New pieces of literature. Our first Spanish SAA literature, *Adictos Al Sexo Anonimo*, is an introduction to our program written in Spanish. *Sexuality In Perspective* is a book (that I understand was written by a SAA member) which is autobiographical and contains powerful insights into living with sexual addiction. You can order these and all SAA literature at the web page:

www.saa-recovery.org

and pay on-line with your credit card.

We've added a new section to the web page called member functions. It's for notices of workshops, outings, and other events sponsored by individual members or groups. Of course, you can't put up advertisements for as business or anything not related to SAA. But if you want to promote an activity to everyone on this planet, check out www.saa-recovery.org/functions.htm.

Not only does the content of the web page continue to grow, but interest has also increased through the summer. Back in June I figured we had a freak surge in interest in May when the visitor count jumped by 38% in one month. I attributed this to an Oprah Winfrey show on sex addiction.

But then visitor count was up another 18% in June, and hit 24,364 in July. Whew, a busy summer. While activity was down a little in August, we still had almost 10,000 more visitors that month than we did back at the 1st of the year. So we must be doing something right!

And we're always looking for your suggestions on how to use our Web site more effectively. A new way to help newcomers? Something that would serve the existing members? Send 'em in — No suggestions ignored. (Well... maybe there are a few we just can't consider!) Write me at webmaster@saa-recovery.org.

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**SAA has two online meetings, Monday night 9:00 - 10:00 (topic meeting) and Thursday night 8:00 - 9:00 (step meeting), both Eastern Daylight Time. To attend them, aside from a desire to stop your compulsive sexual behavior, you need a computer, modem, internet provider (a way to get online), and some type of chat software (generally MIRC or IRC Gold for PCs and IRCLE or Snak for Macs). Once you have the chat software downloaded and installed, you get online, start up your chat software, choose one of the StarlinkIRC servers, and then join the #saa channel.

It can be a little challenging the first time, but once you have been there, it is very easy to get back. More details are available on the SAA online home-page:

http://www.saa-recovery.org/online.htm

The idea for SAA to have online meetings came up as early as 1996 when other fellowships began experimenting in this area, but no one in our fellowship was really behind the idea. Some people feared that online meetings would compete with face to face (f2f) meetings, others feared that it would encourage more addicts to get online and act out, but mostly it lacked someone who had a "fire in the belly" about this issue - who really wanted to make it happen. As time went on, addicts who were brand new to 12 step recovery, and who lived in areas with no SAA meeting within driving distance, emailed Jerry at our service office.

They wanted a way to connect with other recovering addicts, particularly those who understood the SAA program. Jerry was stuck. He knew about the other fellowships' online meetings, but couldn't send folks to them because of the ISO Board's interpretations of traditions 5, 6, & 10 as they relate to this issue. However, he knew that I had attended online meetings of other fellowships, so he told them that they could email me (another recovering addict, but with no direct relation to the ISO) if they wanted additional information on recovery resources available on the internet.

As the numbers grew (from one per month to three or four a week), I got sick of sending out the same information, so I put up a homepage to which I could refer people:

http://www3.shore.net/~sareco99/---

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**In 1998 the board gave permission for SAA to be associated with an online meeting, provided the steps and traditions were stressed at the meeting, and that someone who understood them was chairing. Unfortunately, the old-timers in our fellowship either were not interested in online outreach, or felt that they didn't have enough computer expertise, or they were already too tied up with other service work. I had already decided that I could not take on this project, and Jerry could not either. However, when no one else stepped forward, and I honestly sought my Higher Power's will in the matter, my path became clear.**

The first SAA online meeting started up your chat software, choose one of the StarlinkIRC servers, and then join the #saa channel.

The next time I write about online meetings I'll talk a little about applying the traditions in this medium, and about the new options this forum provides for outreach.

In peace,

Bruce

sareco99@shore.net

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ISO OUTREACH
(Each month, the ISO Office answers hundreds of pleas for help. They come in postal mail, through e-mail, and over the phone. This space is dedicated to sharing some of them)

Dear Robert,

Here is an article for the ISO outreach section. Hope it gets to you in time for this issue. If not, things must be going well because you are full already.

Love,
Jerry

She called the ISO office back in October 97. She had found out that her husband of 31 years cheated on her throughout the marriage. What she felt was a confusing mixture of anger, revenge, pain and desperation. Divorce seemed to be the only solution but then somebody mentioned an organization named SAA.

It took a lot of courage for her to make that call but she finally did. A man answered the phone and she told him her whole story. When she was finished she had learned about the purpose and mission of SAA and the 12-step program. However the man stressed that the initiative to get into the program would have to come from her husband.

Well, the husband did make the call that started him on his way to recovery. He ended up in a treatment center and put a system together for me. I was recently speaking with a friend in the program. We discussed problems encountered by having access to the Internet. Years ago, when I was SE Region Rep to Litcom, I did not own a computer. Most members of Litcom did own computers and were on the Internet. Friends in my region pulled together and put a system together for me. I was “in touch with the world”. At first, I was on Free-Net. I did not have full access to the Internet...everything but pictures. Then, I finally joined Bell South. It seemed like a dream world. No word I typed in would come up empty. There was always a suggested alternative. And there were pictures to go with the words.

For an addict with a weakness for pornography, the Internet with pictures was a land mine. Every time I turned on my computer and got connected, I would first read/answer my current e-mails. Curiosity killed the cat. My curiosity got the best of me. I was isolated, all alone, in my home. I had a keyboard at my fingertips and a screen to show and tell almost anything my mind could imagine. I can confess becoming addicted to the Internet. One day, with all of the different choices I made and all of the download time it took, I spent six hours on my day off surfing the net. There was the monkey on my back, once again. All I could feel was shame, knowing I had wasted time, and had been taken in, once more.

So, I asked myself, how does an addict recover from something like the Internet? It’s always available 24/7. It’s waiting day and night, at the flip of a button. Then, I realized the answer is to do the same thing all addicts have done to stay in recovery.

INTERGROUPS WITH THE NET form a Hub of Users availability. We can help one another with the Internet because this is a We program. All it takes is willingness and accountability to get into the program. All it takes is willingness and availability.

I hope these thoughts will be suggested at individual meetings, and intergroups. Please feel free to make other suggestions. I will be happy to leave my e-mail address for anyone that wishes to contact me to further discuss Internet Recovery: belltalk@bellsouth.net

Louis D.
SE Region ISOSAA
COMING EVENTS

The Traditional Panora, Iowa Retreat
It was not held in 98 but is ON FOR 99!
Mike W. and Jim Bob D. are the coordinators of the event this year. Old Timers, Show Up! And bring as many newcomers as you can! Details below:
Place: St. Thomas More Center [just west of Panora, Iowa]
Time: Last weekend of October 99.
Beginning: 5 PM on Friday evening, Ending: 1 PM on Sunday.
Furnished: Rooms for both men and women, all meals
Bring: Bedding or Sleeping Bag, toiletries, warm clothing
Also bring: Snacks for sharing, musical instruments, singing voice
Cost: ONLY $55.00 per person
This Retreat has always been known as a place of great fellowship, coupled with programs of recovery. Food is great! For more information and registration, call Mike at 319-362-5259. PLAN TO BE THERE!

FROM INDIANA:
The annual IISAA Holiday Celebration is being held on December 4, 1999, from 7:00 to 10:00 PM at Hermitage Retreat Center, 3640 E. 46th St., Indianapolis, IN.
Even if you’re not in the Indiana Inter-group, but are a member of SAA, you’d probably be welcome. For information call 317-545-9783 or e-mail iisaa@nolodo.pair.com..

IISAA Fall Retreat “In Search of...”: Oct 29, 30, 31, 1999, Camp PYOCA, Brownstown, Indiana. Call 317-545-9783 or e-mail: iisaa@nolodo.pair.com [See last issue of PBR for more information]

FROM MICHIGAN
The second annual Michigan State SAA convention will be held Saturday, November 13, 1999 in Lansing, Michigan. For information, contact co-chairs Ted M at 734-482-1621 or Mark N at 616-459-8802, or e-mail tdm1@bignet.net <mailto:tdm1@bignet.net>.

Twelve Steps Before
1. I admitted that there were problems in my life that, in time, I would get them under control and manage everyone and everything perfectly.
2. I came to believe that my power could eventually restore others to sanity.
3. I made a decision to dedicate my will and my life to the control of others.
4. I made a searching and fearless moral inventory of everyone.
5. I admitted to God, to myself, and to anyone who would listen, the exact natures of the wrongs of those around me.
6. I was entirely ready to help God remove all their defects of character.
7. I repeatedly asked Him to remove their shortcomings.
8. I made a list of all people who had harmed me and was anxious to get even with them.
9. I got even with such people where ever possible, except when to do so would make me look bad.
10. I continued to take everyone’s personal inventories and when they were wrong, promptly reminded them. (Or on those rare occasions when I was wrong, I promptly justified it.)
11. I sought through prayer and nagging to improve Gods knowledge of my will for others, and urged to hurry and carry that out.
12. Having had no luck as a result of these Steps, I finally sought help and tried to learn the REAL Twelve Steps as were so perfectly written, and to practice THOSE Principles in all my affairs.

Anon.

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I feel like:
A breath of air- moving up from incredible depths, through the water of a dark, cold ocean. Toward the light I hurdle, a transparent ball. Conscious of the silence, and the only noise that exists in the whole universe is the sound of my movement. I don’t know where I began, but it was so much deeper down in this cold sea, that had I been conscious, I surely would have been crushed by the frozen pressure.

So, here I am. Getting closer to the surface. Beginning to wonder what it is like up there. I feel the texture of the water, fluid yet resistant. But still I’m traveling up. I know it will be different without the water, water pushing in on all sides of me. There will be less pressure, but what will happen to me? Will I disappear? Will what is on the other side of the water be the end of me?

Or will it be the beginning of me?

The light grows brighter now. I’m almost there. The ocean is warmer, the pressure lessens- and then, in an instant, I am arrived. And it seems that for all of time I was meant to be here. And I know that it was all right.

I well up in his eye, and I roll down his cheek, and I am part of his life, and it feels soooooo good to be free!

I am a tear.

Peter B.

From Peter B.
The Ditch

Along every road lies a ditch.
As an addict, relapse is falling into that ditch.
Early in recovery, I meandered along an untracked narrow
ridge between canyons, my behaviors sending
me careening down steep slopes spending most of my time in the ditch.

Climbing and staying out has been a long process marred by error.
It took years for me to admit, believe and surrender,
even longer to reach rigorous honesty and be able to disclose fully, half measures, by the way, do not work.

It is not ironic it took recovery as first priority,
several tumbles and their severe consequences convinced me to be willing
each climbing out requiring lots of meetings, therapy faking it ‘til I was making it, finally a sponsor.

Now, by comparison, I walk along a broad straight boulevard.
Those ditches are still there on either side but they are wide shallow bogs filled with grass.

Rich W. [Author retains copyright]

Focusing on my self-centeredness, [what else!] still one of my most severe character defects.

Trapped In The Mirror

Again I catch myself wondering,
Just as the rage has passed my lips
And the stench of obscene declarations
Chokes me and
Causes all my senses to recoil
In morbid self-loathing, self-pity and shame
All bundled together in yet more rationalization and self-righteousness,
Where did this come from?
What threat did I perceive
That caused this desperate need
To force out such defensive hostility
And seek so urgently to cause you hurt?
Is there some answer Beyond a simple increase in my medication?
Do I lack some dedication
To a real releasing of my darker self?
And now I wallow in this abject, self-inflicted sorrow;
"Oh, I have hurt you too much.
"Poor me. Poor me. Poor me?!"
Am I still so self-enthralled
And lacking in compassion?
Where is my empathy?
Or my oh-so-frequently-and-easily-spoken-of love for you
And God?
Have I hung Him on the tree again,
All bloodied and newly broken
For my fear of falling short
Of worthy admiration and acclaim?
Where is a Copernicus
To displace me at my center,
Or at least some Newton
To teach me proper gravity
So all my worlds
Won't plunge down to their end?
I am so weary and
So self-consumed
By this acting as a spiritual black hole.

Complacency

How subtle the fall, insidious gradual drifting from truth content again with less than my best.

This is the path towards relapse either the one of least resistance or lazy resistance extreme.

Driven by fear and lack of acceptance nurtured by progressive shame that smug delusion of control creeps back.

It is priority error lack of focus, letting go of the wrong things thoughtlessness leads the way as selfish willfulness mounts center stage.

For recovery’s test is always failure complacency bolstered by the absence of specific commitments to others.

Richard W. [Author retains copyright]

Amend

If you look on page 5 of the August/September issue of the PBR, you will notice the poem in the center column had no author. You may have guessed since his work has appeared before. No excuse however! The author is George S., and we make an amend to you George, for omitting it! Ed.

If you look on page 5 of the August/September issue of the PBR, you will notice the poem in the center column had no author. You may have guessed since his work has appeared before. No excuse however! The author is George S., and we make an amend to you George, for omitting it! Ed.

Next month here: Robert S. [       ] Correctional Facility...
THE FOLLOWING IS THE EDITED VERSION OF PAUL'S STORY...

TRUST IN HIM &
GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN

My inappropriate behavior began in Junior High School about age fifteen. I went to a detention home because I took a dare to break in to a small town country store. By age nineteen, I had acquired three D.W.I.'s, losing my driving privileges for three years. During this time I worked my way up from sniffing inhalants, smoking marijuana, to using more potent drugs. I started when I was eight years old. Sex and alcohol was my drug of choice, and the alcohol was a good excuse when I got in trouble. When I wasn’t being sexually active, drinking, or using other drugs, I would seek attention by being a class clown, or by throwing temper tantrums. I was with both my parents, my brother, and three sisters. At this time I thought life was good, and that I was indestructible.

At age nineteen, I learned how to get the love, approval, and forgiveness from family or relatives. They finally became disgusted with my sexually deviant behavior and drinking. I admitted myself in a psychiatric ward once, frequent detox units, treatment centers, and even went to twelve step groups to quit drinking. I was like a Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde around others. I was in and out of jail several times for public intoxication and disorderly conduct. Attending twelve step groups was a quick way for me to get the love and approval back from others so I could drink again.

At age twenty, I was in a severe car accident, in a coma for two weeks, and pronounced dead. This was where life was good, and that I was indestructible.

When I was twenty-four, I thought getting married would solve my problems. Though I was dry for a small period of time, my mind was still clouded through smoking marijuana. Even before we married, I thought getting her pregnant, and being a father would help me to be more mature and responsible. At first, I was a good husband, and father to our child. I became obsessed with sex and drinking again, both relationships deteriorated quickly. I was given an ultimatum: choose family or alcohol. I chose the family at first, but eventually went back to drinking. I didn’t think anyone had the right to tell me what to do. It had not yet registered in my mind that there was still something missing in my life.

In 1989 my life turned for the worst when my mother, whom I relied on so very much, passed away. Since I no longer had my mother or my ex-wife to depend on, I chose the next best thing, sex and alcohol. At first I isolated, then got involved in short-term relationships, and was in and out of twelve step groups.

Nothing seemed to work.

A year later my world came crashing down. My family, ex-wife, and son didn’t know I existed. My last relationship was failing, and I was fired from my last job because of drinking. I continued to do what I wanted, when I wanted, and how I wanted. I was very heavily intoxicated the night I committed my offense. If I’d agree to treatment, all would be forgiven and forgotten. A couple of times, I tried to kill myself in the county jail. I was crying out for help. It was at this point that I realized I couldn’t repair things on my own. God then showed Himself through people that were coming in to share Scriptures with me.

After two years of being in prison, I started to attend S.A.A. meetings, where I met other recovering sex addicts. As I continued to attend these meetings, I became more involved in S.A.A. and the PBR. An S.A.A. member, who had been very helpful in my recovery, suggested I get more involved in these meetings. After I did this, and my ways of thinking started to change, I began to see good things occur in my life, even as an inmate.

There were ten to twelve of us in the group, and I experienced a love that I had never felt before. When I first got involved in the S.A.A. meeting, I accepted God into my life. My obsession and compulsion to sexually act out, or drink, didn’t seem important to me anymore. God replaced that drive with a desire to seek Him, to know Him, and to love Him. I began to seek other recovering sex addicts, and attended as many recovery functions as possible.

In 1991, my life took another turn. As I worked with others in helping them to deal with substance abuse issues, there was still something in my life that I needed to look at. For years, I denied that I had a problem with sex. I experienced not only sexual, but physical and emotional abuse from older family members, or other adults. When I asked certain family members about the abuse, I was told things like, “You’re still using excuses for your behavior,” or “You’re still not wanting to take responsibility for your actions!” With my being in this twelve month sex offender’s program, it was suggested that I trace the events of my past, which might help me overcome my addictions and compulsive sexual behavior.

This trauma may have very well contributed to how I was living my life. A great part of my anger was directed toward my father for what he didn’t give me as a child. The anger that I had for him never left, even as an adult. When he and I were together, I seldom talked about my thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. I spent so much of my energy suppressing these thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, that when I got drunk, I’d act them out in all the wrong ways.

I was finally making progress in this sex offender’s program. It seemed as though I still lacked trust. It was through these prayer-filled counseling sessions, that God helped me to see that good things will happen if I let Him be the director. Over time, He replaced my negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, with a love for my father that I never thought possible. For the first time in my life, I saw my father, other family members, and those that were abusive towards me, through God’s eyes. Today, I have a very loving relationship with my God. I pray everyday that my family will turn to God and find deeper peace and healing. How God has changed my life, and the relationship I have with my son, cannot be expressed in words. His Grace and mercy have been endless. Through His good things have come true in my life, and as long as I continue to trust in His will, “all will be well.” I can now say that I am a grateful recovering sex addict, and alcoholic.

In fellowship and service,

Paul W. [London OH]
“SAA,  
I am writing in gratitude for the existence of SAA and it’s members. This organization has helped to save my life. You may publish this letter at your discretion, if you believe it will be helpful to others. However, my only intention in writing this letter is to tell the group thanks.”  
Jeff

“Dear Jeff,  
Thank you so much for sharing your story. I personally appreciated it a lot and was happy to have such a wonderful gift awaiting me this morning when I came to work. I am copying this to Robert S., the editor of the Plain Brown Rapper, for his consideration.  
Glad to be walking with you,

Jerry B.  
Office Manager”

+++++++++++++++++++++++

“As a child, I often felt alone, isolated, different and fearful. I never recognized it. I felt these things, but did not see them as odd. I just knew I sometimes felt alone. I also knew no one would accept me. No female, anyway. The fear I had about approaching and talking to pretty girls in my classes growing up was extraordinary.

My addiction had stunted my ability to communicate or connect with members of the opposite sex. I liked a cheerleader in the 7th grade so instead of going up and talking to her, I would dress up like a cheerleader at home and pretend she was there. You can begin to see how alone I felt. I had a girlfriend a few years and after we broke up I was so depressed that I rubbed my own feces on myself and imagined her having sex with other men and telling me she wished she had never dated me. The pain was hardly bearable. I would finish acting out and wonder why I did it and why it turned me on so much. I would say that I should find something less degrading to do, since I believed it to be my choice, but the more degrading the better.

The most baffling thing about this disease to me is that I never recognized it as a disease until recently. Looking back, it was so insane and it brought me so much pain in addition to the pain I already felt, that I am stunned I didn’t know what was going on. I had spiritual blindfolds on. It never occurred to me that I needed help. The saying, “If they knew everything about me, they wouldn’t accept me”, never reached my consciousness, but rather was displayed in the insane way I lived my life.

Then something happened. I made a deal with God and things have not been the same. I told him, okay, I believe in you, now help me with the fact that I don’t believe in you. It was my leap of faith, or baby step of faith, but it began a process of change. My life from that day forth, my life has been radically different and I was still 11 months away from walking into an SAA meeting. That is how buried the addiction was in me.

God was reaching deep down inside me, pulling the addiction out from the depths of my soul until I saw it again for the first time. How hideous it looked from the eyes of recovery. I tried to stop on my own. You know how that works. Then I made a decision to tell somebody I had a problem. It was the first time I had ever told anyone my “bottom line” behaviors. The most degrading behaviors were taking away from me that day and by the grace of God have not reentered my life since.

But, I continued to struggle, especially with masturbation and fantasy, so I knew the admission was not enough. I knew that I needed to change in big way to be able to deal with this addiction. A pastor recommended me to SAA and the first meeting I went to I knew I was a sex addict. It was a big meeting and there was a first step that night. The gentleman reading his first step that night might as well have been reading mine. I was very fortunate that someone approached me after the meeting and became my sponsor. Since then I have struggled at times, but I have been growing and walking a life of recovery.

I am becoming the person God intended me to be, little by little. The SAA program has given me so many things that lead me to a loving connection to God, others and myself. These gifts I gratefully accept from the SAA program and I thank you.”

Jeff

From Tom:  
Congratulations on another excellent issue! It was the best one I’ve seen. I appreciate how much nearer it looks, and the quality of the writing was impressive.

I do have to say that I don’t understand how including sexist humor is enhancing to recovery. The “Top Ten List” didn’t seem to address recovery issues at all. I realize that our fellowship is 90 per cent male and that laughing at ourselves can be healthy, but negative male stereotypes are still sexist, and I really don’t think sexist humor has any place in the PBR.

Thanks, again, for all your hard work.

love, Tom

“Manipulation may start as a defensive maneuver... but sooner or later it takes on a life of its own. The addict manipulates just to manipulate, lies just to lie... Years of addictive thinking do not melt away overnight. In spite of addicts’ protests of sincerity, they are manipulating.”  
[Addictive Thinking, Abraham J. Twerski, MD]
Dear Robert:

This article might irritate some people but it comes from my heart. I was slipping in this program for 6 years and though I kept coming back, it was at times incredibly difficult. I wrote this to acknowledge the legions of “slippers” who keep coming back but may be neglected because members with time don’t have the knowledge, patience, or time to reach out to them.

What do you think?
Sincerely, 
Jim H.

Sex addiction is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It is a progressive illness which can take along. It may be neglected because members with time don’t have the knowledge, patience, or time to reach out to them.

Dear Robert:

Six of us have been around a while. It is sometimes assumed that they have the wherewithal to reach out and find recovery again. The purpose of this pamphlet is to acknowledge the member in relapse and to encourage the members to make an active effort to reach out and carry the message of hope to the sex addict who is suffering.

In the 8 years I’ve been in SAA my acting out has gone from obsessive masturbation to cruising for victims. Even though I tried to “work the program” to the best of my ability, it wasn’t enough until I got some serious legal consequences, started taking Prozac, and redid the steps with a second sponsor. I hope members who are not currently struggling with the addiction that includes me at this moment will understand that being restored to sanity is by the grace of God and validate and encourage the slippers efforts at recovery.

My impression, real or imagined, was that people who maintained sobriety thought they were “holier than thou.” They were working the program the right way as evidenced by their continued abstinence. It seems like they felt that if I would just do it like them, I’d get better.

I wish that members with stable abstinence would be extra sensitive to those of us who are struggling. Preaching brings out my worst attitudes of defiance and shame. Listening to members speak from the heart is what helps me connect back up with abstinence and my Higher Power.

While some of these perceptions of uncarng or holier-than-thou attitudes may be engendered by the acting out addict’s own feelings of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization, they are expressed often enough that it is likely they have substance. Whether these perceptions are in fact real or imagined, they do constitute real concerns for many slippers.

Here are some of the things we have found to be effective in 12-stepping the slipper:

We asl them if there is anything we can do for them.

We tell them we love them.
We listen to them.

SMILE

Smiling is infectious, catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner and someone saw my grin. When he smiled I realized I’d passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile then I realized its worth, A single smile, just like mine could travel round the earth.
So if you feel a smile begin, don’t leave it undetected.
Let’s start an epidemic quick, and get the world infected.
[a recent e-mail from a special grand-daughter to an old SAAer]

We ask them empathetic, non-judgemental, thought-provoking questions about their acting out.
We share only experience, strength and hope.
We don’t forget to share our failures as well as our successes.
We call them just to see how they’re doing and invite them to do something “safe”.

We try to be of genuine service to them without being codependent.

We offer to sponsor them at least temporarily.

It’s amazing how member’s in relapse appreciate the offer of sponsorship. It’s not an ego-feeding proposition. It’s an act of love and service. It’s helping the downtrodden when they don’t know how to help themselves. It lets them know they are worth your time. It is said that “love is an action.” Sponsoring the slipper is love in action.

Any way we know how, we need to express this idea: Do not be discouraged. You are not forgotten. Keep coming back. We ask them how they are doing, letting them share their frustrations, fears, and the consequences they are suffering.

We warmly encourage the struggling member to keep coming back, reassuring them that they are welcome, and their struggle is appreciated. We let them know that we have been there too by relating our feelings and thoughts from when we have slipped and fell. We listen with the heart, and avoid being judgmental of their efforts at recovery. We take the attitude that the disease is powerful. Everyone is on a different path and comes to SAA with different levels of willingness, with different life experiences and with different genetic predispositions. Recovery may be relatively “easy” for one addict who comes into the program ready to surrender the addiction. Another person may take a while to hit bottom.

Why all this validation for the slipper even if he may be a criminal or just a “bad example” of recovery? The simple answer is that without this type of unconditional love many a chronic relaper’s defenses remain high, and the seeds of a potential spiritual awakening may never take root.

We hope that in no way will this pamphlet lead members or newcomers to believe that we are not capable of “tough love”. On the contrary, it is sometimes effective to tell the slipper things like “if you keep hanging out in slippery places, you’re going to slip.” However, we do encourage the membership to make an effort to empathize, validate, and humbly share experience, strength, and hope. Reminding ourselves that after all it is mostly by the grace of God that we are sober today. By reaching out to the suffering slipper with an open heart, we can truly grow in recovery and maybe (with the grace of God) make a difference in another person’s life.

Jim H.
We tend to use words and phrases without agreeing on exactly what they mean. This is no less true in the fellowship. Often I hear the terms “objectify” or “objectifying” in meetings, but I’ve discovered that different people employ these words in different ways.

Most commonly it seems to be a process that goes on in our minds. We look at someone else and think about him or her in terms solely related to sexual aspects. For example, if I see someone – perhaps a stranger, perhaps someone I know – and my thoughts focus on the sexual attractiveness of that person’s body, or parts of his or her body, or if I imagine that person without clothes, at the same time not really considering other aspects of that person which do not relate to his or her sexual attractiveness - then in a general sense I say I have been “objectifying” that person.

You can see that there is a lot of room for ambiguity here. In the context of our disease it means losing ourselves in the obsession with sex and the compulsion to act out. In a wider social context I’ve heard it used in reference to media and the general cultural attitude towards sex: such as when a billboard advertisement to objectify someone is used in reference to media and the general cultural attitude towards sex: such as when a billboard advertisement to objectify someone is used to sell something. I’ve even heard it used to refer to dress (a certain type of clothing is called “objectifying,” i.e. sexually provocative) or behavior (someone’s attitude towards others is “objectifying,” i.e. treats them as sexual objects).

“Subjectifying is a two-fold practice. First, I meditate on myself as spirit, with all that this implies – awareness, feeling, thinking, dreaming, hoping – but most of all the very fact of being a subject, the miracle of being awake and alive, with everything that happens in life happening in my experience, not as some material occurrence that is just happening “out there” – but an event which is significant because there is always a soul experiencing it, with joy or suffering or love or conflict, or whatever spiritual quality of which my soul partakes in that experience. Secondly, I meditate on others as exactly the same, that is, as spiritual beings, subjects in just the same way I have known myself. They do not experience themselves as anyone’s object, but as the subject of their own lives, with all their thoughts, dreams, feelings and desires. There is no crowd, always only one person in the crowd. When I find myself objectifying someone, sexually or otherwise, I can practice this by bringing to mind that the other person is a subject, not a thing – and I can imagine that person experiencing life in just the same way that I experience life, as self, spirit.

I have found that subjectifying helps to prepare me for the grace of a Power greater than me. Denial is just an illusion, acting as if we were objects. Subjectifying is aligning myself with the actual truth, and the truth will set me free. By this constant practice of remembering spirit – remembering my own nature of spirit and the identical nature of everyone else – I help myself stay in the process of recovery and open myself to the possibility of conscious contact with a Higher Power. Through this conscious contact, and its improvement through the Steps, may we continuously shed the denial which keeps us bound – the belief in our thinghood which blocks us from knowing our truth as spiritual beings, children of God.

Chris D.

Outside Issues ..?

E-mail is a wonderful convenience; you can forward “junk” to everyone on your list. I have a special young relative that picks out selections for me. I think the words are: Take what you can use and leave the rest.

1. First rule of holes: If you’re in one, stop digging.
2. I started out with nothing... I still have most of it.
3. If God wanted me to touch my toes, God would have put them on my knees.
4. It’s hard for me to make a comeback; I haven’t been anywhere.
5. Strange, I don’t remember being absent minded...
6. If all is not lost, where is it???
Hey Robert,
The convention just ended and I'm on my way to a job in Iowa. You asked for an article, and I've got this little laptop, so here goes:

Right here, I guess. I'm sitting on my motorcycle, waiting for the Four Corners Monument to open. It's the exact spot where Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico meet. I guess it's kind of dumb, but I've been hearing about this place all my life and I was passing by last night on my way to Iowa and...

Another night under the star's nothing new here. My life has been a little hectic lately. The week before the convention, I was stage managing two (clothed) Go Go dancers on an industrial show for a liquor company. And I don't drink, never mind the sex stuff... That ended Friday with no slips and surprisingly little time in the Bubble (hey, maybe I am getting better!). Then I went directly to the Alumni Reunion at the Sexual Dependency Unit of Del Amo Hospital. Talk about going from the sublime to the ridiculous! (or was it the other way 'round?)

The weekend was great. It was such a treat to see the staff that were a part of saving my life. It brought up a lot of gratitude and a lot of love for these people who are on the cutting edge of the Sexual Addiction treatment movement. It ended with an exercise where all 26 of us alumni sat in a big circle that had an empty chair in the middle. We were all given a sheet of blank adhesive labels. Then, one by one, we sat in the chair in the middle, closed our eyes and everyone else wrote down something about the person that we had learned or intuited during the weekend. Then we took our labels and stuck them on the one in the middle and whispered in their ear what we'd written. It was so scary to sit there and close my eyes, even though I knew I was in a safe place with safe people.

I closed my eyes and waited. Then the first label stuck on my shoulder and someone whispered: "You are a loving and worthy child of God". Then "I'd be proud to have you for a brother". Then the next. And the next. It was like being washed over by wave after wave of love and acceptance. After about ten, I had the thought: "What if the voices in my head sounded like this? What would life be like then?"

And then I started to cry (which felt great). In looking back, I can see how those loving voices have replaced the cruel, punishing voices that used to push me over the edge into acting out. The process of recovery has been so slow, I haven't even realized it's been happening. But it has. One day at a time.

Peter B.

PS: The monument was monumentally anticlimactic.

First LitCom Teleconference held in August. Letter from Jeff W., LitCom Chair, outlines hopes and expectations for serving the SAA Fellowship this year.

Dear members of SAA,

We had our first teleconference of the year and got off to an excellent start. We set our priorities for what pieces we want to concentrate on as well as what we want to encourage the fellowship to write. Before we get to the priorities themselves, let me provide a little background. In the past, we had no priorities; we simply responded to whatever people submitted to us. This left us feeling overwhelmed by our workload and unfocused in our efforts. We had a difficult time getting work accomplished. We currently are reviewing about 25 submissions. We didn't even have time to discuss them all at the last teleconference, let alone review them for publication. So, we decided to set priorities on what we would consider this year. We had two criteria:

1. What the fellowship needs the most at this time
2. What has the best chance of becoming published as Conference Approved Literature.

For the first criterion, we know that we need just about all of our literature. Nonetheless, we decided that we need literature that speaks to the particular needs of our fellowship, rather than general Twelve-Step literature. We decided that general Twelve Step literature was needed less because it can be provided by other sources and oral

(Continued on page 11)
This morning: "Maybe what I have (he listed a few examples) is good enough.

Perfectionism, while pursued vigorously by many addicts, especially me, is one big […..] lie! I have been running hard to an unachievable goal. I am stepping back today and looking at me and life on more realistic terms.

I am beginning to touch it and see it and feel it, and it is good. Have a great day!

Andrew

P.S. I liked something that Charlie shared this morning: "just being Charlie, flaws and all." It struck a chord in me. It was quite catchy and my creative juices began to flow. I thought we could create a product to sell and distribute through SAA.

FLAWSINOL:
The new tonic that allows you to be accepted just as you are. Give it to someone who hates, loathes or resents you. Or drink it yourself - you'll see life in a whole new light!

(Continued from page 10)

For the second criterion, we decided that pamphlets that address topics specific to SAA members have a better chance of passing a delegate vote than literature which contains literature which we are prohibited from using by Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Staff

Klaus P. Asst Office Manager
Jerry B. Office Manager

Office Hours [Central time]
[Staffed-M-F] 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Phone answered at all times except when staff is on the phone. Leave Message; call will be returned, usually within the hour.

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SERVICE WORK ! WHAT'S SO SPECIAL

ABOUT SERVICE WORK?!?!?

WHO CARES ABOUT IT? Louis D. does

Hello Robert.

I hope that this e-mail finds you well.

I recently wrote an e-mail to a fellow member of the program and out came the thought of SERVICE WORK. I'm forwarding this e-mail to you in hope that there is something of merit in the e-mail that might help another addict to stay sober. Please feel free to edit this as you choose. I think you have done an excellent job as editor of The Plain Brown Rapper. It seems to me almost an impossible task to regularly have the material you use to make up the whole of the newsletter. You have my thoughts and prayers for your success. Take care, and God bless.

Louis D.

Thank you Bill.

I miss the meetings....I realize what a source of comfort they can be to the struggling addict. I will have to see how I can regularly attend meetings, as it is a WE program. I don't have to struggle and be alone with these fears, compulsions, and self-hating feelings. No one understands an addict like another addict. Even in THE BIG BOOK, around page 69 which speaks of our sexual compulsions, it is said that if one is struggling with their sexual compulsions...to do service work.

I remember in early sobriety our INTERGROUP spoke on this very subject. I supposed this would be helpful to me, as I am struggling at sorting out my compulsions. I find that I am always helped when I give help. It's a very simple thing, and yet it is a very powerful tool that the addict can use in helping his own recovery. And, service work keeps a healthy flow of interaction between members in the program. Service work allows goals to be achieved. I have found that whenever I do service work, the rewards come back multiplied. Service work can be as simple as setting up chairs before a meeting. I find that being a part of THE INTERGROUP is an excellent way to integrate service work into my life. Service work can help to keep one connected, out of isolation, and give one a feeling of helpfulness. I know that whenever I disconnect, feel isolated and hopeless, I'm setting up the addict in me for a slip. One day at a time. It's not all or nothing anymore. That doesn't seem to work. I suppose what I'm telling myself here is to try to find some way that I can be of service to the fellowship. I know that this will help me to connect, and connection is a big part of recovery.

I feel a bit empowered by the thought that I can get out of my own craziness by getting connected to the program through service work. I am grateful for the tools that keep my addict under arrest.

Louis D...

You can order materials and make donations, using your VISA, MC, Discovery or AMEX !!!!

WILL YOU PLEASE? Remember the needs of the SAA Fellowship at the international level? This newsletter was provided for you by those doing their own Step Twelve and Tradition Five work. And by one full/half time, paid staff member. There are important programs of outreach, many of which are represented in this publication. Outreach of all kinds, prison and all other. Materials are provided free to those who cannot afford them; i.e., prisoners. It costs dollars to maintain the central facility through which our efforts are maintained. For you who downloaded this, or have received it via “snail mail”, we hope you will strongly consider sending your periodic contributions to the ISO office. YOU are the answer to total Outreach! Thanks!!