



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

JULY 1995

Vol.7, No.7

In This Issue...

2 Rap Around the World

The need for news: the PBR is looking for news from your neck of the woods. Tell the members of SAA nationwide about recovery in your region and share the news. Recovery depends upon SAA unity.

3 Recovery Toolbox

Learning to be present to our emotions is one of the most valuable tools in our program.

4 Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions

Humbly asking our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings is the Seventh Step of our journey. And reflection on the Seventh Tradition reminds us that "By accepting outside contributions we sell a part of our independence. We must support ourselves."

6 Feature

From Shame to Grace: A grateful sex addict tell us how she moved from shame and hopelessness to the discovery of serenity, sanity, and peace of mind.

8 On The Topic

Comments about coping with the inevitable experience of hotel rooms offering in-room pornography.

10 Fellowship Forum

An invitation from the Literature Committee to participate in the development of our fellowship's literature.

Rap Around the World

The Need for News

The SAA fellowship does not exist in a vacuum. It is composed of members from around the United States and countries around the world. As we work our individual programs of recovery, we are reminded by the presence of *other people* in our meetings that SAA is, truly, a community of people coming together for the common purpose of recovering from sexual addiction. Meetings are the microcosm which reflect the structure of SAA as a whole: our meetings are members of local Intergroups, the Intergroups are members of regions, and so on.

In the same way we share at meetings to support ourselves and others, so too we need to hear from meetings, from Intergroups, from regions, describing what you're doing. As groups, we can share our experience, strength, and hope and enrich the lives of all members of our community in our nation and around the world.

Please consider sharing your groups activities, events, accomplishments, and other news with the fellowship through the PBR. We'd really like to hear from you!

FRIENDS OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE (FOLC)

The Literature Committee is made up of elected representatives, an alternate from each region, up to three at-large representatives, and the Editor of the *PBR*. We want to involve more SAA members in literature-related work. Connect to the network of people helping to create and distribute recovery literature. Fill out the form below and send it to:

Friends of the Literature Committee,
c/o NSO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Name:	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ - _____	FAX: (____) _____ - _____
E-Mail Address:	_____
Intergroup	_____
Do you have a computer?	MAU PC Modem?

My Nascent State, the Ability to Feel

Throughout most of my life, I have been out of touch with feelings. One of my childhood-learned core myth-beliefs was that negative emotions like anger and sadness were too painful to bear. Thus, I could not feel, could not cry, could not directly express anger. I stuffed my emotions and medicated unpleasant feelings with compulsive sexual behavior, starting with masturbation. My sexual addiction led to progressively more harmful acting-out until I hit bottom (I hope). My recovery means a new awareness of what I'm sensing within my heart right now. I am aware of my feelings.

I do not judge my current emotional state; feelings are. They will come. I can expect them. My mood will shift over time. I must surrender control over my emotions' arrival, and gently allow my feelings to occur and evolve. Recovery opens up a wide spectrum of possible emotions. I am capable of multiple simultaneous emotions, including those that might seem contradictory or mutually exclusive. The SAA old timer "loves to see the newcomer hurt," and is not too quick to console insincerely, lest the power of 'healing emotional pain' is lost. By knowing how to feel, I risk experiencing that healing pain.

As they say at the treatment center, "Feel those feelings!" When

I feel, I may share these inner sensations with others I trust. I can analyze my errant thinking with my therapist in an attempt to understand their origins, and I accept knowing 'why?' is not always possible or even a must for me.

How can I discern what is a true feeling? After all, my old patterns of dishonesty and denial enabled me to distort what I was perceiving in order to fulfill my unhealthy desires. Validation of my true feelings remains a challenge. I can seek help from my higher power through prayer, and share what I'm experiencing with my sponsor and therapist. I must be willing to listen for guidance and trust feedback that fits. Once confirmed as true via this process, I can express some of my emotions safely, especially the positive ones. I can laugh, I can cry, I can tell someone I'm angry, I can feel the joy of recovery. This is a new experience for me. It's wonderful and I like it!

Rich W.



Twelve Steps

Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

After we have discovered and spoken about our shortcomings with others in Steps 4 and 5, it becomes desirable to relinquish our shortcomings. We may have tried for a long time to relinquish some of our obvious shortcomings in the past and failed. But now we have a new and all-powerful partner on our side—our Higher Power. Working our way through the steps in a partnership with our Higher Power is a new experience, since we had previously tried to do all of the work by ourselves. So we have done our part of this process of improving our lives by discovering our shortcomings and freely discussing them with our sponsors. We have therefore indicated our willingness to let go of our shortcomings.

In this partnership we must admit that we cannot do all things in cleaning up our lives. It takes considerable humility to ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings. In doing so we move from being self-centered to being self-less. This puts us in harmony with our Higher Power and other people. Humility is simply the growing awareness that "Of myself I am nothing, my Higher Power doeth the work."

Our Higher Power will

remove our shortcomings if we are willing to do the footwork. Our most simple shortcomings will be removed first. Progress will come at a comfortable pace. If we ask that a particular shortcoming be removed and it does not happen immediately, it is because we may not be ready yet. We may need to do more work, or we may not have humbly asked our Higher Power to remove the shortcoming.

Some of us may have had life-giving or valuable things taken from us prematurely when we were young, before we were ready to relinquish them. Today we may have a difficult time relinquishing things which have long since outlived their usefulness in our lives, but we are afraid to let go of practically everything now because we do not want to suffer another "loss" as we see it. In this case we must pray for the additional vision and humility to allow our Higher Power to remove the shortcoming.

Our shortcomings are sometimes removed at a slower pace than we want or expect. We must have patience and know that they are being removed at the appropriate pace. When our shortcomings are removed, we must not try to take credit for their removal, but must humbly

Twelve Traditions

acknowledge that it was our Higher Power who removed our shortcomings. All of our shortcomings will never be removed, so we must continue to ask for the humility to ask for the removal of additional shortcomings. When

we ask that a shortcoming be removed, it becomes our Higher Power's responsibility and we can't accept credit or blame for what happens. Our responsibility is to stay out of the way and let our Higher Power do His work.

Bob W.

Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions

With our money contributed at the meetings, we support our local and national services. Each group decides how much to contribute to these services. The Seventh Tradition says simply that we will be self-supporting, and that we will decline contributions from outside sources, regardless of what may be our need for funds and the good intentions of the outside sources.

If we as individuals are to turn our wills and lives over to the will of our Higher Power, we must be free of attachments to false gods. Likewise, if our group conscious is to reflect the will of our Higher Power for our group, we must be free of financial attachments to outside sources. Taking contributions from outside sources can destroy our basic spiritual nature, make us dependent on a non-spiritual entity, cause us to feel obligated to the outside source, and serve as a poor example of how we as individuals should work our

programs. It is easy to discard our spiritual nature in favor of materialism when we begin accepting funds from outside sources. Our whole focus and journey can become distorted. We are first of a spiritual nature. What we are as a group will reflect what we become as individuals.

In our unhealthy lifestyles we often avoided responsibility for our own survival and progress. By accepting funds from outside sources, we may be avoiding our present responsibility to take care of our own group. Financial irresponsibility is a method of living in fantasy, avoiding responsibility in the present, and connecting to non-spiritual sources on the outside. A group which is not spiritually healthy can't foster spiritually healthy members. By accepting outside contributions we sell a part of our independence. We must support ourselves.

Bob W.

Feature

From Shame to Grace: Finding Serenity, Sanity, and Peace of Mind. by Darleen R.

I am a recovering Sex Addict. I use my SAA recovery date of my first SAA meeting (September 17, 1991). I cannot express enough *gratitude* for these 12 Step Programs.

I am also a recovering Alcoholic & Drug Addict, since August 11, 1988. I am by no means bragging, I just want to let you know where I'm coming from.

My sex addiction has been there since I was a little girl. Although I wasn't aware of it then, I remember masturbating as a little girl and looking at my brother's Playboy magazines, laughing at the pictures, but at the same time also I remember being turned on by them too. I also remember the fear of being caught. Feeling ashamed when I did get caught. How *embarrassing!*

Being an incest survivor, today I can look back and see just how innocent and trusting I was, being so young. I thought all Daddies did to their little girls what my Daddy did to me. I thought all little girls and their Daddies had secrets. I thought this was Daddy's way to show me how much he loved me cause he told me so.

Thank God for 12-Step Programs & therapy. I was able to

work through this awful shame and hopelessness and find some Serenity, Sanity & Peace of Mind.

My Recovery in AA helped me to stay clean and dry, for this I am truly grateful, but my Sex Addiction escalated, skyrocketed! I had been through a divorce, due to a couple affairs I had while I was married. I was completely out of control before I went into treatment for drugs and alcohol, and after I was released I was still out of control. After being clean & dry for a few years, going through some sexually transmitted diseases, and a lot of misery, my AA sponsor suggested I make a list of all the people I had had sex with as far back as I could remember. Needless to say, it was then suggested that I call the hot line for sexual addiction. I was devastated. *Me* have a sex addiction??? No way will I give up sex too!

I can't begin to tell you how I felt in my first meeting of Sex Addicts Anonymous. I was so very embarrassed, ashamed, hurting, scared, resistant, confused. You name it, I felt it, before, during and after I left that place. I don't even remember driving there or how I found the room on the 7th floor of the Hospital. My H.P. led me to this meeting and I have been going ever since. My acting out did not stop totally

after coming to SAA, but I have to tell you SAA caused my acting out to eventually cease! Even though I forced myself to come every Friday, sometimes I continued to cruise by a lover's house on the way to the meeting, just to see if I could see his truck...that's all, just to see his truck. I kept coming back and it got better, and I got better, ONE DAY AT A TIME.

By working the steps to the best of my ability at that time, I was able to see just how out of control I really was and how I needed some time away from men for a while so I could really look at myself. There was a part of me that did not want to look at me. It was easier and less painful for me to look at others, or escape into sex to make everything seem okay.

I eventually became so overwhelmed by my obsessive and out-of-control behavior that I had to surrender. I told myself I would not have sex for a year. That did not work for me. I had to tell myself I will not have sex today. That worked for me. I think I went around, that is MY H.P. and I, went about six months without sex.

What a miracle for me. It was the longest time I could remember that I had gone that long without having sex. Thanks to SAA, my sponsor, and my H.P., I have not acted out for almost 3 years. SAA taught me how to have boundaries, and what they were! I

learned that I can live by myself, and I can take care of my SELF, I didn't NEED a man to be okay. I could probably fill 20 pages with what I have been through and how my H.P. and I made it through, but I feel I have probably

I told myself I would not have sex for a year. That did not work for me. I had to tell myself I will not have sex today. That worked for me.

shared what is necessary for me and for you to know that this Program does work for me if I work it. My H.P. and I have confronted my Dad on the sexual abuse that took place when I was a little girl. That is another story in itself, but I can tell you it was another miracle in my life.

Last year my Dad was diagnosed with cancer and is not expectedly to live through 1995. Thanks to therapy, the 12 Steps, sponsorship, a lot of praying, and my Higher Power walking with me, I am able to say today that I love my Dad and I do not want him to die. There was a time when I wished he was dead. I can be compassionate and loving and caring for him today and that is all because of this program. I am in a wonderful relationship today with a man who is not a sex addict. I have had to deal with my sexual issues numerous times in

(continued on page 11)

On The Topic

In-Room Pornography

A Sex Addict Shares How To Make a Hotel Room Feel "Safe"

As I began working a 12-step recovery, my hotel rooms were suddenly "unsafe". Trips had always involved feelings of abandonment, loneliness, insecurity, fear of bodily harm. Now a way to avoid feelings was right there with the turn of a knob...and I didn't have to answer to anyone about the time spent doing so. Staying sexually sober a day-at-a-time meant struggling rather than resting in my rented quarters.

My dilemma has never been clearer than during my experience at a leading downtown Washington hotel. Before unpacking the bags, I was scanning the channels. In seconds I was hooked. I went to sleep at 3:30AM. I despaired once again at my powerlessness ... that I hadn't worked my program.

Next morning I approached the Front Desk with some apprehension. I didn't really want to talk with the young woman on duty. "May I speak to the manager?" I asked. "I'm the Shift Supervisor, how can I help you?" she answered. My mouth got dry. I'd just be direct about it. "I'd like the pay movie channels turned off in my room." "Why certainly, we can do that right here at the desk. Would you rather that your children not see them?" she asked. "It's not my children, it's me that I don't want watching them." I

replied. By then I was really embarrassed. I thanked her and went to breakfast. That night, the pay channels were missing.

After-work on the third day I browsed the normal network shows and just curiously flipped to the pay movie band. And there it was in all its nudity! I snapped off the TV, called a program friend long distance and got back in touch with reality. I then called the city AA information number and lined up an open meeting I could reach by cab that evening. As I passed through the lobby I complained at the Desk about their failure to comply with my request. Before I had felt embarrassed. This time I was angry.

I don't like feeling anxious whether I'll be tempted in the safety of my own room and I hate the embarrassment and negative consequences of a slip. I was learning a new responsibility for my own sobriety. I filled out the complaint form provided in the room and got a sensitive apology letter from corporate President Bill Marriott and another from the hotel manager. And I was reminded once again that making preparations for pitfalls is up to me. I can't expect others to do it for me. I was humbled **once more** by the power of this addict inside who in a moment can overthrow the skills, the determination, the

carfully nurtured 12-Step program of this fifty-plus man. with a flip of a dial, I can slip into a trance, and once again start into motion the behavior I want to avoid.

Later the same year I had a trip to another hotel. No "X" movies were available, but you could count on several raunchy British nudies rated "R". This time I was ready. Finding the pay movie card on the TV, I put it in a dresser drawer and immediately called the Desk and asked to have it turned "off". "I'm sorry, sir, but our hotel has very old equipment and we can't turn off individual rooms. If you don't wish to pay for those movies, just don't watch them," she said. I would see the manager later. I left a message for the SLAA Miami contact I had gotten from the Fellowship-Wide Service Office and locking the door behind me, was off to my business activities.

After a tiring day, I had a long talk on the phone with my new SLAA acquaintance. I left a message at home for my wife and went to sleep grateful for another sober day.

About 1:00 a.m. the phone jolted me out of a dead sleep. My wife had just gotten home and was two time zones west. I could hardly carry on a conversation, so we made it short. Hanging up I was half awake, afraid, alone and aware that the TV on the dresser contained pornography I wanted to see! There was no big decision. It was out-of-the-covers, four

steps and "click: I was off to never-never-land. Within ten minutes I had masturbated, got bored with the insipid plot, turned it off and was back in bed with the light off. I had done it again! I'd have to deal with a slip at my meeting when I got home. I'd have to deal with my shame, disappointment, and guilt. Sobriety would require a new start date. And I wished I hadn't caved in, in a half-awake moment in the middle of the night.

Next morning I sat in a stuffed chair in front of the secretary's desk, waiting to see the hotel manager. I was uncomfortable, but I was determined. As expected of a corporate manager, he was polite, desirous to be helpful, and a comfortable listener. He explained that their outdated, pay-movie equipment wouldn't be replaced until next year's budget. The movies were selected and changed by an outside contractor. He seemed really willing to please his customer so I decided to take a risk. "Nudie movies for me are like a drink is to an alcoholic. I really am powerless to not watch them, so I accept responsibility to keep them out of my life. Do you have any other alternative to help me?" I couldn't imagine that he did. A thoughtful look came over his face and he dialed the phone. He asked his maintenance supervisor how one might disconnect the pay channel, then turned and asked if

(continued on page 12)

Fellowship Forum

The SAA Literature Committee

You may not know it, but all of the literature comes from members of the fellowship

Dear Recovering Friends:

I'm Jon K. and I'm the Regional (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri) representative of the Literature Committee of SAA. The Literature Committee is a service board elected by and entirely accountable to the delegates of SAA. Our job is to produce literature of all kinds (books, pamphlets, audio/visual media) to express and support recovery from sex addiction "the SAA way", and to publish the newsletter - "Plain Brown Rapper" (PBR). We provide the services of collection, some of the writing, all of the editing, editorial support, formatting and oversight of the printing process (done by the NSO office) for ALL of the literature SAA produces.

You may not know it, but all of the literature comes from members of the fellowship, and only a little of it is actually produced by members of the Committee. This year, we have made it our mission to create a network for all writers, poets, speakers, etc. to get their expressions before the whole of SAA, regardless of where they are and what media they prefer. This letter is part of that outreach effort. If you have something to

share with all of us, or know (or have heard of) someone who has a "burning desire" to share, please get in touch with me. I, and the other members of the committee are dedicated to helping you, and us all, grow in recovery by communicating what is in our hearts.

We are getting prepared for the 1996 Convention. I sincerely hope that many of you will be attending this year. It's always been a great boost for my recovery, and a great way to get into service work. Also, a lot of business, teaching and relationship-building takes place there. Our main issue is to improve the production of and fellowship participation in the PBR. We hope to introduce some new "grass-roots" literature-producing workshops in our region, and we want to strengthen our network by finding new people to get involved. We need new ideas about how to become more accessible. Do you have any literature issues that need to be put before the Convention? Are your literature needs getting met? Do you need more and different kinds of literature on the table at your meetings? Do you (or does your group) have anything to share with us? Do you have workshops that could produce a pamphlet/

(continued on next page)

Fellowship Forum

(continued from page 7)

this relationship. But we talk about it together and usually my issues will pass until something else comes up.

We dated over a month before we had sex, for me that was a miracle. We talked about birth control before we had sex, what a concept!!!! We both were checked out by a doctor before we had sex. We both went to the store and selected the condoms we use today. WOW!!! These are things I never did in past relationships. Talk about sex??? I thought you just do it!

Today I have two sponsors. I sponsor four people, and I go to SAA, AA, and Alanon on occasion. I guess I'll be attending Overeaters Anon. soon because, with H.P.'s help and these 12

steps I quit smoking cigarettes December 1, 1994 and I have put on over 20 pounds. Oh well, always something to work on right? If we didn't have something to work on we would be bored and being bored is quite dangerous for me still today. One thing I know for sure is that other sex addicts identify, understand, and know how hard it is for us to come out of our shame to grace.

KEEP COMING BACK — IT REALLY DOES WORK IF I WORK IT!!!

Thanks for letting me share.

Darleen R.

(continued from previous page)

article/story/book?

You can get in touch with me by writing me at 4315 Stanford, Houston, TX 77006, or by sending a letter to the NSO office (mark it "SW LitCom rep") at P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX, 77270. My phone number is (713)524-9714. I'm eager to respond; I'll tell you how we can support your work or I'll carry your issues to the Convention in your/your group's name. Let me know how we can create a lasting, living network to carry our recovery into maturity, and increase our outreach to the addict who still suffers.

If you'd like to support the regional literature effort, two other ways come to mind: get a group or individual subscription to the *PBR* (which helps NSO in general, and helps get the word in the hands of more people), and consider sending some money to the NSO to help me afford the trip to the Convention. For any help, or just a contact with you, I will be most grateful. Thanks for your attention.

Sincerely, Jon K.

Regional Representative
South Central Region of SAA SAA
Literature Committee

Announcements

(continued from page 9)

I minded if they just removed the TV from the room. I said, "Fine, but removing the cabling device until I left would seem all that is necessary." He hung up and told me that the man would meet me in my room in five minutes to take care of things.

Later, I was in another city, and upon checking in, I simply detached the TV cable between the set and the wall, put it in a paper bag with their movie ad card and left it with the shift manager "to reinstall after I checked out." I also moved the phone book with all the info on escort services out of my room. From then on my hotel room felt "safe." In fact, I now do this routinely every time I check into a hotel room when traveling without my wife.

I've become more assertive! I've come to the conclusion that a

"visually stimulated" sex addict like me, needs some boundaries possibly not necessary for others. I take along local phone contacts provided by the national service offices. The week before traveling I often phone a contact person in that city to make a date for coffee or a meeting. If I can't find a sex-addiction meeting, I call the local Alcoholics Anonymous number and get to an open AA meetings.

It's a frail balance we maintain in this illness. The difference between sane and insane behavior hinges at times on so little. So we turn things over to a Higher Power, often in such humbling moments, and trust that God will work through others to help us stay sober for that day.

This article is reprinted with permission. It is from a pamphlet produced by the SAA Monday Night Meeting, P.O. Box 3211, Boulder, CO, 80307. It appears here in an abridged form.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE *PLAIN BROWN RAPPER*

The *PBR* includes news of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, the experience of the fellowship in working the 12 Steps, outreach, service work, and more. The *PBR* is our journal and a vehicle for communication. In its pages, through the shared experience, strength, and hope of our fellowship, we aim to provide gifts for your recovery and serenity. \$12/year (\$18/year outside the U.S.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country (if outside U.S.): _____

Make check (or International money-order) payable to NSO.

Send payment to: PBR Subscriptions, NSO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.