



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

Carrying the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers.

AUGUST 1996

Vol.8, No.8

In This Issue...

3 Recovery Toolbox

In Our Toolboxes: A Cleveland meeting shares the contents of their collective toolboxes.

Jigsaw: a reflection on life in recovery, by Louis D.

Sarcastic Wit as a Defect of Character: a poem by Rich W.

6 Feature

Parts of a Recovery Story, by Richard P.

A childhood experience remains a lifelong element of one member's addiction.

8 Fellowship Forum

Convention Brings Circle of Hope and Resilience, by Tom R.

Sharing his experience of the 1996 National Convention, Tom spreads the circle of hope to the entire membership.

Returning Home: a poem by Francie E.

*I was to sit quietly when in doubt,
asking only for direction and strength
to meet my problems as [my Higher
Power] would have me.*

AA Big Book, p.13



Welcome!

Yes, we're on the net!

If you haven't had the chance to check out the home page and other web pages produced by our SAA member efforts, what are you waiting for? A computer with an Internet connection? OK, you've got a good excuse, but if you do get online, give it a look, and pass along the web address to your friends in recovery wherever they may be: <http://www.sexaa.org>. Below is a screen shot of the home page.

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window with the address bar set to <http://www.sexaa.org>. The page content includes:

- Sex Addicts Anonymous**
- Welcome to the homepage of Sex Addicts Anonymous(tm)
- Sex Addicts Anonymous, S.A.A., is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so they may overcome their sexual addiction and help others recover from sexual addiction or dependency.
- Here's some information related to sexual addiction:
 - [What is sexual addiction?](#)
 - [Are you a sex addict?](#)
- To get more information about S.A.A. and our program:
 - [The S.A.A. Program](#)
 - [Finding a nearby S.A.A. meeting](#)
 - [Literature on Sex Addiction](#)
 - [The 12 Steps of S.A.A.](#)
- Miscellaneous:
 - [How to contact S.A.A.](#)
- To read comments on this homepage

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows the time as 8:58 PM.

The *Plain Brown Rapper* (PBR) is published monthly by the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

The opinions expressed in any article are those of the author and not necessarily those of SAA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest.

Subscriptions are available in the United States and Canada for \$12/year in U.S. funds. Subscriptions sent to an overseas address are \$24/year in U.S. funds.

To subscribe to the *Plain Brown Rapper*, send name and mailing address, along

with a check or money order made out to ISO, to:

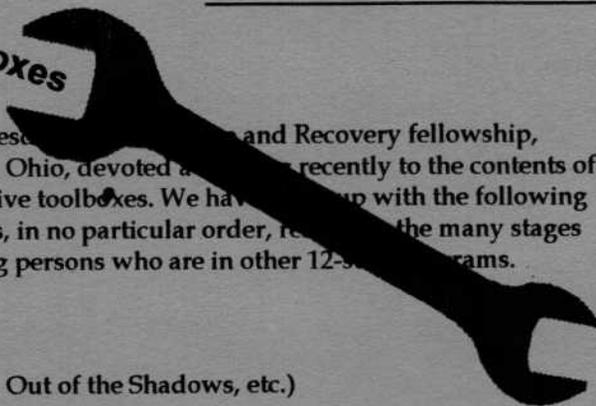
Plain Brown Rapper Subscriptions
ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949,
Houston, TX 77270

Send all questions and comments about subscriptions to the ISO of SAA. You may also call the ISO office at (713) 869-4902, or send e-mail to info@saa-recovery.org.

Send all submissions for publication to the Editor, c/o ISO of SAA. You may also send submissions via e-mail to EditorPBR@aol.com.

In Our Toolboxes

We of the Tuesday Club and Recovery fellowship, Cleveland, Ohio, devoted a recent meeting to the contents of our collective toolboxes. We have put up with the following as the usable contents, in no particular order, from the many stages of recovery, including persons who are in other 12-Step programs.

- 
- √ The 12 Steps
 - √ The 12 Traditions
 - √ Reading (Big Book, Out of the Shadows, etc.)
 - √ Regular attendance at meetings
 - √ Checking in at a meeting
 - √ Fellowship after a meeting (going out for coffee, etc.)
 - √ Writing workshops
 - √ Setting boundaries (no pornography, hands-off, etc.)
 - √ Keep mentally busy, including hobbies
 - √ Meditation
 - √ Avoid isolation
 - √ Not today (stay sober on the 24-hour plan)
 - √ Trusting fellowship members, and maybe a few others
 - √ Using all available self-esteem
 - √ Be easy on yourself
 - √ Focus on recovery, not the illness
 - √ The "3-second look"
 - √ After the "3-second look", saying to self "Thank you, God, for allowing me to see that beautiful person."
 - √ After the "3-second look", focus on the fact that you're looking at a person
 - √ Prayer
 - √ Telephone (both incoming and outgoing calls)
 - √ Learn to relax without being triggered
 - √ Learnt o substitute some particular thought for triggering mental images
 - √ Excuses to get out of a triggering situation – an escape plan
 - √ Create a safe place for yourself
 - √ Really trying to see others as persons, not sex objects
 - √ Ability to feel healthy shame in advance
 - √ Bottom lines, redefining bottom lines, strengthening bottom lines
 - √ Awareness that others have succeeded
 - √ Expand the fact that meeting is not a pick-up zone to other places

Recovery Toolbox

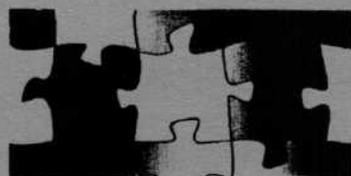
- √ Studying the [proposed] abstinence statement
- √ Trusting your own positive thoughts and intuitions
- √ Get out, get fresh air, but not in cruising places
- √ Gratitude list
- √ The Promises
- √ Building relationships within the fellowship
- √ Willingness to be single, if necessary
- √ Hope
- √ Externalize feelings, in writing or out loud
- √ Therapy
- √ Analyze triggers
- √ Live in the here-and-now, not in fantasy
- √ Be happy with who you are
- √ Be truthful to self and others
- √ Work to overcome asocial tendencies; most of us are not antisocial
- √ I may be an addict, but that's not all I am
- √ Think and speak of the addict in the third person
- √ Substitute the pleasure of sobriety for the pleasure of addiction
- √ Journaling
- √ Sponsors and sponsorship
- √ Spot check inventory
- √ Serenity Prayer
- √ HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)
- √ Healthy humor
- √ Consciously desexualizing language; avoiding sexy jokes and allusions
- √ Focus on the message, not the mess
- √ Think it through till the morning after
- √ Act as if
- √ Feel the feelings
- √ First things first, including recovery
- √ One day (or minute) at a time
- √ This too shall pass
- √ I may have done some awful things, but that does not make me awful
- √ If you must be in a slippery spot, take an aware friend with you for safety
- √ If you become uncomfortable in a situation, say so.



Sincerely,
Tuesday Evening Hope and Recovery, Cleveland

Jigsaw by Louis D.

I'm journaling about the "JIGSAW". Our lives are basically like a jigsaw puzzle from the time we are born until we die. We put the various pieces of the puzzle together as we go through life. At times, we come to pieces of the puzzle that just don't seem to fit. The message is "If it doesn't fit, don't force it. Let go and let God." There are enough pieces of the puzzle for us to work on without our getting stuck on one piece of the puzzle. We can go on,



and then turn our attention to other areas of our lives. The various pieces of the puzzle will come together, *sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly*. Oftentimes, almost magically, pieces of the puzzle come together that we never thought possible and we came to realize that *God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves*.

Louis D., New Orleans

Sarcastic Wit as a Defect of Character by Rich W.

For lack of a childhood paradigm of anger expressed in health, the immature choice of a witness to rage may be a sarcastic wit. Sarcasm, an accepted form of humor preferred by the intellect keen, enhanced by lexicon quick and thick, linked to the arrogant being. 'Tis a versatile tool in varied realms, toxic as a scorpion's sting, a method of taking away the helm, a potent weapon to bare.

Used in dreadful sneak attack veiled as a jeweled haven, hidden in layers of inside jokes, as sharp as the stab of a stiletto. Shame lashing out from the insecure, nourished by myth-beliefs, like a sense of unloveability by those who feel less than whole.

Though roving defense unneeded, unaware victim confused, vicious affront unheeded, private assault diffused.

Sarcasm is seen as less overt, a vicarious means of verbal abuse, passively subbing for fearful confronting. Why not just say, "I'm angry because...?"

Feature

Parts of a Recovery Story

by Richard P.

I wish to thank Louis W. for his article which gave me courage to write this for possible use as a Feature.

I was raised in a highly abusive home, but was never sexually abused by anyone. I stress this because it is crucial to the story: I was not sexually abused by any person. Verbal and emotional abuse were constant in the home; my father had a vocabulary which included every negative word to fit every occasion and could "put down" anyone anytime, and usually did. Mother, of course, became co-dependent and could not protect us from him or undo his nastiness.

At the age of six, we moved to another house in a new neighborhood. The first or second day there, I was hiding behind the big old record player, no one home but mother and me, with my knees up under my chin and my arms around my legs in what I now know to be a very defensive pose. How long I sat, I know not, but I felt a strange sensation in my coccyx (tailbone) and squirmed a bit to make it stop. I remained sitting, empty-headed, and again felt the same sensation in the coccyx. I got up and went to the front door. Then there is a blackout for a little bit until I am

standing in front of the little girl next door who is screaming her head off and holding her hands as though to protect her crotch. All of this is crystal clear memory, and I have known of the memory constantly. From that time on my life was sexualized, frequently in a harmful way. I've never really suffered any legal or outside consequences for my actions, but have driven friends away and have been very lonely and self-abasing.

Over the years, I've had many curious extrasensory perception (ESP) experiences which were obviously meant to protect me from myself, others, and the law. One time, I was to be ambushed and killed by the gang of friends of a person with whom I had never perpetrated but with whom I was afraid I might. I was 'warned' and left.

So, by the age of 40, I was well into the study of ESP, which led me to the study of Eastern religions and philosophies. From this I have developed a very positive spiritual outlook and belief, as the churches I was raised within were not satisfactory. Equally, or more valuable, I discovered the cause of the strange sensation in the coccyx at the age of six and the cause of the ESP.

In Yoga, there is a force called the kundilini which sleeps in the coccyx. It is awakened by certain kinds of meditation and rises up through the spinal column, eventually to the top of the head. On this journey, it passes through the seven centers where the physical being is connected to the spiritual being. The first center is related to safety, security, earthiness. The second is related to all creativity, including sex.

With that sitting at age six, I activated these two centers and opened myself up to protective ESP, to sexual depravity, and a great creativity. I have been creative in almost every endeavor I have undertaken, including my professional career, and am considered to have great charisma.

Finally, about three years ago, having not perpetrated, but having been totally crazy for ten years, my counselor insisted that I join SAA (at age 61). With my new learning, outlook, and newfound serenity, it finally soaked in that the kundilini experience at age six

caused, or triggered, my truly weird and dangerous acting-out, perpetrating, danger freak activities, and tempting death everywhere.

I've never really suffered any legal or outside consequences for my actions, but have driven friends away and have been very lonely and self-abasing.

I am no longer a perpetrator. I see young people as individuals who have a right not to share their bodies with me, with whom I am no longer driven to violate. I now feel rather sane, but I don't know what to do with the kundilini experience. It is so weird that it makes me feel weird. I know of no one who has had a similar experience. If there is anyone out there who has, at any age, had similar experiences, let me know.

Richard P.
P.O. Box 167
Lorain, OH 44052



Lord, we have thought of our sexual acts as shameful and have done them in hiding and sometimes in terrible isolation. Grant that we may learn to rely on You and our dear lovers, that our deepest needs, like those for respect and closeness, may be better satisfied, and by founding our sexual sharing on genuine intimacy we may not be ashamed.

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

Fellowship Forum

Convention Brings Circle of Hope and Resilience

By Tom R.

*"From our similarities,
we connect;
from our differences, we learn"*

Virginia Satir, self-esteem writer

How can I explain the clarifying spirit of an SAA convention? How do I translate, in words, a spiritual "climate of hope" to those not there to feel it? How can I carry back an inspiring message to sex addicts who still suffer? How could I give them value received for the money I got to be a delegate to Minneapolis? For me, the convention was worth several thousand dollars worth of therapy.

My answers often sound like out-of-the-book clichés, but I view many 12-step principles as inspired, eternal wisdom. They cut across major religions and keep hope alive amid our noisy, confusing TV Tower of Babble. The convention theme was aptly called "Circle of Hope" and subtitled "Return to Our Roots". Those ideas represent, for me, future hopes facilitated by gently examining my life and letting go of past evil angels, the ones who made me feel less than and dragged me off track, often to seek "love" in the wrong places.

The convention workshops, marathons and fellowships expanded the meetings we all came from. Like our home groups, the setting was mostly an island of calm, honesty, hope, and resilience amid the bustling city without. Not distracted by life's everyday crisis, we pondered both individual and SAA problems—how can we better help each other? Sometimes that brought tears and sometimes visible signs of relief.

The convention brought together 250 SAA ers (probably 85% male) and 75 COSAns (even including a few males) who listened, shared, laughed, wept, hugged, sang, ate, picnicked, and healed together. The atmosphere was a mixture of intellectual, informational and emotional. We discovered one more time that we were not alone, not as terminally unique as we had always thought. Our eleven-member Southern California delegation included two national officers who came to the convention four days early.

SAA has chapters in six foreign countries now. I spent time talking to the Mexican and Scottish delegates and discovered, once again, that sex addiction knows no boundaries. Accents or languages differ, but the disease doesn't discriminate by skin color,

Fellowship Forum

country of origin or sexual preference. Humanness and a search for love and acceptance connect us all. "From our similarities, we connect; from our differences, we learn", wrote Virginia Satir; this was the case at the convention.

Officially, my part of the action was as a delegate and leader of a workshop called "Self-Esteem and the Addict". Self-esteem is a subject I've pursued for the past 10 years, triggered by the suicide of my son's good friend. That literally mind-blowing event sent me to find ways to "fix" my "at-risk" son's behavior. In working another 12-step program, I found that the answer was not co-dependently changing my son's behavior, but my own. (I'm happy to report that 12 years later, both he and I are doing much better.) I am a 66-year-old retired educator, in SAA three and half years. I was, and still am, though to a lesser extent, leading a double life. My favorite definition of self-esteem says that a person feels lovable and capable (and thus worthwhile). I always felt capable but never lovable (and only marginally valuable).

Emotionally and intellectually, I split in half. I was heaven and hell, doing good works and hanging out in degrading places en route. I learned to wear a mask and build a wall around me. My internal thermostat was often on the edge of blowing. I grew up in what I call "an icehouse", where

emotions were not openly expressed. I asked rebellious questions. One major message I got was "You shouldn't feel that way." Even today, I constantly check to see whether I "should" feel the way I do—and I am often paralyzed while I decide. I mistrust my immediate judgment. Even in SAA meetings, I have a sense that I'm feeling wrong, and my internal addict says, "So what? Medicate! Nobody needs to know."

One important, interesting convention session dealt with the development of a "Large Book" resembling AA's "Big Book", parts of which are often used at meetings. Since its founding in 1978, SAA has not produced its own book. Cooperators in this project are the ISO Literature Committee and Pat C., one of SAA's founders and a practitioner of wide note.

Another major childhood message from my athletic father was "You are not a real man." I needed glasses, couldn't see the damn baseball, and was chosen last for all the teams. These and other negative messages contributed to periodic bouts of shameful binges and irrationality.

Some convention highlights for this addict: At 3 am, I finally came clean at a five-hour mara-

Fellowship Forum

thon, giving the whole version of a story I told earlier only in part. I was followed by another sufferer, whose story was startlingly similar though his skin color was different and his residence was near another ocean 3,000 miles away. We hugged and told each other to take care of ourselves, that more would be revealed. It helped. Later, I held a sobbing fellow sufferer who confessed that he, like me, felt like less than a "real man". However, unlike me, he felt a certain perverse pleasure in being beaten and urinated upon; he felt he deserved it. I told him he did not need to be punished for being human and he told me, "I wish I could talk to my father like I am talking to you. He always made me feel bad about myself". (Yeah, I know that one well. Once Dad shoved me into a pool with the words "sink or swim." Guess who sank and had to be dragged out before a crowd? Does that make me "less than"? God doesn't make junk. I knew that, but I didn't always believe it.)

There was a workshop on "Gays and Straights Together", which made me focus on similarities and ways to accept all our parts — which after all, exist on some sort of continuum. Our modern world gives mixed messages about masculinity and femininity.

How is a real man supposed to behave? What is the silent

message of the Marlboro Man: act too tough to care either about the dangers of lung cancer — or feelings? Be rough and tough — and count your manliness by the number of notches on your gun, the scores you made on and off the field? Is slaughter, rape and pillage the way to Superheroism, with cavemen and traditional soldiers? Should real men be offended by the idea that true males might be kind, gentle and sensitive? As I learned it, God forbid that I should cry.

Many of the 28 workshops involved "How To's" of effective meetings: e.g., "Working With Others", or "Gearing Meetings toward Helping and Reaching the Newcomer". A couple dealt with connecting addicts on the Internet. (SAA has a homepage now.) Some workshops were very heavy: "One Family's Struggle with Suicide", "Rapist/Rapee: My Story as a Recovering Sex Offender", "Being a Gay and HIV Person in Recovery" and "Couples in Recovery". On Sunday I considered attending "Child Abuse from Both Sides", but chose instead "Toning and Chanting", and connecting with fellow addicts in learning about the traditional native, Buddhist, and Christian methods of connecting with their Higher Powers.

The keynote stories of Pat C. And several other convention attendants moved the audience, sometimes to healing tears. Some

Fellowship Forum

mystic bond of empathy, vicarious or otherwise, occurred.

I have rambled on too long here and didn't report my own workshop, "Self-Esteem and the Addict". That can be the topic of a future article, as well a questionnaire I developed to help people focus in on their strengths, as well as their weaknesses. One way of looking at the question of self-esteem is to regard it as our own self image, self concept and feeling of self worth. In short, it is the inner image that shines through to us when we look in our own internal mirror. One danger is that sex addiction can overshadow, in our mind's eye,

all the really excellent parts of our self-report card. But on that issue, more will be revealed.

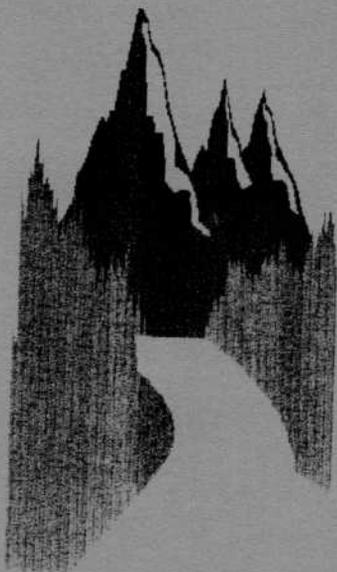
Thanks to all who knowingly or unknowingly contributed to my convention attendance. I learned much—and hope that in various ways, I can pass some of my experience (warts and all), strength and hope back to sufferers known and unknown. May God grant us all the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference. Take care of yourself. Be well. Keep coming back. May the force be with you.

Tom R.

*reprinted with kind permission from
The Outer Circular, June, 1996*

Returning Home by Francie E.

Who am I, this bit of skin and bone?
Flesh embodied spirit, a feeling being
with free will, too.
Who am I, this willful being?
Creature of God with a destiny.
My destiny unfolding in chosen paths
like a mountain stream
now across rocks or sandy bed
then stirring deep mud bottom
where all seems black
lifted up again purified
through twelve layers of sand.
Where to now oh Stream Maker?
You have revived my life again
in this Circle of Hope, where I
mingled with other streams.
Gently lead, guide this work of Yours
until I am poured into the
Great Ocean of Your Being!



Announcements

FRIENDS OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE (FOLC)

Your Feedback is Requested

SAA Homepage Available on the Internet

<http://www.sexaa.org>

The SAA homepage is in a developmental stage. We need feedback from the fellowship of SAA to assist the Literature Committee, and the entire SAA fellowship, in carrying our message of hope.

If you are able, please surf on over to the WorldWideWeb site listed above. Remember that the site is still under construction and only with your feedback and input can we give it shape and direction as guided by the conscience of the fellowship.

You may e-mail comments to:

Jerry B., ISO Office Manager (info@saa-recovery.org)

or

webmaster@sexaa.org

You may mail comments to:

Jerry B., ISO Office Manager

P.O. Box P.O. Box 70949,

Houston, TX 77270

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 ISO.

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