



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1995

Vol.7, No.8

In This Issue...

2 On the Topic

Want to start a meeting? A member offers specific advice, shares the hope and experience of beginning a meeting.

3 Rap Around the World

An E-Mail address is available for feedback on the Large-Book project.

4 Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions

"Surely, the step was only talking about people I had hurt in a big way and who were aware of my wrong doings. But there was that darn word ALL. The step clearly said "all people." Reflective commentary on the Eighth Step and the Eighth Tradition from member Penny K.

6 Feature

Member Marty L. shares his experience of growing to love himself and the child within as he recovers from sexual addiction.

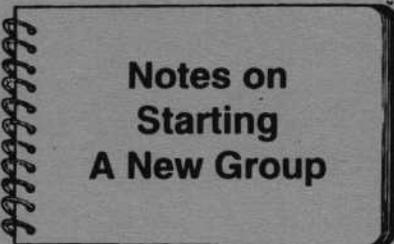
Feelings? poetry by Glenn G.

10 Fellowship Forum

A member from Australia reaches out to SAA members, sharing his story.

In Memoriam — remembering Dennis K.

On the Topic



Notes on Starting A New Group

After being involved with several startup groups, I offer the following opinions.

1. Get it started.

Having two people willing to meet is more important than when, how, where, and meeting format. It takes two people willing to commit to meeting on a periodic basis to start a group.

2. Get new people in the group.

People drop out a lot. I noticed that when a group is "12-stepping" people on a regular basis, the group keeps going - even if the people being "12-stepped" don't stay. Somehow, when the process of "12-stepping" is occurring, the group stays stronger.

3. Be committed even if no one else is.

I need a group. Because of my need for a group, I will show up even though nobody else does. I forget how many times I've been the only one showing up for a meeting and felt the disappointment. But the groups have come back and grown.

4. Be prepared to be disappointed by others.

People come to a group for their own reasons and come back only if they are led to. I try to keep in mind that the groups are governed by a higher power and not by me. Many times, I've "12-stepped" someone and gotten excited by the person's enthusiastic response and then disappointed when the person never shows again. People I never expected to see again keep coming back. People who committed to come show up only once. When I act for my recovery, then I can leave the results up to my higher power and get excited by what that higher power actually does.

5. That you meet is more important than how.

Many different formats work. I've been in step studies, discussion groups focused on a topic, groups where each person can take some time to just talk about where they are, open discussion groups, short check-in with feedback, speaker meetings, long check-in with feedback, and even business meetings. All have given me some healing. The focus on the steps and the traditions and the freedom to change to meet the needs of the people there at each meeting gives each group the ability to adapt and grow as the group needs change.

6. Where you meet depends on those in the group.

I've met in churches, bank basements, rented halls, private homes, etc. I know that a lot of people have fear about being shamed for going to this meeting. I felt fear at asking a church if the group could meet there. I would encourage you to not try for the expensive meeting spots first out. The group may not be able to afford to pay much rent for a few months.

7. How to get the word out.

Again, this depends on the resources of the group. Tyler group rented a mail box and publicized that mail box. Other groups first just let their individual therapists know that a

group was forming and the therapists would refer people. I do not recommend advertising personal phone numbers. The North Central Texas intergroup uses a voice mail box and we get obscene phone calls. Other 12-step groups such as CODA, AA, OA are all groups that can refer people. So, telling them about the new group is helpful.

Both the intergroup for your area and the National Service Organization can refer people to your group. I would recommend that a group contact NSO for people who might be in the area already that are interested and then once the group has stabilized a little, register with NSO.

submitted anonymously

Rap Around the World

Rap Around the World is devoted to news from SAA groups and Intergroups worldwide. Appropriate material for this section includes news, events, announcements, and any other information which may be of interest to the fellowship. The PBR invites all regions to submit monthly news updates of 50 words or less. News and announcements should be submitted a minimum of 6 weeks in advance of expected publication. We are currently accepting news items for publication in the January 1996 issue (or later issues).

E-Mail Address for Feedback on Large-Book Project

The Literature Committee has established an e-mail address for feedback on the current Large-Book Project. Please send your thoughts and hopes for this project to LARGE-BOOK@AOL.COM

Twelve Steps

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

When I got to this step, making the list was pretty easy. I'd mostly done it when I listed my resentments in Step Four. However, becoming willing to make amends was a "little" harder. I put little in quotes because stating it that way is part of my natural tendency to minimize which, along with my equally natural tendency to maximize, came into play big time when I realized what was next if I did this step. If I became willing to make amends to them all, I'd have to let a lot of people know that I wasn't perfect. (At that time I was still under the illusion that I had fooled them and that they thought I was!)

I went into rationalization mode. Why should I humble myself to people who had done far worse things to me than I had done to them? Why should I cause doubt in relationships where people trusted me? Why should I worry about things which were far in the past and where I'd have to work hard to locate the people I'd wronged? Surely, the step was only talking about people who I had hurt in a big way and who were aware of my wrong doings. Surely, it didn't mean for me to stir up things which on the surface appeared

fine. But there was that darn word ALL. The step clearly said "all people."

Why should I humble myself to people who had done far worse things to me than I had done to them?

Gratefully, I remembered what I have to remember every time I begin to work a step. I remembered that the people who had what I wanted had gone through these steps exactly as they were written. I realized again that what I was looking for was "an easier, softer way." I remembered that the "easier, softer way" of my past had led to insanity and a desire to be dead. So I remembered Step Three and turned my life over to God's care. I revisited Step Seven and asked God to remove my character defect of "false pride." I remembered that *can't* only applies to me. I remembered that my Higher Power is not bound by my fears and shortcomings.

My struggles with Step Eight were another reminder that when I "let go and let God," my life works.

Penny K.

Twelve Traditions

Tradition Eight: Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

The long version of this tradition goes on to define professional as the occupation of counselling sex addicts for fee or hire. This reminds me again that it is not me or you or any person that is keeping me sober. It reminds me that no person, not me or anyone else, has all the answers for my life. The only power is my Higher Power.

This doesn't mean that professional therapists, counselors, psychiatrists, etc. can't be members of SAA and it doesn't imply that in their private practices they can't counsel sex addicts. It simply means that the two must be kept separate. As the Big Book says "...our usual SAA step work ought never to be paid for."

In SAA we cannot afford to recognize any distinction between a PhD and an elementary school dropout when it comes to recovery. I'm very grateful that I don't know the educational background or the occupations of most of the members of the groups that I attend because, in that way, I don't filter what they have to say through my prejudice that peoples' accomplishments add to the worth of their ideas. By not knowing anything about them

except that they are a sex addict, I can give everyone my full attention and my Higher Power can and does speak through everyone in the room.

In SAA we cannot afford to recognize any distinction between a PhD and an elementary school dropout when it comes to recovery.

Currently SAA employs two special workers, an office manager and a PBR editor. I am one of the few people in the meetings that they attend who is even aware that they are employees of the National Service Organization. This is fitting because even though a condition of their employment is attendance at SAA meetings and maintenance of sobriety, they weren't hired because they are "model" recovering sex addicts, but because they have the business skills which are required for the jobs they do.

Tradition Eight allows all of us to "take what we like and leave the rest."

Penny K.

Feature

The Hands of a Man

by Marty L.

Recently, Marty L. asked me to type this article for him. However, I must at the same time introduce Marty L. to you, as I was with Marty when he began his process of recovery almost 18 months ago. I've known Marty L. for sometime now, and was honored to have been a part of his first step and the beginning process of recovery. The journey from his sex-addiction has not been easy; Marty was young, afraid, shamed and guilt-ridden when we first began to work together.

Today, Marty L. is filled with the hope, joy and peace that is ours when we apply the simple steps of S.A.A. I am proud, very proud of you Marty L., and the courage and strength it has taken you to overcome this cycle of abuse. The abuse your inner child suffered, at the hands of adults bigger than you, took courage to face and strength to let it go. I've seen you grow in leaps and bounds and am certainly proud to call you my friend and fellow survivor. I encourage you to go on, you are going to make it happen!!

I love you as a person, a friend, and am grateful for the tears and hopes you have shared with me. May I always be found worthy of your trust. May the God of hope continue to guide you on your journey.

Brian S.

After being asked to review my progress, this is just one of the many observations I am aware of when I compare where I began to the present. I can only state that the difficulty that I believe I have overcome is a hurdle that has kept tripping me and has refused to let me go over it, around it, or under it. For the first time I can see the hold I have had by not giving up, just because I have been knocked down repeatedly by it. I can now look at my hands and say, "Yes, you have the hands of a man." I've always seen a little boy's hands, hands that were incapable of taking care of the man that operated those hands. I see the growth that this little boy has made in the person who now speaks what he feels.

I even had the opportunity to feel some emotions tonight at our meeting. The emotion I felt was one of joy. I felt the tears swell up as the fear began to expel from my tired body. At that time, I felt my inner child (Little Marty) grow another foot and gain some wisdom. We both feel pretty good today.

The other side of this story is a scared little boy that only wanted to fit in, be accepted for who he was (and not for what he could give) just to have a true friend. And now he finds that he

can speak, and that the control is beginning to come back without total fear of being in his shell. I can only use a phrase that puts everything in one sentence. It is "NO RETREAT, NO SURRENDER". I intend to either win or go down swinging. The fight continues and I have won only a small part of the war and I will continue even if it is one battle at a time.

I have so much that I need to say. I have felt the next log being thrown into the fire. I felt anger leave, and I've felt peace of mind enter. But what does all this mean? It means that the little boy has just found out that he has a mind, and a good one at that. It means that if I had to choose to revert back to my shell or hit that wall again, then the choice has been made. The wall doesn't stand a chance.

I used to get depressed when I would have to review my past and see all of my mistakes. I would be withdrawn and unresponsive to excitement and let the anger build because that is what short unwanted people were supposed to do. But is this truth, or something to be regarded as a rule to be followed and obeyed no matter the cost? I think not! I got a glimpse of the truth and now I am starving for more, because the more I receive the more that wall comes tumbling down, and the myth that I've always lived by in my life gets cast out. Now that the shame and fear have been ex-

pelled, I can now enjoy my trips down memory lane and smile. I can now laugh with my friend and enjoy my new life. I have

I felt my inner child (Little Marty) grow another foot and gain some wisdom. We both feel pretty good today.

found out that if a person can only recognize that they have a problem, and are willing to open their minds to a new fresh set of rules and possibilities, that there are new avenues and answers to their serious, silly, strange, confusing questions. Then and only then can recovery begin.

My mind was opened clearly and I found a world with joy, light, happiness and sorrow as well. But, because these are facts of life, life does not end just because there seems to be more sorrow and pain. We can't just dismiss the fact that if we open our eyes and minds, the story still holds true: there are two sides to every story. So if this is the case, the other half of sorrow would have to be joy and happiness. We must remember that fact in order to keep fighting and break through the walls of sorrow.

It can be done, because I've done it and, believe it or not, I'm not the only one. I know that SAA deserves the credit because if it weren't for the group that I

(continued on page 8)

Feature

(continued from page 7)

attend, I wouldn't have tried to work as hard as I could to learn. It wasn't easy to trust the Volunteers from the outside world. Well, what would they think of me? I'm a convict, and convicted of CSC! But what I received was "open arms" and a healthy handshake.

Now this was confusing and exciting at the same time. You see, I found out that this problem wasn't mine exclusively, and I thought that if he had the courage to come to my prison and tell me, an inmate, that he has problems, then I would have to accept him as he accepted me and show him that, yes, I am shame-filled, and guilt-ridden, and I am willing to listen to him just as he was willing to listen to me. We didn't judge

one another, we got serious and said, "Hello, my name is Marty and I'm a Sex Addict," the greeting in return was "Hello Marty."

My friends in the group as well as outside of the group equally deserve my deepest thanks in my undying struggle to survive and willingness to bring my message to someone else that is in need. This was my time to begin showing myself as well as others that I will not be conquered by this addiction and you don't have to be either.

So now you want to know what SAA means to me? It means a brand new life. It's the life that's always been inside of me. There it is in a nutshell.

Sincerely,
Marty L.

Sobering Prayers

God, give us the grace to end the denial of the unhappiness in our childhood, in earlier years, and now; and give us the hope that will make us strong enough to seek and bring about that which will most truly make us happy.

~*~*~

God, we ask that you give us the safety to grieve what we must grieve and accept what we must accept, that we may find the energy to live the life that is available to us now.

From Priming the Pump, a pitcher full of prayers for recovering sex addicts

Feelings? by Glenn G.

Disconnected by pain,
Tuned out, buried,
hiding away.

Afraid to understand,
messages of put-downs,
emotions that kill.

You're not good enough,
just not worthwhile,
now hide really good,
behind my smile.

I have no value,
to deserve another's love,
so tune out the hurt,
and quiet the soul.

Now plug in addictions,
to soothe the savage beast,
Or co-dependence,
to find a little peace.

Who worries if into harm we do tread,
We don't know how
to think or feel.

Consider not the feelings of others,
how can we understand the battles they fight
we cannot connect, the risk is too great.

Stop the feelings! NO!
We must find them again
Risk to be human and love once again.

Fellowship Forum

Reaching Out from Australia

Hi, my name is Shane and I'm a sex addict. Things here are going very well. I have basically been single and celibate for over five years now. I put down drugs over six years and three months ago, then arrived at N.A. I was in the sickest sexually addictive relationship that I have ever had, at the time.

There came a day after one year and two months of being drug free that I knew if I went back and saw this woman one more time, I would be going off to the giggle farm. Period. So I didn't go back.

In hindsight, this woman was a lot like my mother, who is a rapist. Breaking this recycled

pattern of abuse has been hard. I want to be wanted for me, not for the fact that I could be used for someone else's sexual gratification. My mother is a particularly evil, sick, manipulative woman who is seriously into mind games. I no longer permit myself to be used and abused by her or anybody else.

The shame and the pain of the sexual emotional and physical abuse is the fuel for my addiction. Pain, suffering and grief are temporary denial and its consequences are forever.

Love you all.

Shane H.
Victoria, Australia

Sobering Thoughts

*Recovery: My daily choice, my daily responsibility.
God's strength, God's speed.
Carry on or carrion.*

28 28 28

*Five Daily Chores of Sobriety:
Knees, Big Book, Meeting, Sponsor, Knees*

In Memorium - Dennis K.

My name is Mark, and I have been a member of SAA for nearly five years. In the time that I have been attending meetings, I have met many people who have had an impact on my own recovery. One of the most memorable people I have met was Dennis K. He was the first person I ever knew who identified that he was HIV positive. When he identified his condition at the Hope & Recovery meeting in Grand Rapids, he got my full and undivided attention. Here was a man who had experienced my own great fear of AIDS. I, through my behavior, was definitely a candidate to catch this disease. I got to know Dennis through our contacts at meetings and retreats. I learned that this slightly built Gay gentleman had courage far above what is commonly found in people in our fellowship, and many people in SAA have a lot of courage. Dennis was truly above average, though. I learned just recently that he would visit schools to share with children the reality of his condition. I have shared my story with many people, but they have all been in recovery. Dennis was willing to go the extra mile, in the hope that others might not become infected.

Dennis was scheduled to be a presenter at the 1995 "Willing to Grow" convention. About two

weeks before the convention, he went in the hospital with respiratory problems. I called him to wish him well, just prior to the convention. He expressed his regrets at not being able to attend, and I told him that I would give him a report on how things went after I got home. Dennis had been scheduled to conduct the AIDS/HIV workshop.

When I got home and tried to call, I did not receive an answer at the hospital. When I called his home, I learned that Dennis had died on May 29, 1995, the day that the conference ended. He was buried that following Thursday, and many people came to his funeral. Several SAA members attended. He was 34 years old.

I never heard Dennis complain about his condition. In fact, I don't remember him complaining about much of anything, really; only, that it took his becoming HIV positive to cause him to go looking for recovery. I will always remember him as a true brother in recovery, one who could always see the good in things, no matter how bad the appearance. He was compassionate toward others, and forgiving to those who slighted him. He never asked for any special favor or consideration related to his condition.

We in Michigan will remember him. Dennis K. was a beautiful man.

Mark N.

Announcements

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? <input type="checkbox"/> MAC <input type="checkbox"/> PC <input type="checkbox"/> Modem?
Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

Some projects we're working on:

- *Plain Brown Rapper*—increase the distribution of the *PBR* in local areas and intergroups, and finding local group or intergroup news contacts • A booklet on sponsorship • A short guide to working the 12 Steps • A book on the 12 Steps (to be published in 1997) • Translations of our literature into Spanish and French (we are looking for translators as well as reviewers of material already translated) • Do you have any ideas for new literature?

Send us your ideas or literature you have published for use by your meeting or intergroup.

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.