

PRISON OUTREACH PROGRAM STILL IN NEED OF SUPPORT - VOLUNTEERS NECESSARY TO SUCESSFUL FUTURE

MIKE L. WRITES.....

Dear Member in Recovery,

My name is Mike L. At this year's SAA international convention in Hampton, VA, I agreed to continue serving as Chair of [this] Committee, and I am writing to ask for your help.

Over the years, SAA has developed several means of reaching out to the sex addict in prison who is still suffering. This includes group meetings similar to those on the outside, one-time presentations by an SAA member to a group of inmates, similar to what are known on the outside as "speaker meetings". Another powerful and very personal means of doing this kind of twelfth step work is by writing letters to individual inmates. This basically involves maintaining a correspondence with a prisoner [s] over a period of time.

The experience, strength and hope that a recovering SAA member can share with someone behind the walls can give an individual inmate a real potential for recovery. Especially in situations where prison regulations or lack of availability of volunteers may make it impossible to reach out to the prisoner in any other way. It is exciting for an inmate to receive a letter, especially if the inmate's family has turned their backs on him. And for me, I find it exciting to hear from those guys, listen to their stories, and watch them progress in the program.

It is interesting and rewarding, believe me. Please write to me at the address below. I will put you in touch with the regional coordinator for your region and will send you a short list of guidelines for writing to prisoners. The first guideline you

should observe is that you have access to a Post Office **BOX** that you can use for return mail. Do NOT use your street address. If you have no personal box, perhaps you can use your group or intergroup box. If no other alternatives are available, have mail sent to you at the ISO office; they will forward it to you.

If you have questions or have concerns about this new experience for you, please write; we'll help you get on with this important work! Thank You!

Very truly yours,

Mike L.

P.O. Box 27544

Houston, TX 77227-7544

OLD TIMERS HANG IN THERE, BUT NEW BLOOD IS NEEDED !!!

1998 PRISON OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Prison Outreach Committee had its annual meeting on Friday, May 22, after the conclusion of the Delegate Meeting for that day that preceded the start of the Eleventh Annual International ISO of SAA Convention in Hampton, Virginia.

Mike L., the chair, distributed certificates of appreciation to those regional coordinators who were in attendance: Arnold D., who has been regional coordinator of the Great Lakes Region; and Mike L., who is the regional coordinator for

the South Central Region, but who forgot to keep his own certificate and so returned it along with the others to the ISO Office, which will forward them by mail to the remaining regional coordinators.

The main activity of the committee meeting was to elect officers. The Prison Outreach Committee has four officers: the chair and three committee members. All four head up specific areas of service work.

Three of the members are returning from last year. Mike L. is going to stay on as chair and is in charge of letter writing. He said that he would send his annual letter looking for volunteers to write letters to inmates.

However, this year the letter will be published in the PBR as opposed to being sent as part of an ISO mailout, which will hopefully get it greater circulation, especially now that the PBR is going to be distributed free.

Mark N. is going to return as committee member in charge of meeting development. He tried to get a meeting started last year at a federal prison in North Carolina but was unsuccessful in doing so. He is going to try at that same unit again this year.

Paul W. is also going to return in his spot as committee member in charge of literature procurement. His job is to serve as liaison between the ISO and the regional coordinators in getting literature to inmates.

The fourth position is committee member in charge of volunteer recruitment. The person who occupied that position last year

..continued on page...3
chose not to return so at this time

(Continued from page 2)

there is nobody occupying the position. This position includes informing groups of the purpose of the Prison Outreach Program and generating interest in becoming a volunteer. Anybody who has an interest in taking this position may contact Mike L. at P.O. Box 27544, Houston, TX 77227-7544.

Sadly, Arnold D. announced that he was resigning his position as regional coordinator for the Great Lakes Region. Arnold has been very actively and visibly involved in SAA prison outreach for a number of years as a regional coordinator; he also served as chair of the ISO Prison Outreach Committee for several years. He will be missed. Fortunately, he does plan to continue his extensive correspondence with inmates into the future.

This concluded the formal activity of the meeting. Most of the rest of the time was spent in just talking about our collective experience, strength, and hope in being involved in prison outreach.

The next meeting of the Prison Outreach Committee will take place at the Twelfth Annual International ISO of SAA Convention in Los Angeles, California. It will most likely take place on Friday, May 28, 1999.

Volunteers are always needed to help in prison outreach. If you have an interest in being involved in any way, please get in touch with Mike L. at the address listed above.

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...."For it is not continuous drinking and revels...which make for a pleasant life, but sober reasoning, which examines the motives for every choice and avoidance, and which drives away those opinions resulting in the greatest disturbance to the soul...."

Epicurus... [341-270 B.C.E.] excerpted from his "Lettter to Menoeceus", one of over 300 works.

LETTERS..... FROM AROUND THE WORLD.....

Hello out there from Sunni the Sailor,

I know I said I'd write but so much going on since I've gotten home. [from convention]. I thought I'd write a note in the PBR and catch you all.

I have heard it said many times how important the grieving process is but I never thought I'd grieve a convention. But guess what? I sure am. When I was in re-entry "What's Next" workshop, Tom from Yorktown VA said, "What we have here is real". Those words have rang through my head for days. As I was the new kid at the convention I learned so many new things, policies, procedures, individuality, boundaries; progress, not perfection. It is true all [these] things have meant so much to me.

At the convention I really practiced new behaviors, adopted new attitudes. Since I have been home for a while it was like a wonderful dream, a great high, everyone showing respect for each individual with support through the healing process.

I really crashed when I got home. [I wanted to go back to that moment, this one is too painful].

Denial [Can I really use those same skills I learned there as here?]

Anger [I was enraged for living in such a secluded place as ND]

Depression [I had to literally talk myself out of bed each day just to show up for life on a daily basis]

Acceptance - I am at acceptance today, 3 weeks later. I think the only reason it finally happened was because 2 guys in my home group took me out for lunch after a meeting and confronted me gently "that I was not living in the here and now". WOW!. That [to me], is recovery in action. That brought home every thing the convention

was about; "Stepping Into the Light" of putting recovery into action.

I am still not up to par but I'm making progress. How about you? Please write.

Sunni W.
P.O. Box 368
Fargo, ND 58107-0368

[Sunni was elected to a 3 year term, at the Hampton Convention, as the Literature Committee member from the North Central Region]

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From Hyderabad, India
"But For The Grace Of God"
To ISO,

Hi! My name is Shira; I am a "sex addict". I thank all the staff and members of ISO on behalf of SAA Hyderabad for sending SAA literature. Really this will go a long way in spreading the message of SAA here.

We have celebrated May 31st as a "Gratitude Day" on the occasion of SAA completing one year. By the Grace of the Higher Power and your constant support and prayers, we entered our second year. We are focusing very much on carrying the message to addicts who still suffer.

Kindly keep all us in your prayers. Thanking you very much for all of us here; God Bless you All!

Yours Sincerely,
Shira

[a recovering sex addict]

[Ed note: We have published their address before but here it is again if you'd like to write to the Hyderabad group.] SAA,

P.O. Box 1337,
Malaket,
Hyderabad-36, A.P.,
India

[Also, in case you missed it, "Ali" from this group attended the annual convention in Hampton this past May.... Dedication? Yes!]

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[Ed note: This letter was sent to me at the PBR. It seems it was written to a dear friend, and a copy sent to

LETTERS: For those who write, they give to us all their Experience, Strength and Hope. And teach us how to help others in recovery, that we might "Pass it on". We give thanks!

What have we left out of this issue?? A bunch !

- ◆ No financials - not ready
- ◆ No "minutes of meetings"
- ◆ No PBR subscription form
- ◆ No "Lifeline Partners" form
- ◆ No list of Board and LitCom members

And only one retreat notice; here it is:

A one day retreat will be held in Eugene, Oregon on October 10, 1998. Joel D. is in charge. For info, call 541-342-5582. No further information.

The usual September retreat held at Panora, Iowa HAS BEEN CANCELLED! Message received after press time, this issue..

LitCom meets in teleconference on August 16, 1998. Input to Dave B. - c/o ISO office or e-mail, or PBR e-mail.

Looking for Sub-committee members for LitCom work. Any are welcome INCLUDING Prisoners who want to interface by mail! List of all Sub-committees next PBR.

Convention finances close to the belt this year, maybe negative. Makes donations to ISO even more necessary. PBR donations also welcome!!! It's free, but it costs, eh? .."As we've been blessed..." All finances next PBR.

We've got some complaints about the PBR having too much stuff about "business" and not ESH. For those who complain loudest, the PBR needs YOUR ESH. Whenever we have more ESH than business, we print the ESH. ie; this issue !

For your communication needs:
ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
713-869-4902
e-mail=info@saa-recovery.org
web=http://www.saa-recovery.org
PBR e-mail=pbr@saa-recovery.org

NOTICE TO ALL !!
We are trying to get this issue on the SAA Web-site. Try about Aug 20

us. Perhaps most of us would enjoy a letter like this when we're at a point of need. Or some input from a sponsor. We're only going to print the first initial of the addressee and the first letter of the name of the writer. It appears this letter was sent with much concern and love.]

"R",
All we have is TODAY. We can REFLECT on YESTERDAY'S and OBSESS about TOMMORROW'S. Whatever the feelings we are having TODAY should always be addressed. A big part of recovery, as you well know, is to deal what is going on inside, at the moment. Suppressing those feelings causes our addictions to seem to be the only choice...and then, we use. We use alcohol, drugs, sex, other people, food, gambling....things that cause pain to ourselves, over and over again. The insanity of this is that we try to do it, over and over, expecting different results. But we get the same results. How many times have we overeaten, then said to ourselves that we are never going to do that again? How many times has someone caused us emotional pain, and we revert to turning the pain into acting out with our addictions, thinking that the "numbing affect" we get will take care of us only to beat us down once again.

Once we realize that our drug of choice only Harms rather than Saves us, we learn to work through our feelings instead of going to the Instant Gratification of our addictions. This is not an easy process going it alone. But there are others who understand our anxieties and fears in dealing with our pain. These are the people that we need to turn to when we haven't got a clue. Working together with others is often our salvation. Letting others know is a major part of the battle. Go to those you trust, and share your pain. There is no problem too little, or too great, that cannot be aided by the support of others who care.

"L"
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"Letter to 'Dave R.' "[LitCom Chair],
Dear Dave,
Thank you for including me on Lit-

**Benefits of 12 Step
Service expressed by
former LitCom
member**

com check-in. I will be submitting the "Letter to the Psyche Community" as soon as Joe T. revises the letter from our intergroup editing. I feel that outreach helps those that might not be aware of SAA. The purpose of submitting the letter to Litcom is to have a standard letter of outreach to the Pyche Communities of all our members. The Intergroups of each region would mail the letter, along with p[amphlets and a "Meeting List" with times and addresses. This is a simple way to make ourselves know to [that] Community and their patients. I am attempting to write my story for submission to the Large Book. I feel that we all have something to contribute. My story in recovery is my life's salvation.

I appreciate all of the encouragement I have gotten from being an active member of Litcom. I feel like my service with Litcom has opened the door to writing for me. I started with a manual typewriter, I've wound up with MS Windows 95, E-mail, and access to the Internet through the Greater New Orleans Free Net. Through being a member of Litcom, I have learned new ways of staying abstinent, and gained the encouragement and validation I needed to let go of Toxic Shame. I know I am not alone because I have a family that grows and learns together. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. There is no doubt that my weakness has been strengthened through the strength others give to me in the program. I have been deeply moved by all of the support I have been given by Litcom members during my service as SE Region Rep and Secretary.

Louis D.
[Ed. Note: The "Letter" Louis speaks of has been sent to the LitCom. Also to note that the Black Hills Area SAA has done the same thing and will submit their document to LitCom as well. If there are others who are working on similar outreach, let us hear from you.]

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Poetry... The language of individuality... the self

To Those who touched my life:

I wrote this on a very long 12 hour ride back to Bloomington, Indiana on Monday May 25th. I feel that it accurately expresses how everyone at the convention touched my life. The first 10 days back were very difficult for me, [especially since I literally came back to an empty apartment], but now I have some renewed energy in my recovery because of the incredibly loving people I met that weekend. Thank you all.

Dana S.

Is This Love

How can I feel so much sadness after feeling so much joy? It breaks my heart and it hurts my head. Is this love that I'm feeling? Is this loss that I'm grieving? Am I out of my mind and where do I find peace for now? Is this pain only fleeting? Is this loneliness what I'm needing? Are these feelings the sanity I've been promised

for so long?

Just for tonight I need

hope, coming from a hand or arms to protect me and hold me tight.

But I'm home alone w/my heart beat echoing in this barren tomb w/beats of longing and loneliness. Is this love?

Fantasies could be my freedom detaching me and my feelings. Forgetting about what I had so I don't deal so bad.

But that is not courageous

Child of God.....

Kathi is a child of God The same as you and I. But while we count our blessings Kathi sits and wonders why. She can't protect against the rage. She can't work hard enough to keep The love that should have been unearned. It's now too costly, far too steep. Kathi is a child of God Born to His love and grace. But she's learned she has to fear, And hide from shame's embrace. She locks her door against the pain, And locks her heart against the hurt Of hands that clutch a young girl's breast And fumble underneath her skirt. Kathi is a child of God. His kingdom is at hand. But the world has told her things She cannot understand. She sometimes tries to turn to stone, And sometimes tries to fly. She sometimes tries to love herself, And sometimes tries to die. Kathi is a child of God. His promises are given. The perfect child she holds within She holds within her heaven. She silent screams across her skin With blades that cut and score. Her blood wells up like empty tears, And falls upon the floor. Kathi is a child of God. Redemption is her share. But now she reaches out for love From those who do not care. She stalks through nights of callous dreams That stink of lust and sweat Still searching for a precious ness She hasn't found as yet. Kathi is a child of God The same as you and I. But while we count our blessings ... Kathi sits and wonders why. Kathi is a woman in the program who did a fifth step with me years ago. I wrote this as a result. She loved it and she gave me permission to deseminatate it through any means possible. The last time I heard from her, I visted her in an mpd treatment facility in response to a call from one her alters. oxoxoxbill [Ed note: Bill R. sent the PBR a number of poems for any future publishing. We have published Bill's material before, and will use his writings often in the future. Thanks, Bill!!!]

Dear Plain Brown Rapper, Please note: There are three voices in this poem - Thus 3 different type styles. May 5th, 1998 I visited the city of New Orleans.

The Narrator [All Regular type] The Voice {All Italics}

I was walking through the French Quarter and was stopped by a young man I named John Mark. He was only 18 years old and a street hustler. I tried to see his face, to look into his eyes but the street was very dark and the baseball cap he wore cast an even darker shadow over his face... I could not see him!

I heard The Voice calling me in the night. "Hey, Mister! Do you hear me calling? Do you really hear what I am saying?" "I do... truly I do hear you!" I heard A Voice filled with sadness!

So Empty! "PLEASE LISTEN TO ME! WITHIN MY SADNESS I SO DESPERATELY WANT TO BE LOVED", says my soul. "The only way I know how to survive is to give you pleasure", says The Voice of Lonliness.

"How much are you willing to pay me so that I could fill you with pleasure just for a little while? This is how I survive!" "Pay me and I will give myself to you, so that you will be filled with pleasure, so that you will forget just for a little while, your pain of sadness and loneliness."

A Voice shouts out to me! It's a very low and yet desperate voice! A Voice saying, "I WILL GIVE, THEN YOU WILL TAKE AND THE ONLY THING I WILL HEAR IS A VOICE STILL CALLING."

"A VOICE OF SADNESS, EMPTINESS, FEAR AND TOTAL DARKNESS." "HELP ME SO THAT I WILL BE FILLED UP, SO I THINK AND FEEL... OR THE LACK OF FEELING."

The Voice in the night says, "Hey Mister! Do you really hear what I am saying? Will you listen with the ear of your heart? Help me! Please help me! I am covered in darkness. Will you bring me to the True Light of Life? This is what I am truly saying, please listen! We Are One!" Amen, let it be!

For once in my life I was truly seeing with new eyes! Yes, I saw myself in this Precious Child of God! By the Grace of God I have come a long way in ten years of being in SAA!

Poem by Linas of St. Joseph -

LEAVING THE NEST.....by Chris D.
 Time to Break Away???? Food for thought...

I am eagerly anticipating, as I'm sure many other SAA members are, the publication of an official Sex Addicts Anonymous basic text. I fully expect a surge of enthusiasm, and a tidal wave of new members, as a result. But this brings up an issue that we as a fellowship will need to face - the use and the sale of Alcoholics Anonymous literature

bers come to the fellowship without any previous experience with the 12 Steps. Don't we owe it to them to provide information that is tailored to their addiction, their particular needs, and that answers their questions about recovery in SAA? I think it is our responsibility to do just that.

The fact is that Alcoholics Anony-

"For if a Fellowship depends on AA literature without developing its own, it fails to cultivate its own inherent strength..."

in our meetings. It is my firm belief that the next step in our evolution is to develop meeting formats and readings that are unique to SAA.

Understandably, there are many who resist the idea. AA's wonderful "Big Book" has served us so well for many years - why should we give it up? Many SAA members have started their recovery in AA, and the use of time-tested AA literature in SAA meetings helped make a strong and smooth transition for these members. So when the subject of relying solely on SAA literature in our meetings has come up, I have seen vigorous argument and even anger about this proposal. Nevertheless, I believe it's vital that we make this step.

First of all, let me say what this "doesn't" mean. It doesn't mean that we are not eternally grateful to AA for making our recovery possible. It doesn't mean that we reject AA, or tell people not to go to AA meetings, or not to read the Big Book, or that we are somehow in competition with Alcoholics Anonymous. All it means is that we are growing up and need to be able to take care of ourselves. I love my parents, and I am grateful for what they have taught me and done for me. But that doesn't mean I'm going to continue living with them all my life. There came a time when I had to leave the nest. I needed to - and my parents needed me too as well!

Every 12-step program that followed AA has begun by using the "Big Book." But there comes a time in the life of every fellowship when they need to develop meeting formats and literature that address the specific needs of their members. Not everyone in SAA is an alcoholic or a drug addict. Many mem-

ous itself has never approved of the adaptation or rewording of any of its literature except for the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. It has always encouraged the eventual substitution of fellowship-specific meeting formats rather than the use of reworded versions of "How It Works" from the Big Book. And in this we see the wisdom of long experience. For if a fellowship depends on AA literature without developing its own, it fails to cultivate its own inherent strength while at the same time distorting the original meaning of the quoted passages. It is only a necessary phase in the early years of a fellowship, not a permanent one.

Therefore I urge Sex Addicts Anonymous groups around the world to get together and write down their ideas for new readings and meeting formats. My hope is that, in the next two to three years, we can develop a format which can be used universally, and that carries a strong SAA message to every newcomer who walks through our doors.

AND AN OTTOWA GROUP BEGINS THE PROCESS....

WITH PROMISES OF ITS OWN....>>>>>>

Hello.

I am a member of SAA in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. I wanted to share with you what our Tuesday night group has developed to replace the AA version of the promises. As you know AA has asked our fellowship not to use their material. After much debate and consultation, our group has produced the following as a replacement. I offer it to you to share with the fellowship, if you think it appropriate.

"Our Promises have been inspired by our own experiences of recovery and by messages of hope found in 'Answers in the Heart'. I would like to ask _____ to read them, please.

"Through a renewed relationship with our Higher power, the healing force of recovery will take hold in our hearts. By giving ourselves over to our Higher Power and working our program, our lives will become manageable and we will be restored to sanity. We will receive the inner strength and support needed to face our anxieties and fears, and to deal with the painful feelings that feed our addiction. Relations with others will improve as we learn to respect our boundaries and allow others freedom to be themselves. Reaching out in trust and connecting with others will come easier, dispelling our sense of isolation and loneliness. Degrading others through fantasies and obsessive sexual thinking will diminish.

In relating to ourselves, self-absorption will give way to self-discovery; secrecy to honesty; feelings of unworthiness to dignity; and shame to grace. A restored integrity will guide our behaviour. We will feel more alive and regain a sense of happiness. We will hear ourselves laugh again and rediscover play. We will embrace change and will grow.

A spiritual awakening will free us from the tyranny of our addiction. An awareness of being guided by a Higher Power and supported by caring friends will sustain us. Regret for the past and worry for the future will give way to living for today. We will open ourselves to the amazing possibilities of a life worth living - our life.

Are these extravagant promises? WE THINK NOT! We have seen them fulfilled. They are ours, if we want them and work for them."

Thanks for being there.

Gord M.

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[Ed note: Gord M. originally sent these to our Webmaster who forwarded them to the PBR. They were to be submitted to the Literature Committee for possible approval [at a later date, and as appropriately reviewed and approved by the Fellowship of SAA].

This publishing will serve as a mechanism from which our readers might give the LitCom some "feed-back" about them, and maybe even offer to volunteer to be on a Subcommittee to do further work on this particular issue.]

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DEATH.....OF A FRIEND.....

HARD ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH...

But by **SUICIDE ...???** by RICH W.

Butch was buried not long ago. He was a local business owner like myself, married, a father of two. He just missed his daughter's birthday. He had started attending Nostos, the men's group I've been in for the past four and a half years, about five months ago. His story was similar to my own, on of dishonesty, compulsive masturbation, repeated infidelity. He told it in an arrogant manner that also seemed awfully familiar to me. I told him my history of sexual addiction, my bottoming out [twice, so far], my divorce and my recovery via the 12 step program of Sex Addicts Anonymous. He listened, and seemed to see glimmers of his own life, and yet never came to an SAA meeting. The concept of "attraction, not promotion" does not console me, here. He was never quite able to label himself a sex addict. It was not for me to decide.

During the last men's group he attended, he was quiet, deferring to others including myself any work to be done in group that night. My divorce and its financial repercussions were among the issues discussed. The following day, Butch's wife asked him again for a divorce. The next morning, in her presence, he fatally shot himself in the head. I was shocked, not expecting this action at all. Was I to blame, somehow? Was there some action I could have taken to prevent this horrid act? Should I have been more insistent he go to SAA? I was angry at him for taking the coward's way out. He left a loving family and grieving friends behind. I was frightened. When I relapse, will I ever spiral down to a point so low I would take my own life? I am sad, having lost a new friend with the human potential for growth and sobriety and peace.

I attended Butch's visitation at the funeral home. I felt awkward, knowing few that were there. I met

and spoke briefly with his widow at the casket. She told me Butch enjoyed Nostos, and felt he was making new friendships. His family blamed her and "therapy" for his decision to kill himself. Two weeks later, she came and spoke with us in a subsequent session of Nostos. This was new ground, and a very powerful moment for me. The mutual support that occurred between us that night was surely God's will.

I remain convinced that my disease, sexual addiction, is a killer. People die from the consequences of this addiction. I know I cannot make another recover, my options for their life are limited. My options for myself are limitless. As Butch went, there but for the grace of God, go I.

Rich W.

THE NARCISSIST'S SONG...

Another submission by Rich W....
[And what insight he seems to have!!!!---Ed]

THE NARCISSIST'S SONG...

Label me grandiose like whiskey
mixed in mamma's milk,
For I lack any insight into another's heart.

I need constant admiration
Yet am overly sensitive to criticism.
I exploitatively exaggerate
Of problems unique,
Live fantasies of unlimited talent,
Feeling entitled, envious, superior.
I am entirely too pre-occupied with myself.

Why am I so misanthropic,
Was childhood abuse so severe?
With self-love so perverted

I learned how to abuse blame as fear's smokescreen.
I am disdainful of all others,
Impatient to excess with the unaware.
Since all my perfect desires are doomed
Then judge me... hate me... but do not leave me
Though I'm different and smarter than you.

Rich W. [author retains copyright-Ed]

[see related article, Mar '97 PBR]

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...about submissions to the PBR...

Most submissions to the PBR, whether in the form of a letter, an article, a report, or a combination of all, are representative of the recovery process brought about by working the 12 steps and adherence to the principles of the 12 Traditions. Even though some of these have illuminated problems with the recovery process, they are usually limited to focusing on the issues, not external forces or issues outside the control of the individual who is writing.

There are some, however, which truly are negative and blaming, or lamenting issues which are not in the purview of recovery as the Fellowship attempts to practice it. These missives are marked with disparaging language, usually aimed at other persons, institutions, or situations, again about issues not in keeping with Traditions, particularly 6 and 10.

The PBR is dedicated to disseminating information to the recovering community, and specifically to our own membership, which is demonstrative of the progress we are making in recovery. And also explains the Experiences [and indeed the difficulties], Strength [which we gain from the "sanding" of the Experience], and Hope [which each of us envisions will happen] which are the total of our stories.

We don't wish to throw the baby out with the bath water, nor return submissions for modifications before they are accepted. We indeed "stretch" a point or two occasionally, printing a few items which contain marginal issues.

But bear in mind we wish to set your submission before the rest of the readers to enable you to get your ESH where others may benefit. In order to do that as much as possible, we try, try, to print it as you send it, making corrections in usage, punctuation as per the accepted rules of the language. And we will use yours, if you let us know that different usage is to make your point.

This month we had to send one back, in its entirety. By the review of several examiners, it replicated many of the negative aspects outlined above. Re-frame your attitude before writing. Read your submissions; change if necessary,

I have resisted writing this for some time. I kept telling myself that I had to get it right before I could share it. I was wrong. My name is Bill and I am an incarcerated Recovering Sex Addict.

TO KNOW AND NOT TO DO, IS NOT TO KNOW

....Bill finds out the hard way, and is still grateful

I have been in treatment/group/recovery for going on 9 years. For most of that time I was in Prison, both the one with fences and guards and the Prison of my addiction. It is only in the last few weeks that I have had any growth in my recovery. I knew what to do, or so I told myself, but I would not do it. I hemmed and hawed, rationalized, justified and excused all of my slips. [My slips are giving in to lust, fantasy, and masturbation.] My slips often contain a lot of anger. I seem to be able to find anger in anything.

Currently my anger is directed at being in prison again. Yet I, with some help, put myself here just as assuredly as I did the first time. My Higher Power gave me direction and I chose my own way instead. Again, I knew, or said I did, that I should and could trust my Higher Power whom I call God, and didn't.

I finally came to the point where I decided that I didn't know, not in a sense I could act on, and so I remembered something one of my therapists said to me, "To know and not to do, is not to know". I wouldn't do, so I didn't know.

Well, now I know. I have come to the realization I need to do what I know to do and not wait, as I was, until I knew it all. I now take my life, relationship with God and my recovery, one day at a time. If, at the end of each day, I can lay down at Peace with myself and my world, it is a good day. I used to live in the past or in the future. Now I have set myself in the NOW. So, I don't say I know anymore unless I am doing. As I do this I find I know more and do more.

One other thing I have learned to take things on their terms and not try to force them to happen on mine. I have to adjust to the program and not try to make the

program adjust to me. Currently there is only A.A./N.A. here. I was refusing to go to these meetings because I wasn't a drung or drug addict and I could not talk about my addiction there. I cut myself off from any fellowship and sharing I could have had. I am trying to get them to let me back in. It is in God's hands.

It has felt good and right to be able to share my Experience, Hope, and Recovery. Thank you for giving me the chance.

Bill S.

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SOBRIETY? Isn't that what we all hope, pray and strive for in

SOBRIETY? A BUNCH OF "THOU SHALT NOTS?"

Carol T. says, "No longer !!"

our programs of recovery? I was in SAA over 2 years before I could put together any length of sobriety. By and length I mean even an initial 24 hour period of time. There is no secret formula. I found a sponsor, had enough pain, was scared enough to try something different and continue to choose sobriety on a daily basis

Initially in getting sober that sobriety seemed to be an absence of things in my life. It was a list of all of the bottom line behaviors I was abstaining from. It was a list of people I could no longer associate with and it was a list of places I could not go. It seemed to be a lot of "thou shalt nots".

As I continue to choose sobriety there has been a change. I no longer thank much about the "nots" because slowly without me

even working towards it, the empty spaces left by the absence of my bottom line behaviors have begun to fill in. All of my life there has been a big empty hole inside of me and I have tried many things to fill it up - religion, relationships, compulsive sexual behaviors, compulsive spending, compulsive overeating, alcohol and using various foods to try to just numb myself so I didn't have to feel that hole anymore. As I quit acting out and I have continued to lay down my drugs, I was scared because I would feel that terrible emptiness inside of me. No matter what I had tried to fill it with, it was never enough to last for any length of time. I didn't know what would go into that space and early in sobriety I asked my sponsor about it. He told me to trust God. I didn't make a list of all of the things I would like to have in my life but God must truly know what I need because I have more often felt "filled up". It was an emotional feeling of wholeness. It was a

feeling of completeness that cause me to feel joy.

Recently my sister gave me a journal and she told me to record the things I am grateful for.

[Had I been sounding un-grateful?] Each night that list often includes my sobriety, my sponsor, my family and each of the program brothers and sisters whose lives have touched mine sometime during that day. I have begun to feel gratitude for such simple things. The hug a child gives me at work or a letter in the mail that I did not expect or a rose that bloomed on a bush I had given up on.

Over this past weekend my elderly aunt and uncle went to a local strawberry field and picked berries. This is quite a chore for them. When they get down they can hardly rise again. My uncle continued on page 9 had a hip replaced last winter and has Parkinson's so the act of a steady hand to pick a strawberry is a chore. They cleaned a big bowl of

(Continued from page 8)

them and gave them to me, ready to eat! Because I no longer choose to eat sugar they have been very respectful and supportive of my efforts to eat foods that nurture my body instead of numbing it.

I took the berries home and sat outside to munch on them with my lunch. It was a perfect summer day, blue

skies, cool breeze, moderate temperatures and the absence of bugs! I bit into one of the berries; it was the

sweetest, juiciest strawberry I can ever remember tasting. I looked down and the noon sun was shining on the strawberry juice and caused it to glisten. My strawberry was sparkling! I felt this wave of gratitude was over me as I connected with my Higher Power, who had created this berry, and provided it for me through people who loved me. Zing! There is was, that filled up feeling!

Along with a gratitude list I also record several of the things that have happened during my day that I did not expect. Things that I didn't know would be a part of my day upon waking. Each morning I pray my 11th step prayer and ask God for His Will and the strength and often, the willingness to carry that out. His will for my day is usually far different than I would have chosen for myself.

For instance, last week one of my former "acting out partners" called. I had not talked with him since getting sober. He wanted to fly his plane 1,500 miles to take me to dinner. After I hung up I remembered that going back into any kind of a relationship with him, even a simple dinner could cost me my sobriety. The last two encounters with him have left me wanting to die from the shame. This conversation or thoughts of this man were not on my agenda for the day but they were in God's. My sponsor reminded me that yes, even this was

part of God's plan for my day. He did give me what I needed to feel all of the intense rush of feelings and yet provided what I needed to stay sober.

Recently my son, who is an amputee called to tell me he is going to lose more of his leg. He will lose his knee and be in a wheel chair for an indefinite period of

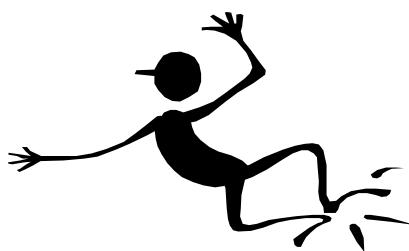
"...My sponsor reminded me that yes, even this was part of God's plan for my day. He did give me what I needed to feel all of the intense rush of feelings, and yet provided what I needed to stay sober..."

time. Because of this he wanted very much to walk his Grandparents down the aisle and seat them at his sister's wedding. It sure wasn't what I had planned for my day but instead of trying to stuff my feelings down or try to numb them, I could feel the sadness and be grateful for my son's courage.

I sense more and more as I am able to feel my true emotions on a daily basis that the emptiness is being filled up with parts of myself that were always there just waiting for me to find them. More gifts of sobriety. I am so grateful to have more sobriety than I ever had in all areas of my life. I can feel my feelings, maybe for the first time in my life. I can feel as a wholeness is growing within me. I am so very grateful!!!

Carol T.

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THE PIANO

Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took her boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE." When the houselights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing. Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage.

In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

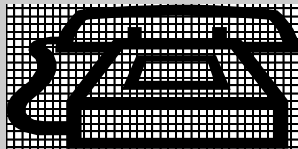
Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obbligato.

Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. And the audience was mesmerized.

Whatever our situation in life and history--however outrageous, however desperate, whatever dark night of the soul-- God is whispering deep within our beings, "Don't quit. Keep playing. You are not alone. Together we will transform the broken patterns into a masterwork of my creative art. Together, we will mesmerize the world with our song of peace."

[Isn't it wonderful what can be found by looking in my e-mail?]

CALLING GOD ...



By Carl Y.

is one the ways I have of trying to reach God.

Carl Y.

When I first came to SAA I heard someone, who became a friend, close the meeting with the phrase, "If you are in a good place, use the tools and work the steps, and if you are in a bad place, use the tools and work the steps".

Well, I thought that was pretty clever, so of course, I copied the words and missed the point. While I still close meetings I chair with that wise saying, however, that is not the same as truly understanding the meaning of the phrase (yet another character defect).

Using the tools and working the steps. I think I see it most clearly when I put it into action and then I don't even realize that I am doing it.

Of all the tools, probably the closest and often most difficult for me is the use of the telephone. What indeed hath God wrought? Why do I struggle to call out? I love to receive calls, but to call out is often a struggle.

My first sponsor was clear that if I wanted to have him as my sponsor, I was to call him everyday and check in with my feelings. Imagine that! I resisted at first, but gradually, I came to accept that when I made the call, and said my feelings about where I was, on that day, I felt better. He was right, and I was "wrong" in resisting. Another example of where the "Carl Plan" was not the "God Plan".

A dear friend in recovery has said many times that the call she receives is as helpful to her as the one who is calling. Why? Because it brings recovery back into our lives, often at exactly the right moment when we most need it.

Recently, a sponsee wrote these words to another: "I used to not make calls because I didn't want

My first sponsor was clear that if I wanted to have him as my sponsor, I was to call him everyday and check in with my feelings. Imagine that!

to bother anybody with my troubles. Someone stated that same reason at last Tuesday's meeting. What I've now learned is that the call I make, for me, is usually, at least 80% of the time or more, also a very positive experience for the caller.

We all have a need to connect. By developing the habit or in this case, the virtue, of connecting with others, I don't find myself in as many slippery situations. I have a choice to call or not to call. Yesterday, I called you. It was a very positive experience for me."

Using the tools and working the steps. In a recent email, I read these words about the concept of trying that might be helpful, no matter what we call our God. "In Scott Peck's newest book he describes how he became a Christian only after he had written "The Road Less Traveled". He explained that what allowed this to happen was finally separating the beliefs of the Christian faith from the life-style of the Christians.

Peck went on to quote one of my favorite sayings by George Bernard Shaw "The ways of Jesus have not been tried and found wanting, they have just never really been tried."

Just like it says in the Big Book, I can not reject things from others because of my puny objections. Listen to what they have to say and then consider how they might apply to me. For me, using the telephone was one of the great gifts of recovery, and in using the tools and working the steps, calling

IS READING A VIOLATION OF A COPYRIGHT?

Sometimes the laws of the land are very complicated, especially for we who are not particularly schooled in subject of law. The areas of patents and copyrights are, we understand one of the more complicated.

Most books we take from the local library are copyrighted, as are the videos, tapes, records, cd's, etc.

Yet we are free to read them, listen to them, view them, without seeming violation. And in many cases these library services are provided out of our tax dollars so they do not cost us extra bucks.

The same seems to be true of the internet. Whatever is posted there, we are free to view, even print and view. Where we get into problems is perhaps repititious using, adopting, etc., for on-going use. [See page 1].

But there is much to be used for recovery purposes if we as individuals, are willing to reach out for it. IFR, it's called. No, not "Instrument Flight Rules", "Initiative For Recovery".

SCA has a 1990 copyrighted article on its web page only recently titled "Fourteen Ways to Avoid a Slip". I wished I had written it. Take a peek, it's worth it !!! [Ed]

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SAVE AS YOU SEND !

Or did we leave out a "P" somewhere??

Like the old cliché - You gotta spend money to make money.

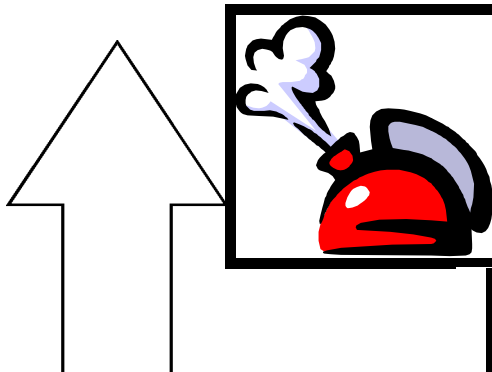
Have you ever heard anything so preposterous? It's like one of my addictions; I've spent everything I ever made plus most of what my spouse made. Switching addictions, I think it's called.

But perhaps I've taken things out of context. I did once. Or twice. I think...

Well, in keeping with the trend of advertising in the world we live in, and we can't get out of it, there is a GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY waiting for you right here at your left [unless you're reading this upside down, the it's right".]

As we said in last month's PBR, if you went to Convention, you couldn't have POSSIBLY heard all the presentations. And if you DIDN'T go, you couldn't have heard any of them. [Unless you REALLY turned up your hearing aid...]

The ISO office doesn't make a killing on these tapes at \$6.00, let alone at \$99.00 for the whole batch. THEY TRY TO BREAK EVEN HOWEVER !! So... let's get out your moldy old 20's [five of them], and send for this set of recovery ware. You can't cook in it, boil water in it, cover your flower bed with it, but you can get some benefit from it. Like maybe staying sober a while longer each day. Do yourself a favor, "YOU DESERVE A BREAK TODAY". "One a day keeps the [shrink] doctor away." Keep your sponsor off your back too; He/She may even come and listen for a while as well.



Let's get steamed up about this!

STEP 8: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."
STEP 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

As a review of the Aug-Sept issue of the PBR in 1997, Steps 8 and 9 were referred to as the **"TA-DA" STEPS**. Looking at the 12 steps, the first seven have to do with ME and MINE. That's true of number 11 also. But it's 8-9-10-12 that have to do with others in our lives.

As I look at my life, and subjectively at the lives of others I associate with, it seems apparent we don't live much in a world of our own, despite an old country song to the effect we might.

My grandiosity blinded me to the of "harm to others" by my former behaviors; in fact some behaviors which I STILL can not see. I am a sex addict, and I've stopped the sexual behaviors, what more can I do?

Making the list was first in Step 8. Making the amend was in Step 9. For me the list was quite long and I got it done rather quickly. My problem was that I probably hadn't looked at the results of my work in Step 4-5-6-7. In fact the score is still not in on that facet of my recovery, nor will it be. Being black and white in my thinking, and impetuous about doing it now, and quickly, I jammed things in compartments right and left, just like old times. And thinking I had some touch of sobriety. I really had not arrested the addictive behaviors, and did not make the most appropriate amends in those first feeble attempts, albeit it took me three years to begin.

I have to look back often at the violations of dignity of self and others. They had to be on the list. Other behaviors need to be attached to persons in my life; issues of: Control, Domination, Dishonesty, Stealing, Resentments, Manipulations, Cheating, the list almost

never end. EGO and PRIDE seemed the biggest block in formulating the list.

"First things First", and "Keep it Simple" are the two most helpful slogans, since it is only time that will bring us close to completion of this process.

In making amends, it is apparent that my lack of boundaries kept me from making appropriate beginnings. I acted in haste, sometimes to make things even worse by the attempt, particularly with my own children, and family of origin.

So, in regard to the "TA-DA"'s, in continuing these two steps:

- I - NEED-DA do my work on the first 7 before attempting 8-9.
- I - PLAN-TA, so I must be diligent about those plans, recording them in my journal, reviewing them often to check progress,
- I - BET-TA move ahead, not in leaps, bounds and set backs, but slowly, progressively.
- I - CONTINUE-TA work with group, sponsors, and others, to help me over the discordant areas.
- I - GOT-TA be thankful that I have come this far in my recovery process, despite all the difficult times, rejoicing in the knowledge that if:
- I - LOOK-TA the PROMISES as my Hope for continuing success,
- I - OUGHT-TA not only enjoy the trip {not over the Steps}, but the benefits of new relationships with others, which is what these two steps are all about. rv

TRADITION 8: "Our Fellowship should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers."

"We are all peers" we are told, about our relationships in the SAA. We are not pressured into roles of leadership. There are no "professionals" or leaders in our 12 step groups. We never pay for 12 step service, that is: carrying the message of hope to those who still hurt. . What little payment is made to individuals, it is only for facilitating our 12 step work. The maintaining of sobriety is our real reward !

My greatest problems with this Tradition: Laziness and blindness. Realizing what 12 step service could do for my own recovery. The simple things to start; making coffee, cleaning up. INITIATIVE; the answer to a dead program.!

TRADITION 9: "Our Fellowship, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

One of my greatest enigmas! As disorganized as my life ALWAYS was, I was an "organization freak". There had to be a "chart", a "chain of command". Else how would all this work commence, and how would it be measured, and who could get credit where credit was due.???

My,My! Medals and trophies will never be on display in this group !!! What a rude awakening, to KNOW what a great leader I am, and HOW I can handle [manipulate, perhaps better?] all the needs of these persons, and then NOT be able to put all this knowledge [No, NOT wisdom] to work. Need I go on????? rv