

The Plain Brown Rapper

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“Newcomers are not forced to believe in any particular God or Higher Power, and are encouraged to develop an idea that will work for them. For many, especially agnostics and atheists, the Group may become a transitional Higher Power.”

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“I now see why God allows problems such as our addiction: the only possible way I have found to deal with it is to go directly to Him and surrender.”

See Page 17

A Way to Think About the Inner Circle

By Steve W.

We in SAA, famously, like to say sometimes that we “define our own” sobriety. I think this is an unhelpful and even dangerous way to think about what we are doing when we decide what belongs in our three circles. I see members, especially those without sponsors, talking this way, and occasionally coming up with a new definition. The new definition is invariably tailor-made to allow them to begin a sexual relationship considerably sooner than the time agreed on with their sponsor that they ought to have known the prospective partner socially.

How can we think about this process in a way that does lead us into trying to manage our addiction?

I suggest we reverse the word order in the concept that we define or pick our sobriety definition. What is much, much closer to the truth is that our addiction chooses us. In other words, it is not for us to decide what belongs in our inner circle. What belongs there is already engraved or hot-wired into our psyche, in many if not most cases, for a long, long time.

Our job is to discover our inner circle behavior, not decide or pick it. We are what we are and it is what it is. We just have to recognize it, to accept it, and to design a program which keeps us out of it.

Yes, we would prefer it if our addiction were only to prostitutes and not also to Internet porn. For me, realistically, I can only read erotic stories for so long before I have to start watching TV to find images. I can only watch TV for so long before I “find myself” watching sexy thrillers. I can only watch sexy thrillers for so long before I “have to” escalate to internet porn. I can only indulge in internet porn for so long before I have to escalate to something stronger. And the cycle goes on.

So recovery for me is a gradual surrendering of more and more parts of my life as I realize and accept these parts of my life too as elements of the addiction. In the past 90 days I have hardly watched TV at all and no sexy thrillers. I have been largely successful at finding novels to read that are free of sexual content. I have not gone to any internet porn sites, let alone prostitutes. And all of this began with staying away from the erotic stories.

So I think of the inner circle as any kind of behavior which leads me into my true bottom-line behavior. I know it works for some to put these “slippery” behaviors into the middle circle, giving themselves the opportunity to step back before they move into the inner circle. And for me these kinds of behaviors inevitably lead to my bottom-line behaviors. So for me it's safest to put them into the inner circle to begin with.

La historia de SAA en la Argentina

por Gabriela L.

[Editor's Note: The English version of this article appeared on pages 16-17 of the January-February 2005 PBR.]

En el año 1992 asistía a un grupo de recuperación para mujeres adictas a las relaciones destructivas que se basaba en lecturas de un libro que trataba de mujeres que amaban demasiado a los hombres. Hacía dos años que participaba del grupo, ya que me sentía devastada después de que el chico con el que había estado durante cinco años me había dejado porque por cuarta vez, yo había quedado embarazada de él y no quería proseguir con ese embarazo. Aunque compartía algunos de sus sentimientos, no me sentía totalmente identificada con las mujeres en el grupo. Yo no había amado “demasiado” a este chico. En realidad nunca lo había amado. Yo decía que no lo extrañaba a él, sino al sexo con él. Las mujeres decían “Ah, eso se te va a pasar enseguida.” Pero no se me pasaba. Un día en el grupo escuché decir a S., una de los miembros, “Soy adicta al sexo.” Algo dentro de mí se sacudió. En la siguiente reunión leímos un capítulo sobre la adicción al sexo de un libro continuador al primero que habíamos estado leyendo. Entonces pude identificar el componente de adicción sexual que intervenía en mis relaciones insanas.

S., junto con otras chicas, ini-

ció un grupo llamado “Anónimas Mujeres Víctimas de Abuso Sexual” en su casa. Un mes más tarde yo me unía a este grupo. Básicamente lo que hacíamos era explorar las formas en que habíamos sido abusadas en la infancia, basándonos en la lectura del capítulo sobre las mujeres adictas al sexo mencionado anteriormente. En su libro, la autora menciona a uno de los expertos reconocidos en la recuperación de la adicción sexual y recomienda un libro de ese autor. Compramos el libro y empezamos a leerlo. Para mí, esto significó que la luz empezó a ingresar a mi vida.

S. y yo empezamos a sentir y a decir en el grupo que era necesario que asumiésemos la realidad de nuestra adicción sexual en lugar de limitarnos a la exploración de los abusos que habíamos sufrido. También, que era mejor incluir hombres en el grupo y llamarlo “Sexoadictos Anónimos.” Ninguna de las otras mujeres estuvo de acuerdo, así que S. y yo dijimos que íbamos a dejar ese grupo y a iniciar uno nuevo, enfocado en la adicción sexual. Lo hicimos. Empezamos a reunirnos en mi casa, y dos hombres de Al-Anon, Hijos Adultos de Alcohólicos, se nos unieron. Eso fue el 24 de septiembre de 1992. Consideramos que esa es la fecha del inicio de SAA en la Argentina.

Después de algunos meses abrimos dos grupos, cada uno en una iglesia distinta. Y ahí es cuando la verdadera aventura de SAA en Buenos Aires comenzó. Llegaron

nuevos miembros y empezamos a crecer. Tan grande era nuestro entusiasmo que empezamos a hacer todo lo que podíamos: un folleto verde para el recién llegado, uno amarillo titulado “¿Soy adicto al sexo?,” ambos basados en información de uno de los libros que habíamos estado leyendo. Diseñamos un logo que representaba a la comunidad. Un día decidimos escribir a algunas de las comunidades mencionadas en uno de nuestros libros sobre la adicción sexual. Elegimos tres y les solicitamos material. SAA nos envió gran cantidad de folletos sin costo, lo que interpretamos como un signo de cuidado y buena voluntad hacia nosotros. ¡Qué sorpresa! No se nos había ocurrido que todo lo que estábamos haciendo ya estaba hecho, y que había muchas personas con buena recuperación de las cuales podíamos extraer experiencia. Recuerdo haber sentido que el logo y el lema de SAA me representaban y me atraían por completo. ¡Ese sol saliendo por detrás de las nubes! Y “De la vergüenza a la gracia”: ¡qué maravillosa promesa!

Elegimos a SAA como la comunidad a la cual nos afiliaríamos. Empezamos a estar en contacto con la (en esos días) NSO a través del siempre solícito Jerry. Entonces formalizamos nuestra afiliación, empezamos a hacer contribuciones a la oficina central y a comprar ítems de literatura y medallas. Seguimos creciendo. Pero entonces, desafortunadamente, comenzó un doloroso tiempo de crisis, y como resulta-

do, gran parte del grupo se separó y formó otra comunidad similar. Dejamos las iglesias que nos albergaron hasta ese momento y cambiamos los días de reunión. Nos achicamos. Durante un tiempo perdimos el contacto con la ISO.

Ahora seguimos siendo una comunidad relativamente chica. Sin embargo, tenemos cuatro grupos regulares en Buenos Aires, tres mixtos y uno con orientación homosexual. Estos grupos forman un intergrupo que recientemente llamamos “Estrella del Sur.” De a poco estamos creciendo hacia el interior del país: un grupo abrió hace poco en la provincia de San Juan, y desde otras provincias y ciudades ya nos están pidiendo información. Estamos en contacto con la ISO nuevamente. Cuando encontremos una región autónoma dispuesta a apadrinarnos, seremos una región de alcance.

Ahora, gracias a la generosidad de un miembro anónimo que se ofreció a ayudarnos económicamente con los gastos de viaje y a las becas que ofrece la comunidad, por primera vez enviaremos un delegado a la Convención del 2005 en New Orleans. Fui honrada con la responsabilidad de llevar a cabo esa tarea. Así que estos días estoy en plena conmoción ante el prospecto de vivir lo que imagino como la inigualable experiencia de una convención de SAA y extasiada ante la posibilidad de encontrarlos a todos ustedes, miembros de SAA, allí. No puedo más que decir GRACIAS a SAA por todas las bendiciones que nos ha brindado a lo largo de estos doce años.

Lord, Keep All the Cars an Inch Away from Me

By Santi L., Charlotte NC, 9/11/1994

So goes a favorite prayer of people who do a lot of driving, I am told. In some ways this prayer is similar to what good sponsors tell their sponsees about Recovery. We are not to worry when we face difficulties in our lives. We need to “turn it over.” But then right after telling us to relax and not fret over things beyond our control we are told to work because we will only be safe if we endure and persevere. So which is the right strategy, to rest and relax or to plan and persevere?

The traveler’s prayer above assumes that the driver is using common sense and good driving habits, even while depending on the Holy Spirit to guard against unseen dangers. Likewise, we all need to have a good balance of decision-making and reliance on God as we move through our daily lives! It can be very easy to get wrapped up and out of balance doing our thing—even good things—without looking to the Spirit for wisdom, guidance and strength. Of course, we need to work hard, but at the same time we need to draw on the power of the Spirit. We can’t do one and not the other.

As we grow in our recovery we recognize more and more how this marvelous relationship works. It’s an integral relationship between our perseverance and divine intervention. Some of

us had given up on all spiritual relationships prior to coming to SAA. We figured that if God really loved us or listened to us God would relieve our addiction. But isn’t that exactly what is happening as we apply our will power and perseverance, not on doing battle with our addiction, but when we apply our perseverance and will power to a total surrender of our lives to God and to working the Steps. Yes, whether it’s prayer, family, work, money, or even having fun we should work hard. Yet when we include the power of God in “all our affairs” the true greatness of our lives in Recovery unfolds for us—even in times of difficulty!

Experience will teach us devastating results when we have one and not the other. Unfortunately in SAA we see even very religious folk relapsing over and over and over. Yet recovery in its essence is as simple as the formula, commitment (Work) plus God equals Recovery. That’s $W+G=R$. I just wish that our brothers and sisters who are habitual slippers would get it, but we all have to go through what we have to go through!

St Augustine is said to have encouraged people to “work as if everything depended on them and to pray as if everything depended on God.” As we try our best to make decisions in union with the Holy Spirit, we will begin to see how closely these two dimensions

of life (Work and God) work together. And then we will be amazed before we are halfway through as we become instruments of God's amazing grace at work in this

world.

PS: I credit a daily devotional I read for some of the spiritual concepts contained.

The Outreach Call

By Steve

"I hope you don't mind, I hope I'm not bothering you, sorry for taking up your time..." and on and on and on goes the internal tape (often coming out of my mouth) when I reach out, or worse, staying internal and being part of the reason I don't reach out.

Yet receiving even a voicemail from another (from a sponsor, spon-

It reminds me to work my program when I'm getting complacent.

It reminds me that I have something to contribute.

It sometimes even saves me if I am in the middle of a slide.

It is a true gift, a moment of grace, my HP acting through another.

So please don't apologize, and just accept my thanks.

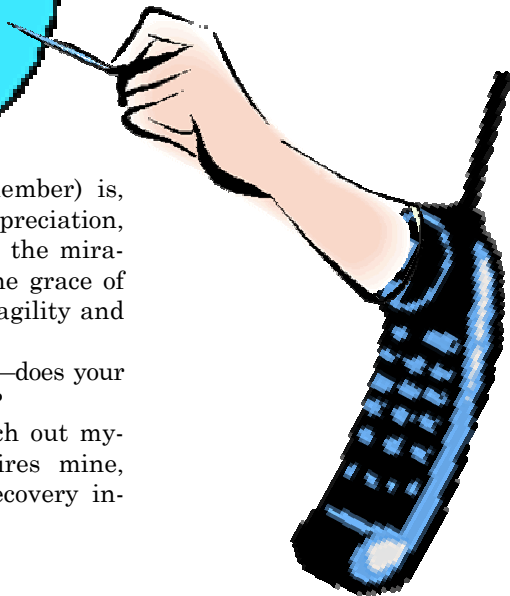
And lord, please help me to remember these thoughts and feelings the next time reaching out is hard for me.



see or another group member) is, for me, a moment of appreciation, even joy, wonderment at the miracle of this program, of the grace of god, tenderness at our fragility and delight in our strength.

What—fellow traveler—does your reaching out mean to me?

It inspires me to reach out myself—your courage inspires mine, your prioritizing your recovery inspires mine.



Wounded Eagle, or the Stick Man

By Anonymous

The world today is a complicated, confusing place that is slowly sapping Humanity of its spirituality and inner peace. This reality is something we are urged to accept and apply in our daily living, but this is not a requirement of life! We need to make a conscious decision to change for ourselves...without influence of those around us.

Let's turn from the chaos for a moment and focus on our basic needs for survival...food, water, air, shelter, clothing and last but not least, love. Without any one of these, we will perish. These basic needs are required of all living things...Humankind, animals, plants, etc. You may notice that material wealth isn't a requirement for life. Take this point to heart. The true wealth we gain on earth isn't measured in material things. Those whom we have influenced along life's long and winding road in fact measure our true worth. In the long run, our final value is calculated at Heaven's Gate.

How does a person reach the point of going back to the basics? You know, the true necessities of life? Unfortunately, in many cases, something catastrophic forces us to face reality. These may be quite complex situations... such as the mistakes we have made in our lives, the ones we have hurt, or the relationships we have destroyed. These

life experiences can make us or break us. If we choose to make these experiences our tools during the rest of our walk on this earth, we will be able to hold our head up high and remain thankful for the dawn of each and every new day.

This is the path that I chose after a MAJOR event changed my life and my "walk" forever.

Extreme cycles of abuse existed in my household. In order to break these cycles, my family reached out for help through Social Services and the local law enforcement agencies. This was a desperate cry for help that proved to be very effective. I was forcibly removed from my family and was incarcerated. During the time I spent in jail, I was forced to examine myself, the mistakes that I had made, and all those who had suffered because of my words, thoughts and actions. BUT, before I could see the error of my ways, I needed to die.

As I sat in a small holding cell in a cold county jail, the laugh of Satan rocked me to the very depth of my soul. "I've got you now, you Son of a Bitch!" echoed throughout my cell. Tears of pure anguish, hate, and fear burned down my face as I cried out for Death's blanket to surround me. However, God had another plan for me. I reached out with trembling hands and grabbed the only book I was allowed to have in my cell...the Bible. I opened it and started to read

verses at random. Then it happened. The Great Deliverer reached down and KILLED me.

At that very moment in time, the worldly addicted, self-gratifying "Me" was destroyed. Then, he reached down and grabbed me firmly by the hand, pulled me to my feet and instructed me to walk a new path like no other. It isn't an easy path...full of vines, thorns and pitfalls, but this is his will. So be it!

Jail, of course, wasn't a pleasant experience, but it is one on which I can look back while smiling. That holding cell wasn't a portal to my end, but rather the gateway to a new beginning.

After serving my full sentence, I was released on a cool November morning. I jumped into my car and drove about a half a block when I realized that something was wrong. Yup. A flat tire! I'm sure the jailers were laughing, but I didn't care! I WAS FREE!!! The air had never smelled so fresh! A light dusting of snow made everything so clean and refreshing! A quick tire change and down the road I went!

My home had changed dramatically. It was no longer a cozy 3-bedroom 1 ½ story house in a quiet neighborhood; instead it had changed into a one-bedroom apartment above a small business, right on Main Street! OK. It wasn't home yet, but in time I could make it do. I had never visited this small town

before, but now it was my home. This was the first step on my new walk.

It was on my second day of freedom that I received the call of the wild. This is something that is hard to describe. The peace that was growing inside of me was calling out to be fed by a place of solitude and true serenity. Actually, it was more like a conversation between two kindred spirits. A conversation in which I had no control. My soul cried out to be fed...and the heart of the Minnesota River Valley answered. A knife that I had received in trade for a pack of cigarettes now had new meaning to me. It no longer was to be used as a weapon, rather a tool in which to aid others in their walk through life.

In a small park a short distance from my new home, I set out with my knife down a well-used ATV trail. A whirlwind of emotions surrounded me. Fear, anger, loneliness and depression attempted to engulf me. It was at that time that I first heard the call of serenity. I spotted a young sapling, standing straight and tall against the chill of the fall air. "Use me", it cried.

Yup...I've lost it! I'm Funny Farm-bound! Ahhh... soon my peace would come in the fashion of a 10cc syringe, loaded with thorazine and a nice padded room in which to vegetate.

"Cut me and make me a new creation."

Huh? You've got to be kidding! All right...what do I have to lose? I cut the sapling off carefully at the

Wounded Eagle, or the Stick Man Continued

By Anonymous

base. This wasn't easy, especially because the tool I was using was intended for cutting flesh, not wood. However, in time the tree was freed from its mooring in the earth. I held the young tree and proceeded to strip the limbs from the trunk. I thought deeply as to what this was to become. As I worked, I took a step back and stumbled over some vines. As I braced myself for the imminent, the stick caught me. I staggered and regained my footing. My mission was clear now and my focus renewed. I should have fallen, but I was saved by this life that had been given for me. I stripped the bark from the sapling and brought it home.

The process of progress is a slow and tedious one. How one measures this progress is very difficult. Physical progress is rather easy to see, while emotional progress can only be measured in time.

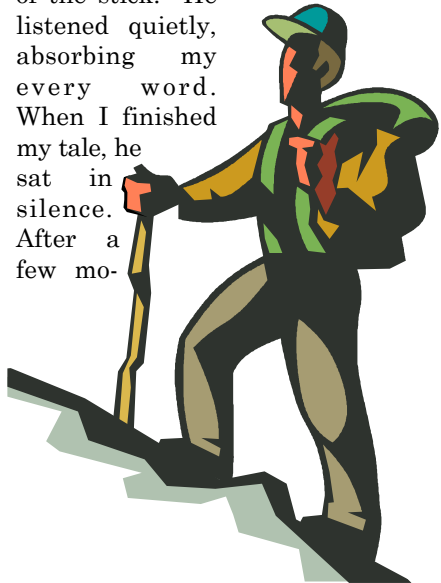
I sat alone in my kitchen, slowly shaping the crown of my wooden savior. The knots in this walking stick proved to be rather difficult to work with, but success was the only option...failure was not. The knots were carved down to an acceptable texture and the tedious process of drying began.

I had no fancy drying machine to aid in this process, just a small, wall mounted furnace

with a rather powerful fan that circulated heat throughout my apartment. This is where the stick found its temporary resting place.

Due to the nature of my incarceration, it was one of my conditions of probation to complete a formal program of therapy and aftercare. I was hesitant at first because I didn't want to face the atrocities of my past. I wanted to forget and get on with my new life. But, that was not to be the case. In order to be healed, I had to face the ill of my ways.

My counselor, "Ted," is of Native American heritage and has a depth to him that cannot be measured. I told him of my experience in the heart of the Minnesota River Valley. I shared, in great detail, the selection, cutting, and shaping of the stick. He listened quietly, absorbing my every word. When I finished my tale, he sat in silence. After a few mo-



ments, he looked up from his notebook.

"When you took the tree, what did you leave in its place?" he asked.

"Huh?"

"What right do you have to take something that isn't yours, turn your back, and walk away? What price did you pay for it?"

He was right. I had stolen the stick. But, from whom?

"In all of life, there is a give and take. We go to the store and PURCHASE food. The cashier totals the value of the items we have selected and then we pay for them. The exchange is complete. We express love towards another person and we receive a response in return. Once again, the exchange has been made."

I had stolen from nature and, in fact, God.

"The next time you cut a tree, make sure you make an exchange. In the Native American tradition, we would make a gift of Tobacco, a drop of our own blood, or something of great value to us. I encourage you to do the same."

The next day I trudged back to the woods like a little boy who had taken a piece of candy from the five-and-dime without paying for it and was caught by Mom. My exchange was to be made in the form of a fine, darkly roasted style of coffee. I left the woods that day with a much deeper understanding regarding the exchange between man and all other living things. The feelings that I experienced that day cannot be described, only experienced and absorbed.

A seed had been planted. Peace had begun to grow within me. The "Stick Man" was born.

My Sponsor

By Steve, 10/03

For Ricky

There.

A simple word, short, monosyllabic

Yet more powerful than a locomotive....

There

And so much more.

With words (and actions) of wisdom

hard won from experience, mistakes, connection, missteps, grace, blessings, hard work.

Expressing appreciation, support, space, challenge.

Yes, thank you Lord, for my sponsor

and please help shape me into a sponsor you –
and I and the universe –
can be proud of.

Step 3 Worksheet

Submitted by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: The following article represents a method of working Step 3 that has worked for some members of our fellowship.]

Made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.

Step 3 is where we start to give up control and hopefully find a freedom from the attacks.

Made a decision

Step 3 starts with something which occurs in the quiet, alone time. This decision is not like prior decisions we have made to not act out.

How have I made the decision to not act out in the past? Give examples Have these decisions worked?

Often, we made such decisions in the tail end of our insanity - during the remorse of having acted out. Yet, we never addressed the start of the insanity in our prior decisions. The start of the insanity occurs far earlier than the acting out.

What parts of my life would need to be addressed for a decision to affect the start of the insanity?

How can I get direction for addressing those parts of my life?

Do I have the commitment to change these areas of my life in order to not act out? Is not acting out a higher priority than staying in the same lifestyle and enduring the same conditions?

Can I make the decision to make not acting out the top priority to my life?

What it is going to cost me?

What will I need to do in order to make that decision stick? Can I make the decision stick?

To turn our wills and our lives over

There are two parts to this phrase. The first part involves how we accept other people telling us what to do.

What are the rules that my sponsor has for me? Am I able to follow those rules?

What suggestions has my sponsor (or other people in the program) made and which I did not like, thought that I could do better than, or otherwise did not follow?

Did following my own will work?

One phrase used in recovery is "My best thinking got me here." How does that phrase fit in your life?

The other part of this phrase addresses our expectations. When we come into this program, we have expectations. Yet, often, our expectations are not met. What expectations have not been met?

Have I been disappointed by meetings or by other people in the program?

Have I had the experience of submitting to the process even when resisting it and had my sobriety improved?

to the care

What fears do I have about submitting to anyone?

What things could happen to me if I submit to someone else?

Do I need to be in charge all the time?

Does this step say anything about being controlled against our will to our harm?

What would it be like to have someone care for us?

In this step, are we being asked to wait till we understand god or god's will before acting? How have I been learning to "do the next right thing"?

What types of things am I learning in this program on how to take care of myself? What boundaries am I learning in order to protect my sobriety?

of God as we understood God

This phrase often adds to the confusion. It is ok to wrestle with the phrase and change it to what helps us recover.

What is the first thing that comes to mind when I hear this phrase?

Is that helpful to my recovery?

In recovery, many people start experiencing a higher power in a totally different way than they did prior to recovery. What experiences of a higher power caring for you have you had in recovery?

What methods are you learning in order to be more open to a higher power's direction?

How are you learning to be more true to your own self?

Goals

By Craig R.

Goals ain't all that bad!

Goals used to drive me crazy. I set those huge grandiose kinds of things that I could or would never achieve...as my goals. Then when I didn't achieve my goal I'd have a very good reason to beat myself up and then go medicate.

I found my own way to dealing with the ideas of goals—and it conveniently fit within an outline I learned of later. It goes like this:

SMART

S= Simple

M= Measurable

A= Attainable

R= Realistic

T= Timely.

How is it used? Before recovery I'd look at the goal of landscaping my yard (1,000 square feet in the front) and immediately melt down at the size of the amount of work I saw before me.

With recovery and that SMART method- I can set myself smaller shorter goals. Keeping them simple.

1. Get the plans drawn up, to scale by Wednesday of next week. I can accomplish that. Wow... I am getting work done. hmmm
2. Begin foundation work for retaining wall and do it in sections over the next two weekends (mini tasks in-

cluded getting gravel and such...but that fit into the idea of breaking my HUGE goal down into many smaller goals.)

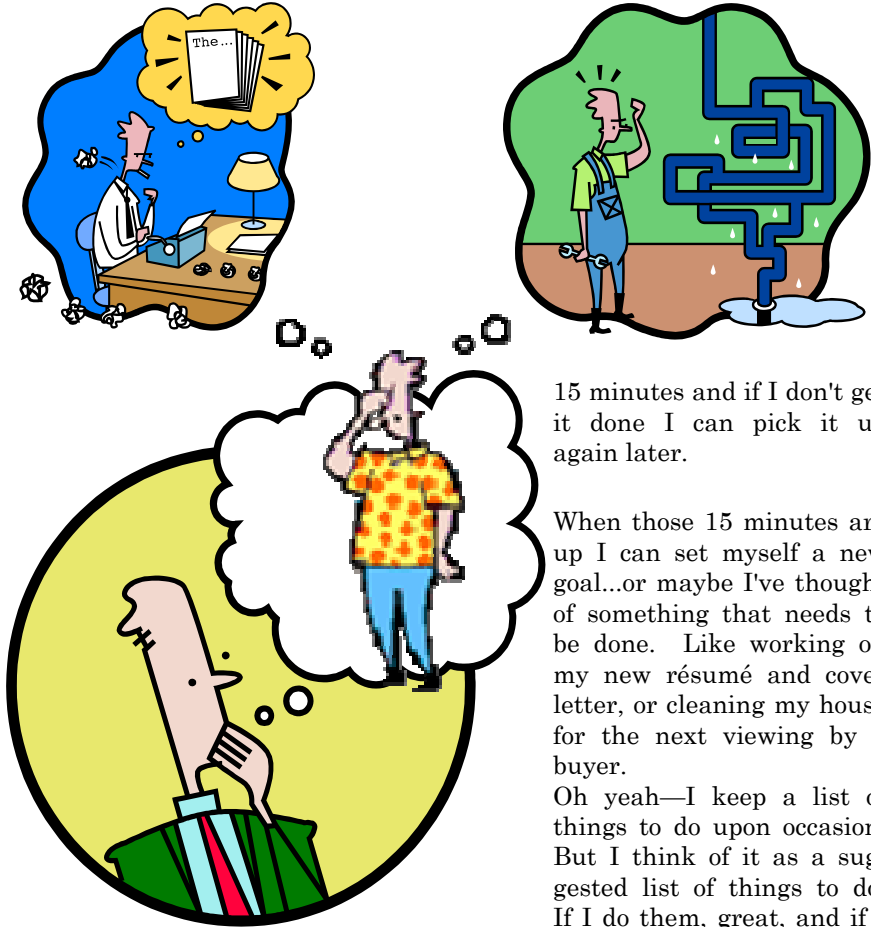
3. Start building wall up by sections.
4. Figure out those corners.
5. Extend foundation work by log lengths as I go.
6. Start Tiebacks
7. Start second tier of logs.
8. Figure out that smaller corner.
9. Begin demolishing that old flower bed and filling the new one with its dirt.
10. Amend the soil with city compost stuff.
11. Transplant those rose bushes.
12. Take time and smell those roses.

Its a lotta little steps. But I got it done in two and a half months. And I enjoyed it the whole time. This was so cool.

Another example would be painting a house. I can't do it all in one day. But I can prepare and paint one room this weekend. Simple, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

My goal is to find something to do with my dead time, that time when I'm bored and start getting the ideas to go act out.

1. (Simple) I am going to fill the next 15 minutes with some-



15 minutes and if I don't get it done I can pick it up again later.

When those 15 minutes are up I can set myself a new goal...or maybe I've thought of something that needs to be done. Like working on my new résumé and cover letter, or cleaning my house for the next viewing by a buyer.

Oh yeah—I keep a list of things to do upon occasion. But I think of it as a suggested list of things to do. If I do them, great, and if I don't do them, I will get to them before too long.

I find that I have to psych myself up for some tasks. If I have a few days to look at my calendar and say "Next weekend I am going to get three applications done, clean the house, help a friend with his chimney and fluorescent lights." Then I am ready for it when the weekend arrives and I don't feel run-over by events.

And I've learned to pay atten-

thing I enjoy.

2. (Measurable) I will get that good feeling from finishing the word scramble-search in the Sunday paper.
3. (Attainable) All I need is a paper and a pencil to get started.
4. (Realistic) I have the time, I am rested, sure, this is realistic.
5. (Timely) I will work on it for

Goals Continued

By Craig R.

tion to my dreams...just as much as I've learned to pay attention to my feelings. I blocked them both out for the longest time. Today dreams aren't just the stuff that happens when I'm sleeping. They are also those long-term goals that I have to do many little goal-steps to accomplish. I want to run my own business in the next three years. I want to go to my home-town in Alaska next year. To do both I have to get that better-paying job, I have to sell my current house and move to a less expensive community. I have to do the research for the business plan and the vacation trip. I have to spend the money and go. And then I have to enjoy it the whole time I'm out there.

But right now those are my two biggest dreams. Maybe that should be a capital 'd.' Dreams, yup. My two biggest Dreams.

Tools I use to explore my wants, my likes, and my dreams include—

1. Journaling—I write out what I think on this idea I have. I explore it in words—I use poetry and attended a poetry group to learn the other ways people expressed themselves.
2. Free Association Writing—I grab a blank piece of paper. I put a topic in the middle of it. For example, I had an

idea to restore old LPs via computer and programs. I start writing down any ideas or words or anything that comes to mind around that topic. In my example, I wrote down...a new computer, program, turntable, cassette deck, soundcard, the time, fun, so cool to edit those old tunes, restore dad's big band stuff, etc.

3. I go to crafts fairs, builders' fairs, home and garden expos, I get pamphlets, get ideas, just have fun.
4. I find that group of people I really enjoy. And go spend more time with them. For example, mine was a singing quintet (was a quartet until our new minister showed up). We are singing tonight in a group home. It's going to be so cool because I get to sing Manhattan Transfer's Operator as a duet with my best bud. Wow.
5. I get involved with my family again. I rebuild those relationships as long as I can do it in a healthy manner.
6. I'm patient. I'm always patient and willing to let that next thing happen in its own time. Just because I'm on a plateau today doesn't mean I will be on that plateau tomorrow. I may just be getting ready for that next big climb or discovery or next batch of recovery work

I've found my patience to be the best of all my tools on a daily basis. And that means I have to count to 10 around the kids—be ready to wait before I can get my next goal done—be accepting that I can't make it all happen in my time.

There—now I think I've got most of my ideas out...hope it sparks something for ya!

This tool can also be used to help you focus on dreaming up those things you may want to do someday. What do you dream? What did you want to do as a kid? What did you enjoy? What do you think would be so cool to do (building models is still high on my list, and I ain't done any in years). What do you need to do to re-awaken those old likes?

The Three-Step Prayer

By Paul C.

It was Christmas morning, 2003, and I woke up mad. I had been separated from my wife and kids and was not welcome back in our home for Christmas. I prayed and I read the Bible but I was still mad. Then I picked up the basic text of another 12-step fellowship that had a story by a man who had years of sobriety but, due to not sharing at a meeting when he needed to and to a tiff with his wife he started to "feel the darkness descend" when he saw a woman on the street. He immediately knew to work the first three steps on this old feeling: "I am powerless, God has all power, I ask Him to take this away from me." I decided to try this on my anger and I said, "God, I am powerless over this anger but you have all power. Please remove this from me.". It took maybe

30 or 45 minutes but the anger lifted. And in its place came the most amazing peace...serenity...that I knew it must be from God. It's now Christmas 2004 and I'm still alone. I've used this "three-step prayer" hundreds of times to handle anger, depression, judgment, worry and anything else I can't get rid of and it always works. My wife filed for divorce last January and dealing with the legal situation has given me a lot of opportunity to use that prayer and it always works. And you know what? I now see why God allows problems such as our addiction: the only possible way I have found to deal with it is to go directly to Him and surrender. The result of this surrender is peace because my loving God is running things and I don't have to anymore.

Twelve-Step Spirituality

By Shannon T., Seattle, WA

I think there's a great deal of treasure to be found within the church basements, hospital wards, health clinics, prison classrooms, and recovery centers where people gather to share their experience, strength and hope in working these 12 Steps. They come together, not to convert or convince, but to hear and provide, as well as tell their stories.

Their stories usually convey a great deal of disarray, discord, devastation, and destruction...physical and emotional health, financial affairs, career, family, friends, housing- all tangled up and out of control.

Lives of deception, secrets, hidden accounts and undisclosed relationships kept out of sight, away from friends and family, and steadily eating away at any semblance of self-respect or self-dignity.

Eventually, they reach a point of no return—they cannot keep the façade up any longer and the bottom falls out, things

Eventually, they reach a point of no return—they cannot keep the façade up any longer and the bottom falls out, things fall apart, and the cat is out of the bag

fall apart, and the cat is out of the bag. The denial, minimization, rationalization, and outright lies no longer hide the fact: a life out of control and completely unmanageable.

These folks come to these rooms, gathering together to learn these simple steps toward a new life of recovery. They promise a

“spiritual awakening” where generosity, tolerance, compassion and radical honesty pervade and direct a new course of action.

Newcomers are not forced to believe in any particular God or Higher Power, and are encouraged to develop an idea that will

work for them. For many, especially agnostics and atheists, the Group may become a transitional Higher Power.

And, the Group is a radically democratic assortment of volunteers, where leadership means service, and service means showing up to lend a hand, an ear, or time, and doing what it takes to get a meet-

ing in order and underway. No one gives orders. No one dictates direction. No one delivers sermons. No one decides what anyone else believes or doesn't believe. People speak for themselves and no one else.

The ones who bring the most honesty are fearless in the face of their lives' terrible mistakes, and willing to do the work and take the steps; they are the ones who lead by example- not command.

It is quite
simple: Trust
God, Clean
House, Help
Others.

Trust God:
God is up to
us. We are
responsible
for our own
idea of Higher
Power. In any
case, our own
history should
show us how
ridiculously
dangerous our
choices have
been thus far.

We are open,
we experiment, we listen to the
stories of others, we attempt dif-
ferent spiritual practices, types
of prayers, meditation, sitting in
silence and listening. There is
ample testimony from others
who describe a Higher Power
that literally transforms their
lives and equips them with
skills, abilities, and power never
imagined—and their lives reflect

this.

Clean House: We've made some
terrible mistakes, hurt others,
damaged a great deal, and created
one hell of a mess. Our task now is
to get honest about it, take respon-
sibility for it, and do whatever it
takes to repair and mend the dam-
age we have caused. "Success" in
our life will now be a matter of cor-
recting the many mistakes and
offering assistance to those who
have been wronged by our addic-

tive, compul-
sive behaviors.
We don't
worry about
reward,
thanks, ap-
plause or rec-
ognition ... we
just get busy—
there is a
great deal to
be done.

Help Others:
We need help,
can't do any of
this alone, and
it will take the
assistance,
guidance and
support of lot

of people. Accepting their help is
helping them. Helping others gets
us out of our self-defeating pat-
terns of self-pity, resentment and
'woe is me' nonsense. There is no
reason to be lonely; there are far
too many people in need. We get
out of our self-imposed nightmare
of ego-stroking, and lend a hand.
Again, there is a great deal to be
done.

It is quite simple:
Trust God, Clean
House, Help Others.

From the Editor

By Mike L.

It's exciting to see SAA continue to spread throughout the world. As our fellowship continues to grow, we have begun receiving PBR submissions from countries outside the United States. As you have just seen, this issue contains the Spanish version of an article that appeared in English in the last issue. The next issue will contain a short article in both Spanish and English. Most of our pamphlets have been translated into Spanish, as the book will most likely be as well. We are, I believe, at the beginning of what is expressed in the Foreword to the Fourth Edition of the AA big book: "Literature has played a major role in A.A.'s growth, and a striking phenomenon of the past quarter-century has been the explosion of translations of our basic literature into many languages and dialects. In country after country where the A.A. seed was planted, it has taken root, slowly at first, then growing by leaps and bounds when literature has become available."

And I am still looking for articles in English for future issues of the PBR. You can submit them via e-mail to pbr@saa-recovery.org or else through regular mail to the office: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949. Be sure to write "PBR submission" on the envelope.





ISO News



ISO Literature Committee, ISO Board, & Board Committees

The SAA Book Now Available!

After many years and after the labors of even more members of the Fellowship, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the basic text of SAA, is now ready for ordering. With approval, formatting, and design by the Literature Committee completed, the book is now at the printer's with a delivery date to the ISO Office scheduled for about the middle of May.

Available in both soft and hard cover, the book will contain 336 pages. The first printing will total 2,000 soft cover books and 1,000 hard cover. At its meeting on March 19, the Board of Trustees approved a sales price of \$14.00 for the soft cover edition and \$18.00 for the hard cover. Orders can be made by check or money order using the coupon on the page after this article or by credit card through the SAA website store (www.saa-recovery.org) or by calling the ISO Office (800-477-8191).

In addition to setting the sales price for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the Board also approved a schedule for its distribution as follows:

Books ordered and paid for by members and groups who will not be at the convention will be shipped on June 1.

Members who participated in the 2002 Special Limited First Edition fund raising campaign will have their books mailed to them as soon as they are received at the ISO Office. Printing for these special editions is being done separate from the regular first printing.

A free soft cover edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* will be mailed to inmates upon their request.

(Go to the SAA Online Store to place your order.)



**The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met by teleconference on March 19, 2005.
The following is a report of votes taken.**

Approved: Purchase of three CD recorders and one duplicator in order to offer convention speakers and workshops on both tapes and CDs.

Approved: A motion to keep convention registration fees and fee graduations the same in 2006 as in 2005.

Approved: A modification in the convention registration brochure that will provide members who cannot attend the ISO convention with the opportunity to support it with a contribution.

Approved: The annual audit of the ISO Office for presentation to the 2005 Delegates.

Approved: A pay raise of 2.5% for ISO staff member Jonathan C. effective upon the anniversary of his employment.

Approved: A motion to return the revised and reformatted edition of *Sexuality in Perspective* back to the list of non-SAA literature sold by the ISO.

Approved: An ISO policy titled, "Handling Of Information About Ongoing Sexual Abuse Of Minors." (The policy, which pertains to ISO Office staff and volunteers, is printed in this issue beginning on page 24)

Approved: The agreement for printing 2,000 soft cover copies and 1,035 hard cover copies of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

Approved: A motion to set the sales price of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* at \$14.00 for the soft cover edition and \$18.00 for the hard cover edition.



Approved: Authorization to give a free copy of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to any inmate who requests it and to review this practice in one year.

Approved: A motion to send the Special Limited First Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to the 2002 fund raising campaign contributors as soon as it is received at the ISO Office.

Approved: A proposal for distribution of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* (see page 21 for details).

Approved: The wording of a note to be printed in copies of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* that will be given in appreciation to SAA members who have worked on the book project since its inception in 1995.



**The ISO Literature Committee met by teleconference
on Sunday, November 14, 2004. The following is a
report on approved motions.**

Approved: The cover design of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the SAA basic text - Green cloth covers with blind embossed cover and embossed foil spine, green leather cover with foil embossed cover and foil embossed spine, a green soft cover with a blind embossed cover with no text on the spine, and the dust cover will be green with foil embossed cover and spine or a 4 color representation.



ISO Board Policy

Handling Of Information About Ongoing Sexual Abuse Of Minors

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and instruction to ISO Office staff and volunteers on how to handle callers who say they are sexually abusing a minor.

a. Basic Considerations These procedures rest on the following four basic considerations:

- 1) SAA Tradition Three: "The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior."
- 2) SAA Tradition Five: "Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the addict who still suffers."
- 3) SAA Tradition Twelve: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."
- 4) Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code states that anyone "having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect" must report the case immediately. The law does not require a person to be certain that a child is being abused or neglected before reporting, but only to have reasonable belief. A report can be made to any state or local law enforcement agency (Houston Police Department 713.884.3131) or Child Protective Services, a department of the Texas Department of Regulatory Services (800.252.5400). A person reporting should provide, whenever possible, the child's name, age, description, address or other information that may help authorities locate the child.



All of these considerations might not come into play in every instance when a caller divulges ongoing sexual abuse of a minor. Those that do come into play might not do so simultaneously. It is imperative then that ISO staff and volunteers be so well versed in all four basic considerations they are able to recognize instantly which to apply at various points in their decision making.

b. Evaluating Caller's Intent When receiving a call that includes information about ongoing sexual abuse of a minor, the ISO staff member or volunteer must make an evaluation of the caller's intent, specifically, whether the caller has abused a child or whether the caller has information about a child's abuse by another person. If the caller has information about a child's abuse by another, then direct them to report as provided above. If the caller is an abuser, then ascertain whether the caller wants to stop the sexually abusive behavior. Making this evaluation is essential, because the decision about the caller's intention will determine how to proceed with the call. Our purpose is to bring hope to the suffering addict. The following are some suggestions to help in making the evaluation:

- 1) The ISO is not an investigative agency nor does the law require it to act as one. Do not ask extraneous questions about the victim, the caller's relationship to the victim, or the nature of the behaviors. The fact that an evaluation of this kind is being made presupposes the staff member or volunteer already knows the caller is engaging in sexual behavior with a minor.
- 2) Ask the most important specific question, which is, "Do you want to stop this behavior?" This question can be rephrased in other ways during the course of the conversation, e.g., "Do you want help?" or "How do you feel about this behavior?" These kinds of questions are to be used until the staff member or volunteer has reached a clear decision as to whether or not the caller has a desire to stop the behavior.

c. Courses Of Action Depending upon what is decided about the caller's intentions, the ISO staff member or volunteer is to follow one of the two courses of action:



- 1) The Caller Has A Desire To Stop The Behavior In this case, the ISO staff member or volunteer is to focus on helping the caller get help. In communicating a desire to stop the behavior, the caller has fulfilled the only requirement for membership in SAA. As is the case for all callers who seek help, the next step is to describe the SAA program, provide information about SAA meetings, and offer encouragement to attend them.

This course of action is based on the belief that, in working the SAA program, the caller will not only be able to stop the behavior in question but will also come to the conclusion to take the appropriate steps to see that the victim receives help.

Unless the caller has volunteered unsolicited information or ISO staff member or volunteer has inappropriately probed for information such as names of the caller and the victim, where the behaviors took place, and when they took place, there should be no specific information to report.

- 2) The Caller Has No Desire To Stop The Behavior In this case, the ISO staff member or volunteer must ask the caller to reconsider his or her intention to continue the behavior with emphasis on the following three reasons:
 - a) Consequences In all states, sexual activities with a child (person under the age of 18) are serious crimes and carry heavy consequences. It has been the fellowship's experience that such behaviors do become known sooner or later. It is not a matter of whether or not the consequences will be felt. It is only a matter of when. In many cases, authorities deal less harshly with people who stop before being caught and with those who are willing to help see that victims receive help.
 - b) Harm Sexual activity with a child inflicts serious and far reaching harm on the child. It matters not that the minor looks like an adult or that the minor appears to



be cooperative. The fact is, the child is neither intellectually nor emotionally able to cope with these behaviors.

- c) Help Is Available Even to those who do not want to stop their behaviors, the ISO's primary purpose remains to carry its message to the addict who still suffers. Concerted effort should be made to impress upon the caller that, when he or she wants to stop, help is available from the ISO. Even though the caller does not want to stop now, any information given about meetings might prove helpful later.

When taking this course of action, the ISO staff member or volunteer might think the victim is being ignored and experience strong emotion because of this. In matters beyond our control, our Higher Power can do for us and for others what we cannot.

d. Knowledge Of Specific Details Although ISO staff and volunteers are directed not to seek specific details about sexual behaviors with a minor, if a caller were to voluntarily reveal such details, they cannot be ignored. This information must be immediately reported to any local or state law enforcement agency. The details should be recorded as well as the phone number from which the call originated and its time and date. A record of any known or suspected abuse reported to law enforcement should be maintained by the Director of Fellowship Services. The Director of Fellowship Services should inform the Board of Trustees about the situation by phone or e-mail in a timely manner. Further action is to be taken as directed by the Board.

e. Reporting Regardless of what course of action is taken by ISO staff or volunteers in response to callers who say they are sexually abusing a minor, the Director of Fellowship Services will report the incident in writing to the Board of Trustees.



ISO Financial News

ISO Income/Expense Summary As Of February 28, 2005

This report does not include income and expenses associated with the annual ISO Convention or the Delegate Meeting nor does it include travel expenses, which are for the most part funded by the convention surplus. Any convention surplus not used for travel expenses is used to fund the ISO's various reserves.

ISO Income/Expense

Daily Operations February & Year To Date

Income	February	Monthly Average	Year To Date
Net Sales	4,097	3,675	7,350
Undesignated Donations	7,907	8,139	16,277
General	4,768	5,257	10,514
LifeLine Partner	3,139	2882	5,763
Miscellaneous Income	11	53	106
Total Income	12,015	11,867	23,733
Expenses			
Wages/Benefits/Taxes	7,605	7,053	14,105
Wages - Outreach Related	2,121	1,685	3,370
Wages - Other	3,791	3,360	6,721
Benefits	1,162	1,575	2,314
Taxes	531	433	865
Insurance	139	139	278
Board/Committee Expense	323	491	982
Postage	372	270	539
Communications	419	447	894
Rent/Utilities	1,145	693	1,387
Office Related	463	501	1,002
Financial	-51	514	1,028
Plain Brown Rapper	1,743	1,207	2,414
Translations	0	0	0
SAA Book	0	0	0
Total Expenses	12,158	11,315	22,629
Surplus/Shortfall	-143	552	1,104

Last year at this time, the ISO's bottom line looked a lot better than it does this year. In 2004 at the end of February, the average monthly surplus was \$7,166 versus \$552 so far this year. Yet the ISO appears to be starting off more stable financially this year. As strange as that might sound, it is true, because last year's big surplus resulted from a phenomenal January that brought \$25,882 in discretionary income. After that initial big splash, the road was mostly downhill all the way until November, when another phenomenon - the San Francisco's fund raiser - saved the year.

Early on at least, 2005 looks to be steadier. February's income was actually a bit better than was January's. Equally as important, expenses have remained virtually the same, with only \$3 separately this year from last. What is needed on both sides of the ledger? More of the same.

* * *

The big news comes early this year, with the announcement in this issue of the PBR that *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the long awaited SAA basic text, is at the printer and orders are being taken.

Because of the Board's foresight in asking the fellowship for up-front funding for the book and the fellowship's generous response, the ISO will not have to borrow from its prudent reserve to pay for this first printing. Having to borrow would have put the organization on a treadmill financially, needing to rely on sales from the first printing to pay for the second, then sales from the second printing to pay for a third, and so on, all the while trying to replenish the prudent reserve.

Having in hand money for the first printing also makes it possible to send *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to inmates who request it. Many of these men and women have pursued recovery behind bars for years, many relying on SAA as their primary resource. To be able to offer those who request it a copy of the SAA's accumulated experience, strength, and hope is a gift to the whole fellowship.

Finances might seem profane, far removed from spirituality. Yet having the wherewithal to give *Sex Addicts Anonymous* to recovering inmates puts money into perspective as a tool of service. Being able to offer a toll free phone number to the addict seeking help also puts money into perspective as does providing the PBR free to anyone who requests it. Availability and responsiveness to member needs come with a financial side. Having the capacity to nurture fellowship growth and to meet growth's expanded needs requires fiscal care. Examples such as these shine a different light on finances. Though dry to be sure, they too are essential to SAA's wholeness of spirit.



Miscellaneous News



The new trifold pamphlet, *Sexual Sobriety and the Internet*, is proving to be popular with SAA groups throughout the fellowship. The fact that it is new surely has something to do with it, but the fact remains: the pamphlet is usually being ordered in quantities of fifty and more.

When ordering *Sexuality Sobriety and the Internet* keep in mind that it falls within the group of SAA pamphlets that qualify for the

volume discount price of thirty cents when purchased in quantities of one hundred or more, either by itself or in combination with other pamphlets.

Plans are still on track to have the pamphlet available in Spanish by the end of May.

* * *

Sexuality in Perspective, a non-SAA literature book which had been unavailable for almost a year while it was being revised, reformatted, and reviewed, is again being offered for sale by the ISO. It can be purchased through the SAA website store (www.saa-recovery.org), by phone (800-477-8191), or by postal mail. As it was previously, the price is \$13.95.





2005 Delegate Meeting

Several reminders might be helpful to those planning to attend the Delegate Meeting.

- ◆ First, although an abbreviated version of the *Call to Convention* was mailed to all SAA groups, it is not unheard of for this information not to make it to some meetings. In cases where this happened and also for anyone who simply wants the complete *Call to Convention*, it can be found on the ISO's website (www.saa-recovery.org). Hard copies of the *Call to Convention* will also be available at the delegate registration desk.
- ◆ Second, congestion at the delegate registration desk is a recurring problem. The heart of the problem is that only about 25 – 30 Delegate Meeting participants pre-register. In recent years that has resulted in 70 – 75 people registering on site. The delegate registration form was included with the *Call to Convention* sent to groups. It can also be downloaded from the website or obtained by calling (800-477-8191) or e-mailing (info@saa-recovery.org) the ISO Office. Register early — save time!
- ◆ Finally, delegate registration runs smoother if each delegate's group is currently registered with the ISO. Check the updated list of registered meetings on the website or contact the ISO Office for group registration status. A current group registration and pre-registration by Delegate Meeting participants will speed up the registration process.

Consider a different kind of service...**... Consider becoming a LifeLine Partner**

**Be a part of the ISO's sustaining foundation by
committing to monthly support.**

☐ Yes, I want to be of service as a LifeLine Partner.

I pledge \$_____ per _____.

Enclosed is my initial gift of \$ _____.

Name: _____

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date

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Houston, TX 77270**

All donations to the ISO are tax deductible.

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. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1

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.

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

Region

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