

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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Failing this course in life has opened my eyes
This subject in life that was me has failed
Can I take back some sand from the hourglass stand
Is it too late to start over again.?*

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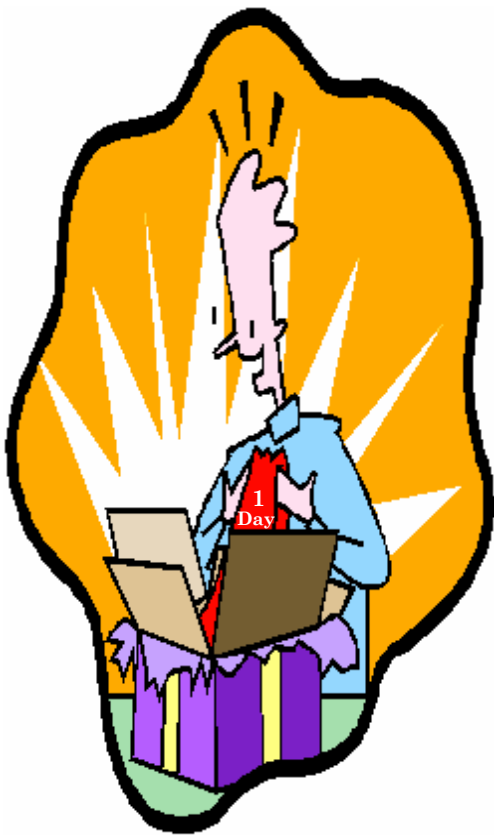
Just Being There

By Scotty W.

The days roll on, seemingly changeless. Each day delivers 24 hours, no more, no less. Yet some days feel vastly different from others. How curious. What makes one day different from the others? Me.

I can approach this day as a logistical challenge. I can set my alarm early and stay up late, working to cram my ambitions and expectations into every spare corner of “my” day. Through my own efforts, I can economize, maximize, utilize. The trouble is, this effort-laden approach often leaves me feeling LESS accomplished, less fulfilled by day's end, than when I began.

Or I can view this day as a gift. I can wake and go to my knees, thanking my Higher Power in advance for the day I'm about to experience. I can allow the day to unfold, watching for new discoveries and fresh insights with each passing minute. I can acknowledge the Divine Scheduler, realizing that the day runs according to HIS Day-Timer, not my own, and his plans for me are vastly warmer and more rewarding than my own.



And I can sleep peacefully at night, knowing the greatest gift I could have given myself is to remain present and open throughout the day.

Everything else falls a distant second to “just being there” for the gift I call today.

My Weekend

By Ric M.

I had an interesting weekend. One of the highlights was a message I received on who God is and how this can help us; I got this message by means of a great talk at my son's friend's birthday party. A gentleman with whom I have been wanting to talk spent an hour and a half with me. It was so refreshing and great. He spoke a lot on recovery and his own struggle with internet garbage. We spoke about the fact that it isn't about perfection when it comes to a relationship with a Higher Power. It is about a desire. God wants to love and forgive us. He proves it many times (despite the skewed view that we often have as addicts). We spoke about forgiveness and restoration after a slip. We talked about how our Higher Power stands knocking on the door to our heart once we have left him. It is up to us to let him back in. And we also spoke on the prodigal son and how the father didn't scold him once he returned longing to make amends for his "wild" (sex addict?) living. The father ran to the son and showered him with love. Afterwards I spent some time sitting back and thinking on it.

So often I am so hard on

myself and figure no one will forgive me. And yet this is the opposite of what my Higher Power says to me. "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." This is my favorite promise from God. He knows the plans he has for me. A loving God has plans for me. Plans that will bring me hope and a future, even though I am an addict, a person who has clung to lies and who walked away from him willingly, like the prodigal son. I tear up thinking about this. It isn't about religion, it is about a God who cares for me (for all of us) and who is doing all he can to show us this, if we will but listen.

And this weekend's worship service was even more powerful. It was a message on prayer to God and a relationship with him. The message was similar to the one I just mentioned. And yet a point made about prayer stuck deeply with me. The spiritual reading said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and loaded down with burdens, and I will give you rest. Place my yoke on you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is pleasant, and my

burden is light.” What a promise. In prayer, all I need to do is come to God. He isn’t looking for my wish list or for me to pray for every detail I need changed. I just need to seek him. He will place a light/pleasant burden on me and give rest to my soul. This is what I have been searching for my whole life as an addict. Not religion. Not tasks. Not penance. But someone who will love me as I am and who will place an easier burden upon my life.

The speaker’s point on prayer was to just come to God and know who he is. Acknowledge all he has done and know him for his power and splendor.

How can this God not take care of all the needs and fears in life? My only requirement is to desire that connection (Step 2) and surrender to it (Step 3). It was a mountaintop, quiet moment for me in my life. It fully sank in this morning. I can stop acting out on the bottom line because of loving him. He stopped the earth and time for a day for Joshua; he brought down the walls of Jericho with a shout; he parted the Red Sea. Why is my acting out too big for him?

I just had to share this exciting, eye opening revelation my Higher Power has helped me to see. I hope to focus on this daily and let him sweat the big stuff and little stuff.

My Time in “The Bubble”

By Rand L., Santa Fe, New Mexico

In January 2003 I celebrated my fourth year in SAA. It was not, however, my fourth year of continuous self-defined abstinence. When I started in SAA, I had a sizeable gay porn collection, and had gotten badly into debt with 900-number phone sex calls and for-pay net-site porn signups. I couldn’t even turn on my computer to work (I’m a writer) without “checking my email,” which

always led to cruising the net, sometimes for six hours at a time; sometimes all night long. I felt dirty, ugly, and pathetic. Going to meetings, praying, using the telephone to call fellow addicts, and eventually working the steps through Step 9 with the help of a series of sponsors, I was able to get rid of all my porn, print and electronic, and stay away from the net for three years. Then, one

My Time in "The Bubble"

Continued By Rand L., Santa Fe, New Mexico

day, I visited a site again. I recovered my abstinence the next day, and didn't have another slip for a year. Then I went to the net again. This time it only took me six months until my next slip. Then it was four months; then every month; then a couple of days a week; then every day; then several times a day; then four to six hours at a stretch; then back to all-nighters that left me exhausted, desperate, and fantasizing about suicide. Through it all I have kept going to meetings and working with my sponsor. Today, as I write, I have two days of abstinence. But the weekend has arrived, and I'm scared. "Here we go again!" I thought as I left my evening SAA meeting to face Friday night.

I'm not afraid of going back to acting out in bathrooms and adult bookshops, as I used to years ago; or of picking up strangers, or of engaging in phone sex, or of buying more pornographic magazines, or of hitting the bars. My drug of choice is those gay Internet sites. For me these sites are not good, because they reinforce the sexual shame I have suffered from all my life as an incest survivor. And reinforcing

those feelings of shame and worthlessness, of course, is what my inner addict craves. Lost in that timeless, seemingly invulnerable acting out space so well described in the SAA pamphlet, "The Bubble," I can forget, for a time, how lonely and worthless I feel.

It's no accident that I feel the strongest urges to act out on weekends, when I go home after evening SAA meetings, or during long unstructured afternoons (I am self-employed and work at home), because those are the times I feel the loneliest. I also tend to act out when I am angry about something and not acknowledging it. In fact, I have realized that my masochistic desire to be hurt during sex hides a deeper desire to be the one perpetrating the hurting. And the people I secretly wish to hurt the most are all those handsome men of Herculean physique whom I have envied all my life and failed to attract--the very men whose photos are on the sites I compulsively surf.

The "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous is right on when it says that resentment is the No. 1 killer of the addict! Time once again for a Fourth Step inventory on my man-hating, and a Fifth Step share with my sponsor, and

a Sixth Step pinpointing the character defects underlying the problem (lust, self-centeredness, self-loathing, lack of forgiveness toward the specific men I have longed for and lost). And that hardest step of all, the Sixth: being completely willing for my anger toward men to be removed in the Seventh Step. (I'm willing to be willing on this one; that's the best I can do right now.)

Step 8, though, is a puzzler: whom have I harmed this time around? This time around, only myself. I guess I need to start making amends to myself for the time, money, and self-respect I've lost by acting out with porn. But how? I've already been working the program. If that isn't self-amends enough, what else is required?

I got a clue the other night, at an SAA meeting; a woman member shared that she had once, long ago, worked as a nurse caring for bedridden patients. She described how, if the nurses weren't vigilant, these patients would develop "pressure sores": wounds that would get infected and scab over, sealing the infection inside. Although to all outward appearances the wounds were healed, in fact the infection hid-den away down deep was infiltrating deep tissues. If left to rampage unchecked, it would

eventually infect the bone, and the patient could die. "I realized that abstinence from my inner circle behaviors isn't enough," she said to the group. "My Higher Power wants me to take action on healing the underlying alienation from myself that leads me to engage in my inner circle behaviors." Her strategy for doing this includes not only cultivating her spiritual life by working the 12 Steps, but also engaging in acts of deliberate physical and emotional self-care each day: a shower, proper rest, non-punitive exercise, decent food, time with friends and others who reinforce her sense of being a valuable, attractive person.

That's my problem, I've decided. I've developed a spiritual pressure sore, and the cure has got to be 100% commitment to daily self-care, including breaking out of my self-imposed isolation. So in addition to my week's step work, prayer, reading of literature, and writing about my feelings, I need to call up some safe friends this weekend and leave my hidey-hole. It's going to be hard--in fact, without the strength of my Higher Power under-girding me, it's going to be impossible. But it's the least I can do for myself.

The Fruits of Service

By Robert S.

As I ponder the contents of five letters from prisoners that I choose to answer today, it gives pause to reflect on many aspects of my own recovery over these past 13+ years in the Fellowship of SAA. It arouses memories of all my counselors, sponsors, sponsees, and others who have been supportive of my efforts to become what my Higher Power intended. And I think that's to be fully human, and able to interface with others on the basis that they too, are human, and deserving all the benefits of life on this planet.

Obviously, we may not always be in a position to derive all the "benefits" we desire, especially if we have contravened those mores of society wherein we have not been human in our treatment of self and others. We may be restrained at times for good reason. Sometimes that may have been imprisonment, and sometimes servitude outside the walls as well.

As I look back at those years "before SAA," it becomes all too apparent that my imprisonment was of my own doing, subsequent to having been thoroughly schooled by my family of origin and other persons of influence in my early life. Between the genes and the cul-

ture, an inclination toward certain behaviors seemed to have been almost "hard-wired" within me. The behaviors themselves then, came quite naturally, insidiously, alluringly, secretly, sometimes shamefully, but always comforting, even if fearfully and excitedly carried out.

The confusing part of recovery for me was trying to figure out all of the circuitry that connected the behaviors to the character defects. It seemed if I could understand it, all I'd have to do is "turn off the switch" and I'd be "fixed." This took me into the continuous search for knowledge of addiction in book after book, tape after tape, feeling as if I could just assimilate all this information, it would become understandable, and the answers would be there, and the "fix" would appear. It was almost as addictive as my addiction. Which of course leads me to believe that I, as an addict, can pretty much be addicted to anything, or any process, as long as it needs to be done compulsively, whether or not it has a useful purpose to my life. And the "purpose" can be merely a figment of my imagination. My, oh my, the scope of those "circuits"! They never end, and the mind games play over and over. What a conundrum!

Of course it's not understand-

able. If it were, we'd not be bound by the lives we live as addicts, and behave the way we'd rather not. But I, perhaps not unlike many of us, keep trying to find the easier, softer way, and cannot.

I believe it is our own recalcitrance, built by narcissism--to whatever degree--that refuses to allow us to move beyond our absolutes. Like: I know that I know what I know. And: I want what I want when I want it.

The Twelve Steps of SAA, worked over and over again and again, are the process of change, and if nurtured and cultivated, will cause us to bear some fruit. Particularly I think, Step Twelve. I doubt we can fully own anything until we have the belief that it is valuable enough to pass on to another. We finally can become what we pass on.

When I hear persons of long standing in a group complain because they are still having bouts with inner circle behaviors, it seems they are usually those who are keeping their

recovery a secret, thus truncating the very process designed to propel them to a new life. And it seems to stop after Step 11.

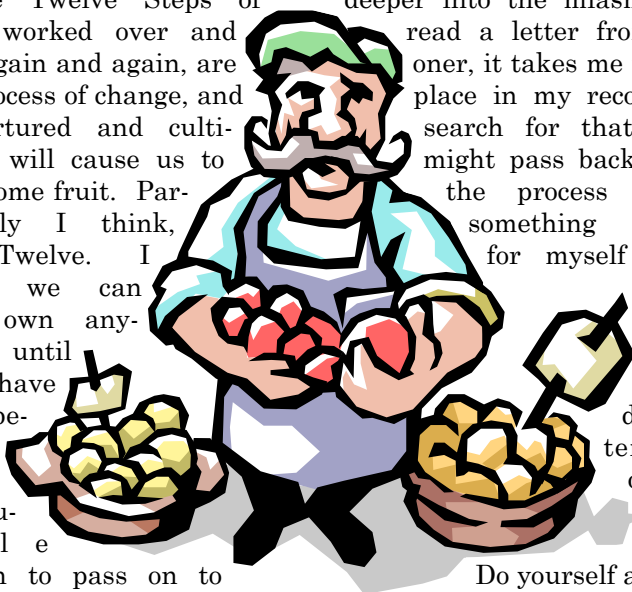
I've done a modicum of service work, and the fruits are greater when I extend myself just a bit to pass it on to someone else. I hope I can continue into my senior years (that's a joke, son!).

In closing, let me say the prison outreach program is a way to keep from wasting three hours on the computer searching for sites that might dig me (you, us) deeper into the miasma. As I

read a letter from a prisoner, it takes me to another place in my recovery as I search for that which I might pass back. And in the process of doing something beneficent for myself and another person, I am moved from the damaging temptations of my addiction. Try it.

Do yourself a favor.

P.S. I visited on the phone today with the widow of Arnold D. who passed away in 2002. Arnold was probably the "Father of Prison Outreach in SAA." She said he was still getting letters addressed to him.



From Dan, Who Sought Help

By Dan

[Editor's note: Roughly a year ago, one of the ISO office workers forwarded to me a very long poem he had received from a prisoner. What follows represents a little more than a third of the poem, and I think the excerpted portions adequately reflect its shifting moods. If you want to read the whole poem, please contact me through the ISO office or else at pbr@saa-recovery.org.

This injustice from silence has controlled me
Fear and shame I have been branded within
My conscience spoke up inside and demanded change
Listening I did, my soul was unhappy and lonely
I remind you I chose this path of healing

We sit here in a state of transcendence
Never knowing how and when this pilgrimage started
This journey has its setbacks and detours
We are muddling through this plane of existence hoping
This spirit of the heart guided by our desires
The price of open-mindedness transforming beliefs
Reflection of lessons learned is a necessity now.

Learned behavior has become accepted within
I realized the flawed perception of this student inside
Failing this course in life has opened my eyes
This subject in life that was me has failed
Can I take back some sand from the hourglass stand
Is it too late to start over again.

This pain I feel within my heart
always lingers, always constricting
Nerves are twisted and taxed tri-fold
I am consumed with this discomfort
I need this peace from my demons.

My heart sings to the souls in the room
Feelings flooding and thriving around
If you listen you can hear me weaving
This art of my voice ambushing its audience
Constricted no longer by speech, emotions now thriving
Searching and seeking, sculpting and carving
This web of passion captured its audience

The music is still playing... can you hear me?

A teacher has presented himself to me
I was asking for a soul to help guide
This chance to be instructed is noticed and needed
I hope I can pass this new test of life, I am ready.

When is providence no longer secure and safe?
When clouded perceptions elude the blatant truth
Persistent dwelling on things in the past
Is a bottomless pit for your energy and mental well being.

Fleecing your mask around your face every day
Is no way to deal with the world around us
For this persona is only lying to itself
Don't believe in false beliefs
Be true to yourself and God.

Temptation calls and requests one's undivided attention
Subconscious warnings, threatened beliefs are in danger
What was once valued and praised is now misconstrued
Another day compromised, when is this uncontrolled chaos to stop?

The best friend in your life will always know when to listen
Just think about him and the phone might ring, maybe it's him
Answer the phone for there must be a reason for his telepathic reception
God connects us with those who will benefit from our love
This friend appreciates your affection and constant acceptance
For a true friend stands by you when others pass judgment.

Sitting in this enclosed worn-down cell
We contemplate the unknown possibilities ahead
Surrounded and locked down for society's protection
We all sit here like sheep waiting for the slaughter.

As we sit here enclosed within our new surroundings
It seems we all identify and share a mutual rage
They seek and destroy, vengeance blind of innocence or guilt
What's the price worth to punish with blindness?
Caged and cornered, scared and threatened, we await our end.

Leaves tumble and swirl around my feet
Intersecting and converging across my path
I stop and listen to the world surrounding me
If you pay attention you can feel its presence
Don't forget, stop and listen, life surrounds you.

Two unknown souls encounter understanding between themselves
This path has brought them together in this guarded confinement
~~A moment has passed, time has slowed and blurred, these two have converged~~
Lies are behind them and the truth rings true
Souls going through their pain and truly knowing acceptance.

Closure is near for this pain that was me
This price from society should allow me to change
Through this pain I can now look forward and around
For I now know what my demons became.

Have you ever stopped to look around
And see yourself in someone else's control?
Who is the master of this ship?
When we dream at night, who's to say we are not controlling someone else
When we wake and see the bigger picture around us
Is that me behind the reflection in the glass?
There will be a day soon enough when everything will make sense
So don't be in a hurry to meet your end
Remember, look forward and around...



Helping Sponsees Define Their Three Circles

By Anonymous

Many times newcomers are surprised to find that in SAA each of us is trusted to define our inner circle or bottom line-acting out behaviors. This was certainly the case for Mark, a new sponsee who came to us with three years clean in another 12-Step fellowship. He had developed a solid recovery from his substance abuse problems and found that his sexual issues had escalated. Things got so bad that his acting out endangered his marriage and work. When someone informed him that there is a program--SAA--for sex addicts, he jumped into SAA with great enthusiasm.

At his first meeting he was given a copy of the Three Circles pamphlet and assigned a temporary sponsor. His pain from getting caught was so fresh that he was not acting out and was not even having any sexual feelings; he was also smart enough to know that this

was temporary and that he needed to get to work. We started to work with the ideas in the pamphlet; I assured him that he didn't have to do this exercise perfectly and that he would probably refine it as he progressed in recovery.

When Mark looked at the outer circle, he questioned whether he had any healthy sexual behaviors that would fit. He acknowledged that he usually sexualized even the healthy behaviors that are suggested in the pamphlet. We decided that he might want to wait on putting anything in the outer circle in that case; he accepted assurances that as his recovery progresses, healthy sexual behaviors will emerge.

To help him identify what behaviors belong in the middle and inner circles, I gave him a checklist of addictive behaviors and asked him to identify which ones were part of his addictive patterns. We discussed how to fig-

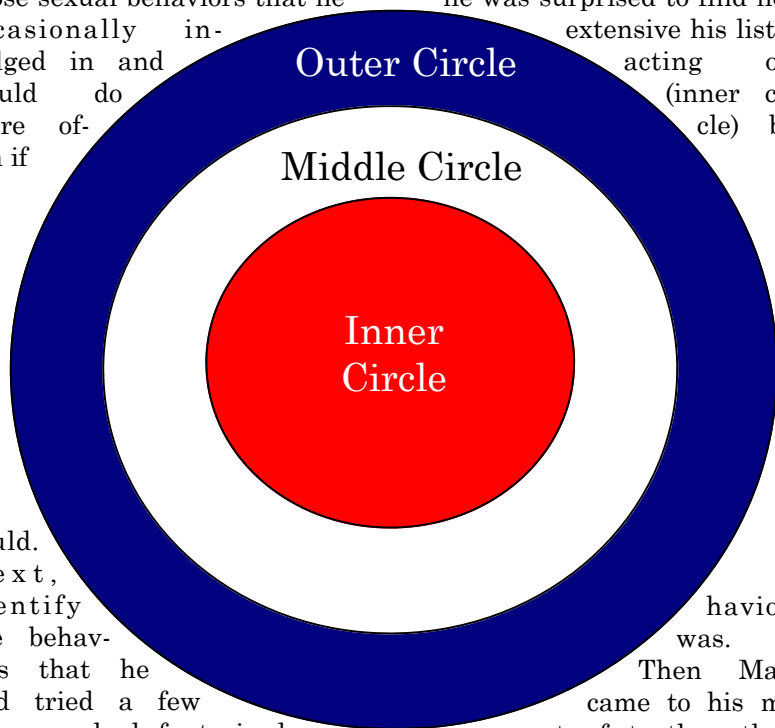
Helping Sponsees Define Their Three Circles

Continued

By Anonymous

ure this out. The suggestions I offered went like this: first, go for the easy ones--check the behaviors that are regular acting out behaviors. Then look at those sexual behaviors that he occasionally indulged in and would do more often if he

ing out) behaviors. After doing the above exercises, Mark had very little trouble recognizing which behaviors went into which circle. As with most newcomers, he was surprised to find how extensive his list of acting out (inner circle) be-



could. Next, identify the behaviors that he had tried a few times or had fantasized about. Finally, I suggested he look at all the behaviors he had checked and ask himself, "Which unchecked behaviors led me to these?"

It was only after he had completed this checklist that we began to assign behaviors to the middle circle (those that would lead to acting out) and inner circle (those that are act-

haviors was. Then Mark came to his moment of truth: there were some behaviors that he did not want to have in his inner circle. He wanted to "save" certain addictive behaviors so that he could indulge in them occasionally. His main difficulty centered on masturbation; he knew that if he put it into his inner circle then he would have to give it up and he didn't want to do that.

This has come up many times, even with long-term members of the fellowship. They reason (as Mark did) that since each member of SAA defines his or her own circles then it is simply a matter of defining masturbation (or another behavior) as a middle circle or even an outer circle behavior. This way they aren't acting out, right?

Mark struggled with this question for a few days before he talked to me about it. This line of reasoning sounded to him like addictive logic, not honest recovery. He was right; it was his addiction talking. He was honest enough to recognize that even if he limited himself to an occasional go at masturbation then he would focus all of his addictive energy on that one act; he realized that he wouldn't really be recovering. But he still felt tempted.

When we talked, I suggested he recognize that his inner circle has already been defined--BY HIS ADDICTION. In other words, we in SAA don't define our inner circle by choice; it is already defined for us in our addiction history. The reason we say that each sex addict defines his/her own inner circle (or bottom line) is that we recognize that the addiction has taken a different shape for each of us. There is no single definition that fits everyone. However, that is not a loophole for some to get

by with addictive behavior re-defined as middle circle or healthy behavior. The honesty necessary for a healthy recovery forces us to see what behaviors are already in our inner circles. Otherwise, we are still active sex addicts who now have told ourselves one more lie to cover up our behavior.

Mark accepted that explanation very openly. He recognized that surrender meant facing the truth that masturbation belongs in his inner circle. It also led us into one of the most fruitful discussions on 12-Step spirituality that we have had. Mark recognized that by being completely honest about what behaviors belong in his inner circle he was completely surrendering his addiction to his Higher Power. Holding back even one behavior would interfere with his recovery and whatever gifts his Higher Power wanted to give him. When he looked at it from that perspective, he said that it was much easier to be honest about the addictive behaviors that are already in his inner circle.

This is one story of helping a sponsee identify his three circles. Do you have others? Please submit them to the: The Sponsorship Corner, c/o thePBR, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949 or else online at pbr@saa-recovery.org.

From the Editor

By Mike L.

One of the things about the convention in Portland that really energized me was the SAA meetings I attended at the hotel, which were well attended and featured some wonderful sharing. The San Francisco convention started a new tradition with regard to convention meetings, which was to hold them at set times only; thus, folks know when the meetings are and when to show up. The Portland committee followed this tradition.

Attending these meetings in Portland and listening to the sharing reminded me of how much I miss the old days of my early SAA recovery and all the warmth I felt from being at the meetings, sharing the sadness and the joy, and spending time after the meetings in fellowship. And so I vowed to start getting back to more meetings when I returned to Houston. I was aware of course that it says in "The Doctor's Opinion" that they made "many resolutions, but never a decision." I'm happy to say that so far this has been a decision for me, and I have kept with my vow to get to more meetings. And I've even been blessed to see one of our meetings that has been struggling for a long time finally start to make a decisive comeback.

Recently I've heard some wonderful, powerful first steps, and really taken the opportunity to be reminded of what the addiction was like. While technology since 1991 has vastly changed the available means for acting out, what hasn't changed is the cunning, baffling, powerful nature of this addiction and the experience, strength and hope that helps me to combat it. That's one of the chief things I get out of the meetings.

Attending the meetings has also reminded me of other things from the early days of my recovery, particularly how I used to suffer from "last-to-leave-the-room" syndrome after the meeting was over. If there is someone still there then I want to be there also. And the fellowship, the so-called "meeting after the meeting," is still just as much fun as it ever was. So this will be a decision that I think will be easy to stick to.

On another topic, you may notice that we have a fair amount of material in this issue of the PBR by and concerning prisoners. There is a report from the prison outreach board liaison, an article by Robert S., the previous PBR editor, and portions of a long poem

from a prisoner himself.

Recently I was privileged to be a part of a multicultural workshop here in Houston and we spent a fair portion of our time discussing prisons and prisoners. I was shocked and deeply saddened by a lot of the information that came out of that workshop, the things that nobody, not even the prisoners themselves, are often willing to talk about. Even though I've been active in prison outreach for a while, the things I learned that day only served to double my resolve to stay active in this part of my recovery, which for me mostly means writing letters.

As I said, we have some poetry from a prisoner in this issue and I have more material from prisoners in the wings. Given the large number of PBRs that are sent into prison units, I want to take a second and encourage more prisoners to write material to be considered for publication in the PBR. Of course, the basic guideline is the same as for everyone else, i.e., please keep the focus away from the problem and on the solution. Most prisoners don't have access to e-mail and the like, they can write to me at P.O. Box 27544, Houston, TX 77227-7544.

And thanks to all who have made submissions to the PBR. I'm still blessed with a backlog of material to publish and want to keep it that way, so please keep it coming.





ISO News



ISO Literature Committee, ISO Board, & Board Committees

ISO Board Minutes

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc., met via teleconference on August 16, 2003. The following is a report of actions taken.

Approved The 2004 hotel contract as presented by Jerry B. and authorized Roger B. to execute it.

Approved A motion to set the 2004 ISO Convention registration fees \$5 above those of last year.

Approved A motion to make all 2004 ISO Convention events open with the exception of closed SAA Meetings and workshops that may be closed at the request of the presenter.

Approved A motion to add the Celebration Of Recovery Creativity fundraiser to convention events. (See special convention insert)

Accepted A logo that featured the word "Unity" with the First Tradition imposed on it. (See page 22)

Approved As amended, the 2005 hotel contract and to authorize Joe T. to finalize negotiations and Roger B. to execute final contract.

Approved Funding of the reserves for translations, employee benefits, and capital expenditures and to resume following established formulas for reserve funding thereafter.

Approved A motion to reinvest the certificate of deposit for \$20,000 for six to twelve months.

Approved A motion to raise the salary of the Director of Fellowship Services 3% this year and 7% next year and to accept his Job Performance Report.

Approved Authorization for the Office Oversight Committee to negotiate for approximately 1,000 square feet of suitable office space at a cost not to exceed \$700 per month and, if necessary in order to secure such space, to do so up to two months prior to expiration of the ISO's present lease; and to further authorize the Board chair, acting as president of the corporation, to execute the lease on a date that serves the ISO's best operational and financial interests.

Approved A motion to set the price for *Tools of Recovery* at \$4.00.

Approved A motion to continue to carry Directors and Officers Liability Insurance, using the same company, with coverage of \$2,000,000 and with the annual premium to be paid out of reserve funds with the money to be paid back monthly over the course of the policy year.

Approved Use of the money budgeted for travel to the Interfellowship Forum.

Approved A motion to authorize Francie E., the Board liaison for Interfellowship Relations, and Ken S., the Interfellowship Relations Committee chair, to attend the Interfellowship Forum.

Accepted The 2003 Delegate recommendation to consider changing the name of our international newsletter, *The Plain Brown Rapper*, taking suggestions throughout the year, and deciding on a name at next year's Delegate Meeting, using the Delphi technique. (See page 28)

Approved In regard to ownership of the domain name sexaddictsanonymous.com, a motion for the Board to direct Bob D. and Jerry B. to use available resources to formulate a course of action and bring it to the Board for an electronic vote.

Approved Formation of a committee to investigate websites and bulletin boards for committee use. (The Board chair appointed Bob D., Jeanette W., Jerry B., and Lawrence S. to serve on the committee.)

The Board's next meeting is scheduled to be held by teleconference on November 8, 2003.



ISO Financial News

Good news: LifeLine Partner enrollments have more than doubled since May. Here are the monthly numbers.

	Donors	Donations
April	39	1,445
May	29	1,045
June	71	2,642
July	74	2,366
August	78	2,280

Hopefully, the upward trend will continue. SAA members can enroll via the internet by going to the “Member’s Area” of the SAA website (www.saa-recovery-org) or by contacting the ISO Office.

More good news: SAA has a new piece of literature, *Tools of Recovery*, which comes out of the Bay Area Intergroup. Members who have purchased it in the past, before editing and approval by the ISO Literature Committee, might be disappointed to learn it is being sold for \$4 instead of the \$2 price it used to have.

Why must the ISO sell *Tools of Recovery* for twice as much as the Bay Area Intergroup did? Why must ISO literature be marked up at all?

For one reason, the ISO has added expenses associated with distribution of its literature. Besides printing, there are costs of stocking, packaging, handling, ad-

vertising (yes, the website and store cost money and so do the literature catalogs), and freight.

A second reason is that ISO sales help pay for literature given away and shipped free, mainly to inmates but also to members trying to start new meetings.

The monthly Income/Expense Summary gives income from sales as Net Income, a figure that is simply the amount left over after deductions for all literature related expenses. (See opposite page)

After deducting all literature related expenses from August’s gross sales of \$6,899, the amount left over was \$3,563. Could some of that money be used to lower prices? Indeed, it could, if donations paid operating expenses.

Unfortunately, just like Alcoholics Anonymous before it, the ISO has found its donations do not cover its daily operating expenses. It takes a surplus from sales to make up the shortfall. So far this year, 56% of ISO operational income has come from donations and 44% from literature sales. Page 21 lists monthly percentages.

As the figures show, recent increases have somewhat improved the donation percentage. Will the day come when donations cover ISO expenses, enabling it to sell literature at cost? The answer to that question is in the hearts and hands of the membership.

	% of income Donations	% of income Literature Sales
January	61%	39%
February	51%	49%
March	56%	44%
April	58%	42%
May	46%	54%
June	71%	29%
July	55%	45%
August	60%	40%

ISO Income/Expense Summary
Daily Operations January - June, 2003

	Monthly August	Monthly Average	Year To Date
Income			
Net Sales	3,563	2,923	23,384
Donations			
General	6,171	5,562	44,499
LifeLine Partner	2,280	1,696	13,568
Designated	40	580	4,639
Miscellaneous	0	95	761
Total Income	12,054	10,856	86,851
Expenses			
Wages/Benefits/Taxes			
Outreach Related	1,734	1,828	14,621
Other	6,700	4,602	36,816
Taxes	449	464	3,711
Insurance	88	345	2,757
Committee Expense	81	68	542
Postage	196	202	1,613
Communications	75	247	1,979
Rent/Utilities	760	704	5,628
Office Related	471	256	2,051
Financial	543	477	3,814
Plain Brown Rapper	1,150	756	6,049
Outreach Related	763	819	6,555
Total Expenses	13,010	10,767	86,136
Surplus/Shortfall	-956	89	715
Reserve Commitment	1,577	1,728	13,823
SURPLUS/SHORTFALL	-2,533	-1,639	-13,108



ISO News
Continued



ISO Literature Committee

ISO Literature Committee Minutes

The ISO Literature Committee met via teleconference on August 24, 2003. The following is a report on actions taken.

Approved The role of the Literature Committee, in the production of audiotape versions of SAA literature is to be kept informed

and consulted throughout the process, and to have final approval of the product prior to distribution.

SAA Book Progress Reports

The SAA Book Progress Reports printed below were submitted by Chris D., one of the book's editors, to the Board. They were written to be used in conjunction with a special website that allows the Literature Committee to review the work of the editors and authors and provides the committee with a forum for constructive commentary. Even though the reports have been edited to make them more understandable without specific references to the website, they are presented as completely as possible. It is hoped the reports will not only keep SAA members up to date on the book's progress but also give them a sense of how thorough the Literature Committee is being in carrying out its work. The last report printed in the PBR appeared in the May-June issue. The following are progress reports submitted to the Board of Trustees since then.

June

The editors are now working on the section of Chapter Two of the book, the section dealing with SAA meetings.

Sections regarding sponsorship and the Three Circles are "works in progress," i.e., in the beginning stages. In addition, eighteen stories are [ready for review]. More stories [will be added] in the weeks ahead.

July

Revised versions of the Introduction and Chapter One are now [ready for review by the Literature Committee]. The previous versions are still [available for comparison].

Two sections from Chapter Two are [ready] as well. They deal with meetings and sponsorship. There are now 25 stories [for review]. The outline of the book that we agreed upon at the Houston retreat is also [available], preceding the Intro.

The work takes a great deal of concentration. We are encouraged by the progress we have made.

August

It has been a productive month.

First of all, a new section of Chapter Two is now [being reviewed]. It deals with abstinence and The Three Circles. In addition, substantial revisions have been made to previous sections of the text. The "meetings" section of Chapter Two has been overhauled, with a rearrangement of paragraphs, and a good deal of rewording and new material.

One issue that came up was that it didn't seem right to delay mentioning Higher Power until Step Two, when there was so much introductory material. Since the book as a whole will be read, and hopefully reread, by all members and not just newcomers, we felt that spirituality had to be introduced earlier, in some way. A paragraph (#3) was added to the Introduction, along with mentions of HP in Intro par. 7 and Ch. 2, par. 23, and a mention of prayer in Ch. 2, par. 29. It's still unclear whether this solution is adequate, or if we will need more.

Along with various other rewordings and slight additions to the text, there is a new paragraph at the end of the "sponsor" section emphasizing the role of the sponsor in helping us realize

our worthiness.

The first two chapters (as they have been provisionally divided) serve as a kind of preliminary to the Steps - giving basic information about our disease, and outlining some facts about our fellowship, and laying the groundwork for sobriety. We are interested in hearing your feedback on this.

September

A draft of an introductory section to the Steps has been completed and is [being reviewed].

We are revising the Step One section, which should be ready ... soon. Step Two is in the preliminary draft stage.

Recent comments from Literature Committee members on the text [are also available for review]. Four more stories [are ready for review], bringing the current total to 29.

We have discovered that the work has its own pace, dependent on a spiritual process of reflection and conversation that can't be rushed. Nonetheless, we are happy with the rate of progress so far. The work goes steadily forward, and the contributions from other Literature Committee members, and the authors, have proven to be quite valuable. Please send comments to both Elizabeth and Chris if possible. Comments are more than welcome from all Literature Committees members, and authors, and apply not only to the text but to the stories as well.



ISO News
Continued



Prison Outreach Committee

Prison Outreach Committee

Dear fellowship,

Part of the ongoing outreach work that has been carried out for years by program members has been that of prison outreach, particularly with regard to correspondence with inmates who contact the office for information on recovery from sex addiction. Every month there are dozens of requests for literature, for sponsors, for any information on how to get free from this disease.

For just as many years as there has been a prison outreach group, there have been amazingly few members doing this service. Each year there have been no more than a handful of members covering all of the inmates looking for correspondence, and we need help. Although each of us is grateful for the opportunity to be of service and carry the message of hope that we were given freely when we showed up, it can be very challenging to find the time to adequately respond to the people reaching out. We each have a personal policy of answering every letter that we receive, and

some weeks the load is heavy.

The climate for sex offenders in prison in the U.S. these days is not welcoming. There certainly seems to be a strong emphasis on punishment, and little on recovery. Very few prisoners have access to sexual recovery resources, except when provided by an outside source like our own. Many of

these prisoners have been wholly rejected by society, and often by their families. We

might often be the only contact the prisoner has that can provide hope and understanding, thanks to our own experiences in SAA. The following are excerpts from letters received recently:

"I apologize for not writing back sooner. It is just that every time I went to write you, I was facing all my shame, guilt and lack of forgiveness for myself."

"I see myself not as unique, but pretty darned alone when it comes to sexual aberrations, and I haven't found another soul like me..."

"I get into a cycle where I fight to not fantasize about _____ and masturbate; the more I refrain, the hornier I get and the



stronger my desires become. Then I fight it more, the desires get stronger, I give in to my urges, feel very guilty, and don't want to think about sex in the least. Until the next time. How the hell am I supposed to deal with that?"

"I'd appreciate if you can send me the info on the three circles, and the first step guide; maybe you can help me figure out what positive behaviors around here I can replace my sexual acting out with."

"What's it gonna take for me to change? I thought I hit rock bottom by coming back here a second time. Can a 12-step program work for someone like me, who seems to be not able to change on his own?"

Each year at the prison outreach focus group at the annual convention, that handful of members doing prison outreach relates how rewarding it is to do this service--and none of us is blind to the truth that this service is helping to preserve our own sexual sobriety. Do you have something to share with the sex addict who is still suffering? Do you have some clean time and some step work under your belt? Is it time for you to do a little more service? We are not looking for a large commitment; in fact if out of the fellowship just a dozen or two members commit to writing to one prisoner, it will make a big difference, and it will add to the health of the overall fellow-

ship as well as that of the folks who are already doing this service. If you can help, please contact the office at 800/477-8191. One of us on the prison outreach committee will be glad to telephone you or e-mail you about how to do this service while maintaining your anonymity and security. Thank you for considering this, even if you are not yet ready to get involved--and stay sober! It helps all of us.

I'll end with a quote from the chapter on the third tradition in the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions": "We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had."

Sincerely,

Tim E.

The Board Liaison
to Prison Outreach





PBR Name Change

Every now and then, discussion arises about changing the name of the ISO newsletter from The Plain Brown Rapper to something else.

Last May the 2003 ISO Delegates voted to venture beyond the discussion stage by passing the following recommendation for the Board's consideration:

"To consider changing the name of our international newsletter, The Plain Brown Rapper, taking suggestions throughout the year, and deciding on a name at next year's Delegate Meeting, using the Delphi technique."

At its meeting in August, the Board voted to accept the delegates' recommendation, thereby setting into motion the following process:

From now until the opening of the 2004 Delegate Meeting, SAA members are invited to submit suggestions for a name for the newsletter. This does not mean the name will be changed. That decision will rest in the hands of the delegates.

"The Plain Brown Rapper" is automatically one of the names submitted. It, along with all

other suggestions, will be placed on a list from which each delegate will choose her or his top three choices, with a first choice receiving three points, a second choice receiving two, and a third choice receiving one. The name garnering the most points will become (or remain) the name of the ISO newsletter.



Suggestions can be called into the ISO Office (800-477-8191 or 713-869-4902 outside the U.S. and Canada), e-mailed (info@saa-recovery.org), or sent by postal mail (ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

Suggested names will be printed in the PBR and posted on the ISO website (www.saa-recovery.org) in the order in which they are received. Once a name is printed or posted, it need not be submitted again. There is no limit to the number of different suggestions an individual member can make.

For this issue, the list is a short one:

The Plain Brown Rapper

Let the other suggesting begin!



Intergroup Communications Committee

In addition to Committee reports, this section gives members, groups, and intergroups the opportunity to share ideas about topics such as how they communicate within their local SAA community, promote service work, support each other, or reach out to the addict who still suffers. Specifically, it is about ways to carry out these activities.

In the following letter to the PBR, Bill J. writes about the kind of concerns and problems expressed from time to time by other members of SAA. Bill and the ISO invite trusted servants from other intergroups to respond with your experience, strength, and hope on this topic. All responses e-mailed to the ISO (info-saa-recovery.org) will be forwarded to Bill. Perhaps enough ideas and suggestions will be received to form the basis for a future article that will benefit all.

Hi, I'm Bill and I'm a Recovering Sex Addict,

I am concerned with the Intergroup for our area. It has dwindled till only a handful attends because of lack of interest. It has been difficult to get groups to donate even. Our Intergroup is fal-

ling apart.

I have tried this entire year to drum up interest but no takers. The same four or five people show up. I am chairperson for Intergroup, and I feel responsible.

I can see a major problem as being that most groups don't have regular business meetings, and there are only a couple with group representatives. Most groups don't see a need for either. I have had to go around to groups and ask for donations in order to keep the Intergroup going. Some groups don't register with the ISO and don't seem to be interested in doing so. How sad.

I was going to resign as chair, but it is a two-year commitment, and I decided to stay. I've been in other 12-step groups for 20 years and have never seen this level of apathy.

Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Bill J.

"Our Intergroup is falling apart... (I) have never seen this level of apathy."

Tools of Recovery is Here!

Tools of Recovery, the new booklet approved by the ISO Literature Committee in May, is now available for sale. It can be purchased using a credit card by phone or through the ISO website store or by mail using a check or money order. The price is \$4.

This 46-page booklet is all about the solution. It is about Outer Circle behavior, offering page after page of suggestions for specific actions that can be taken to put and keep one's recovery on solid ground.

Although it is subtitled "A Practical Guide for New Members of SAA," *Tools of Recovery* is a helpful resource for old timers as well, especially for sponsors, for those who continue to struggle to keep sober, and for those who are looking to beef up their program.

In addition to its host of practical, everyday tools, the booklet contains an appendix that lists the Twelve Steps of SAA, another that has the Twelve Traditions, and a third that offers a number of prayers, including those for the Third, Seventh, and Eleventh Steps.

At this point, *Tools of Recovery* is being carried as "Literature Committee Approved," meaning it will be offered to the SAA membership for a minimum of two years during which time feedback is not only welcome but encouraged. Toward this end, at the back of the booklet there is a place for comments as well as space for listing other subjects the reader would like to see covered in future SAA literature.



SPECIAL PBR OFFER

**Order your copy of the *Tools of Recovery* booklet
with this coupon and pay no shipping cost.**

Number of copies _____ **x \$4.00 =** _____
(Texas residents add 8.25% Sales Tax)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City

State/Prov.

Postal Code

Country

Phone Number _____

*Offer good only for Tools of Recovery booklet.**

*If ordering other items, include this coupon and subtract cost of *Tools of Recovery* from order total when calculating shipping & handling fees

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. 15, Feb. 15, April 15, June 15, Aug. 15, Oct. 15

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

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Houston, TX 77008

Phone: 713-869-4902
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Sex Addict Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may stop our compulsive sexual behavior and help others to recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

Membership is open to all who share a desire to stop compulsive sexual behavior and are willing to follow this simple program.

Our program is based on the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholic Anonymous, but we are not affiliated with A.A. or any other organization or agency.

We are not a religious organization or aligned with any sect or denomination.

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Board Alternate

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Lit. Com. Alternate

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