

RECOVERY IS.... A GROWTH PROCESS

by Harvey A.

Step 6 defects of character relate back to the exact nature of our wrongs uncovered in Step 4 and admitted in Step 5. But Step 7 seems to alter the focus when it speaks of asking God to remove our shortcomings.

Defects of character form when making bad choices on a habitual basis, perhaps originating in childhood as a way of coping with life. They may be a way of getting needs met that are out of balance, something similar to an addiction that's both self centered and selfish. They are harmful to me and others.

Becoming entirely ready for God to remove my character defects involves the recognition of a need for change. That requires an awareness of character defects and a willingness to let them go. Being human, I'm not honestly able to bring that about without God's help.

When I see the need for change, I'm ready to ask God to remove the shortcomings that keep me stuck in my defects of character. Shortcomings are not necessarily the same as character defects. They may be weaknesses or frailties that gave rise to character defects but they are not bad habits. Then there are weaknesses and frailties that are just part of being human and need to be accepted. Recognizing the difference between the two is part of what needs to happen in order for

**SHORT—COMINGS
LONG——GOINGS**
[Interesting concept]

me to become entirely ready.

If I look at the words which are opposite from "short-comings", I see words that resemble growth - "long-goings." Growing out of my

shortcomings empowers me to break my bad habits, so when I humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings this is what I seek. By asking God to help me be more of a man and fully functional human, I work Step 7.

by Harvey A.

SAA GOING STRONG INSIDE THIS FACILITY

Dear PBR,

My name is Carroll W. I'm now a prisoner at [] Institute and have been here for a little over 1 year now. Since I've been here I have helped start the SAA program here for there was none at the time of my arrival. Our group consists of about 12 regular members who attend weekly. I must say it was not easy getting the prison here to accept the idea of a 12 step program for sex offenders. But with a lot of talking to the warden and counselors, and with God's help [who I call my Higher Power] the group is coming along ok. Thanks to your "headquarters"[ISO Office and Prison Outreach Committee] of SAA for all the help and letters you sent to help get it started.

Before I came to [] I was at [] Correctional Facility. There I was also the elected Chair person for almost 2 years of my time spent there. I really hated it when I was transferred. But this institution is a less security prison and I'm coming to the end of my time here, about 7 more months. I will leave this behind soon.

But I'm happy that I could have got the program started here for there are around 160 of us sex

See the roses around this frame? Like a wall perhaps. The walls around a prison are not flower gardens. You might however, help plant a bud of beauty and hope in a fellow-addicts life if you took part in the proram of Prison Outreach.

Send your letter of intent to serve to the Prison Outreach Committee, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

addicts and offenders who are sent here. There was no program except talking with our psychologist once a week.

I would like to give your PBR permission to reprint an article I wrote back in the 1995 issue. It was called "The Old Brass Rail". I thought you might like to see it again. It was quite long. I also hope you will pass this message on to [] but it really doesn't have anything to do with SAA.

[Ed. Note#1: Carroll closes his letter to the PBR [and the one to the person whose name we omitted in the above paragraph] with these words: "I thank you for taking time to listen to this humble sex offender speak to you. God Bless you in your work! P.S. I'm looking forward to the "Big Book"... for SAA"]

[Ed note #2: The "Old Brass Rail" story was in the December-January, 1995 issue of the PBR. If there's room, it will be in this issue; if not, the next. Carroll used the name "Sonny" then]

[Ed note#3: If anyone would like to write to Carroll W., you can send it to the ISO Office for forwarding, UNLESS Carroll gives us permission to give his address. If so we'll print it next issue]

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR RECOVERY..... by Bill H.

I am continually [slow learner] amazed at how easy it is for me to gradually stop doing the things I need to do to keep my recovery going. It's not [usually] that I purposefully stop my step work or using the tools I've learned that help keep me sober, rather I let other desires take priority. Add to this a penchant for denial and rationalization and the results of this process are always negative, especially in terms of closeness to God.

Then I found a tool that forced me to brutally look at my reality. Quite simply, it is a weekly chart on which I grade myself in three categories: How did I spend my time, my efforts, and my money? To do this, I list each day, and then write specifics on these three categories. Did I pray/meditate? Did I call people in the program? Did I do any specific step work? Have I done any service work? Have I supported my meeting [s] with my presence and my financial support? Have I supported the International Service Organization [ISO] financially to help in outreach to others? There are many other questions one might ask, but you get the idea. Sadly, at least for my program, I find that when I actually have to list my achievements in these areas, there is not a lot there.

The good news is that now I have a "real" reality that I can use to make decisions on, versus my often insane way of looking at life. When I was active in my addiction, I had no problem spending many of my waking hours, a large percentage of my energy, and large sums of money trying to get my "fix". The question I have to ask myself is this: Is my recovery worth this type of dedication?

Bill H.

DO WHAT YOU KNOW TO DO, AND USE WHAT YOU HAVE...

by... Bill S.

I often forget that I do know some things. I prove this by not doing what I know to do. Often the companion excuse to this is I don't have what I believe I need. Thus, I don't use what I do have nor do what I need to do.



July 15, 1998

Dear PBR and ISO,

My congratulations to you for your new policy of providing the PBR free of charge. As I read your reasons for the change in policy I was struck by the clarity of thinking about the Steps, but especially by the "abundance thinking" demonstrated in the explanation. As an addict I have for too long been mired in "scarcity thinking" and the fear and shame from which it comes. This decision [to provide PBR free of charge] models the faith, love, and the abundant grace and light that are the core of the recovery we seek.

Thank you. I am grateful.

Love, Action, Serenity, Courage, Wisdom -

Glenn C.

[Ed : And aint it great to have a butterfly land on your shoulder. What a bit of serendipity, and how it is appreciated!! Thanks Glenn!]



An example is AA. There is a good fellowship here with men working the program. I know attending the meeting won't hurt me and may very well help. Yet, I am not an alcoholic or a drug addict and so they can't help me. It's not an SAA group so I won't go. WRONG! I need the fellowship. I need a place to hear, and share my experience, strength, and hope. That it is not the one I want is no excuse to not use it.

This has taken me sometime to work out. I don't think I really wanted to. As long as I had an excuse to stay out of help in my recovery, I had an excuse to stay out of recovery. I have had to really mend some bridges to be allowed back into the AA fellowship. It is a demonstration of the powers that are love and recovery and desire to help that I have been allowed. I had really worked to convince them that they could not help me, and that I did not need them. Having to admit that I was wrong has been one of the healthiest things I have done in a while.

You see, I knew to be honest, and wasn't. I had help and wouldn't take it.

It has been the same with my relationship with my Higher Power whom I call Jesus. I know, and have known for some time all the things I needed to do to allow Him to work in my life. But I used the fact that the services here were not what I wanted to justify not attending services nor working on my relationship with Him.

Finally, I have come to realize that "if" I will do what I know to do, to the best I am able, and will use what I have, I will grow in knowing what to do and will get more. Not how I would choose to have things set up, but it is how they are.

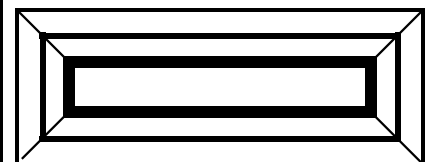
So... my experience is being stubborn and then learning to give in. My strength is in my willingness to give in and my hope is that I will grow and continue in recovery and in a personal relationship with God.

Thank you for letting me share.

Your brother in recovery,

Bill S.

P.S. "God protect me from my ego. I am not done and no better than anyone else. "Amen".



I consider the vampire a good physical analogy for a sex addict. We both tend to be creatures of the night, are seen by society as being evil and pass on the dark kiss of the disease to our victims. Bill R.

Vampire's Lament

There is no refuge in this dark place that reeks of sunshine spent on unworthy grass;
No hiding place from the loss of anger's delight and broken glass.

There is no safety in a world that greets the morning with such blaring horns and such bared, white, gleaming teeth.

Where is there peace or end to tumultuous yearnings that well up so futilely beneath this dark sea of chaos and love unspoken?

Where is the face of God in this?

Turned away uninterested, unmoved?

When did he decide that sinew tied to bone and fed by love could be enough for any on this pleasant green torpid planet with its treasures to suffice?

When did He remove the broken promise of His grace and break His sweet Son's heart and fill it then with ice?

Or have I simply misplaced my gaze;

And He is present, moving slowly through this maze of screaming self-defeat and lust?

What if I am one more fallen angel looking for a perch more meaningful than life that's sprung from easy dust?

Is all this suffering and this bounty of despair really nothing more than my sad reflection in the mirror of time?

Is there beauty in this foil of Satan's wrath?

Are there truly petals strewn upon this path that I have chosen to ignore?

There must be a remedy, a sanctuary for the broken-dreamed, that brings to eye and ear a sound and sight that offers more. I can breathe this death no longer.

I cannot squander such precious heartbeats just to drum some other fool's beat to another simple-minded truth.

Give me meaning, precious and secure!

Oh, God, forgive this ranting and release this conscious ego from its self-centered I of such a storm.

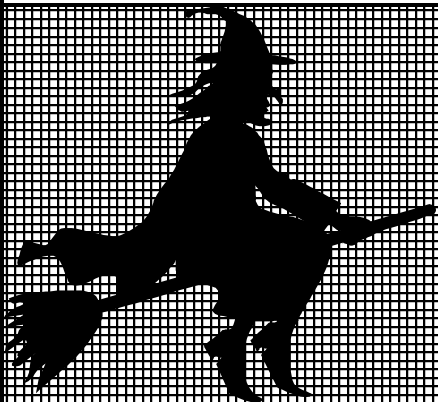
Reality is more and less than I can bear.

Dreams of refuge haunt me in the air,

But flights of fancy never take me there.

Where is the rainbow's end to this dull being?

Bill R.



P o e t r y

Language of individuality..the self



During the worst part of my depression I exercised my addictive behavior almost daily, and I felt a constant pain. However, even living with this pain, I could not cry. Crying was something I stopped when I was 10 years old. I had an abusive mother who beat me then beat me for crying. This next poem tells the story of:

"HURT"

Tears scald my face like acid they burn,
Anger fills my heart, I have nowhere to turn,
Rage and resentment are constantly near
Replacing the calm, leaving only fear

Feelings buried deeply, deep in my heart,
Eat at my serenity, tearing my life apart.

A life marred by trouble, acting out in fear
With the demons waiting, memories of yesteryear.

Why must these tears burn on my face?
Why must anger consume the whole human race?

Why are rage and resentment constantly near?
Taking their toll leaving me in fear.

Questions I hear, yet, I never speak.
The answers evade me. I constantly seek
The pleasure of my addiction. This companion is the pain
That blocks my sanity and drives me insane.

Then feelings engulf me, I'm down on one knee,
No relief, no hope, only depression I see.
I tumble through life, I ke a ball I roll,
Until my addiction in vengeance takes its final toll.

Alone with my rage, denial and fear,
Alone with my sadness and my acid filled tears,

Alone with my feelings all covered they hide,
Alone with my nothingness, I finally cried.

Comments? Feelings? Emotions? All are welcome.....

George S.

ADDICTION

By Bill R.

I was innocent then,
Naked in my wonderment
and glad beneath a sky
that made more sense

than blue.

Good and evil still hung in the garden,

Green,
Undifferentiated
And sublime in their sameness and without any despair;

A time before self-delusion and separation

When there were no denominations

And no doubt.

I walked in God's hand.

Then,

I ate

And as the juicy, forbidden pulp
Confused and gagged my sensibilities,
NeedySelf gained primacy

And, as fruit alone could not suffice

The hunger grew,

And I became the eye

Through which all meaning would be seen.

Then,

Using the fulcrum of self-centeredness

And the force of an unsated

Need for knowing,

I moved God to heaven

And my self to dusty, doubting death.

And so,

Abandoned to this self,

I lurked about in all the damp

And moldy hallways of my introspection.

My perspective drawing life

From fruit no branch would bear,

I obsessed.

I acquiesced.

My self, so unassured, assumed

An air of easy losses and decay.

I learned to seek the pleasure of each day

And slept my vacant nights away.

The prospect of a war with angels

Caused my soul to slake,

To moderate its aspiration.

I did not know how ...

To live.

And so ...

Sur ...

Surrend ...

er

of this self

Comes more easily now.

I'm getting used to it.

Now I desire.

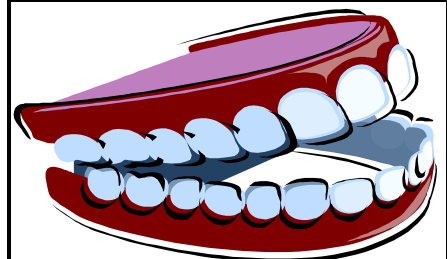
I acquire.

I do not hesitate.

Did you think I could not cry "Rapture!"

And eat the clouds of glory at your feet?

Would you I ke to see my teeth?



[Ed note: Louis D. is a former member of the Literature Committee. He is still active to the work of the Fellowship. He continues to send the PBR images of his experience, strength, and hope. Here's one from way back in 1990. Where were you 8 years ago???]

THE FORCE...

Think not that thou art alone.
Since you were formed in the womb,

There has been a force with you that understands.

The force understands your heights, your depths.

The force is with you in all your trials.

The force understands all your tears;

It gently comforts you to be at one with self.

The force helps you to be alert to dangers

And guides you safely to protection.

Be aware of your inner force for it will teach you.

The force will give you knowledge that can only be gained through awareness.

Simply let your body relax, let your mind be still...

Feel the solitude, the quietness, the innermost parts of your soul speak.

You will learn that there is such a force only if you allow your body to calm,

Calm to a quietness like a gentle breeze over still waters.

The force will bring to the soul a happiness of contentment with self.

Once one has experienced a contentment with self,

There could never be barriers that one could not hope to cross.

The force will fill your heart with life, joy, peace, and harmony.

Let your body be at rest.

Let your thoughts of discontentment be at peace.

Open your mind to the force that lies within the depths of your soul.

LouisD. 2/21/90

Frankenstein

Wherever I go,
the shopping mall, the restaurant, the street,
I assemble my lover.
I give my lover this one' eyes
and that one' hair.

I adorn my lover with those clothes
and that ass.

In bank lines and airports I shop:
I find a lovely pair of lips in a magazine,

legs in the grocery store.
Sometimes, something as simple
as someone' hands turns me on.

I am the doctor
creating my monster:

My lover is perfect.

My lover is beautiful, graceful,
stylish, and confident.

My lover loves me unconditionally.

No-one in my life compares to my lover.

Everyone falls short, fat, old, near-sighted, grumpy, and demanding.

No-one understands me.

My monster has come to life.

It has a will of its own.

It takes me in an embrace
that threatens to crush the life
out of me.

It will have to be destroyed.

I will mourn the loss. I won't rebuild
the lab.

Jeff W.

Copyright retained.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR ISO BOARD ACTIONS

As stated in other portions of the newsletter, the Board ok'd some basic guidelines for beginning online meetings and there will be a web site posting of these in the near future.

Harry S., the former chair of the ISO Board, is now the Chair of the Interfellowship Committee, and he, along with Penny K, current ISO Board Chair will attend the Interfellowship Conference on November 7th and 8th in Waltham, MA. Report will probably be in the Feb/Mar PBR.

Office hours are changed, see pg. 10 this issue.

There will be a separate report to all groups concerning contributions made by group. The commentary is sad in that of the 550 SAA groups, only 115, or 20.9%, have supported the ISO through the first seven months of 1998. And a parallel is that 58% of the \$8,612 donated has come from only 16 of those groups. The list is published; hope your group is on it. If not, 'nuff said. Think of it - if each group donated five bucks a week [which wouldn't buy a pint of good booze...], that's \$143,000. At the present rate of donations we'll have about 10% of that amount for 1998. An extra 7th Tradition may be called for at your meetings, eh?

Other non-SAA Literature is on the ISO shelf. Prices are set at a "no loss" level.

There will be an investigation of Public Service Announcements on a national level for television. THERE ARE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE PSA'S. CONTACT THE ISO OFFICE!!!

Octavio E. is to write a plan for the translating SAA Literature into Spanish and inform the LitCom.

"Never joke with mules or cooks as they have no sense of humor"

From:

Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On!

by: Texas Bix Bender

"...SIX MONTHS AGO I ALSO TRIED SUICIDE..."

[This letter is in part, a response to an article printed in the August/September PBR... The writer sent it to the ISO office with a cover letter which will not be printed here. The writer also requested anonymity if this letter was used. He/She [?] is granted this request.Editor]

To The Editor, Plain Brown Rapper:

"I was angry at him for taking the coward's way out" (as quoted from the letter "Hard enough to deal with... But by SUICIDE...???)")

I read the letter entitled "hard enough to deal with but by SUICIDE" with interest, and with a lot of other emotions as well. But, as has evidently been done by others, I am not here to take Butch's inventory. I do however, salute him and honor his choice, and feel, although perhaps incorrectly that I understand and empathize with it.

You see, six months ago I also tried to take my own life. I was almost successful. Why did I try to take my own life? It is something that one can not readily put in words, but I will try. You see I have demons. Please don't laugh, it is not meant to be funny, for my demons are a manifestation in me that make my life a living hell. They are unpredictable, I can never tell when they will strike, and with what degree of vengeance! They are crafty. They know when I am weak, even though I do not, and often that is when they strike. They have little regard for social propriety, often striking in social situations.

Sometimes I can cover up the situation until I can get away by myself, whereupon they totally take over, and sometimes I can't!

I have had my demons for several years. Some people call them depression.

That is a good name for them! Perhaps it is BETTER than demons, but demons is more graphic, and my depression is graphic! It is real! It is uncontrolled.

My demons or depression if you prefer that term, came upon me several years ago, but it came with a vengeance about three years ago. I live in a large metropolitan area, and I have a fairly good intelligence and brain, and I sought out the best help I could find. I tried Psychiatrists, I tried Psychologists, and I tried all levels of care. I mystified them. We tried the medications, but my demons - my depression was stronger. It loved my attempts to control it. My demons would hide, leading me into a sense of complacency, thinking finally they were controlled. Then they would spring! They defied the medication! They defied the professional help. I spent days in

terror. I spent days in tears! The demons - the depression loved it. They were loyal, they stayed by me.

Finally like Butch, I made an attempt on my life. I had no idea it was only going to be an attempt, I thoroughly planned on being successful, but my higher power, or whatever powers that be, had other ideas. After four weeks in an ICU, 17 days on a locked psychiatric unit, and 1 month at a nationally known inpatient recovery center, I survived. The demons - the depression loved it. It bided its time. It listened to the lectures, it listened to the experts, and it laughed and smirked - silently, it didn't want to let on until - I was released. Suddenly after 1 month in an ICU - 17 days on a locked psychiatric ward - and 1 month in a treatment center, I was released. The demons - the depression took over. It smirked. It had won again. It was stronger now however, for what little professional help that I had in the past was taken from me. I found myself surrounded by amateurs, and dogooders when it came to psychiatric help. There was always a reason why they couldn't help - "it's not covered by managed care", "your situation is such that I don't think I can help!" Now I faced the demons alone.

Friends and family were afraid. They were afraid that I would try it again. They didn't want to lose me, they wanted to "grow old with me." What am I, a pet dog to be kept alive for their edification? The demons kept on, the depression was there. I could not discuss it with family and friends. It is obvious they were afraid, and they had no real idea how to help. If the professionals couldn't, how could they be expected to do so. Finally, when they asked how I was, I learned to tell them I was fine, and change the subject. It made it easier for everyone.

Now, however I had other obligations. A bill for 100,000 dollars for four weeks in an ICU, an additional 17,000 for four weeks in the inpatient treatment center. And the demons were faithful. They are always faithful.

Society chose to try heroic measures to save me from my suicide attempt. They were successful. They congratulated themselves on how they saved another soul. The demons laughed. I can only regret that I had not been successful. That society had not let me die as I had wanted to do. For you see,

the pain of the demons was so bad, that I was willing to risk whatever may or may not be on the other side of suicide.

Am I suicidal now? No I am not. For the time I choose to live with the demons. They still are powerful, but for the time I choose to live with them. Will I always choose to live with them, or may some day they go away? That I cannot say.

But back to the point! To call Butch a coward? I think not!

PS. In case you are wondering, I am about to celebrate five years in recovery! Five years in SAA. I stand tall in what I have done in recovery, it has not been perfect, but I do not feel that I need to apologize to any one for the way I have worked my program. My demons go to the meetings also!

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CORRECTION:

In the last issue of the PBR, on page 7, was an article on death and suicide. The writer did not request anonymity but it may have appeared so. The name of the writer was not printed because the PBR editor had made an error in the "framing" of the headline. We apologize to Rich W. who sent the piece, and the piece of poetry, "The Narcissist's Song" that followed it. Ed.

**fear is a door way
we can not go around
it will block our journey
courage is the faith
we will survive
to get the gift
on the other side**

Jim

SAA ONLINE MEETING...

Bruce B. reports in on Monday Night Meetings

SAA meets online every Monday night at 9:00pm EST. If you want to attend an online SAA meeting, please use your chat software to connect to one of the following Starlink-IRC servers:

Rochester.MI.US.Starlink-IRC.Org
Jacksonville.NC.US.StarLink-IRC.Org
Houston.TX.US.Starlink-IRC.Org
Williamslake.BC.CA.Starlink-IRC.Org
Stillwater.OK.US.StarLink-IRC.Org

Once connected, join the SAA room by typing:
/join #saa

Once you are in the SAA meeting room, you will be approached individually by a trusted servant who will ask you if you are here for an SAA meeting and if you meet the 3rd tradition (Do you have the desire to stop your own compulsive sexual behavior?) If you answer "yes" to both questions, you will be given the ability to "speak" in the SAA meeting room.

The format will consist of the serenity prayer, readings of the steps and traditions of SAA, some brief instructions on sharing, and then the floor will be open for people to share on the topic or check-in. A person indicates an interest in sharing next by sending an exclamation point (!), and when the floor is free, the meeting chair will recognize him/her in the order in which the interest was expressed. Just like in F2F meetings, only one person "speaks" at a time.

If you have not attended F2F meetings, when a person begins sharing he gives his first name and admits his addiction, "I'm Bruce & I'm a sex addict." Then the other members of the meeting say "Hi Bruce" Then he begins sharing.

When he is finished sharing, he lets the group know, and the other members of the group say something like "Thanks Bruce." No one will try to fix you, or judge you. We do not give advice.

If you have questions about either the technical details or the meeting format, please contact the current meeting chair at sareco99@netwiz.net.

Bruce

[Ed note: Bruce is in the process of registering this group as one of the SAA Fellowship. At a later date this may be added to the SAA web-site so the various links, etc. will be always available. All members are encouraged to participate]

LITCOM JOINED AT THE EARS FOR NEARLY 3 HOURS 8-16-98

And we were informed that no surgery was required for separation!

It is probably third best following meeting face to face. When phone tv is universal, that may be second.

There are gobs of work being done and yet to be done on projects left over from last year and new ones undertaken for this period.

Two items undergoing fellowship review are the book, Shame to Grace and Exploring Healthy Sexuality. These have not been brought before the Fellowship, and perhaps should have been before this. Feed-back is still requested from the membership.

Other issues: Women's Pamphlet is receiving favorable feed-back and the Abstinence Pamphlet has undergone some rewrite and feed-back on the changes are good.

Sponsorship material which was produced by Indiana members is being sought for inclusion in the pamphlet sent by the Fargo group. It is felt that the piece might be expanded.

The "Guide to The Twelve Steps" has been returned to the author for further work if it is to be re-submitted.

Persons or groups submitting material should edit for spelling, correct use of language and syntax, prior to submission to the LitCom.

There are two efforts in preparing material on Sex Addiction and the Internet. Work continues.

A proposed "Questions and Answers for Professionals" needs further refinement [too broad]. Web-site feedback is being considered.

The Large Book project is moving forward. Many responded with letters by Sept. 1, 1998, for possible inclusion in the book and all have been forwarded to Pat C.

The Statement on Felonious Behavior has been discussed by many groups and intergroups. State and Federal law may impact the writing. This is being researched.

A subcommittee was formed to write a "Self-Statement" which is to be as close as possible to an "all encompassing" statement of what SAA is. The statement could be used by anyone or any organization. It was originally requested by the Intergroup Fellowship Committee of the Board.

Spanish versions of three pamphlets are ready but Dave R. has some technical questions about them. Jeff W. is setting up the pamphlets. There was discussion of which materials should be translated and if it would be feasible to have a professional translator do these translations.

There was discussion on many other items, all ongoing and important to the work of the Fellowship.

Step Ten: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Tradition Ten: "Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy".

Step 10 is generally thought to be practiced because of our relationships with others. Unless of course we are reclusive hermits who only "wrong" ourselves. Not likely...

Last week I bought 10 pounds of sugar, put all but 2 pounds in a household container too small to hold the whole of it. I put the container to the back of the shelf with the bag in front so I could use from the bag first and discard it.

My wife, in noticing it as she went about some of her business in that section of the cupboard, placed the bag *behind* the container. I made a small comment but without further discourse.

She made 2 apple pies Sunday and used the sugar from the container. As I needed some sugar for some "pear butter" I was making I looked in the container, saw it was about three-fourths full, and the bag of remaining sugar still behind it.

Dutifully I poured the remainder of the bag into the container, then extracted a half-cup for my recipe, tossed the bag in the waste container.

Today as my wife was looking over the paper before changing into her work clothing, and after her "morning walk", I was preparing her lunch. The sugar bag was still visible in the waste container.

I said, "I see you used the sugar in the bag for making your pies". Humor of course. "Goading" sick humor. You have no doubt heard about what happens when certain objects hit fans?

I have my reasons for doing things my way, my wife hers. And we have ways we speak to each other. And my way, today, was not

an appropriate way to engage in conversation about how things are to be done. My comment was borne of old crap, and a part of the sick junk I should have dealt with in Steps 4-5-6-7.

That's why step 10 is vital to those of us who have yet to incorporate real change into our behavioral patterns. Sugar anyone?

To continue, it appears that I in my illness am prone to take on issues which are truly outside my recovery process. Perhaps that's my "co-dependent" side, the solving of other people's problems, and cleansing the world of its ills.

As much as I would have liked to make a claim on Tradition 10 to avoid taking responsibility for the actions alluded to in the above paragraphs, the interface involved therein clearly is an "inside issue" and has direct bearing on my health.

Having the mind of an addict keeps me looking for the loopholes. And even with a "little" recovery, I ain't as good as I used to be at finding them...! rvs

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Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."

Tradition Eleven: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

There are issues of life around me about which I am truly intemperate. One of these is religion. I am a recovering addict of same and have great difficulty in finding spiritual connection.

Last night we were visited by a member of my wife's group who we both knew. This person had reasons for "checking in". But during the course of the conversation, the topic of "church" came up.

Last week I went to a meeting of a "freethought" group. There were *many* subjects of religion discussed there.

Both are "outside issues" here.

As I have charted a course across "God-waters" for all the 6+ decades of my life, it has been a "choppy" ride, even wet perhaps.

The more I tried to "search" for a Higher Power, and place a "name" on it, the more confused I became. It was like searching for the "right" anything in my life. As if there really was a "right" anything.

And there is of course as I look at my behavior which damages the human-ness of others. Invades their sovereignty, their space.

How can I "pray" if I don't know what, or who I am praying to? Doesn't "it" need a label of some kind? Is this in some way, rather paradoxical? And who am I to have an "understanding" of God? Isn't that rather grandiose?

Is it perhaps some of these questions that drove me to where I am, trying to "figure it out"? Isn't there a lecture somewhere that will fill me in on this?

I heard Pat C. quote the short version of the serenity prayer: "Lighten up". Perhaps it's time...rvs

And with the aforementioned still in mind, how could I possibly put forth any kind of public relations policy with so many questions? Most certainly I would not be too successful in "promoting" our Fellowship with them, eh?

I also wonder about the many facets of language I [maybe we] use to define myself [ourselves]. And the recovery process. What is required to create a program of outreach to those who still suffer? Do we not need to be known by *someone*?

The real question is: How can the Fellowship attract those who still suffer without elevating the personal status of we individuals in it.

As the 12 & 12 says, "being in the public eye is hazardous".

Sugar anyone?

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Jerry B. Office Manager

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[Staffed] 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
 [Phone calls taken in Person]
 M-T-W-F 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
 Thurs 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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STOLEN FROM THE NORTHERN TIER INTERGROUP

From Dan J...

It seems the Bismarck Saturday group has had a theme for the month. Relationship and loneliness. I guess none of us wants to be alone. Even if I spent my whole life showing otherwise. As I listen to group members talk about family and partners I sometimes find myself thinking about the future and wondering if I will spend the rest of my years alone.

Then as I take a closer look at myself I know that I am not alone unless I choose to be. I have so many friends in and out of the group that I can hardly believe that I am the same guy that used to have one friend at a time [to use instead of to cherish]. I do not know when I realized that friends were not to be used but I am glad that I did. As I think back it amazes me that I had any friends or family. I count my blessings that I have made some changes in my life that allow me to look at myself and see that I am a work in progress and I have faith that my Higher Power knows what He's doing....

Dan J.

[Ed note: Dan is editing the NTI Newsletter. He'd like some input from anyone who'd like to share. "...does not need to be long or profound...". Send to: NTI, Box 741, Bismarck, ND 58502-0741]

MESSAGE FROM JIM...

Greetings & Salutations! Hope you had a good June. A couple of first for me in this issue: this is the first time I've had any of my work published, and this is the first praise song I wrote. It was written while I was in jail. I didn't have access to instruments at the time, so I wasn't sure how it would sound. I've since composed music for it and consider it a terrific reminder of where I was...

When I was feeling down, I looked around-
and what did my eyes see?

I needed truth; I needed You,
You were right there waiting for me!

You are my Rock Solid Salvation
Shining every day
You are the world's greatest sensation

And I want You to hear me say..
Thank You, beyond thank you
Words cannot describe

How I'm feeling deep down inside
[I just say]

Thank You, beyond thank you
Now You give me hope, You help me cope

Your love is higher than the sky
You hear my call, You break down the walls

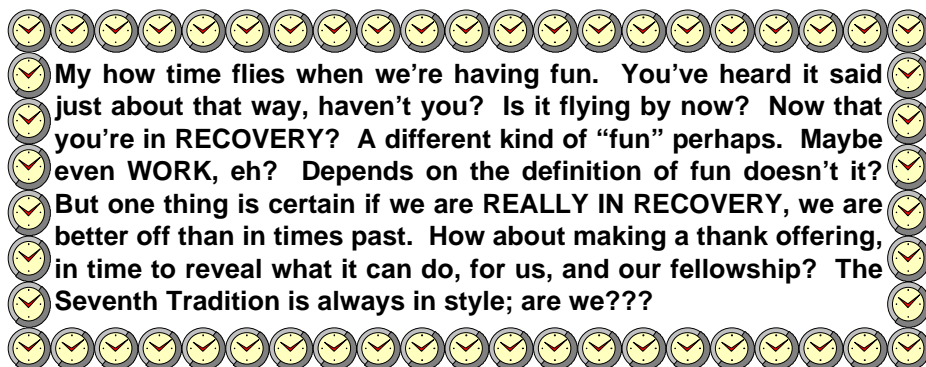
And you hear me when I cry...
You are my Rock Solid Salvation
Gracious with Your love

You are the world's greatest sensation

I want to shout to the heavens above...

Thank You, beyond thank you
Words cannot describe
How I'm feeling deep down inside
[I just say]

Thank you, beyond thank you.
Jim M.,
Bismarck Sat Group



Do You Use SAA Literature? Does Your Group?

Kind of a stupid question maybe? Well, maybe. But....

When we first came into our various groups, regardless of where in this vast world we began, we almost always were given, or had to buy, a piece or two of SAA literature. As new "Johnnies come lately's" we wanted to sort of "be in the know" about at least a few things that went on, and *something* about this sickness we [maybe] had.

But lately...? Have you reviewed on of those "early" pamphlets? Maybe better to ask ourselves if we have read every piece of what the ISO office has to offer. Better yet, have you and I **studied** most of these pieces? There is a difference. Especially if we look them over after being in recovery for a while. New perspectives appear, even from old sources.

Pick up a few and re-join yourself with the process..... rvs

MICHIGAN STATE SAA CONVENTION

"Celebrating The Promises in Every Step"

SAA members in Michigan will hold their first Michigan State SAA Convention on Friday, Nov. 6, and Saturday, Nov. 7, 1998. The event, which has as its theme "Celebrating The Promises In Every Step," will feature guest speakers and workshops. Registration will begin at 8:00 p.m., Friday. All activities and two meals are included in the \$20 registration fee. To receive a registration form or for more details, call Mark N. at 616-459-8802.

NEW ISO OFFICE HOURS

In an effort to increase the efficiency of its one-person staff, the ISO Office has received authorization from the Board of Trustees to change the hours during which its phone will be answered in person and during which its doors will be open to the public. The new weekly schedule provides at least 20 hours of uninterrupted working time and 20 hours during which work will be stopped to answer phone calls and to serve walk in visitors.

Voice mail messages will be returned promptly at the beginning of the next business day. The schedule will not affect e-mail messages, which will continue to be answered at the beginning each business day.

The hours during which phone calls will be answered in person are:

[All in CENTRAL TIME]

Monday 10:00 am.- 2:00 pm.

Tuesday 10:00 am.- 2:00 pm.

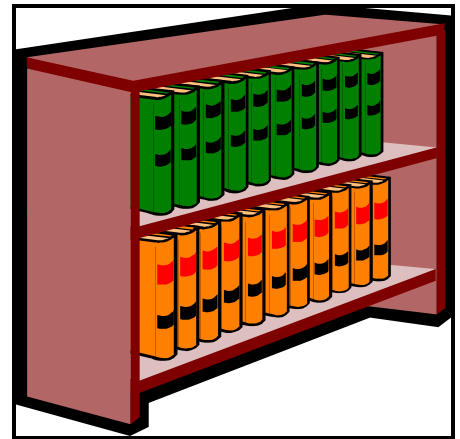
Wednesday 10:00 am.- 2:00 pm.

Thursday 2:00 pm.- 6:00 pm.

NEW NON-SAA LITERATURE TITLES OFFERED BY ISO OFFICE

The ISO Board has authorized the addition of three new titles to the list of non-SAA literature offered for sale by the ISO Office. The new books are *Sexual Anorexia* by Patrick Carnes (\$14.95), *A Gentle Path Through The Twelve Steps* by Patrick Carnes (\$14.95), and *Hope and Recovery Workbook* (\$9.95). These additions are now available for sale and will appear in the next edition of the SAA Literature Catalog.

The Board also instructed the ISO Office to resume sale of *Don't*



**"outside literature...
[is] sold by the ISO
as a convenience to
the Fellowship..."**

Call It Love by Patrick Carnes. Because the publisher's discount on this book had become so low that it could be sold only at a loss, the item had been dropped from inventory. In resuming sale of *Don't Call It Love* solely as a convenience, the ISO Office will sell it for \$18, which is \$4.05 above cover price.

As in the case of all outside literature, SAA neither endorses nor opposes the views expressed by the authors or the publishers of these books. They are sold by the ISO as a convenience to the fellowship.

The sale of non-SAA literature also benefits the ISO because one-half of the gross profit from such sales goes directly toward building up the prudent reserve.

Groups are encouraged to display non-SAA material apart from ISO Approved and Conference Approved literature.

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ISO GUIDELINE: Carrying The Message To The Deaf !

ISO Guideline

CARRYING THE MESSAGE TO THE DEAF

In regard to carrying the SAA message to the deaf, as in formulating a guideline on any subject, the ISO of SAA, Inc., must begin by citing the Fourth Tradition of SAA, namely that "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.A.A. as a whole." Bearing this in mind, the following guidelines are merely suggestions that have been reviewed by the ISO of SAA, Inc., Board of Trustees and approved for distribution to the SAA membership. They are not meant to be interpreted as an ISO policy.

For the purposes of these guidelines the term "deaf" is used. There are other people who are hearing impaired, either permanently or temporarily, who might benefit from assistance in ways other than those suggested here.

Remember Who We Are

Sex addicts include people of both sexes, different gender orientations, people who live in all countries and who come from different backgrounds and cultures. They range in age from the very young to the very old. Some are small. Some are big. There are quiet ones and those who are talkative. Many have college degrees. Many do not. There are sex addicts who require wheel chairs. Some sex addicts are blind. Others are deaf. In carrying the message to all of these people, the most important thing to remember is that they are all sex addicts who need the program and who need support. Even when and where that support is not the best that exists, it can at least be the best available then and there.

Hopefully, always available to the deaf sex addict is a handshake or a hug. Much can be communicated by taking the time to look that special person in the eye and nodding that you share the addiction, that you understand, and that you care. There might not be an interpreter at the meeting or anyone who can sign, but members can offer to write out the gist of the sharing on a notepad. (In communicating in writing with the deaf, remember English is a second language for them, sign language being their first) Still, in all such actions, as simple as they are, the underlying messages is the same: This is your home. This is your family. There is hope. Keep coming back.

"I Can't Hear, But Be Sure To Ask If I Can Read..."

As noted before, English is a second language for the deaf. Do not assume they will be able to read proficiently. With this in mind, not only should special effort be made but also special care should be taken to point out with sensitivity that SAA literature is available. If there is not a good supply of literature at the meeting, call a group conscience to discuss purchasing at least one copy of each SAA pamphlet, booklet, or book. Call the ISO Office for back issues of the Plain Brown Rapper. Remember, there is a possibility that much of the fellowship's collective experience, strength, and hope can be shared with the

deaf in written form.

Don't Forget The Phone!

It is easy to overlook the telephone as a way to communicate with the deaf, because many people do not know about the availability of the telephone relay service between the deaf and normal-hearing callers. Nearly all states provide this service which is free and operates twenty-four hours a day. Charges are based on the distance between only two parties, not the distance from one caller to the relay center and to the receiver.

Become A Correspondent

Even though you might live in the same town, you can still write to the deaf sex addict, either mailing the letters or exchanging them in person. Long distance correspondence is possible as well, but being able to see your pen pal in person is special. And, of course, today there is the availability of e-mail. In SAA, exchanging phone numbers has long been a tradition. Start the same tradition with e-mail addresses within your group, especially if one of the members is deaf.

Translators

Some groups might be able to provide a translator. The advantage of this is that the translator is a person who is trained to communicate effectively on the deaf person's level. When considering this option, the group will have to take into account the following:

1. The translator should be trained in American Sign Language (ASL) rather than another sign language which is not used by the majority of the deaf. (In fairness to all concerned, three years training is preferred).
2. A translator might well have to be someone from outside the group, someone who is not a sex addict. Once approved by the group, it is a good idea to note the presence of the outside interpreter at the beginning of each meeting since newcomers and visiting addicts have a right to know there is a non-addict present.
3. Although the translator might be a volunteer, the only option available might be a professional who will have to be paid. (Keep in mind, even if family members are qualified to translate, it is unlikely the deaf addict will want them at the meeting).
4. Care must be taken that the deaf person does not become so dependent on the translator that there is little or no interaction with other members. Members of the group will have to take care to do their part to keep the addict involved.
5. If the group has a trained translator who is also an SAA member, it is a good policy that the translator not participate in sharing during the meetings which are being translated.

Information about the availability of translators in your area can be obtained by con-

tacting: The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), 301-608-0050 or fax at 301-608-0508; or write them at 8630 Fenton Street, Suite 324, Silver Springs, MD 20910.

Is There A Volunteer In The House?

Even though there is not a deaf member in your group right now, there is a good chance there are deaf still suffering sex addicts nearby. How will they be reached? Who will 12-step them into the program? Who will make provisions for their participation in meetings? Who will translate for them? Intergroups can solicit volunteers to spearhead an outreach to the deaf. Perhaps there is already a member who knows how to sign. Maybe there are members who will see in this outreach a special calling and who will respond by learning how to sign. By contacting local support agencies for the deaf, the interested member or group or intergroup might find not only a channel through which to reach deaf sex addicts but also learn about ways to make the program available to them.

The internet is another way to learn about agencies that serve the deaf. There is a website at www.gallaudet.edu, which provides a list of websites for the deaf under the "Deaf Connection" section (click on "deaf websties/links").

Special Events

Those who plan SAA retreats or special events, such as the ISO of SAA annual convention, are encouraged to investigate ways to make these gatherings accessible to the deaf sex addict. The key is to be ready before the request comes. Know where you can obtain one or more translators. If the translator is to be paid, budget for the expense. Arrange for special seating for the deaf. Print on flyers and registration forms that the event is accessible to the deaf, making sure there is a special space for registrants to mark if they are deaf. Once the event is announced as being accessible, stick to your plans even if there are no deaf registrants. Deaf addicts can walk up at the last minute just as well as any other addict.

Conclusion

The ISO encourages its members, groups, and intergroups to share their experience, strength, and hope about making the program available to the deaf. Write or call so that your information can be passed along to the rest of the fellowship. Not only the deaf sex addict will benefit, we all will.

