

THE *Plain Brown Rapper* The SAA Newsletter

50¢

March, 1992 Edition



The purpose of the Newsletter is to be a voice of the SAA membership. Written by and for brothers and sisters recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors; to be informative, sensitive, and expressing the experiences, strengths, and hope of recovering members. It is intended as an additional tool of recovery for those working the twelve-step SAA program.

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REACTING IN METAPHOR VS. EXPERIENCING REAL LIFE

Growing up I experienced many losses - the divorce of my parents, the loss of my relationship with my brother through his physical abuse of me, the alcoholism of my mother, my father's sex addiction, and sexual abuse by my step sisters. I was not loved. I was abused directly and indirectly, and these abuses caused me to hate myself. As those losses mounted up I became progressively more emotionally shut down, my belief that I was an unworthy person took deep root and whatever faith I'd previously had - in the world and in a God - evaporated.

As a teen and as a young man I did everything in my power to not feel the emotional pain of those losses. I had already suffered enough, this was a time when I would control my life and feel good all the time - despite what my family did. I drank, did drugs, and had sex in various and sundry ways. I needed a "rush", a high, something that would fill me up, change me, take me away, and help me dissociate from my hurt, my unmet needs and my self-loathing. I used to reflect after acting out, on why I kept doing this crap to myself. As I neared the bottom it began to occur to me that my acting out was my way to meet real needs in unreal ways.

I believe my acting out was always an attempt at worthiness even when I was behaving criminally; it was always an attempt to get feelings I didn't get as a child - attention, being valued, having a choice, having power. In the acting out--whether it was one-nighters, exposing, or whatever-- I knew I was feeling something quite unnatural, definitely an altered state which was far different from a loving sexual experience. I was in "the bubble" - I was exhilarated in a way, in a sick way - trying to heal from experiences of abuse in my childhood. So I would act out, feel that tremendous high, crash and feel that disgusting low. My beliefs about myself would be confirmed, that I was worthless and bad. As I see it, this acting out allowed me to experience two worlds (two worlds so I could be loyal both to myself and to my abusers). In the first world - the world in which I defeated my perpetrators - I felt a sense of power, relief, importance. In the second world I experienced blame, being unwanted, and being irredeemable. This dynamic is diseased, and gratefully this program found me and allowed me to break the cycle and heal.

When I feel addictive now, I respond "Ah, what's this really about?" It turns out - almost without fail - that I am feeling addictive because of some emotional pain that I don't want to look at; this presents me with the option to attempt to meet my needs in direct and healthy ways. As I have recovered, I have found that my sexuality is only as healthy as it is distanced from the fetishes and fixations of my acting out. I believe I became fixated on specific things for good reason; I was re-enacting the abuses I experienced as a child. My sexuality and the abuse were fused together. Ah, but back to the legitimate suffering - when the old poisons build up and contaminate me, as they often do, triggering me to feel addictive - I slow down, I stay sober, and I try to name the real need and heal that feeling with my strength, the strength of others, and with the strength and grace of God.

Escaping my pain didn't work. Perverting my pain didn't work. Grieving, meeting my needs, staying sober, and being real does work.

Douglas P.

Ex-pervert, healing up - in Mpls.

Toward A Group Conscience ...

[Editors note: The following article is one person's opinion. We welcome contrary opinions. Please submit your viewpoint to the PBR.]

Discussion has come up recently in Intergroup and the fellowship at large over what kind of literature should be distributed at our meetings. Some argued that "outside literature" should not be distributed by Southern California Intergroup since it violates the tradition of endorsing outside enterprises. They also argued that professionally written material also took us away from our primary purpose which is to carry the message from one sex addict to another. Advocates of this point of view suggested that we only carry material published by S.A.A. intergroups throughout the nation, the National Service Office of S.A.A., and material published by Alcoholics Anonymous. Advocates of another viewpoint contended that if professional literature is not bought and sold, neither should A.A. material because it too should be considered "outside literature." This article is an attempt to address two questions: First, should S.A.A. follow the lead of Overeater's Anonymous and adopt the "Big Book", the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and other A.A. material as officially approved literature? Second, should A.A. literature be considered part of an outside enterprise?

OFFICIAL LITERATURE?

In my opinion the book Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as the "Big Book" of A.A., is the most important piece of literature I own outside of a meeting guide. It shows me how to stay sober and happy at the same time. It gives me the practical kit of spiritual tools necessary to stay away from the first drink even though my way of getting drunk has to do with misusing my sexual powers and instincts.

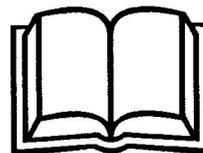
The Big Book gives me reasons why I must work this program. "The Doctor's Opinion" chapter teaches me that I have an allergy of the body coupled with an obsession to take the first drink (i.e. act out sexually). It brings home to me that I act out because I feel "...restless, irritable and discontent..." Furthermore, I repeat my destructive behavior in order "...to again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks." The chapter entitled "There is a Solution" spells out that, on my own resources, I have lost the ability to remember the pain and humiliation of the last time I acted out. With stark detail and vivid examples, the book convinces me that my only solution is to obtain power through taking certain steps. No other literature I have read comes close to the no-nonsense, 'get-in-your-face' language employed to carry this message.

Since the trademarks of how I get drunk are the special ideas, attitudes and feelings that I have in common with other sex addicts, it can be argued that A.A. literature does not offer enough identification for addicts like myself. Yet the Big Book does not speak that much about alcohol either. I suspect that this is so because for A.A. members, **alcohol is not the problem - sobriety is the problem!** The message I pick up is that real alcoholics perceive themselves to experience unbearable feelings and stress when the alcohol wears off. Thus, on page 64 the intended readers are advised, "Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to the causes and conditions."

Is the problem of sobriety any different for the sex addict, who must deal with the unfathomably painful prospect of sobering up without growing up? Being sexually sober without living skills, for me at least, is about as pleasant an idea as being thrown into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean without knowing how to swim. Surely there is nothing worse than being abstinent while at the same time clueless about dealing with life on life's terms. The Big Book provides the answers. The successful example of Overeaters Anonymous, whose members must live with food to an even greater extent than our members must live in a world of sexuality, can serve as a guide for us. Despite having literature of their own, O.A.'s official textbook is still Alcoholics Anonymous— and it has been for more than 25 years!

Some members who are new to our fellowship, but not new to 12 step programs, have developed a resentment against the Big Book. I have heard some in this category complain that since this book did not help them to get relief from their sexual compulsive behavior before arriving at S.A.A., that it can be of no value to them. But this view fails to take into account what it says in "How it Works" where it states that this is a program which "demands rigorous honesty." It is not easy to get honest about sexual compulsive behavior by sharing in other programs. The solution for many of us is to go to S.A.A. meetings and feedback groups while at the same time studying the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve.

My experience is that there are many people in other 12 step programs with our problem that study the original source material but do not have a safe place that allows them to get honest, identify with others, and apply what they learn to recovery from sex addiction. On the other hand, there are those who attend S.A.A. meetings but do not read the two books which will most effectively confront and motivate them to take responsibility for their own thinking, feelings and behaviors. Unfortunately, when some of those in the first category finally arrive at our program, they draw the conclusion that the old literature does not work. They never get to experience the freedom that comes from **both** honestly taking responsibility for one's actions (as taught in the Big Book) and sharing of themselves in a safe place. In my perception, those in both groups seem to be very frustrated and angry. When especially restless, irritable and discontented, they complain that what this program needs is more outside literature from 'experts in the field'. When outside literature does not work, they wallow in self pity and resign themselves to endlessly complaining that the problem is with their parents, the opposite sex or both. Eventually they are confronted by the consequences of their own emotional or physical acting out behavior. When all else fails and they begin to read these books, take the steps and go to meetings - all at the same time - these same people seem to get happier and cease attacking the program.



OUTSIDE ISSUE? (*Toward a Group Conscience, continued*)

Certain members would point out that one of the primary reasons that the early A.A. members wrote the Big Book was to raise money for their fellowship. They would contend that we need to promote our own material in order to generate revenue for our nearly broke organization. Surely, A.A. would not promote our fellowship by selling S.A.A. literature at their meetings. Why should we endorse it by making their publications available?

I believe A.A. literature is not an outside enterprise because the fate of S.A.A. is intimately tied to A.A. What would happen to S.A.A. for example, if any of the Carnes' books went out of print? What would happen to our fellowship if Hope and Recovery were to suddenly disappear? Very little. Although these are excellent works, the only consequence would be that some good material was out of print and hard to find. What would happen on the other hand if all our members become unaware of A.A.'s history? The very foundations of the S.A.A program would be threatened.

Our program is built upon the wealth of experience that A.A. underwent and which is still crucial to the survival of our program today. Hundreds - perhaps thousands of alcoholics died because their groups diluted the message, broke anonymity or tried to go into business for themselves. These misadventures led to the adoption of the Twelve Traditions. Therefore we read them at nearly every single meeting of Sex Addicts Anonymous all over the nation. The fact that we change a few words here and there in order to identify more easily, should not delude any of us. Those traditions are the result of **their struggles**, not ours. Because alcoholics shared **their** history with the world, thousands of addicts today and in the future will not have to pay the ultimate price.

Is it not then a contradiction to argue that officially sanctioning and encouraging newcomers to study A.A. literature, including the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, is a violation of those same traditions?

The Big Book, the Twelve and Twelve, and A.A. historical literature should not be considered part of an outside enterprise, because Alcoholics Anonymous is not superfluous to our existence. We read **their steps, their traditions, and their version of "How It Works"** at all our meetings. We have an interest in preserving and distributing A.A. literature because without it's history we have no future.

A Traditional Column

Tradition Four: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.*

To me, this tradition simply means that every group gets to decide for itself such things as: how to conduct the meeting, whether to use SAA literature and how to welcome newcomers. What it doesn't get to do is have affiliations with organizations outside SAA, or promote SAA or refuse to welcome new addicts into the group. As with all the traditions, there's no need to have some individual(s) policing things, we implicitly trust that when groups or individuals stray away from the principles of this program, eventually the

venture will buckle under its own weight, and the wisdom of the traditions will become apparent.

In any case, we know that the integrity of SAA as an organization will be intact and this is because it is based on autonomy at the group level. Any changes in principle, format or philosophy will ultimately need to be accepted, rejected or ignored by each individual group's conscience. This provides a safe guard against any kind of wholesale detrimental changes and at the same time provides a way for there to be the kind of variety from group to group that addresses the needs of many different sex addicts.

Next month in this space there will be an individual's opinion about the fifth tradition. It would be wonderful if someone else feels moved to submit some comments about the subject.

Lisa G. (St. Paul, MN)

Women in recovery

When I first came to SAA, the meeting I attended hardly had any women in them - most of the time I was the only one. Over a period of time more women appeared. I can remember how enthused I felt when a new woman would show up. For so long in my life I didn't like women; I didn't even like being one myself. I soon realized that with women was where most of my healing would take place and also where I would learn the most about myself.

Eventually there were about 4 or 5 women who regularly attended, so we decided to start a women's meeting. Once a week we split off from the men to have our own meeting. Sitting in a room with just women was pretty scary for me at first and sometimes still is today. I am learning to respect and honor the feminine part of me - what a journey it has been!

It is still important for me to attend co-ed meetings because avoidance never solved anything for me. The stronger my friendships are with women, the more capable I am of being a friend to a man (without sex) - something I could not do before. All my life, it seems that I've been craving and searching for intimacy and I've looked for it in all the wrong places. I never knew that I would find it with women and myself first. I want to thank the sisterhood for being there. I'm proud to be a part of it today. Kathy C. (Tulsa, OK)

SAA ORDERING INFORMATION – Winter/Spring 1992

Mail to: S.A.A. Literature, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403; phone (612) 871-1520

Please allow five weeks for delivery. Prices include shipping and handling. With overseas orders, please include an additional 20% to help defray the additional postage, and expect a longer delivery time (items shipped surface mail only). Orders of more than \$25.00 within the United States, please use a non-PO Box address so that we may ship packages U.P.S.

National Service Organization Approved Items

<u>QUANTITY</u>		<u>TOTAL</u> <u>AMOUNT</u>
_____ S.A.A. Group Guide	@ 4.50	_____
_____ Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A.	@ 2.50	_____
	or 12 for 25.00	_____
_____ First Step to Recovery.....	@ 1.25	_____
	or 12 for 10.00	_____
_____ S.A.A. Self-Assessment Brochures	@ .50	_____
	or 12 for 5.00	_____
_____ NEW! The Bubble – An analogy that describes what it is like to be in the addiction.....	@ .25	_____
	or 10 for 2.00	_____
_____ The Plain Brown Rapper (1 year).....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ The Plain Brown Rapper group subscription rates (1 year, each) 10 or more to the same address.....	@ 3.00	_____
_____ S.A.A. Fellowship Directory.....	@ 3.50	_____
_____ S.A.A. Medallions	@ 2.50	_____
_____ Blank 6 MO 18 MO 4 YR 7 YR 10 YR		
_____ 1 MO 9 MO 2 YR 5 YR 8 YR 11 YR		
_____ 3 MO 1 YR 3 YR 6 YR 9 YR 12 YR		
_____ Aluminum S.A.A. Medallions (available only with blank sobriety date).....	@ 1.50	_____
_____ NEW! Three Circles: Defining Sexual Sobriety.....	@ 5.00	_____
	12 for 25.00	_____

“CARRYING THE MESSAGE” CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES

<u>QUANTITY</u>		<u>TOTAL</u> <u>AMOUNT</u>
_____ 1. The Founding of S.A.A., Pat C.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 2. Multiple Addictions, Barbara B.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 3. Measuring and Celebrating Progress, Rich S.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 4. Exploring Healthy Sexuality, Douglas P.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 5. Sharing our Recovery – Three stories: S.A.A., COSA, and a Couple.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 6. Sharing our recovery Part Two.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 7. Personal Stories, Gregory M., Linda M.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order any six tapes for the price of five.....	@30.00	_____

MICHIGAN 1991 CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES

<u>QUANTITY</u>		<u>TOTAL</u> <u>AMOUNT</u>
_____ 1. Prison Outreach, Arnold D.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 2. Jill's Story.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 3. Healthy Sexuality, Kevin.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 4. Sponsorship, Jeannie O.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 5. Long-Term Sobriety, Francie.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 6. Adult Child, Grant.....	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 7. The Illusion of Control, Gary L.	@ 6.00	_____
_____ 8. Keynote Speaker–The First Woman in SAA, Jean O.	@ 6.00	_____

Twin Cities S.A.A. Intergroup Items

_____ Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts.....	@ 2.50	_____
	12 for 25.00	_____
_____ Exploring Healthy Sexuality.....	@ 3.50	_____
	12 for 35.00	_____

Other Recovery Items

_____ Answers in the Heart (meditations).....	@ 9.00	_____
_____ Out of the Shadows (Carnes).....	@ 11.00	_____
_____ Hope and Recovery.....	@ 12.00	_____
_____ AA Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous).....	@ 12.00	_____
_____ The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (Alcoholics Anonymous).....	@ 12.00	_____

Mn. residents add 6.5% sales tax.....

Additional Donation (From _____)

Total Enclosed.....

Make checks payable to SAA literature

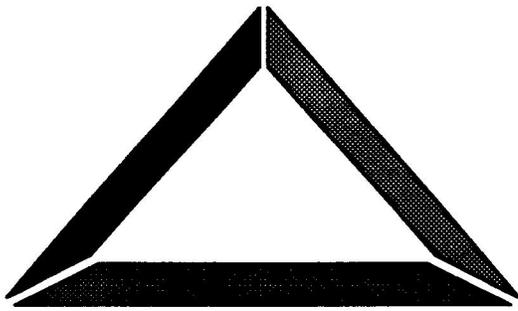
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Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____



Spirituality

The Bridge:

I stood at the edge staring toward the distant cliff. I discovered that when I closed my eyes, I could imagine what it would be like to be on the other side of the chasm.

It was lovely. Children sang, flowers bloomed and there was lots of laughter. I longed to cross the ravine and find out if I was right.

One day, as I sat in the rain dreaming of that far off place, a man came up beside me and asked me what I was doing. After I told him, he said, "I'm a carpenteur and I'll be glad to build you a bridge." I was elated. Finally, I'd get to see the new world. Immeadiately he put out a single board across the gap. "Please follow me," he said.

"Oh no!" I exclaimed, "I'm afraid I will never make it alone on such a narrow board. You said a bridge, not a mere plank!"

The carpenteur thought for a moment and then he laid out a second board, "Walk beside me then," he said.

"Oh no!" I protested, "I'm afraid I'll fall away from you. I'm not going to risk that for a place I've never been."

Again the carpenteur thought. A moment later, several other people came over to us. "We will walk with you," they all said.

Afraid of being laughed at because I was so scared, I said, "Oh heavens no! I'm very happy right here. I don't care what's over there."

The others left without me. As they began their perilous journey, I could hear them crying out with fear. A smirk crept across my face as I heard their reactions. I was proud of myself for not being so foolhardy.

I was just settling back, with my eyes closed when suddenly I heard laughing and singing. When I looked up, I saw that all of the people on the bridge had joy on their faces. I gasped in surprise at the change that had taken place in their demeanor. The closest person heard me and turned to extend their hand out to me. I stretched to reach it, but it was no use, they were too far ahead. Tears of frustration were pouring down my face, when I heard a soft voice beside me.

"You can take my hand," said the carpenteur.

"How did you get here?" I said indignantly. "I thought you left with the others."

"I've been here the whole time," he gently replied. "You've just had your eyes closed. Will you come with me now?"

"I want to, but I'm so afraid," I cried.

"I know, and I'll help you walk through your fear," he said reassuringly.

"If only it weren't so far away."

"It's actually only 12 steps." Carol H. (Anchorage, AK)

PBR Articles needed!

In the on-going attempt to upgrade this newsletter, we need more contributions from members. We're interested in articles describing your experience, strength and hope in recovery from sexual addiction. The subjects are by no means limited to these, but some of the column titles that we are trying to introduce/continue are: Traditions, Inner Child, Reach Out Don't Act Out, Prison Outreach, Women in SAA, Toward a group Conscience, Child Sexual Abuse - A view from both sides, and Spirituality.

If possible, please send your articles on an IBM compatible disk. If you don't have a computer yourself, perhaps someone in your community has one you can use. If you can't get your local group to reimburse you for the disk's cost, we'll be happy to return it to you by mail. The post office has special packages for sending computer disks. In the near future, we hope to have a system where PBR articles can be FAXed to the system where the newsletter is formatted.

NSO REPORTS

DELEGATES AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Well February is over and we supposedly have our delegates picked for the upcoming convention. If this has not been accomplished, I hope it will be soon. The delegates have a very important part to play in the business of the convention. They have to convey the thoughts and ideas from their home group to the rest of the delegates and to the board. There's never been a problem with having enough concerns and subject matter coming in from the delegates, in fact, we are trying to find more time for the business part of the convention. If there is any question about the duties of a delegate, or for those who are newly elected, you might want to read the second tradition of S.A.A. I believe the last part of tradition two says it all: "Our leaders are but trusted servants: they do not govern."

Those of us who sit on the board, representing our region have a similar job to do. As board members, we need to know where the delegates from our region are sitting, and how they are voting about the issues, so we can vote as our delegates are voting. It has been brought to my attention that this has not always happened.

The responsibility for accurate communication is obviously two-way, from fellowship to representative and from representative to fellowship, however the greater part of that responsibility lies with the one who has agreed to be a trusted servant.

Therefore, part of my job, as a representative, is to get the word out to the people who I represent, to inform them about the issues, current and upcoming. As a board member I try to have open and clear communication about where I stand on the issues BUT when it comes to voting I vote as the majority of the delegates from my region vote.

As I look through the By-Laws of the National Service Organization of S.A.A., I see that Art.III, Sec.3 talks about our responsibility to the delegates and the others in our fellowship. The last sentence reads: "In its deliberations, the board shall ever bear in mind that the ultimate authority and power in S.A.A. lies in the body of the fellowship, and the board acts as the trusted servant of the fellowship."

We have some new board members who may not be aware of this idea and we may have some more

experienced board members who are not doing this. I ask that all delegates and board members keep these rulings in mind, brought forth by the fellowship as a whole. Looking forward to seeing all of you at the convention.

From the Chairman's Desk, Arnold D.

Dear People of S.A.A.

During our recent mid-winter board conference, there were many projects and requests handed out. One that I received was how to write a letter to the people we represent, asking for money. Well since I just did this in the Great Lakes Region, I've enclosed a copy of that letter, and it will go into the delegates package that is being assembled. That letter worked well for me; I received enough money for my plane ticket, plus a little left over for the N.S.O., which is certainly in dire need of money.

If we, as trusted servants of our region, state or meeting, are doing our job, the people in our community will support our needs. I can see from my own region, that the people I'm in contact with the most are the ones who give the most to this program. We, as addicts, are uncomfortable asking for help - I didn't like it at first myself, but as I get more and more involved in the S.A.A. program, I get more and more recovery, and it's great! I want everyone to be a part of this wonderful program and receive the wonderful gift of recovery that I have. I don't want it all to myself, there's too much out there for me alone. Even if I did want it all to myself (as I once did), I REMEMBER: I have to give my recovery away in order to keep it, and I'm working on that every day of my life. So if you are helping to spread the word of the S.A.A. program, you're becoming a better person by doing so and you deserve help. It's yours for the asking so go after it with the Blessings of your people. Thank you and keep working the program.

Your Great Lakes Representative

Arnold D.

Our deepest Thanks to Michael



For **three years** we have been graced with an editor who has quietly and consistently been producing this newsletter. We wish to express our gratitude to Michael S. for his faithful service over that time. When he informed us that he felt a need to move on, those of us who know Michael, felt some sadness and fear - sadness because we had come to value him as an editor and as a person, and fear because we had come to depend on Michael to deliver the newsletter punctually and professionally. We could not have asked for an editor with more compassion and less ego.

What the heck does this say though about this live recovering person--Michael? Though the members have benefitted greatly from his work on the PBR, the vast majority in the fellowship have never met this unassuming, kind man. Speaking for those who have come to know Michael, there are a couple of things that we would feel regretful of, if we didn't at least make mention of them. First, Michael is a long time member of S.A.A.. By the time he began as the second editor of this newsletter he had been in the program for years--long enough to become grounded in a solid recovery - and that wisdom has shown through consistantly. Secondly, everyone that we are aware of, who has interacted with Michael, has walked away with an almost immediate impression: here is a spiritual man. This man has recovered from sexual addiction and has restored his relationship with his Higher Power. Our experience of Michael is of a man who knows his values, and who has submitted his will to his Higher Power. Lastly, we have come to know Michael as a gentle man. This gentleness is expressed in his soft, welcoming voice and manner. This gentleness has been demonstrated in the "thought for the month" pieces he has periodically added to the newsletter (when the newsletter was hurting for enough contributions).

Thank you Michael!

PRISON OUTREACH

This year's NSO National Convention in Tuscon Arizona should prove to be very productive, rewarding and fulfilling. The Prison Outreach Committee is looking forward to being able to take advantage of the gathering of fellowship members from around the world in order to learn and grow. It is our desire to do everything we can to help the suffering addicts who are locked away behind bars, feeling abandoned and hopeless.

This past year has seen a wonderful growth in interest throughout the fellowship in this most vital area of 12th step work. Brothers and sisters all over the world are doing what they can to spread the message of hope. Volunteers from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Canada, Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Utah are helping by answering some of the letters we receive from inmates. But, we are aware that many more people are actively involved in prison outreach work in their local areas.

The POC plans to hold an open forum workshop at the convention in May. There we hope to be able to pull together the resources from all those involved and develop more efficient and effective ways of accomplishing our task. We would like to be able to learn enough from this to produce a "How-To" manual for future efforts in prison outreach.

If you are currently involved in any type of institutiional outreach, you are encouraged to come and share your challenges and successes with the rest of us. If you have not yet gotten involved but are interested in seeing what you can do, then by all means attend this workshop. We often learn as much from the questions of the newcomer as we do from the experienced trooper.

We plan to make this session fun and informal as well as highly productive. Won't you please join us in this ambitious endeavor to more effectively spread "The Promise of Grace"? Remember to register for the convention before April 1 in order to take advantage of the lowest registration fee. See you there!

Gary L., Mpls. MN

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Recovery:

The NSO is presently faced with a financial crisis; we may not be able to meet our monthly operating expenses. Contributions are decreasing and our expenses are increasing. We are taking extra precautions to be as frugal as possible. But this is not enough!

We are presently staffed by a half-time office manager. In this short amount of time, this person is expected to do the following: answer all telephone calls and requests for information, assist with the distribution of the PBR, package and ship all literature requests, manage the finances, coordinate the volunteer help (which has dropped considerably), assist the board members with their projects, organize and distribute minutes of the board meetings, improve and maintain an updated database of all groups for the directory and other purposes. This list only names a few of the duties and responsibilities of the office manager. Considering the time and resources that he has to work with, our person is doing a fantastic job.

We desperately need to increase this position to full-time. We also need to upgrade our office equipment - especially the computer - to meet the requirements of our growing membership. Additionally, we need to move the National Office to a better location which has more suitable space.

All of the items mentioned above are National Goals adopted at the National Business Convention in 1991. We have been unable to make very much progress on any of them, mostly because of funds. Furthermore, we are beginning to lose some of the gains we have made.

The NSO desperately needs your help!. Remember we are self supporting through our own contributions, always declining help from outside organizations. We depend on our membership to keep us afloat. Recently, contributions have been way down. This fellowship has helped save many people's lives. With your help, it will continue to do so. In order to keep functioning at the present level, and to move S.A.A. into the 21st century, we really need to increase the amount of donations coming in.

One suggestion that I have for helping to raise funds is for groups or intergroups to host a yard sale. Members can contribute used and discarded items to sell to the general public, then the proceeds can be directly donated to the NSO. Some groups have raised as much as \$500 in one day by doing this. Besides being a big help to the NSO and a wonderful opportunity for you to be of service, it can be a fun way to socialize with people in the program. I strongly encourage groups to consider implementing this idea!

Peace and Grace be with you! Sincerely, your brother in service, Ed G.

YES! I want to help SAA! (please indicate your contribution)

Monthly

Quarterly

Annually

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Home group _____

Do you have a story, an experience of growth, or would you just like to share your emotions and feelings? Please write The Plain Brown Rapper. Ysisters in SAA would like to hear from you. We have much to share with each other. Please write to PBR Editor, c/o SAA, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403. If you can submit your writing on a computer disk (either 800K Macintosh or IBM), that would be greatly appreciated. Please ensure that all IBM disks (either 5-1/4 or 3-1/2 inch) are formatted consistent with their physical density (i.e., high-density disks formatted high density; low-density disks formatted low density). Please submit all writings for the April newsletter by February 21, 1992

Unless otherwise noted, the content of all articles, stories, and poems that appear in the *Plain Brown Rapper* reflect the opinions of the respective writers. Those opinions are not necessarily shared by the N.S.O., S.A.A., or the Literature Committee. Discussion of the contents of this newsletter is encouraged.