, I remember thinking that what was missing was the third place in my life. Perhaps my mid-life journey really began when I began to realize that my soul needed to be fed by something other than raising my family and my job. The best way I can explain my feelings at the time was that I was “underbeing” and not “living up to my full human potential.” I was stuck between feeling on the one hand that I needed to aspire for more in my life, personally and professionally, and on the

other the comfort of staying where I was, in familiar surroundings, with familiar places and faces. It didn’t help that people who were close and loved me, like my wife, always accused me of being underemployed and that I could have made much more money if I had just applied myself and sought positions with more leadership responsibility. It also didn’t help that I had already had one experience in my career in which I was demoted for failing to perform to expectations when I was in a position of higher authority. While I survived that demotion and in fact thrived in a different job within the organization, I never got over the trauma of being in a job that might have been “too big for me” and the subsequent decision to remove myself from that job so that someone with more ability could take my place. It was a blow to my self-confidence and self-esteem that still shadows me to this day.

What did I do with this anxiety of being stuck, of feeling that I was not living up to my full potential, of feeling that for whatever reason my current job responsibilities, though familiar, were not challenging me or my skills enough? I turned to a third place, the only third place I knew...a video booth in a pornographic bookstore in town. I visited this place a lot, sometimes once a week, sometimes three times a week. And when I wasn’t acting out there, I’d be acting out in other places and ways. In short, I was an addict, someone whose life had become unmanageable because I could not control the urge to get “high” and numb my feelings of discomfort by using sex to

escape. At the height of my acting-out ten years ago, I was arrested. Fortunately I was able to keep the arrest away from my employer, but I did have to tell my wife and I swore to her then that I would stop my sexual escapades, promising her that this was something I could control on my own. It wasn't. I continued to act out for another seven years until I finally entered a treatment program and twelve-step program for sex addicts in the spring of 2003.

I'm pleased to say that today, almost four years later, I'm still in a twelve-step program and go to meetings weekly. I've been sober from my bottom-line behaviors for over three years, but sex addiction for me remains a daily struggle which I am only able to manage because of the help I've received from God.

The reason why my third place became unacceptable to me was because in the depths of my soul it was not who I was as a person. It was not I. I hated the lying, the deceit, the risking of my own life, let alone the lives of those I loved by constantly pursuing sex "in all the wrong places...and for all the wrong reasons." The disparity between my inner soul, the person I knew and loved myself to be, and my external behavior as an addict became so great that something had to change. But I couldn't do it alone; I needed help. And I found that help from someone who had never left my side: God, a Higher Power greater than I. And the people who helped lead me back to God were men trained as spiritual directors, men who were trained to walk with me and help

me discern where God was and how to communicate with God on a regular basis. It was a spiritual director who first confronted me with the fact that the "bad behavior" to which I was referring when I talked about my acting-out behaviors in fact might be an addiction, which in turn was a turning away from God.

And so where am I today? It goes without saying that my first priority in life must be to continue my successful recovery program from sex addiction. This means working the twelve-step program, going to meetings on a regular basis and saying the Serenity Prayer each and every day. It means staying close to my Higher Power, staying under spiritual direction and maintaining a relationship through prayer and other activities with God. In short, it means taking care of myself physically and spiritually so that I can manage and handle the stresses of everyday life in ways that will not harm my family, my community, or myself.

But what about the search for that third place? Where is it for me? I still need to answer that question because one thing that hasn't changed is the fact that, now that I'm in the middle of my life, my ego is searching for a different kind of gratification. I'm looking for something that will feed my soul, make me feel good about who I am, allow me to share the wisdom of who I am and what I've learned in this life with others. I'm still searching for the answers of why God put me here in the first place. The way a friend once put this to me was that I should ask myself the question, "Bill, if you were told you had six months left to live and were going to die of a terminal

The Third Place Continued

disease, what would you do with those final six months of your life?" I was asked that question almost ten years ago and I'm still searching for the answer. Perhaps the answer is that there is no answer. Perhaps I'm living the answer each and every day; and to quote an over-used expression, "it's not the final destination but the journey that really matters."

I do have a better appreciation for just how important is this journey to find a third place in my life. You see, while I did muster up the courage a couple of years ago to

change jobs after twenty-eight years with the same employer, this hasn't changed the fact that I'm still a sex addict who struggles with addiction every day; nor, oddly enough, has it changed my feelings that I'm "underbeing" and not working up to my full human potential. Translation: it's not the job, it's not the second place in my life that necessarily needs fixing, it's finding that third place that truly feeds my soul and gives me the feeling that I'm in touch with what God wants of me in this life.

Second Step

By Brad O.

Defining My Higher Power

A couple of weeks ago, my Thursday Evening GLBT and friends meeting discussed the second step. It was interesting to note that about half of the people found it to be a very difficult step while the other half found it to be an enjoyable process. A lot of it depended on the person's experience with religion or spirituality as a child. Fortunately, I was brought up in a wonderful church where the main message regarding God was that God loves me. Sunday school rooms were filled with positive images like Jesus gently holding a lamb, an old man praying at a table, etc. Because I knew I was gay since around the age of ten, I am very grateful that the church didn't confuse me by referring to homosexuality as a sin. Sexuality simply wasn't discussed.

Because of my positive childhood experiences around religion and God, I was not perplexed when faced with Step Two. It was a welcome relief from the rigors of the first step. My sponsor had me begin work on Step Two by creating a "Higher Power Classified Ad." The purpose of this activity was to list attributes I wanted my Higher Power to have. I came up with a list of twenty-two attributes. Here are a few of them:

Wanted: A god who (1) guides me through a life of adventure and meaning; (2) cries easily; (3) laughs heartily; (4) gives me hugs and kisses; (5) is blameless; (6) guards my steps and gently holds me accountable; (7) is optimistic; (8) takes charge and steers the course of my life.

Four years have passed and I am revisiting Step Two. After reading

my old Higher Power Classified Ad, I realize that my perception of God has evolved. I no longer define my Higher Power using human qualities. My list of twenty-two has been trimmed to four. My want ad now reads as follows:

Wanted: A god who (1) is constant; (2) is available twenty-four hours a day; (3) knows my past, present, and future.; (4) is stronger than all other forces present in my life.

This revised perception of God may appear less personal and appealing at first sight. Upon reflection, however, I am more empowered by a Higher Power that transcends human characteristics. I don't want my Higher Power to have any human characteristics. After listing these four traits, I went on to describe each one and how it relates to my life.

1. A God who is constant: Before recovery, my life was very unstable. During childhood, I needed my addiction to stay alive. My life was so bleak and painful that acting-out served as a reprieve from reality. I believe that my addict kept me alive. The little highs I achieved when acting out gave me something to stay alive for. It kept me from entertaining thoughts of committing suicide.

During the first six years of recovery, I continued to act out despite attending meetings. Eventually, I reached a point where I realized that I needed to "divorce" my addict. This was hard, since my addict was always there for me. However, I came to realize that my addict was now killing me, not saving me. It no longer served a purpose. Thus, I needed to find

something new to replace the addict. I needed to find something that would always be there for me. The solution was presented to me at the meetings. It was God.

Over time, as I have worked at getting to know my Higher Power, I have come to believe that God is constant. God is unwavering. God is always there for me.

2. A God who is available twenty-four hours a day: Before SAA, I not only had no one available for me twenty-four hours a day, but I had no one available at any time. I remember that, at the age of nineteen, I was in a deep depression. I lived at home at the time. The depression seemed strongest at night, and I would go into my parents' bedroom and try to talk about it. My parents would quickly get agitated, telling me that they were too tired to talk. They said that if I want to talk about it, I should wake up at six in the morning to talk instead of sleeping in. Eventually, I got the hint and stopped approaching them. Since my addiction was available to me twenty-four hours a day, I found some solace there.

I have had great sponsors in recent years that are available twenty-four hours a day. They tell me that they would rather I call at 3:00 a.m. instead of acting out. I couldn't believe my ears when I first heard this. I thought they were saying this to be nice. In time, I internalized their unconditional support and concern for my well-being. If indeed I do call at that hour and get a voicemail, I have another option for communication: God. I may ask God to guide me to sober living for the next minute, then hour, and then day. Fortunately, the urge does pass, as the old AA say-

Second Step Continued

ing goes. I will later discuss how I connect with my Higher Power, but the main point is that I can connect with God at any time or place.

3. A God who knows my past, present, and future: Sometimes life is very scary. Knowing that my Higher Power knows everything not only about my past and present, but also about my future, consoles me. Philosophy-minded people may question whether or not I believe in free will. I experience life as if I have choices, but I also believe that God already knows what choices I will make. Automatically, this frees me from punishing myself if I make the wrong choice. I just allow myself to feel the feelings that are a consequence of that choice, and then move on to make any amends that are needed.

A past belief, grounded in free will, was that if I made the wrong choice, I was off God's path for me. God and I were separate. However, since God already knows my path, there are no wrong choices, and I am never separate from God.

This particular belief keeps my self-will in line. All good and bad things that happen were to be. I can be grateful for the good stuff without taking full credit. I can learn from the bad stuff without chastising myself. Wherever I am,

it is where God intended me to be.

4. A God who is stronger than all other forces in my life: There are so many things I am powerless over. I once made a list of one hundred things I am powerless over. At first it was difficult, but soon it became a fun, freeing activity. Number one on the list was my addiction. After that, I began listing things like stoplights,

Whatever happens, I will be okay. If I relapse, I will be okay. If a nuclear war occurs, I will be okay. Even if my shoelace breaks, I will be okay."

weather, my boss's mood swings, the stability of the chair I sit in, gravity, etc. In the second step, I came to realize that although I am powerless over many things, my Higher Power is powerless over nothing. I feel a sense of parental protection. Whatever happens, I will be

okay. If I relapse, I will be okay. If a nuclear war occurs, I will be okay. Even if my shoelace breaks, I will be okay. I may not be able to handle many things, but God can!

Experiencing God

Now that I have a conception of my Higher Power, I want to find ways to experience it. My Higher Power is expressed in many ways.

1. The fellowship. I believe that I can get all my needs met through the program. The steps are powerful tools. Meetings are a place where I can be loved and accepted unconditionally. My sponsor is my guide and mentor. My feedback group pro-

vides me with encouragement and straightforward advice in areas of difficulty.

2. Nature. Nature is beautiful and amazing. Walks outdoors can be illuminating when I take the time to look at the beauty of the world around me. Small details and events enrapture me, from a calling insect to a falling leaf. All five senses are overwhelmed in nature: I hear a rushing stream, see blowing flowers and grass, taste a leaf or bud, touch a feather or caterpillar, and smell the ionized air after a rainfall.

3. Music. Music tugs at my heartstrings. A beautiful collection of songs can thoroughly relax my body, or create a heightened state of emotion. It can make my hair follicles tighten and my breath shudder.

4. Relationships. My Higher Power allows me to share loving conversations and moments with treasured friends and family. Being honest and authentic with others is rewarding.

5. Intuition. Trusting my feelings and being honest about what is there. Feeling safe enough to listen to and address my internal

signals allows me to see ways I can spiritually grow.

6. Sex. I have had a handful of healthy sexual experiences that have given me a glimpse of my Higher Power. I believe that sex can be an avenue to Higher Power connection in the context of a loving relationship.

The items listed above are means of connecting with my Higher Power. Below I have listed direct ways I connect with God.

1. Prayer. When I pray with humility and yearning, my Higher Power can comfort me. Prayers of joy and gratitude are as meaningful as cries for help and guidance.

2. Meditation. Sometimes I need to be still and listen. Sometimes it is powerful to just be present. Then, there are times I think about and marvel in the beauty and power of life.

Conclusion

I know that as I continue my journey in SAA, my concept of God will continue to evolve. I trust that this evolution is nothing to fear. It is a healthy outgrowth of working the steps.

E-mail Outreach

By Marilyn S.

Our local group voted to try the use of e-mail as a method for sex addicts to contact us. We have used this method for one year now, and have had over fifty inquiries. We were exploring new territory, and made a few mistakes along the way. In the end, we took our experiences and adopted a set of guidelines through our newly-

formed intergroup.

Originally, the e-mail site was started by the Tuesday/Thursday groups. We found that we were twelve-stepping new people and helping plug them into our other existing meetings as well. It became clear that while this was readily accepted by the other groups, we wanted to be "endorsed" by all of the

E-mail Outreach Continued

groups. We decided to start an intergroup to address issues that affected all of our meetings in the city since we had grown from three to six meetings in a three-to-four month period.

The other issues that surfaced were (1) responding as recovering persons, not as professionals; (2) handling requests for services that were not available locally; (3) receiving inquiries from persons in other S-fellowships; (4) being told about illegal activities.

The result was the following list of guidelines adopted by our intergroup on January 13, 2007:

1. M. and S. are the trusted servants who answer the site. S. checks the site on Monday and Wednesday. M. checks the site on Friday and Saturday. We may check more often, but those are the minimal times we check. M. and S. communicate with each other on any out-of-the-ordinary situation.

2. Answers are kept simple. We give some basic information about the group, and ask for a phone number so that we may contact them.

3. If the request is outside the scope of our local SAA, we may give them contact information only for other fellowships/agencies that may be able to assist them in their search (e.g., the existence of a group for significant others or that of a woman's group in another S-fellowship since our local SAA has no group for significant others or for women).

4. We do not endorse any

other program, nor do we criticize.

5. If someone writes in and volunteers that they are actively engaging in criminal behavior against minors or knowingly exposing others to HIV, etc, we will consult with ISO of SAA about our responsibility to report these issues.

6. We answer the site as recovering persons. All information shared should be as a recovering person. We do not claim professional expertise in the subject.

7. We maintain anonymity and safeguard the integrity of the group by following the process agreed upon by each individual group. All the groups in our city are closed. The only published meeting is the Sunday meeting. Every group except Sunday has opted for twelve-stepping new members. As new people come into the program, we contact current members within the fellowship who are willing to make twelve-step calls to facilitate new member orientation/inclusion.

8. If an SAA member is here from another city, we give them the meeting information.

9. If the new person has been a member of another S-fellowship, we still require a twelve-step call since the fellowships are different. The two members who make the twelve-step call become temporary sponsors to help the person get started in our fellowship. We provide a packet of information about SAA, and try to help them in the transition.

10. We do not give out any SAA member's phone number without permission.

Being All That We Can Be!

By Santi L.—9/19/1994

How often do we simply allow life to “happen” to us...considering ourselves a victim of circumstance, and resigning ourselves to that which befalls us? The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and to expect a different result.

The only way to become all that we can be is to resolve in our minds that we will take a stand against the difficulties and troubles that come our way, or whatever it is that we perceive has been holding us back...and by facing them, overcome them once and for all.

I rose to the challenge, and chose not to be an “at leaster.” I didn’t buy into the casual recovery attitude of enabling someone else, letting them enable me, or not holding each other accountable for our actions. This diseased attitude, which is a breeding ground for addiction, perpetuates acting out. I call it the “we seek progress rather than perfection” syndrome, because it is easy to misunderstand, sometimes purposely, the meaning of that very powerful recovery message.

At every meeting when we read Chapter 5 of the Big Book, “How It Works,” the sentence “We seek progress rather than perfection” refers to an addict who is in fact working on his recovery to the best of his/her ability. It encourages addicts to push on in the event that they should have a slip, which is not uncommon. The phrase encourages us to persevere and continue on our journey by having us honestly assess the

progress made so far. It absolutely is not meant to imply we should settle for an outcome or a goal less than what we are capable of when we are willing to go to any lengths. It does not refer to addicts who have adopted a half-measures program and attitude. The dangerous misinterpretation of that wonderful phrase, if adopted as a mantra (way of life), over time will bleed us of all our courage, determination and will to succeed in our transformation. Let us love one another into recovery but let us be truthful to each other about our shortcomings, stubbornness and lack of effort.

Focused Discipline

I keep my eyes firmly focused on the final outcome, and keep my dream alive. I don’t allow setbacks and disappointments to sway me. I had been working a fairly good supervised program and was working on my sixth step when I relapsed. I was devastated. My sponsor, rather than allowing me to wallow in self-pity, which is what my addiction wanted, suggested I stay in the solution. I picked up my butt and took it to a meeting. Soon thereafter, I stopped blaming God for my slip and resolved to do more to safeguard my sobriety. I learned a valuable lesson.

Surety of purpose and unwavering conviction can overcome almost any circumstance or obstacle that may stand in our way. Once I was convinced of that which I was called to accomplish, I allowed for no other possibilities. No matter how things may have seemed, or how they may

Being All That We Can Be! Continued

have looked in the moment, I knew that steadfast endurance would lead to ultimate triumph.

I have always faced my greatest trials just prior to victorious breakthrough. I have seen others allow what would have been ultimate victory to end in failure, when if they had endured but a short while longer, they would have attained their goal. As I have heard it said at meetings, "Don't quit five minutes before the miracle happens." Miracles do happen but I had to stick around to be one!

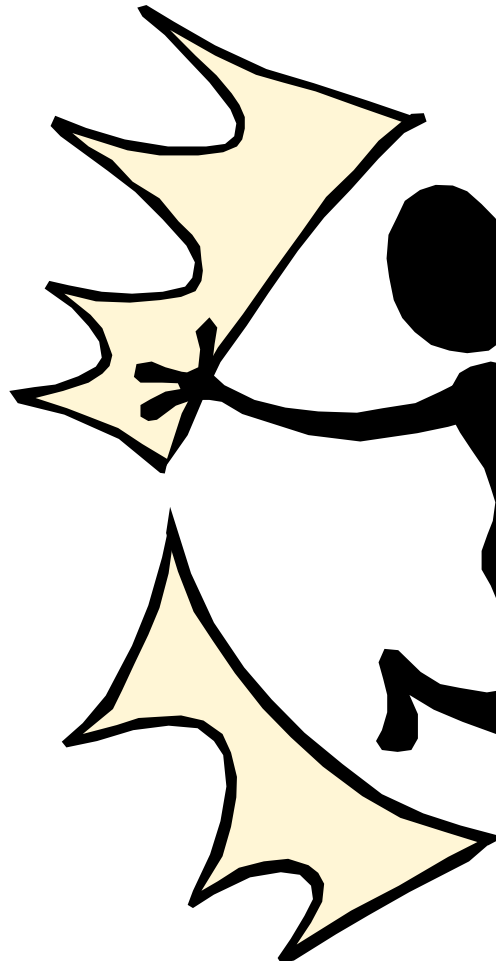
If I had found myself suffering from terminal uniqueness and looking for excuses to isolate and not following a few simple suggestions (steps) about recovery, I would have hoped for my sponsor to kick my butt and set me on the right path.

I have always tried to do what I need, not what I want. Early on, I made up my mind that whatever might come, I would stick with it. That very decision in itself, refusing to allow for any other alternatives, set unseen forces into motion on my behalf to bring it about.

Something happened when I made a firm commitment to a course of action, allowing for absolutely no other alternatives, and resolved to see it through, come what may. My Higher Power began to move on my behalf, things seemed to just naturally fall into place, and that which may have previously appeared improbable, suddenly became possible.

When there is hesitancy and

doubt, or thoughts of other possibilities, there is always a tendency to draw back, second guess myself, or become convinced that it will not work, and turn back. I determined to go boldly forward, refusing to accept any other alternative but recovery. I did not settle; instead I relied on God for all things, I did my part (right ac-



tions rather than right thinking), and then I stood back and watched what unfolded before me.

Show Me; Don't Tell Me

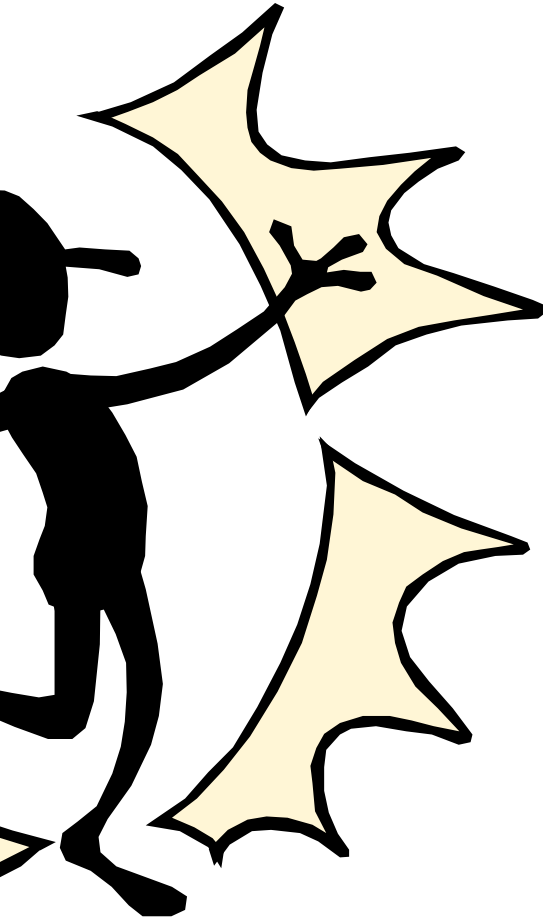
Everything first begins with a thought or an idea, which we begin to entertain and to which we begin to give place in our mind. That thought then begins to take form, and shapes the words we speak...our words in turn affect our

actions...and ultimately, our actions will shape our destiny. Learning to control our thought life therefore is an essential ingredient to living a victorious life. However, let us not forget that right thinking does not translate into right actions, but that right actions, over time, will translate into right thinking.

Actions speak louder than words! How we conduct ourselves in our daily affairs, and respond to the various circumstances we face, has far more impact on others than anything we may say or profess. I have always striven to be a living example of that which I believe and hold to be true, or expect of another. I have never forgotten that others are watching and noticing when I fail to exhibit the character that I demand from myself.

I don't measure my ability to accomplish a worthy goal by what I have in my hand. Many incredibly successful endeavors were begun with little or no apparent initial means to get the job done. I started where I was, with what I had, with absolute faith in the vision I had received, and I was amazed at how Higher Power began to take over, and things began to fall into place to take care of my needs as they arose.

One of the greatest tragedies in life is wasted opportunity--not making the most of what God has given us. We came into this world with certain abilities and we are called to exercise those gifts to help others, to build our own lives, and to glorify God for the fruit we bear. This is why God allows us to go through certain obstacles and difficulties. As an addict I had to rise above the throne of self-pity to be all that I could be!



Promises, Promises, Promises

By Robert S.

We've all heard 'em; we've all made 'em. From our childhood to our boyfriends and girlfriends, partners, friends and neighbors, we've been circulating "promises." We promised to be good, to be faithful, to be kind, to stay sober, etc. And we heard others say the same to us. Many times these promises were broken, many times we were shattered by those that were unfulfilled. And others may have been shattered by those broken by us.

When we entered this program of sexual sobriety, we stood on the shoulders of those before us in AA, learned their secrets, and used their book, their lesson plans, and their experience, strength and hope. Let me cite an example here:

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will

slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them. — Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd edition, pp.83-84.

Many of our groups have adopted this statement into their meeting formats and it is usually read at or near the end of a given meeting. We sort of "adopted" them as our own, though we clearly indicate they belong to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

And now that we have our own basic text, Sex Addicts Anonymous, moves are underway to begin weaning ourselves away from the use of literature other than our own. In fact, we have had many discussions about "outside literature" for years now, even to the point of whether or not the ISO should have it available for sale.

Accordingly, a member of the Ottawa, Canada Hope and Recovery Group has written a different set of promises. Some groups began using these promises in 1999, including the Black Hills Area SAA, and now at least two phone groups also use

them.

I've made inquiry into the expectations of the Group Guide Subcommittee of the Literature Committee, and their position is that the new Group Guide will contain only that which is from Sex Addicts Anonymous or other approved literature. This is a laudable position and it is very probable that we will find the entire fellowship behind it. So what I do here is offer these "Ottawa promises" as promises that I think speak to the things we can expect from recovery:

These are The SAA Promises, inspired by our own experiences of recovery and by messages of hope from our fellowship.

- Through a renewed relationship with our Higher Power, the healing force of recovery will take hold in our hearts. By giving ourselves over to our Higher Power and working our program, our lives will become manageable and we will be restored to sanity. We will receive the inner strength and support needed to face our anxieties and fears, and to deal with the painful feelings that feed our addiction.

- Relations with others will improve as we learn to respect our boundaries and allow others freedom to be themselves. Reaching out in trust and connect-

ing with others will come easier, dispelling our sense of isolation and loneliness. Degrading fantasies and obsessive sexual thinking will diminish.

- In relating to ourselves, self-absorption will give way to self-discovery; secrecy to honesty; feelings of unworthiness to dignity; and shame to grace. A restored integrity will guide our behavior. We will feel more alive and regain a sense of happiness. We will hear ourselves laugh again and rediscover play. We will embrace change and will grow.

- A spiritual awakening will free us from the tyranny of our addiction. An awareness of being guided by a Higher Power and supported by caring friends will sustain us. Regret for the past and worry for the future will give way to living for today. We will open ourselves to the amazing possibilities of a life worth living...our life.

- These are NOT extravagant promises! We have seen them fulfilled. They are ours, if we want them and work for them.

Mike L., PBR Editor and Lit-Com member, has asked to be advised as to any use your groups might choose to make of these promises. You can contact Mike at pbr@saa-recovery.org or c/o ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

From the Editor

By Mike L.

Greetings from the last issue of the PBR! No, we are not shutting down publication. At last year's convention, the delegates asked the Literature Committee to determine a new name for the Plain Brown Rapper. Deliberations are now finished; the new name of the ISO newsletter is —taa daa— "The Outer Circle". Plans are to implement the new name with the July/August issue.

I recently returned from a trip to New York City. The trip was significant to me in several ways. It was the first actual vacation I have taken in years. While I can't complain that I don't get to travel enough (although I often do anyway), every trip I have been on for a long, long time has been tied into a goal or expectation that someone else had for me or that I had for myself. The only goal I had for myself on this particular trip, aside from finally keeping a promise I made to myself back in 2003, was to enjoy myself, and that I did.

Being a city boy myself, I've always loved New York, going back as far as 1966, when our family visited the World's Fair that summer. However, I've had a love-hate relationship with the city since 1980 when I made an unsuccessful attempt to live there, an attempt that was cut short by a serious illness that caused me to decide to return to Austin, where I was living before I moved. I never ever seriously faced the anger I carried as a result of feeling like a

failure, and over the years I stuffed those feelings to the point of completely forgetting about them. I did go back for a few days in November of 1986 and managed to leave without having gone back and addressed this issue.

After being away for more than twenty years, my first reaction on seeing the city again was to wonder what I had ever seen in it in the first place. However, after only being there for a few hours, New York had me in its spell once again.

One memorable thing I did on this trip was to go see the Dakota and especially the very simple but effective memorial to John Lennon across the street in Central Park. Just a simple mosaic in the sidewalk with the one word "Imagine," but seeing it was probably the most moving moment of my week there.

After seeing the Dakota, I made a point of walking down the nearby street where I lived while I was in the city and even stepping inside the rooming house where I stayed. In 1980, rooms were \$60 a week; well, the Dakota it wasn't. Now those same rooms go for \$100 a night, and the place discontinued its weekly rates six years ago. I was not prepared for the rush of feelings that came up as I walked down that street. Amazingly, the most important feeling I experienced was one of pride. Even if my plans to live in New York permanently did not work out as I had hoped, I didn't leave those plans on a back burner, only to spend the rest of my life wondering what might have happened. Most

important, I was reminded of the anger I felt before at my plans not working out; that anger came up and it dissipated, rather than just going back and being stuffed again.

There are several possibilities as to why I got so sick while I was there, especially since the doctors never did figure out what was wrong with me. However, one definite possibility is that it derived from my acting-out; New York was not a "safe" place for me to be in terms of my addiction. And possibly if I had stayed there, I might not have lived to tell about it. I really needed to be here in Houston where, after more stumbling around in my acting-out, I could find recovery. And, not so amazingly, New York has now become a very "safe" place for me to be, as indeed just about any place is as long as I remain in recovery.

I had my trip so fully planned this time, with visits to the opera every night of the five that I was there, that I did not make time to go to any twelve-step meetings. I'm hoping to remedy that situation on my next trip, which I have currently planned for

later this year. While New York did not work for me as "home," I think it may work well as a "home away from home," and I'm hoping to get back there more often. After all, I have to make up for a lot of years!

Of course by now, the twentieth annual SAA convention has taken place, and so there is a lot of material in this issue about the convention. My annual article about my experiences at the convention appears elsewhere in this issue. If I didn't get to see you at this convention, I hope I will get to see you at a future one. In the meantime, enjoy this final issue of the PBR!





ISO News



ISO Board Actions

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc., met by electronic mail from March 27-29, 2007. The following is a report of significant actions taken.

Approved: That the ISO accept the room rate adjustment offered by the hotel for the 2007 convention.

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc. met on May 23-24, 2007. The following is a report of significant actions taken:

Approved: That the Workshop Exit Polls be adopted with one amendment to insert the questions from the back between the introduction and the workshop guidelines.

Approved: That the Board approve specific financing for an editor / project manager for the meditation book contingent upon receiving a project proposal.

Approved: That the Board present the Proposed 2007-2008 budget to the delegates.

Approved: The distribution LifeLine Partner cards at the convention.

Approved: The multi-year convention recording contract offered by the recording vendor.

Approved: To replace the old Group Guide on the ISO website with the newly approved Group Guide in printable form.

Approved: That the Board continue to research the sale of downloadable and printable pamphlets through the SAA Store.

Approved: That the ISO Website Committee be tasked with maintaining all ISO sponsored websites.

Approved: That the following be adopted as a Code of Conduct:

“Committed to service and being guided by the Twelve Traditions. Successful in SAA recovery. Open-minded. Respectful of all and willing to hear all views. Supportive of the group conscience. Accountable to service groups and to the fellowship. Approachable. Courteous and well-mannered.”

Approved: That the Code of Conduct be entitled “The Code of Conduct for Board and Board Committee Members,” and that it also be listed in bulleted items, made available on 3”x5” laminated cards, included as a mandatory part of the start of each Board and Board committee meeting, and added to the Board Committee Principles as part of each committee meeting agenda.

Approved: To add the Code of Conduct and the procedure for dealing with convention incidents to the Board Committee Agendas.

Accepted: The following language for a procedure for dealing with convention incidents:

“The ISO holds the responsibility for maintaining a safe environment, to the greatest extent possible, at conventions and other ISO events. Should there occur an incident that threatens the unity of the event or of the group involved, the board will designate a committee to intervene as a mediator. In the unfortunate event that an individual or group of individuals is not responsive to the board’s (or its liaison’s) efforts to make peace, said person(s) will be asked to leave the event.”

The language will be published on page 1 of the Introduction to the *Call to Convention*, the Delegate Orientation booklet, and the convention program.

Approved: The DAC workshop proposal as presented.

Approved: That the office procedure on Handling Calls About Ongoing Abuse of Minors be amended to strike the words "or may be" from the applicable section, a -6).

Approved: The nomination of Jeff B. for At-Large Board Member at the Delegate Meeting.

Approved: To assign a Board Liaison to each active convention committee.

Approved: That the Office Oversight Committee (OOC) chair would conduct the evaluations of both the Director of Business Services and the Director of Fellowship Services.

Approved: That the Board delegate to the OOC responsibility to make decisions on pay increases for hourly employees, provided any increase does not exceed the position's approved pay range.

Approved: To present a leather-bound first edition copy of the SAA basic text to Art F.

Approved: That General Outreach be given the additional task of reaching out to young adults ages 18-39.

Approved: The Men's Outreach convention program insert and poster.

Approved: The "Guidelines for SAA's Cooperation with S-Groups" submitted by the Interfellowship Relations Committee.

Approved: That SAA identify itself on the IFF website using the statement found in the Conference Approved outreach pamphlet entitled "Sex Addicts Anonymous" which reads:

"Sex Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so they may overcome their sexual addiction or dependency.

- Membership is open to all who share a desire to stop compulsive sexual behavior. There is no other requirement.
- Our common goals are to become sexually healthy and to help other sex addicts achieve freedom from compulsive sexual behavior.
- SAA is supported through voluntary contributions from members.
- We are not affiliated with any other twelve-step program, nor are we a part of any other organization. We do not support, endorse, or oppose outside causes or issues.

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a spiritual program based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are grateful to A.A. for this gift which makes recovery possible."

Approved: The creation of a central E-mail address which would distribute ISO service information to all ISO registered intergroups.

Approved: To authorize the Director of Business Services (DBS), in conjunction with the OOC, to invest in the Vanguard Federal Fund money market.

Approved: That the following job description for Board liaisons be approved as amended:

“The function of each Board Liaison is to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the Board and their particular committee. To do this the Board Liaison will:

- Distribute the Code of Conduct information to committee members
- Make sure committee members are introduced to each other
- Guide the committee rather than direct
- Report to the Board
- Bring to the committee motions to the Board
- Facilitate recruiting committee chairs
- Attend meetings and teleconferences
- Be the moderating influence on the committee

In all these functions, they should model healthy service behavior in accordance with the Code of Conduct.”

Approved: To form an *ad hoc* Board committee to consider the possibility of providing for non-SAA members serving on the Board. The committee will provide an update to the Board by the first Board teleconference.

Approved: The 2008 Convention fundraiser.

Accepted: The bid to host the 2009 ISO Convention in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Accepted: The bid to host the 2010 ISO Convention in Albuquerque, NM.

Accepted: The bid to host the 2011 ISO Convention in Houston, TX.

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.
met on May 27, 2007.

The following is a report of significant actions taken:

Elected: Tim E. as Board chair for the 2007-2008 service year.

Elected: Ed B. as Board secretary for the 2007-2008 service year.

Elected: Don K. as Board treasurer for the 2007-2008 service year.

Approved: To remove all present signatories on all ISO checking and money market accounts and replace them with the following: Tim E., Ed B., Don K., Jeff B., and Jerry B.

Approved: DeJon M. as Board liaison to the Interfellowship Relations Committee (IRC).

Approved: To post the "Guidelines for SAA's Cooperation with S-Groups" on the SAA website. [Note: In order for this action to take place, it is understood that the guidelines must first be approved by the Literature Committee for continuous or repeated use.]

Confirmed: Santi L. as Board liaison to the Intergroup Communications Committee (ICC).

Accepted: The ICC request to provide protected space on the SAA website to store documents and minutes.

Approved: A target date of the Board March teleconference for the Inter-group Guide to be presented to the Board.

Confirmed: Gary C. as Board liaison to the International Development Committee.

Confirmed: Eric M. as Board liaison to the Online Outreach Committee.

Confirmed: Tim E.. as Board liaison to the Prisoner Outreach Committee.

Confirmed: Gina I. as Board liaison to the Women's Outreach Committee.

Confirmed: Ken S. as Board liaison to the Literature Committee.

Confirmed: Eric M. and Mary Joy S. as the two voting Board members of the Website Committee.

Confirmed: Ted M. as Board liaison to the Disclosure Advisory Committee (DAC).

Approved: That it is possible for regional Board members to conduct teleconferences so that members could meet to discuss plans for regional events.

Approved: That the Board meet every other month for three hours with the option to meet for one additional hour.

Approved: To hold the first Board teleconference on Saturday, July 28, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Central. Subsequent teleconferences will be decided in the future.

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.
met by teleconference on June 16, 2007.

The following is a report of significant action taken:

Adopted: The Literature Committee recommendation to express approval of the revisions to the women's pamphlet as follows:

“Conference Approved May 2000
Revisions Approved by ISO Literature Committee May 2007”



ISO Delegate Actions

The Delegates of the ISO of SAA, Inc.
met on May 25-26, 2007.

The following is a report of the motions
considered and reports heard:

Elected: Ken S. as the chair of the Delegate Meeting.

Accepted: The business procedures presented in the 2007 *Call to Convention* with one amendment to change the number of items to be prioritized to five.

Accepted: The 2007 *Annual Report* as presented.

Elected: Jeff B. to a one-year term as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees.

Elected: Shira K. to a one-year term as an at-large member of the Literature Committee.

Reported: By the Literature Committee that it accomplished the development of a format for submissions to the proposed SAA meditation book.

Reported: By Jerry B., the Director of Business services, the action taken by the Board to switch the ISO budget year from the calendar year to start on July 1 and end on June 30 effective July 1, 2007.

Reported: By Mike L., the ISO newsletter editor, that the new name selected for the newsletter by the Literature Committee will be *The Outer Circle*.

Reported: By Greg B. that in order to make brochures more accessible the Board voted to make the SAA basic Outreach pamphlet available on the ISO website in a non-printable format free of charge.

Failed: A motion that the book entitled *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, including the attached content-level changes, be approved for publication and distribution as Conference Approved literature. If the motion passes, the changes will be reflected in the 2nd Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* and the 2nd Edition of the book will be Conference Approved.

Failed: A motion that whenever confidentiality is limited, those limits should be clearly stated.

Approved: That the pamphlet "Sexual Sobriety and the Internet," including current changes, be approved for publication and distribution as Conference Approved literature.

Approved: The 2007-2008 ISO Budget.

Failed: A motion that the Women's Outreach Committee of SAA proposed changes to "A Special Welcome to the Woman New-comer" pamphlet be approved by the conference delegates.

Approved: That the Delegates direct its Literature Committee to produce a pocket sized version of SAA's basic text, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, for sale by the ISO.

ISO Financial News

Note: As this issue of the newsletter was being finalized, only the May financial reports were available. These reports do not include some major convention expenses, thereby making them overly stated on the income side. The ISO income and expense report will be resumed, along with a summary of 2007 Convention finances, in the July – August issue.

In the meantime, this edition includes on page 32 the first in what will be a continuing series of articles on different ways members and groups can support the ISO and its work.



ISO Literature Committee Actions

The Literature Committee of the ISO of SAA, Inc.
met on May 23-27, 2007.

The following is a report of significant actions taken:

Approved: The women's pamphlet as revised.

Approved: To recommend to the Board that, due to the issue of anonymity, there be no postcards from this organization.

Approved: To return the new website announcement to the office with our recommended changes.

Approved: The Literature Committee Pre-Review Questionnaire and include it in the next revision of the handbook.

Approved: To translate our 12-question pamphlet into Mandarin Chinese, French, Russian and Swahili in that order.

Approved: That *The Outer Circle* be in colors consistent with the web page, that is, off-white with green border, that it be in black print, and that it be on high quality paper.

Approved: The process of interaction with the website committee.

Approved: To modify the SAA meditation book proposal to read "Below that will be a quotation from SAA literature."

Approved: The SAA meditation book proposal as modified.

Approved: To present Elizabeth S.'s revisions to the LitCom handbook to the Board with a preamble that this is a work in progress and that we are very interested in the Board's input.

Approved: The nomination of Shira for At-Large Member.

Approved: To open up the complete text of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to feedback from the groups through the 2009 convention.

Approved: To request that the introduction of the main speaker from the opening ceremonies at the Minneapolis convention be removed immediately so that we are not selling them at the convention.

Men's Outreach

The ISO office regularly receives requests for sponsors and other program support from men in geographically isolated areas and from men in meetings short of sponsors. Seeing that working the Steps with a sponsor is the cornerstone of our program, these men need our help! Finding good sponsors for men in these situations is a fellowship-wide problem. To strengthen SAA as a whole from the inside, we need everyone's help in coming up with ideas and collecting the names of experienced men who want to be part of the solution to this difficult problem.

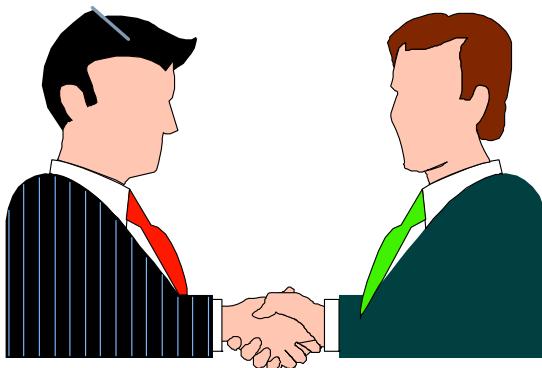
Over the last few years, the Women's Outreach Committee has made tremendous strides in addressing the challenges faced by women joining our life-saving but mostly male fellowship. They have developed a range of resources for women in the fellowship and are open to educating men about how their resources work so men can tailor them to their own needs. The Men's Outreach Subcommittee needs YOUR help in making similar strides to help men in SAA who lack sponsors and support in their area.

Current resources for men seeking sponsors include:

- (1) A Men's Telemeeting that is held each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time (6:00 p.m. Mountain, 7:00 p.m. Central, 8:00 p.m. Eastern). The call-in number is (641) 297-5500, and the passcode is 976431.
- (2) Six mixed telemeetings that occur regularly each week.

For more information on telemeetings, please call the ISO office at 800-477-8191, or visit the website at www.saa-recovery.org.

These resources are a start but they aren't enough; experienced men at the Telemeetings are already overwhelmed with requests for sponsorship. If you can help and would like to participate in this important form of service, please contact the committee at men@saa-recovery.org or write Ed B. at boardsp@saa-recovery.org.



Fundraising

A Legacy for SAA

As possibly your new fundraising chair (as I was the lone Delegate to attend the fundraising committee at the International Service Convention), I believe that I have the easiest job in the world. Why is that you ask? Because, it seems, the membership of SAA is a mature and solvent one. Simply stated, I believe that if the ISO asks, the dedicated membership, understanding that recovery has saved their lives, will step forward to ensure that SAA will survive for future generations.

The ISO has already taken the first steps to accomplish this by starting the Outreach Endowment Fund, part of the Greater Houston Community Foundation. However, with stronger solvency, there are many projects that the ISO can more easily undertake to help the still suffering addict (and those in recovery). One great example was voted on favorably by the Delegates at this year's Delegate Meeting. That is, the pocket-size SAA text. This wonderful project will certainly help the newcomer. However, the first printing must be pre-paid. With a solvent ISO, this first printing can be put in motion immediately.

So . . . in hopes of adding to the solvency of the ISO, I intend on writing a series of articles for the Plain Brown Rapper (soon to become the Outer Circle) to discuss ways in which the membership can ensure that the ISO remains solvent, vital and prosperous.

This month is a great month to speak about a new opportunity to make charitable gifts from your IRA or other qualified plan (called a "qualified charitable distribution"). Because of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, you can now make charitable contributions directly from your IRA without any tax consequences (certain restrictions apply). Because the ISO is a charitable tax qualified organization (a 501(c)(3) organization), contributions to the ISO are tax deductible. However, before the advent of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, contributions could not be made directly from an IRA or other qualified plan directly to a charitable organization. Now these direct contributions can be made. These provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 are only allowed for 2006 and 2007. This charitable tool is especially useful 1) if your Social Security income would be taxed should your Adjusted Gross Income be increased, 2) if you do not itemize your deductions 3) if your Adjusted Gross Income is high enough that your ability to deduct itemized deductions is reduced, or 4) if you live in states that do not allow charitable deductions.

An IRA owner may take distributions from his or her IRA, without penalty, when he or she becomes 59 ½. When an IRA owner becomes 70 ½, he or she must take required minimum distributions based on his or her age. While many members in SAA are in the position that they must take re-

quired minimum distributions, many are taking these distributions and simply adding the money to savings (and paying taxes on the entire distribution). Because of the new law, tax free distributions can be made from the IRA to the ISO. The rules of the ISO state that the maximum contribution by any member in any one year is \$12,000. Of course, every member needs to make their own decision about contributing to the ISO. However, with this new tool, giving makes even more sense. If you are interested in contributing to the ISO in this way, or you have questions about different methods of giving to charitable organizations, the ISO will put you in touch with a knowledgeable professional member who is willing to answer your questions. Please call the ISO or your Tax or Legal Advisor for more information.

Yours in service,
Larry A.
Baltimore



Helping Professionals Within SAA – Your Help is Needed!

The General Outreach Committee of ISO is looking for a few good men and women to share the message of recovery within the professional community.

Many SAA members work as helping professionals. This general term may include counselors, therapists, psychologists, physicians, nurses, teachers, police, clergy, social workers and many other occupations. Their work may involve contact with addicts or addiction and require knowledge of what addiction is, what an addict needs and what resources are available. Many professionals who are not themselves SAA members may be willing to carry the SAA message in a cooperative way to addicts who are suffering, but they lack the information they need to do so.

As an SAA member working in these professions, your input is needed to help figure how we as a fellowship can best reach out to other professionals so that they are aware of SAA and are able to offer information about SAA to their clients if they so choose.

Lawyers, accountants, managers, media specialists and others within the fellowship are currently lending their expertise in specific areas as requested by the ISO Board. This request expands this type of service to occupations who have a great capacity to understand and reach out to addicts every day.

This type of service may be thought of as the laying of long-term groundwork for the growth of our fellowship and the greater awareness of our program among both addicts and the people they count on for daily assistance.

You may respond as an individual member active in recovery. If you belong to one of the many professional boundary groups within SAA, you are also encouraged to craft your response as a group.

Please respond by contacting the Director of Fellowship Services, and mention "Outreach to Professionals".

The General Outreach Committee thanks you for your assistance. We hope those of you in these fields may use this opportunity to put the Seventh and Twelfth Traditions to good use in your daily working lives.

E-mail Addresses

The following is a list of Board E-mail addresses and the LitCom e-mail addresses for the various regions, and the ISO staff E-mail addresses. The Board, LitCom, and the staff are always happy to hear from the fellowship.

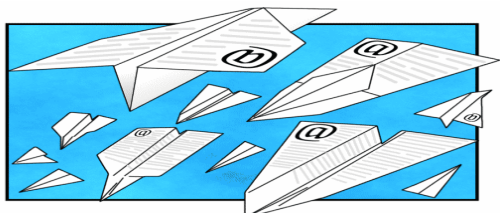
Great Lakes Board Member and Alternate: BoardGL@SAA-Recovery.org
Intermountain Board Member and Alternate: BoardIM@SAA-Recovery.org
North Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardNC@SAA-Recovery.org
Northeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardNE@SAA-Recovery.org
North Pacific Board Member and Alternate: BoardNP@SAA-Recovery.org
South Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardSC@SAA-Recovery.org
Southeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardSE@SAA-Recovery.org
Southern Pacific Board Member and Alternate: BoardSP@SAA-Recovery.org
At Large Board Member: BoardAL@SAA-Recovery.org

Great Lakes LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomGL@SAA-Litcom.org
Intermountain LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomIM@SAA-Litcom.org
North Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomNC@SAA-Litcom.org
Northeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomNE@SAA-Litcom.org
North Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomNP@SAA-Litcom.org
South Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomSC@SAA-Litcom.org
Southeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomSE@SAA-Litcom.org
Southern Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitcomSP@SAA-Litcom.org
At Large LitCom Member: LitcomAL@SAA-Litcom.org
PBR Editor: PBR@SAA-Recovery.org

Director of Fellowship Services: DFS@SAA-Recovery.org
Director of Business Services: Business@SAA-Recovery.org
Administrative Assistant: Info@SAA-Recovery.org
Outreach Specialist: Outreach@SAA-Recovery.org
Information Technician: Webmaster@SAA-Recovery.org

The SAA-ISO Board of Directors has established an e-mail box which may be used to register complaints from the fellowship about the ISO staff.

OOCchair@SAA-Recovery.org





Regional Planning Events

Northeast (NE) Regional Planning

Members of the Northeast (NE) region have been meeting by teleconference to plan cooperative activities during the regular service year. Facilitated by NE Board representative, Gary C., the group has already met twice, and plans to meet next on Sunday, September 23, 2007 at 12:00 p.m. Central Time. For information on how to participate, please contact Gary at BoardNE@SAA-Recovery.org.

Members of other regions are welcome to meet with one another to discuss cooperative planning as well by contacting their regional Board representative. Board representative service E-mail addresses are listed in the PBR each month.

Southern Pacific (SP) Regional Planning

In March, the SP Board representative and a Fundraising Committee member met with ISO staff to draft a letter to SP members, groups and intergroups in their region. The letter offers SP members specific ways in which they can work together at the regional level to increase fundraising, ISO group registration renewal, and further communications.

If you live in the SP region and have questions about ways to assist, or if you live in another region and would like to send a similar letter to foster cooperation between members, groups and intergroups, you are welcome to call the ISO Office toll free at 800-477-8191 or write to info@SAA-Recovery.org.

Local SAA Events

8th Annual San Antonio SAA Retreat

SAA members of the San Antonio Intergroup will hold their 8th Annual SAA Retreat on August 17-19. The event has as its theme Recovery is the only option. The event will feature workshops conducted by Judy and Gene G. (Houston, TX).

Registration fee for the event is yet to be announced, but will be under \$100, and will include meals and boarding.

To receive a registration form or for more details, call:

Karl: 210-320-4952

Troy: 210-563-6623

Or RSVP to:

San Antonio Intergroup

P.O. Box 460776

San Antonio, Texas 78246



SAA Basic Text Now Available in Spanish!

The Spanish translation of the SAA basic text, *Sexo Adictos Anónimos*, is now available through the ISO office. Orders from members in California and Puerto Rico have already been fulfilled.

The Spanish translation is currently available only in soft cover, and the price (\$14.00 US) is the same as its English counterpart.

To order, members can go to the SAA Store on the ISO website at www.SAA-Recovery.org, by mail at the following address:

ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
USA

or by phone (US and Canada) at 800-477-8191. To call the ISO office from outside the US and Canada, members can use the alternate number 001-713-869-4902. The ISO can ship literature to anywhere in the world.

Please note that the international shipping fee is double that of the US First Class domestic rate. All checks and money orders must be in US dollars.

¡El texto básico de SAA ya disponible en español!

La traducción al castellano del texto básico de SAA, *Sexo Adictos Anónimos*, ya es disponible de la Organización Internacional de Servicios (ISO). Los pedidos del libro de nuestros miembros de California y de Puerto Rico ya se han cumplido.

Actualmente, la traducción castellana es sólo disponible en rústica, y el precio (U.\$14.00) es el mismo que el de la versión inglesa.

Para pedir el libro, los miembros pueden visitar la tienda de SAA en el website www.SAA-Recovery.org; si se quiere pedirlo por correo, se debe usar la dirección siguiente:

ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
EEUU

o se puede llamar la oficina (desde los EEUU y de Canadá) a 800-477-8191. Para llamar la ISO desde afuera de los EEUU o de Canadá, los miembros pueden usar el número alternativo 001-713-869-4902. La ISO puede enviar literatura a cualquier parte del mundo.

Favor de anotar que el precio para enviar libros a direcciones internacionales es doble el del precio doméstico Primera Clase de los EEUU. Todo cheque y giro postal debe ser en dólares estadounidenses.

How to Submit a PBR Article

First:

Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

Second:

Send your article by e-mail to: PBR@SAA-Recovery.org

or mail to: ISO
P. O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Third:

Send the **Article Release Form** below. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step 12

Submission deadlines:

Dec. 10, Feb. 10, April 10, June 10, Aug. 10, Oct. 10

Release Form: I hereby give this newsletter, its successors, assignees, and those acting on its authority permission to copyright and/or publish any articles, poems, other written material, or art work pertaining to my personal story of recovery from addiction and my personal experience with or opinions about the SAA fellowship or program. I understand that additions may be made to my written material and that it may be changed or edited. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO newsletter from any claim by myself or my successors.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS: _____ **DATE:** _____

Mail to: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

3890-D North Freeway
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: 713-869-4902
Toll Free: 800-477-8191

web: <http://www.SAA-Recovery.org>
Office e-mail: info@SAA-Recovery.org
PBR e-mail: PBR@SAA-Recovery.org

Office Staff

Carol Ann R.
Director of Fellowship Services

Jerry B.
Director of Business Services

Klaus P.
Outreach Specialist

Jonathan C.
Information Technician

Tim D.
Administrative Assistant

PBR Staff

Mike L.
Literature Editor

Carol Ann R.
ISO News Editor

Jonathan C.
Layout Editor

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from their sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Our fellowship is open to women and men regardless of religion, race, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, or profession. Our members define their own sexual boundaries with the guidance of their sponsors and other group members. We encourage our members to discover and explore what healthy sexuality means to them.

Region **Board Members** **Board Alternate** **Literature Committee** **Lit. Com. Alternate**

Great Lakes	Ken S.	Ted M.	Morris B.	Justin C.
Intermountain	Eric M	George D.	David R.	James L.
North Central	Gina I.	Wharton S.	Thea D.	Jeff B.
Northeast	Gary C.	Mike D.	Chris J.	Michael J.
North Pacific	Tim E. Chair	Mary Joy S.	Jeff W. Chair	Lawrence S.
South Central	Don K. Treasurer	Steve B.	Jim Le.	Randy E.
Southeast	Santi L.	Mark S.	Jim Lo. 2nd Chair	John R.
Southern Pacific	Ed B. Secretary	DeJon M.	Larry C.	Mitch G.
At Large	Jeff B.		Shira K.	
Newsletter Editor			Mike L. Secretary	