

# The Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

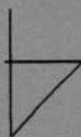
Volume 10, Issue 1

*Carrying the message of hope  
to the Sex Addict who still suffers*

February-March, 1998

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**BIG BOOK COMES CLOSER TO COMPLETION - - STILL NEED HELP YOURS !!**

Help With the "Large Book"  
By Pat C.

Our fellowship is creating a "large book" which we hope will serve to guide us in our fellowship life. Core to this book is the stories of our members. We already have some contributions and others are writing theirs, but we need many more. Here are some of the topics we are looking for:

- \* Stories of how bad it was and what it is like now
- \* Stories which describe the withdrawal experience and how you got through it
- \* Stories about how sexual acting out is so misunderstood by the culture, families, churches, legal system, and therapists
- \* "New comer" stories which tell of how the fellowship helped when you first arrived
- \* Stories of individuals or groups that started between 1977 and 1985. (Our goal is to provide a picture of our history as a fellowship)
- \* Stories of any individual or group that shows what it takes to start a new group in an area with no resources
- \* Stories about long term recovery which show how learning and growth continue

We need stories that help to understand the following issues:

- \* The influence of the family of origin
- \* The impact of multiple addictions
- \* The importance of a spiritual life
- \* Co-dependency
- \* Recovering from slips and relapse
- \* Couples recovery
- \* Healthy sexuality

Some of these contributions will be longer (3500 words), and some will be short vignettes (500-1000 words). If you have interest in any of these topics or know something that would be helpful that we have not thought of, please contact us. Write a brief letter describing what you wish to contribute and we will send you instructions to help you in your writing. Address the letter to: "Large Book", Literature Committee, SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston TX 77270. Include your address, phone number and/or e-mail. If in doubt about whether something would be valuable, please check it out. We would be grateful for "passing it on"!

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# LETTERS - NOTES GOINGS ON.....

## NOTE FROM N.T.I.

The Northern Tier Inter-group [North and South Dakota] sends notice that the next NTI meeting will be the first weekend in April, Sat the 4th, Sun the 5th, and will be in Fargo, further info to be sent later as to place, time, etc. It would be great to have representation from each group, and all SAA members are welcome. [Ed note: Sec/treas Jim M. notes that Sioux Center, IA has a new group. Is it inferred that they [it] could be in the NTI if they wished, even if in Iowa???.]

Also noted that a few more contributions could be used and groups/members are encouraged to send them to NTI, P.O. Box 741, Bismarck, ND 58502.

They also have a lending library for those who may wish to borrow a book or two. Write the above address or call Dan J., President, at 701-250-0189 for more information.

If you are not in NTI and still wish to come, respond to the address or phone above since the next issue of the PBR will come out too late to run the information.

++++  
FROM CAROL T., IOWA:

She writes that the group has 10-12 regulars now and 2 women added to the group. 4 new male members.

"Such a sense of unity", she says, "A wonderful place to be in recovery!"

They have already had the first meeting to plan the Fall retreat!

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**DON'T FORGET..APR 3-4-5**

Twin Cities Intergroup Workshop on Spirituality and Healthy Sexuality by Jeff and Judy H. Open to singles, couples, gays, straights. Begins 7:30 PM Friday, Ends 1:30 PM Sunday. Cost \$85, \$75 before Feb 28. Write: TCIG Workshop, 3444 Garfield Av. S. Mpls MN55408 Phone: 612-471-0086.

# ANOTHER FORMULA FOR S.A.F.E AND HEALTHY SEXUALITY.....by Craig S.

I have lost count of the number of times I've heard the Abstinence Statement in meetings and the part of it that suggests healthy sexuality is possible to all who earnestly desire it. I've pondered what healthy sexuality means to me and have tried out various versions of my sex plan. I've read other people's definitions of what healthy sexuality means. I've listened to members' sharing what it means to them. Until recently, the concept was an enigma to me. As a sex addict, how could I possibly define what is healthy in the area of human sexuality?

Well, certainly by myself that seems impossible. And to some extent even working with sponsors it has been an unproductive effort. But the other day I had a dream in which I got a message from within. The main character in the dream was a man I barely know from another S-group fellowship, and he said, in essence, "In order to figure out what healthy sexuality is for you, you are going to have to experiment."

I'm one of those people who believes that my Higher Power sometimes speaks to me through dreams. Yet, particularly in the area of sex, I'm not going to act without continuing to listen for further guidance.

Then a few days later I was thinking about the SAFE formula, which Pat Carnes wrote about in *Out Of The Shadows*. He points out that there are signs which suggest sex could be compulsive. In short if the sexual behavior is Secret, if it is Abusive, if it used to manage Feelings, and if it is Empy,

then it is probably compulsive and addictive.

I think that is good information to consider as I continue my recovery. But what about the concept of healthy sexuality? The SAFE formula, as previously written, suggests what healthy sexuality is not. But, for me, what *is* healthy sexuality, and might the SAFE acronym not be a place to start with a definition of this, until now, elusive concept? Yes, I reasoned. I could be a place to start. So I offer now, on a take-what-you-like-and-leave-the-rest basis, another formula for Safe and healthy sexuality.

1. It is Shared. It is discussed with a sponsor or other program member, preferably before the act.

2. It is Affectionate and Affirming of the person or persons involved, either in a relationship with oneself or with a partner in a committed relationship.

3. Feelings are communicated before, during, and after the experience.

4. It is Empowering, Energizing, and Enriching to those taking part.

God, other people, and I know I have experimented with my sexuality before. After all, that's what led me to SAA. So, I want to be cautious about experimenting in this area of my life again. But, with the help of my Higher Power, the Steps, my sponsors, and other people in my program, perhaps I can begin to experience that which the Abstinence Statement suggests is possible to all who earnestly desire it.

Craig S,





*stepping into  
the light*



**R  
E  
C  
O  
V  
E  
R  
Y**

**The Eleventh  
Annual  
SAA  
International  
Convention**

**FUN & FELLOWSHIP**

VIRGINIA BEACH  
sand - water - sun  
VIRGINIA AIR & SPACE  
MUSEUM  
COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG  
living history  
COLISEUM MALL  
shopping in walking distance  
SATURDAY EVE. MOVIES  
MUSIC JAM  
bring your instruments  
TALENT SHOW  
depending on interest  
bring your talent !!

**FRIDAY EVENING**

Opening Celebration  
Opening Speakers, SAA & COSA

**SATURDAY**

Workshops [sessions 1-4]  
Dinner Banquet  
Keynote Speakers, SAA & COSA

**SUNDAY**

Workshops [session 5]  
Luncheon  
Joint Speaker, SAA & COSA  
Workshops [sessions 6-7]

**MONDAY MORNING**

Brunch  
Closing Speakers, SAA & COSA  
Fairwell and Closing Ceremonies

**MORE THAN  
30 WORK-  
SHOPS, SEM-  
INARS AND  
SPEAKERS**

**24 HOUR  
MEETING  
ROOM**

**MEDITATION  
ROOM**

**May 22-25, 1998  
Holiday Inn Hampton  
1815 West Mercury  
Blvd  
Hampton, VA 23666**

**Reservations  
800-842-9370  
fax-757-838-4964**

Discount Air Fare:  
Call US Air for reser-  
vations at:800-  
334-8644. Refer to  
Gold File number  
23570122 for dis-  
count.

**Registration Plans: For One person, [hotel not included]**

PLAN: [Postmarked by: Apr 1 May 1 At the Door

4 day-Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon	\$65	\$75	\$85
3 day-Fri-Sat-Sun	\$53	\$63	\$73
2 day-Fri-Sat	\$38	\$48	\$58
2 day-Sun-Mon	\$44	\$54	\$64

Registration fee includes full admission to the convention and its activities for those days indicated on the chosen plan. All must register to participate in all events. Meals included: Saturday [dinner], Sunday [lunch], Monday [brunch]. [Friday Delegate luncheon on Friday is separate, not a part of registration fee]

## POETRY...Just 2

### A CERTAIN SADNESS

Today something happened  
 somehow small but large  
 like the first leaf of fall  
 or the first fear  
 i conformed to rules  
 shorts gone forever  
 then pay demotion  
 \$18 to \$16  
 what has happened?  
 i could not summon the  
 righteous indignation which  
 can push away sadness.  
 i was asked to let go of a lifelong  
 crutch:  
 forgive father  
 i'm afraid to let go  
 but then i want to; I can sense  
 some peace beyond the deflation  
 some sanity beyond justification,  
 blaming  
 for all i've done or failed to do  
 To say "perhaps he was spiritually  
 sick  
 for me" I too have committed  
 atrocities  
 unforgivable sins.  
 Do I deserve forgiveness?"  
 Am I ready to receive it"  
 God I want you as a friend  
 no more do i want to pursue that  
 dark path  
 i want to let you in.

Jim H.

+++++

### LOVE after LOVE

*The time will come  
 when, with elation,  
 you will greet yourself arriving  
 at your own door, in your own mirror,  
 and each will smile at the other's welcome  
 and say, sit here. Eat.  
 You will love again the stranger who was  
 your self.  
 Give wine. Give bread. Give back your  
 heart  
 to itself, to the stranger who has loved you  
 all your life, whom you have ignored  
 for another, who knows you by heart.  
 Take down the love letters from the book-  
 shelf,  
 the photographs, the desperate notes,  
 peel your own image from the mirror.  
 Sit... feast on your life.*

Derek Walcott

## STEPS TWO AND THREE...

### "INSEPARABLE....."

#### Step 2

"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity".

#### Step 3

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of god as we understood god."

For me these two steps are inseparable. In believing that I can be restored by my higher power I then immediately have to, in no uncertain terms, give my life and will over to that higher power. If I believe that the higher power can restore me to sanity, yet keep my will and my life in my own hand, I am continuing the insanity that allows my addict to reign over me. **The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result.**

I have all my life in some way or another believed in a higher power. Since I got sober from drugs and alcohol, I have been on a steady and continuous path of spiritual revelation and growth. It was that path that lead me to this circle. My creator is a higher power in the simple fact that the creator has created all and lives in all. Before anything there was the creator or Great Mystery. This does not need to be defined, it just is. The beauty of the creator is that I am related to all things and therefore I am responsible for everything and no greater than anything. I am only great in the manner that I serve others and what I make of myself by using the power or "medicine" that the creator has given me. If I do not use my medicine, it is lost to creation because no one else possesses exactly what I have been given.

Making a decision to turn my will and life over is not easy. But the more I do it the easier it gets. The creator provides for me what I

need and shows me where I am to go on my path. I don't always get what I want, but what I need. Defining the difference between these two terms uncomplicates life quite a bit.

If I allow my will and life to be in the care of a higher power I am much better taken care of than if I try to do it by myself. I have such a limited perspective. Why not allow one who is more able to take care of me? It is not a cop out or a codependency. It is a beautiful dance of life with a partner that is a strong lead. I sometimes trip or step on toes but if I let myself feel the music of life, the dance can become effortless and ecstatic. Only when I struggle for control does it get difficult. I pray for guidance in what I do and say. And then I do it. I have to have the faith that I can recognize the creator directing my life. No lightning bolts or burning business, just acceptance that if I believe, what I do will be the right thing.

This has to come from the heart and not the head. God is not found through intellectualizing, but through a desire to be connected and then practicing that desire in all aspects of daily life.

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### NOTE FROM INDIA.....

Ali, on behalf of the Boon SAA group, sent thanks to the Black Hills SAA for the "helpful material" they received. Black Hills was enthusiastic about our contacts with the Boon group.

The group now has 5 members, 4 males, 1 female. "We have a lot of hope", he says, despite "struggles".

Here's hoping more groups will "stay in touch", especially with newly formed groups. !!!



# ALONE — LONLINESS — ISOLATION ANY RELATIONSHIP ??

xxx,

Just read your e-mail on loneliness. Its an interesting topic. In fact, so is a related one -- isolation. In some ways, loneliness could be as a result of isolation... but I have found that even when I am surrounded by people and family, I could also be lonely. So the first inclination a person would have to get rid of loneliness is to just be with other people. But as you suggest in your e-mail -- just the company is not enough.

Loneliness is a state of mind. It is not a physical activity like isolation. Sometimes they overlap. For example, two years ago, I went on a camping trip with my wife and daughter. One day, neither of them wanted to go hiking and I did not want to spend the day in camp. So I decided to go my self. I spent 4 or 5 hours on the trail hiking and climbing. How did I feel during that time -- isolated or lonely? Thinking about it now, I can see I was both. I was isolated (or should we say alone) since I was doing it solo. But I was also a bit lonely. And why? Because of all the excitement and beauty around me and no one to share it with.

This is where I think the spiritual approach of the program would help me. I have to realize and understand that a balanced life means that I have to be sometimes with people and sometimes by myself. It is no more healthy to be constantly with other people as it is to be constantly alone. The whole basic premise of recovery for me is to understand how unbalanced and out of whack my life was before I began recovery. My goal therefore is not to be a perfectionist in any one area -- not to be a master or an expert in just one area. Instead, I need to be just proficient in many areas. Its OK to be good a many

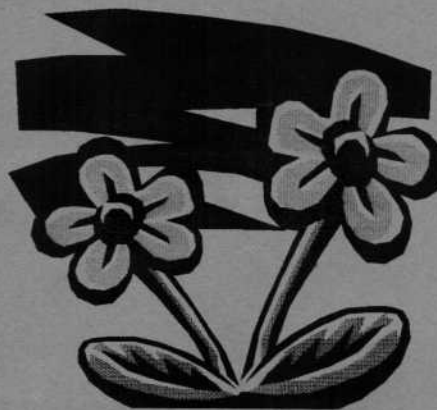
things and not the best at anything. So if you [sic] are alone most of the time, then you [sic] are out of balance and need to find a happy medium somehow (easier said than done -- I know....).

But as far as loneliness is concerned -- balancing out isolation with interpersonal involvement will not rectify that. Loneliness means not sharing. You [sic] have to become spiritually adept at understanding that you [sic] are never alone. You [sic] have a higher power or a God to share with. It may not be such a great feeling to say I have enjoyed something and will share it just with my higher power. But if you [sic] truly believe that you[sic] can always share your [sic] good and bad with at least God (if not also with other humans), then you [sic] will begin to feel less and less lonely.

As another suggestion, you [sic] may also try another medium -- a pet. When I am walking with a pet, I feel less isolated and less lonely. A pet is not a substitute for a human, but things seem to always go better with a pet than without anything.

Have a great weekend,  
Joel

[Ed note: The [sic] notations behind each of the "you's" or "yours" is to indicate that they are printed here as they were submitted, no inferences intended]



# "OUR GROWING EDGE"

In a letter from SAA fellow, Bob R.: ...Just a little information I garnered: Someone said at one of my meetings, "That those places that hurt for us are at our growing edge." The notion is worth thinking about. I know it's a hard pill for me to swallow, but I also know there is some truth there. That's why I'm beginning to say, "[Wife's name]'s actions towards me often hurt, however, she is probably my dearest friend because she calls me to growth & self examination." Most often I reject it & I refuse to accept her comments, because the pain is too much, but that is my problem... The Buddshist teachers brought this to my attention, when they said something to the effect that your enemies are your best friends, not your mothers & fathers. Your mothers and fathers protect you from harm and tryto smoothyour path for you. ...Your enemies challenge & call you to be more than you are and promote growth on your path. ...I just had to pass [this] on, for whatever it is worth...  
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Dear: [name--of person in the fellowship who had reached out...],  
In spite of the storm, we have the Right To Take Care Of Ourselves. We don't always have to have the answers. We don't always have to be there for others. Having the right to take care of ourselves also means having the right to make mistakes. The beautiful thing that I've learned in recovery is that I now have a CHOICE. Choice was not present when I was in denial and full blown addiction. We can be grateful today, in spite all of life's odds, because we have the right to take care of ourselves with...family of origin; friends; God; work; food; sex...(any thing else you can fill in that causes stress.) Be gentle, get hugs from those you trust, call people that are close when you just want and need to vent...LOUIS D.

**FROM THE INSIDE....."I EAGERLY AWAIT EVERY ISSUE OF THE PBR"..... "for my RECOVERY TOOLBOX"**

Dear Sir:

I eagerly await every issue of the PBR as it is a valuable tool in my recovery toolbox. For those of us who are incarcerated every issue certainly expands our circle of recovery by providing insight into our growing fellowship.

All of your hard work and dedication to duty is greatly appreciated by me as the Literature Committee works on its full agenda. I also like the three column layout as opposed to four, and the latest policy on continuation of articles.

After entirely too much procrastination, I have finally written another article I hope you will find acceptable to print in a forthcoming edition. I you recall, I sent the story, "My name is John R.: which was published in the January 1997 issue. As I've done before, I am giving you an unconditional release to use this article as you see fit, editing it as required to maintain the high standards of the PBR.

With regards to any possible editing, I am not sure how the derogatory verbal abuse comments such as "baby raper" and "tree Jumper" [so common in prison] will be received by our membership at large. If you deem these terms to be in bad taste or offensive to some, please feel free to revise as necessary.

Someday I hope to be able to attend some of the functions and gatherings listed in our PBR. I was very active in AA and see no reason why I cannot continue this along with our fellowship once paroled. My long range goal is to meet some of you face-to-face and become a viable member of the team.

Sincerely, /s/ John R.

Story.....

I send my greeting from inside the fence of the Trusty Division at a Michigan prison. During the summer of 1995 I wrote a letter to SAA's old Minnesota address that I had found in a prison library book

only to have it bounce around the country to Houston, Texas, then back to my area's prison outreach committee chairman, and finally in to the hands of the man who would become my pen sponsor. For the first time in my life I now had someone who could relate not only to my sexual addiction, but to the solution as well. As we shared our experience, strength and hope with each other the fears of my past disappeared as that awful feeling of loneliness vanished.

I was becoming free on the inside - free to fully participate in my recovery - free to help others - free to be me.

The road of recovery has taken many twists and turns, having been in AA for over twenty years prior to my arrest and imprisonment for criminal sexual conduct. During those alcohol free years I had neglected to "practice these principles in all of our affairs" as stated in the AA twelfth step. I had become complacent and used the AA program only to the point of feeling comfortable with not drinking while practicing avoidance behavior and being afraid of any real or imagined consequences of my sexual addictions either to myself or on others. Fear had become my prognosticator. Fear told me if I looked at my addictions I'd be ostracized; if I didn't I'd risk acting out. Can anyone also relate to the irony of this Catch-22 situation?

While I was attending sex offender group therapy, my local support group was enlarged and I felt very secure even though I was in the topsy-turvy environment of a prison where a murderer is the king of the castle while a pedophile is the scum in the dungeon. Fellow inmates will understand as we are often verbally abused with terms that range from baby raper to tree jumper, or worse, physically assaulted. Fortunately, I have not experienced the latter, and how I

deal with the former is directly proportional to where I am in our program of recovery.

Upon completion of group therapy, I found myself in a situation many convicts can relate to - a decrease in our housing security level and an immediate transfer to a minimum security facility. Gone were my familiar and comfortable surroundings, being replaced by many strange faces and no local support group, a situation reminiscent of my days as a fish [prison newcomer].

More than ever, I really needed my meetings in print: SAA's PBR and other area newsletters, AA's Grapevine, letters from my SAA sponsor, and telephone calls with my AA sponsor, including the newsletters from MI-CURE and CURE-SORT which all helped to alleviate my real or imagined fears.

Soon I found myself in the Trusty Division of another prison and as I searched for inmates to start a dialogue of recovery, I started to build my own circle of recovery around me. While it's true that suspicion, distrust and fear permeate prison life, I have found some of those precious few who are trustworthy and desire to continue in their recovery as well. My pen sponsor has taught me to be selectively vulnerable in sharing with others, establish healthy boundaries and to trust more and more in my Higher Power.

Recovery is always available to those of us who want it and are willing to go to any length to get it. As we continue to use whatever means at our disposal we will realize the fruits of the AA paradoxes: WE SURRENDER TO WIN; WE DIE TO LIVE; WE SUFFER TO GET WELL; WE GIVE AWAY TO KEEP; any of which much could be written about as we start FREE ON THE INSIDE.

A brother in recovery,

+++++John R.+++



## PAIN GRABS MY ATTENTION

Pain is a great attention getter...

It's a long story but points to all facets of my life as a recovering addict.

Day one, Wednesday, September 24th, minus 4 months. It was a hectic May, June, July, trying to finish the new downstairs bath before our 10 motorcycling persons arrived to rent our home for 5 days during the Sturgis, SD rally; beginning August 1st. A [step] daughter's wedding mid-July took my chief hired hand, i.e.; my wife, for several days in preparation and ceremony.

August 1st; the riders arrived; we moved out to Minnesota [500 miles] for a week and a 50th H.S. reunion [I'm old!]. Returned to the Black Hills. August 22nd; back to Minnesota for the 90th birthday of my primary childhood care-giver, an aunt. Return. Relax a few days; wife returns to work.

September 1st; begin newsletter, but not too diligently. By the 20th, all stories in, ready to put together. Day one.

Had a pain in my left abdominal area, digestive system upset, continued layout of newsletter. Borrowed son's van for trip to Panorama, Iowa "S" retreat. Day two; worse pain. Finished the newsletter about 10 PM, readied for mailing on Friday. At midnight I was still loading the van with tools, parts, clothes, musical instruments, and other sundries to take to Panorama, then to Minnesota to harvest sugar beets for 3 weeks or so. In bed by about 1:30 AM.

Up at 6; Dave is pounding on the door at 6:20 ready to cut for Panorama. A quick bye-bye and we're off, pain and all. It's worse, but I have to go. I will improve.

We're 160 miles down the pike looking for an oasis with gasoline but too late, I ran dry. The Explorer pulled me to the station and we filled. We started again but the van would only get up to 50 or so, then cut out. Then 30, then 10, then stopped. [I found later the van had been rolled in the water and

mud of Rapid Creek earlier in the year and the tank had not been cleaned--I needed a filter but didn't know it].

Long story short: Dave and the Explorer pulled the van and trailer over 170 miles into Iowa where we met other SAA members. We broke the tow strap 3 times or so, once in heavy traffic: "are we having fun yet"? We then left the van to ride with others to Panorama. The pain did not go away.

How great to see everyone at the retreat! Old friends, new faces also. In bed by midnight or so. Not much sleep, pain doing a job.

Morning activities after breakfast [couldn't eat however]. Then Jim took me to town to get some OTC meds. All afternoon, no reprieve, worse. Jim drives me to a hospital E.R. forty or so miles away. Nearly 5 hours there. I did get a strong "shot" that gave me, when we got back, 5 hours of uninterrupted sleep. By 9:30 am Dave loaded me in the Explorer for the ride back home. I left the van in Iowa.

Day 6: Saw my doctor; "shingles", and not infection, was the verdict. They were bad she said, and profuse.

Day 51: Been in bed 16-18 hours per day since Day 6. Pain, depression, saturated with pain and other meds. No digestive system functions. Weight loss. Had several other x-ray-lab procedures, examinations for other problems. Nothing.

Same day: I took the vibrator to bed with me; it offered some relief to leg, arm, and back muscles. Can you let your mind wander a bit here, and see what other relaxation this might offer? And it did, for about 5 minutes. A Center-Circle behavior, held in check by HP for 7 1/2 years, now broken. A slip. Now there was other pain to contend with.

But it didn't hit for about 30 minutes; it was like my eyes were glazed over, my functions were au-

tomatic as I changed underclothes; I knew exactly who I would call, how I would tell my sponsors, my group, my wife. It was without emotion, until I got two of my sponsors [who were both at the same location at the time I called!! HP working]. Then the gravity of this situation hit me, and I crashed! Thank God for sponsors, for groups, for wives who support.

I'm still in some of the same pain I've had for 4 months; it's slowly ebbing. I have nerve damage to both legs, my walk is hampered; I've got a "handicapped" sticker. I lost 48 pounds and was 130 January 1st. Lowest since my freshman high school days. I vomited about 8 times to start the new year. I've done that before but only because of strong drink and much of it.

It seemed to be the turning point; I've got 10 pounds back, I eat, my system works better. But this 120 days of constant pain [with more to come it appears] has, I hope, taught me to treat myself better than I ever had before. They say "shingles" is a stress-related exacerbation of the chicken pox. Looking at last 8 months, it is painfully obvious the amount of stress I have placed on my body, mind, and spirit.

But that's how I am; perhaps how addicts are. I can always squeeze just a little more out of this bit of time. I can always procrastinate a bit since I [god] can get it done in less time, especially if I have a close-in deadline. I can do three or four things at once so time means less to me, no problem.

Pain caused my addiction. I looked for relief in it. I still look for relief. But it takes the support of loving caring persons in my life. The isolation of recent days in physical pain was no different than my isolation of spiritual pain in days gone by. I need my fellowship. I need to work my own program. I need to reach out to others who still suffer the pain of their addiction. I need to be aware of pain, of all kinds, lest I reach for the wrong medication.

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# BOUNDARIES .....?

## WHAT BOUNDARIES.....?

[Subject] rang the front door bell. [Subject] had rung the same bell on many occasions. I dropped what I had been doing each time, opened the door. There had been no invitation, no prior phone call to ask permission to arrive at a given hour, nor to ask me if it would be convenient. [Subject] came in with greeting, found a chair and sat, then talked. We talked. The conversation seemed today to somewhat imitate that of the last time. We were in the same recovery group so it seemed probable that one or more recovery issues might come forth for mutual edification and growth.

That means what's happening within, how we feel, what are our fears right now, what have we done, or feel like doing? What step [s] are we working? What trouble are we having with our programs? Is that why you came? For some sharing, for getting support? For giving me some support. Why was it you came to my door?

Is this a crisis visit, or one because "I'm in the area"?

The visits seemed to yield little except a series of "war stories" I had heard before, and were wearing thin. I mentioned to my wife that I was concerned about this. She reminded me that in the past I would have been happy to entertain most anyone who would drop in, whenever, wherever. Further, that I had been guilty of the same behaviors by walking into the lives of others, unannounced, even uninvited. As now I do remember past Ann Landers columns; it was a subject that appeared often. But **did I have the problem?** I did. And maybe, since I allow others to permeate my boundaries with impunity, I **still have the problem.**

We've heard of the "zipper on the outside" syndrome, which means that others always have access to me and can intrude on my life. And usually I was more comfortable with those persons who

also had outside zippers so we could come and go as our addictions prompted.

Recovery has made a difference, and it is apparent that **BOUNDARIES** are the protectors of my sobriety, and need to be practiced. I am not a recluse, nor do I mind a friendly visit occasionally, even if unannounced. But I must not come into your space without making sure all is agreeable, i.e; mutually agreed upon reasons for the visit.

The above is what **I should do** about NOT accessing YOUR zipper. I must also take on the ability to turn my own zipper around so that no one else can access it either. That takes continued practice.

How hard to say, "I'm sorry, I've some other activities I'm working on now, perhaps at another time; why not call me tomorrow?" It takes facing up to old guilt feelings. "He/she/they won't like me"; "That would be unfriendly and unkind"; "I don't want others to think I'm better than they are", are the familiar rings of old tapes, and old rules.

In recovery I need to take care of me. That means my space, my time, my body, my spiritual path, my home, my family. **BOUNDARIES** are necessary to my well being, and I need to respect them, and to see that others respect them. And--respect theirs.

[The above was submitted by a writer who asked to be anonymous]  
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## TRADITION TWO....

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as he/she may express him/her self in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

In the final stages of my addictive life, and even into the early stages of my recovery, my acting out behaviors were not just sexual, since I am an addict's addict; and I was addicted to about everything one can be addicted to.

During the "white-knuckle" era of my sexual problems, which was the 7 years before the big crash, the safest addiction for me to sort of "front" for the rest, was to be addicted to religion. In fact, I used this facet of life during most of my acting out days; it kept the heat off to a great degree.

I used the pulpit of Christianity to beat down my adversaries, even perceived adversaries. I used the scriptures to scrap with my church members, admonishing all within sight or earshot about the way their faith ought to be practiced.

This method successfully kept my eye off ME. And it kept a few others off balance enough that I seemed to "win a few battles" here and there. If I could recite chapter and verse [and I practiced all the time!], it was easier for me to be on the winning end of a scriptural argument. It was good to know that most of the Christians I knew did not pursue that kind of "book-learning" with any degree of perseverance.

But in recovery I had a harder time coping with this aspect of my disease. I also had developed a series of roadblocks to recovery by holding so tenaciously to my dogmatic positions.

As I began to "lighten up", and hold my recovery a little looser in my hand, the Spiritual aspects of the program became more the focus of my support. It came through my group, my sponsors, and others not in the program. The Power that moves the the fellowship is the Power that moves me - as an individual, and as a member my group. May that always be my "Ultimate Authority".  
Robert



### TRADITION THREE....

"The only requirement for SAA membership is the desire to stop compulsive sexual behavior"

As I read pages 139 and 140 of AA's "Twelve and Twelve", it is very humorous and the book itself says, "Maybe this sounds comical now." They were, of course, alluding to all the rules different AA groups had for accepting people into membership in AA.

Then on page 142 the issues of membership becomes even more "sticky" as an AA group looked at a prospective member who said he had "an addiction even worse stigmatized than alcohol." It rather sounds like some of these "multiple addictions" are **still** frowned on today in certain circles.

It seems that having someone in my group whose behavior is/was worse than mine, or who had "several addictions", would lower my character in the eyes of others who knew I had only ONE. And if I were "unequally yoked" with such a one, the "stigma" would do me in.

Thanks to that Higher Power what takes care of me, I am accepted into the fellowship without question, as long as I "say" that I'm a sex addict and desire to stop such compulsive behaviors. To take away my chance, or someone else's, might well, as the 12&12 says, "pronounce a death sentence" upon us.

I have to catch myself often having mental machinations about someone else's recovery, about their behaviors, their issues of life. Most important is that I **catch** myself, and **stop** being concerned about anyone's issues but mine.

We are all granted a place in sobriety for a purpose; it may seem abstract, or even not known. If we are diligent about our efforts, chances are it will be for the support of others at some future times and places.

Just for today, I'm glad I am accepted, maybe even acceptable!

Robert

## OLD HABITS - OLD RULES SAME - SAME

In the household of my family of origin there were rules. Nobody wrote them, they were not posted above the water-pail nor on the bedstead, but they were known to all. And for the most part, obeyed. The consequences were also known. And it didn't seem to matter what price our bodies had to pay, in fact our bodies probably never knew when they were paying a price. They had never known anything different.

When I [we, in the case of others in the family] learned something, i.e., a task, a behavior, a habit, it seems it was carried for life, or at least until it absolutely could no longer be adhered to. But the "knowing" the [activity, whatever] could no longer be adhered to was the enigma. How could we know what we didn't know? And if we did finally "know", how did we get the "courage to change the things we can"? Where did we get the "wisdom to know the difference" between what could and what could not be changed?

Of all my sexual acting out behaviors and being in recovery going on 9 years as a process of "curbing" this acting out, there appears another part of recovery. Some call it "Stage II", the **Living** of the life saved in Stage I. I'd suppose in this stage I would begin to notice how to better engage in healthy relationships, to have better boundaries, to take better care of my body. In my life, any of these new dynamics were hard to come by. I give you a small and seemingly insignificant example.

I have carried a "billfold" or "wallet" since I was 6 or 7 years of age. Much of the time the only thing in it was an I.D. card, a few pictures, and later a dirty drawing, and when I wanted to present a "macho" image, a condom. The latter might

have worn out just by the carrying but no matter, it still served its purpose.

And since I have pockets front and back, my handkerchief was in the right rear [with pliers]; jack-knife, comb, nail clipper, and primary set of keys were in the right front; loose change, secondary set of keys, [current] SAA Medallion, leather "teddy bear", were in the left front; and of course the "wallet" was in the left rear.

In these later years, there was more "junk" in the wallet [still not much "moola"] so it became fatter and fatter. Since my "gut" stuck out over my belt, my pants were worn lower than if the waist had been at the waist. This brought my "billfold" just to the left of my left hip bone, pressing on the gluteal [or whatever muscles those are].

Over the years, particularly as I was driving, and more particularly driving a vehicle with "bucket seats", I would notice the pressure of the wallet giving me some displeasure. Would you believe it's only these last 4 or 5 years that I would [sometimes, if the pain was unbearable] remove the wallet for the duration of the trip.

Read again the last 6 words above.

Would you now believe that **it has only been in the last two months that I finally moved that damned "billfold" to my right rear pocket?**

I speak for no one but me, but is this an addiction I'm in, or just what is going on that **MAKES CHANGE SO DAMNED HARD ??????**

I hope in your Stage II that you change your pain[s] in the butt long before I did !!!

An **OLD** sex addict.....

