



News from the Web...

By: Bob D.

Well we made it through the New Years without the Internet exploding or other serious computer melt downs. To celebrate that non-event I thought it was time to look at the future of the SAA Webpage – What's in store during our new century? Actually these thoughts came from a discussion held at the last ISO of SAA Board meeting.

In the near future is a commitment from me to reformat the Webpage. When we started 5 years ago, we were thinking of the Internet as a tool for Outreach. Now as the web becomes more popular, our Webpage is also useful to SAA Members. In recognition of that growth, I'm thinking of reorganizing its presentation into 3 sections: New-comer Information, The SAA Store, and Member Data. If you're interested in helping with this redesign, write me at webmaster@saa-recovery.org

Secondly, I believe it's time to put more emphasis on On-line meetings. Not all of us can easily get to a physical meeting. Currently there are 2 on-line meetings. I dream of the day when there's a 24/7 SAA meeting on the web. When? ...

And lastly, foreign language information is going to increase in importance. The current Spanish SAA Webpage accounts for an amazing 6% of our total traffic. The SAA office reports an increase in requests for information in Spanish. We need to improve our services to the Spanish-speaking addict and think about adding other languages.

Speaking of that: Anyone want to become the SAA Spanish Webmaster? My Spanish is non-existent and I could use some help. Anyone motivated to translate the Webpage into other languages? French, German, Chinese? All big projects. But we'll be doing them all in this century.

“FROM THE INSIDE - MY RE-ADJUSTMENT TO LIFE ON THE OUTSIDE”

David S.

I started with the book “Out of The Shadows”; I read it in 1997 for my treatment during the time of my incarceration. Time passed since I read the book. It was October 26, 1998 when I started looking for a job in the Rapid City Journal when I came across the [Black Hills Area SAA] group meeting schedule. I got hold of my mother to find out the address so I could write to them.

A few weeks went by then I got my first letter from Robert S. I answered the letter right away and mailed it back. Two weeks passed then I got another letter. I bought the book Hope & Recovery had to wait for three weeks before it came. I tried to keep myself busy when I wasn't working. I had a lot of problems to handle before I got out of prison. Every month I wrote Robert S in Rapid City, SD spent time reading my new book.

I started to really struggle with masturbation; it got to the point that it was starting to control my life and told Robert S about the problem. He gave me some support with my problem. Time passed, the masturbation got a little bit better only did it twice a week. I thought that the problem was going to stop; I was wrong, it only got worse. I wrote the group in Rapid City then got a letter back from Ken M. It was May [1999]. The masturbation got worse. I also had emotional problems with the sexual behaviors. The behavior really got to the point that nothing I did would work. My anger was getting very high at myself. That only made the problem worse; it was feeding my sexual behaviors. I had to make the hardest decision of my life in order to change

the sexual behaviors, and the unwanted thoughts.

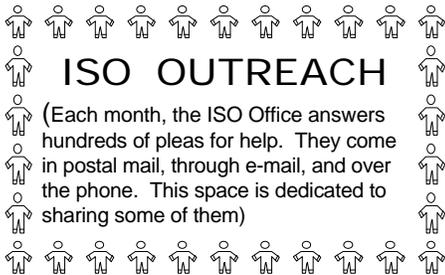
These addictive behaviors got to the point they became unmanageable. My behaviors related to problems I had a problem with a prison employee who was inviting an involvement in activities I would not, could not participate in. The drastic measure I had to take was to actually get released from my job in that department. It was June 3rd when I started to think what I could do to stop the behavior; three weeks passed and on June 24th it happened. I got out of the department where the problems were. I got sent back to the main prison to do the rest of my time. I only had four months left to do. Time started to go slow; I thought I'm never going to get out. I wrote Ken M. I wrote him three times.

Only two weeks to go until I get out. When I got out on November 17, 1999 I couldn't believe it. I made it home the next day, and thankful that I was out, and that I had some of my freedom back. I took my first few days very easy. The next week I called Robert S. to meet him and find the meeting place. We met for lunch; talked for awhile, then he took me home. He called me the next day to ask if I was coming to the meeting that night. The first meeting I was very cautious about the others.

I went to a few more meetings until I felt I had a place in the group and I could say things that I wanted to share. Then I missed my third meeting due to the weather. I felt bad the next day. I got a call from Robert S. I told him how I felt about missing the meeting. We talked about our problems with having a

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Send contributions to ISO of SAA, Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270



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)

[ED NOTE: THE COLUMN THIS MONTH WILL DEAL WITH SOME ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ALL THE FELLOWSHIP...]

Leo H., chair of the Fund Raising, has some great news. As of December 31, 1999, eleven members of the Fellowship had come forward to serve as "Founders" of the ISO's Outreach Endowment Fund.

Thanks to their generosity, the fund stands at \$23,034.00, with one more contribution committed to be made in February. This will enable the ISO to reach the seed amount negotiated with the fund's administrator, the Greater Houston Community Foundation.

The Outreach Endowment Fund provides a way for SAA members to insure that there is a perpetual income stream to be used by the ISO for outreach. Large gifts of \$2,500.00 or more and bequests made to the fund will be held permanently, with 80% of the earnings on the principle being distributed to the ISO annually. The other 20% of earnings will be retained as part of the fund.

The Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF) is a large non-profit organization that administers many charitable funds like the Outreach Endowment Fund. By using the GHCF, the ISO benefits from having its fund administered by professionals in this field. SAA contributors benefit by having their anonymity protected while still being eligible for a tax deduction through the GHCF.

Enclosed with this issue of the PBR is a brochure further explaining the Outreach Trust Fund and how you can participate in it.

With the initial funding goals of the Outreach Trust Fund now

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT GROUP REGISTRATION

After 18 months of attempting to get all SAA groups to meet the requirement for annual re-registration, the results show the ISO Office has been 70% successful. Out of the 594 groups and intergroups listed in the ISO database, 374 were registered for the year 2000 as of January 31.

During its teleconference on January 22, the Board approved the following measures to be taken in regard to groups that are not current in their registration:

1. Immediately delete from the database obviously inactive meetings.
2. Publish a two-part Fellowship Directory, listing registered meetings in the front and unregistered meetings in the back.
3. Drop all unregistered meetings from the website and all cities with unregistered meetings from the website city list.
4. Instead of sending the next issue of the Plain Brown Rapper, send only convention information and a registration form with a note that this will be the last mailing to the group and then delete all unregistered groups from the database.

All of the above actions have now been taken.

In addition, since only currently registered meetings are eligible to send delegates to the ISO's annual business meeting, the 2000 Call To Convention will be mailed only to groups and intergroups that are in compliance with the annual re-registration requirement. This mailing is scheduled to go out during the last week in February, immediately after this

NEW "STUFF"

As of January, two new items are being offered for sale by the ISO Office.

The first is a plastic one-day or "desire" chip which sells for fifty cents. The round chip is white and imprinted with silver. One side bears the SAA logo with "1 Day" inscribed. The other side has the Serenity Prayer and the words "One Day At A Time."

The other new offering is a video entitled "Addicted To Sex." This item is among the non-SAA products approved for sale by the Board. Here are some excerpts from the video jacket:

"This documentary is a rare uninhibited look at sexual addiction. A cross section of sex addicts tell their stories honestly and openly. They take us from their first childhood sexual experiences through their worst act of compulsion to how they are recovering today.

"Interwoven with these testimonies, three sex addiction specialists discuss the history and treatment of this disorder. This video is an illuminating introduction into this secret world."

Like all non-SAA literature, SAA neither endorses nor opposes the views expressed by the director or the producer of this video. In approving it for sale, the ISO Board of Trustees saw it as a potentially useful outreach tool that could be used in conjunction with presentations to local professional care givers as well as to the general public who are interested in or seeking recovery from sex addiction.

The video is in black and white and runs 58 minutes. It is available through the ISO Office for \$24.99.

These new items can be purchased at the ISO website store at www.saa-recovery.org or by mailing in the order blank printed below.

Please send me the following:
Plastic one-day chips @ .50 each
\$

Prison Outreach by Joe T.

S.E. Prison Outreach Coordinator

Reaching Out to the Incarcerated Sex Addict

Being a Sex Addict is a difficult road to travel, feelings of shame, isolation, and the fear of exposure can stifle someone with the best of intentions under the best possible circumstances. But, imagine a situation where you are constantly on guard for your physical well-being, where even a mention of a particular sexual problem can get you instant physical isolation and bring harm. A place where even a simple question can bring intense consequences. These are some of the situations an incarcerated sex addict faces.

As the Southeast Region Prison Outreach Coordinator, and one who was incarcerated for a substantial period of time for his sexual acting out, I know first hand the feelings of isolation, helplessness, and fear associated with being in prison. I know how all of the emotions in prison are multiplied and intensified. I remember how an act of hate against one who is perceived weaker was a daily occurrence. I relate to those who are struggling against all odds to find some solution to their sexual addiction in a less than ideal environment.

There is a pecking order and the incarcerated sex addict is at the bottom. Acts of hate are born out of frustration, guilt, and sometimes not having anything better to do. Reporting such events only brings the system down on your head, sometimes from both officials and inmates. It is in this world that the sex addict must try, as best he or she can, to work on recovery. It would be easier if there was widespread support for treatment programs, instead of blind assumptions that no treatment could ever be effective for such individuals, but there is not. But, some positive programs do ex-

ist. In many institutions there are active SAA groups helping many who would otherwise find no help. Groups are run by the inmates themselves, similar to the SAA groups on the outside. Sometimes outside members are allowed in, sometimes not. Many choose to participate, but many, out of fear, or the unavailability of the program, chose to read and study our literature on their own. The ISO supplies SAA literature free of charge to inmates provided they send their request through their regional prison outreach coordinator. For these individuals who choose to work on their recovery alone, having a outside sponsor who can correspond with them is truly valuable. I can not overemphasize the importance of letters from the outside from a caring SAA member who is willing to share his hope and experience, but the value is not only to the incarcerated person. The sponsor also gains experience and understanding and truly grows in his or her recovery. As we all know, many times an experienced member can learn a great deal from a newcomer.

I have been privileged to be able to correspond with many incarcerated individuals over the years. Many of the letters are heartfelt and touching: "I have finally come to the bottom. I can not sink any further.

STEP TWO...

Continued from page 1...

I realized that I had been prejudiced and closed-minded when it came to spiritual matters. Other recovering addicts said that if I just kept an open mind and was willing to let the program work that it would. They told me to "Keep Coming Back," and the love and encouragement they gave me kept me coming back.

One day, after about two months of coming to meetings daily, I was sitting in a meeting, and I started thinking about the phrase "God Is Love." I kept repeating it silently to myself, and when I shared, I said, "If God is Love, I guess I can handle that." I started to cry. This broke the ice for me. Here was something simple and non-threatening. I saw that love was a Power greater than myself, that love was what I needed to fill the emptiness inside me that I was trying to fill with my addictive behavior. When I just opened up and let God's love in, I was filled. I knew everything was going to be okay.

love, Tom



From the Inside...

Terry K. sends a greeting - a poem...

[This [edited] letter and submission was received after the last PBR went to print.]

Hello,

Terry K. here. Still in prison, still working on myself, and still writing.

Enclosed is the 4th poem I've sent you this past year. I would appreciate it if you would print it.

The holidays are a very difficult time for some people in prison. And I imagine [even] for those who are still free but are suffering, and

feeling alone, even if in a crowd.

There are a lot of questions to be asked when one is alone: What happened? How did you [I] get to this point? What happened to all your [my] friends?

Eventually one must get to the point and acknowledge your [my] faults.

It's my hope that everyone can find a way back from the lonely roads they've taken. Best wishes to all on this holiday season.

Terry K.



POET'S PAGE



"Lonely Roads
Terry K.

Sometimes we venture down a
lonely road;
the one less traveled or so we're
told,
to find the treasures we just **know**
are there;
Ideals forsaken, we hardly care.
We travel on both day and night;
Month by month we fight the fight,
And it seems the farther that we
stray;
That the road grows narrower,
friends drop away.
Till one day you wake up and you're
all alone'
On a path so narrow you can't go
on,
There were not treasures, you're so
far from home;
That road less traveled's worn you
down to the bone.
You made your mistakes, you'll ad-
mit in the end;
Then sit down, ask forgiveness, and

by **George .S....**

At times all the devils some of us
must face becomes overwhelming,
and we slip
into our active addict role. At times
we might feel we are screaming and
no one is listening. I believe the Devil
always listens and shows us the easy
way. Sometimes we feel like we
reach out and only grasp air, remem-
ber that the Devil offers more pain
instead of

"Help"

Don't extend that hand you reach
only for air.
Don't you know by now that no one
is there.

Just get away but there's nowhere to
run.
No chance to hide your fears just eat
the gun.

Don't you know you'll never win
Be the fool you are now destruction
begins.

Who told you life was "not all that
bad"?
Did they experience all the abuse
you had?

You think you're wise and have
known the hurt?
Just wait until your ashes are spread
in the dirt.

I'm talking to you, you piece of shit.
Don't try to escape you'll never be fit

To bask in the sun, For you only
rain.
Stop searching for the answers,
You'll find only pain.

Now do you understand why I can't
take your hand?
Why I feel all the people out there
don't give a damn?

Why I continue to say there's no
place to run

I have been in recovery for
about 6 weeks. The PBR is one of
the early resources I found on the
web. To punish you I'd like to inflict
some bad poetry on your readers, or
at least submit it. I **WON'T FEEL
OFFENDED IF YOU DON'T USE
IT**. If you do, you can post my email;
it's ok. It speaks of the discovery of
recovery, finding again my HP, and
joining the community of fellow-
sufferers.

Take care and thanks for your ser-
vice.

Bob B

A thousand defeats until victory

There are a thousand defeats to
victory,
A thousand wounds before the
soothing balm,
A thousand disillusion will lead us to
the truth.

It is weak and in defeat that I have
found His hand,
My knees bent, my head bowed un-
der a thousand insults,
A thousand surrenders, and a thou-
sand failures.

At last I cried: "I am lost!",
Then I heard His voice, surrounded
by a thousand friends,
I found a path of rest, a path of
salvation

No one tramples the earth careless,
shouts prideful, nor speaks haughty,
All speak with regards, with words of
tenderness, all watch over their
steps,
Yet their voices resound loudly and
their feet mark the ground for others
to follow.

I have lived a thousand defeats, and
through them found the victory,
I have bent my knee, He has lifted
me,
I have raised my arms in surrender,
friends have seized my hand.

We can use more poetry!
Don't hesitate to send
yours! It doesn't matter where
you are in recovery in order to
submit an item.
One thing we would like
to ask of all those who submit
articles and poetry is that they
let us know something about
their work in recovery.
Let us know about your
work, about your group, about
your length of sobriety, or what-
ever else might tell a reader
what to expect when he/she gets
to the same point in recovery.
If, of course, the reader
wants to be at the same point
as...
Well, you know what we

INTERNET INPUT...Continuing dialogue on the problems - AND - Solutions... regard- less of degree of difficulty - or time needed

Louis D's letter in the last PBR drew some comments and correspondence. We print one here and another note from Louis on ICQ and its benefits in his recovery.

Ed.

Hi Louis,

I just read your article in PBR of Oct.nov.99 and I knew just what you meant. I have been in recovery now for 25 days. I have had many struggles with this addiction for years, with ups and downs and victories and defeats, but it is only 25 days ago that I have understood and accepted my status as addict, that's why I call it the beginning of my recovery.

What you say about the internet is so true. It has really made the problem so much more difficult for me in the last 2 years. And I did end up wasting so much time (not to mention my mind) with this.

Right now I am still 'wasting' a lot of time [that is being unproductive, which is a problem as I am self-employed], but with the newsletters, recovery web-sites, PBR, online meetings, I am re-conquering my computer and the net for my sanity and recovery. I hope to reach another phase, when I don't have to look for 'connections' all the time, and when I can actually do some of my work (I'd better!), but for the moment I don't let it worry me too much. The need to reach out, listen, read, share, is too great [as you can sense by how lengthy this is getting]. And I sense it is a healing process. So things are on-track I guess.

Your idea to have the possibility to connect with others while online seems great. I just wanted to

Louis Responds to Bob...

Bob,

Thank you for your e-mail. I knew that members were having difficulty with the Internet because I would hear their stories in meetings. I didn't even have a [computer-internet] system at the time. When I did get my system and e-mail, I started to see what these members were talking about. It seemed as though I could spend hour upon hour, chasing a connection. I had never experienced the wide range of possibilities from just sitting and typing, at random, anything my mind would come up with.

I finally realized that I could actually transfer Bottom Line Behavior in using the Internet as a new acting out tool. I knew I needed help. I prayed to God to help me with this. I realized that one of the biggest tools in [my] recovery was helping others. Then, the thought came to my mind that I could actually use the Internet as a new tool for recovery. I had ICQ. I saw this as a perfect tool to connect with other recovering addicts. Whenever I used my system, any member I could put on my User List would know when I was online. The ICQ would do the same for me, letting me know those on my user list were online.

As always, we have a choice. Knowing that I have taken steps to make myself available to the fellowship on the Internet is a way to keep my recovery alive. I encourage you to download ICQ. It's free, and so simple. Then, try to find members in your home group that would be willing to have you on their ICQ User List. Whenever you are both online, ICQ will notify you of one another being online. You can actually chat, at the same time, when you agree to connect

On-Line Meetings...

Only a "click" away....

Now 2 a week...

night. Many of the people attend both SAA online meetings. The list of people who have attended one or both meetings is probably near 100, but just like face-to-face meetings, people come and go as they feel led. So far we don't have a lot of "Old Timers" so some who attend are not able to share

much experience on the higher numbered steps. When this happens we check in or share our hope.

There are a number of attendees who use the online meetings as their only source of contact with recovery. Some work with me in an online sponsorship arrangement and the success rate (judged by continued sobriety) is about the same average as a face-to-face arrangement.

One of the things that I did not expect by chairing an online meeting is the number of letters I receive seeking information on SAA in general. Bruce B. and I receive many letters and even though we like to simply guide these people to the online meetings, we are often providing information about the overall program. To date this has not been an overwhelming task, but there

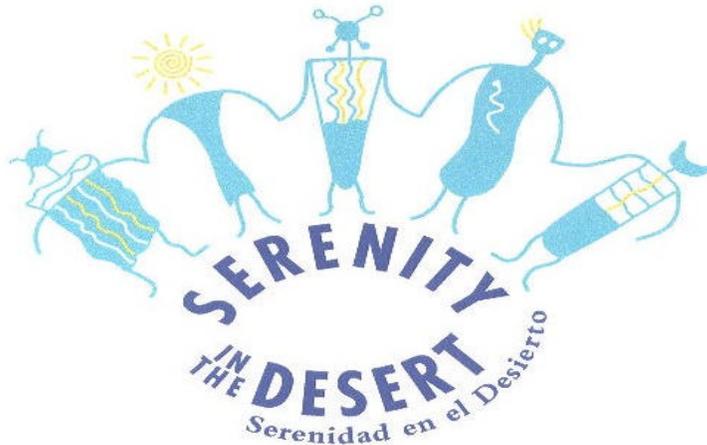
might be a way for other members in the fellowship to aid by placing a contact email address on the SAA web page for general information and let us focus on reaching those wanting to attend the online meetings.

From a 12th Step perspective I find chairing an online meeting challenging and rewarding. There are so many more newcomers at the online meetings than we normally see in local face-to-face meetings. I am able to share my own experience, strength and hope as they attend and encourage them to seek out long-term recovery in a local group. I enjoy chairing the meetings, but I would like to start the new year out by training others to run the scripts and facilitate the meetings.

ON-LINE THURSDAYS - STEP STUDY - MIKE Z. LEADING

My name is Mike Z. and I am the routine chair of the Thursday SAA online meeting. The Thursday meeting is a Step Study meeting which covers a paragraph a week from the step chapters of the book Hope and Recovery. We are now beginning the fourth cycle of the steps which means we are coming up on one year as a group.

The meeting fluctuates between five and six regulars to as many as 18 on one



Join us in The Desert for the SAA 13th Annual International Convention May 26-29,2000

The Fellowship has been planning this convention since the summer of 1998. After winning the bid in LA, 20 people became involved, donating time and money. They're enthused about this SAA gathering!!!

Fund Raising

Successful to date! Over \$1500 so far. Another workshop by Pat C. and another professional is scheduled for February. Your attendance is invited! More details later on this.



AND YOU CAN ALSO HELP BY:

- Writing a donation check.
-Take a second group collection.
-Have a fund-raising activity.
-Buy a T-Shirt [or 3 !] One of each color!!!!
-Prayer - That the Will of our Higher Power might be done through this convention gathering! And for the work of the convention committee.
-Register early - Line up your roommates and make travel arrangements.

NOTE: PORTIONS OF THIS COLUMN HAVE BEEN DELETED FOR WEB SITE PUBLICATION.

ANONYMITY REASONS

- We're Excited !!
-Partial Program-
Friday nite walk-in buffet - socialize !
Banquet-Saturday nite with Pat C. Keynote speaker
Sunday AM-Hike?-maybe.
Sunday afternoon the Talent Show [sign up!]
Sunday late PM-Picnic and play time.

Workshops and presentations are being planned for all days.

NOTE; PORTIONS OF THIS PAGE HAVE BEEN DELETED FOR WEB-SITE PUBLICATION. ANONYMITY REASONS

"Personal recovery depends on SAA Unity". This first convention of the new millennium deserves your participation!!! What can you do?

- * Do Register now! Be here.
* Eighth Tradition says we all as delegates should provide direction to the ISO Board. Each group must be represented, eh?!
* Volunteer to present a workshop; share your ESH! The "Call to Presenters" has gone out. Get one from your group. Or write us.
* Talent Show participation. Let the energy recovered from your addiction shine in a new way.

NEW-EASY-REGISTRATION VIA CREDIT CARD

For the first time, this year SAA embers will be able to register for the ISO Annual Convention by credit card. Here is how it works.

Once you have decided to attend the "Serenity in the Desert" Convention, call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191. Either Jerry B. or Klaus P. will take your registration and your credit card information by phone.

After processing the credit transaction, they will immediately forward a completed registration form and a check to the convention committee. The committee will then send you a confirmation of your registration.

For your convenience, a copy of the convention registration form is included with this issue of your PBR.

Don't forget these important cut off dates:

- March 31 - Deadline For Early Bird Registration
April 28 - Deadline For Receiving Special Hotel Room Rates
April 30 - Deadline For Last Registration Discount

MIRACLES IN SAN FRANCISCO

This February marks the fifth anniversary of SAA's beginning in San Francisco. At our Intergroup meeting this month we decided it would be good to send an article to the PBR, to let people know what it was like getting started here and what has been happening. We hope that our experience in growing a fellowship will help others, particularly those who do not yet have any meetings in their area or who feel there is not much long-term sobriety at the meetings they attend.

It basically started by a chance encounter between Matt C. and myself at the AA meeting on Friday night at St. John's Church in San Francisco. It was the first time we had run into each other in over a year; we barely knew each other's names. On that night at AA, however, we stopped and said hello.

In prior years we both had made on and off attempts at getting sexually sober in another S-fellowship, but with little success. I had grown increasingly frustrated with attending the other S-fellowship here and had basically given up. I would go to the meetings and talk about my acting out and listen to other people do the same, and it seemed that most people who were sex addicts like me were unable to stop. To complicate matters, it was not totally clear to me whether I even needed to stop acting out in order to get better. It seemed most of us at that time were content to have found fellow sufferers and to not be alone in our active addiction.

On the night I saw Matt, I had been sober in AA for ten years. I had been seriously struggling with sex addiction for at least the last five years of my AA sobriety. Matt told me that night that he was not an alcoholic, but that he was coming to AA to try to find some help for his sex compulsion. We had had similar

failures in our attempts to stay sexually sober.

There was another guy at AA that night, a guy visiting from Los Angeles who was a member of SAA. After the meeting, the three of us stood outside. We talked about how

John H. relates the story...

"...Almost everyone raised their hand when we asked if there were any newcomers. It was humbling for us to keep raising our hands... It was more important that we now had a way of running our group that was focused on sobriety and hon-

good the AA meeting felt and how different it was from what we were used to in our old S-fellowship. Basically, we stood outside the church there and did a lot of complaining. There is an old saying in AA: All it takes to start a new meeting is a resentment and a coffeepot. I think this would easily apply to SAA's beginning in San Francisco.

All three of us had had wishy-washy experiences in this other S-fellowship that existed here. Our bottom line gripe with it was this: no one was staying sober (including us!) As we talked more, our L.A. friend began to tell us about SAA meetings he had attended, and about how some people there were finding a way to stay sober (to stay abstinent), some people for many years. He said they were using the AA Big Book. This made some sense to us and brought a tiny bit of hope. I think we were also challenged by it. Either Matt or I said, "why don't we have an SAA meeting here?"

Matt and I decided we would have a meeting the next week at my house; it did not matter if it was just the two of us. As I recall it, our first attempt to meet fell through for some trivial reason. One of us couldn't make it or something. I remember thinking that it might not happen at all. On the surface it did not look like much: two addicts getting together to try to get sober. We had been trying

for years. Why would this attempt be any different?

We did soon get together at my house, on a Tuesday night in February, sitting around the dining room table. We had found a few other guys who were also interested. Matt was usually the one who would bring new people to the group. At those first meetings we did a lot of talking about what we needed to do differently. Many of us had been around for a while and had suffered through relapse after relapse.

One of the critical decisions that came out of this was that we knew it could no longer be a mystery as to who was staying abstinent and who was not. We each needed to know the definition of our own sobriety, and we needed to share this with the group. In other words, there would no longer be relapses that went unacknowledged in the group. We would no longer minimize the relapse. We had learned about the Three Circles and we were willing to put our circles down on paper and live with them.

We would welcome "newcomers" at the beginning of the meeting. We knew that a newcomer had to include everyone who was new in sobriety, not just those new to the fellowship. In other words, I had been going to S-meetings for years, and I was a still a newcomer, because I had not yet learned how to stay sober. For us, a newcomer is anyone who has less than thirty days of continuous sobriety from the inner circle. This was the only way it made sense to us.

We were so tired of seeing people pick up chips for "2 years of recovery" and then go on and on about their latest sex binge. Not only was it painfully clear to us that this was not recovery, but that this kind of faulty measurement sent a very unclear and rather hopeless message to those new to the meetings. Another major change was that we felt free to discuss our sex addiction in all of its painful detail. We learned we could speak honestly about the specifics of our acting out. We felt that in previous groups the discus-

(Continued on page 9)

John H. continues the saga of SAA in San Francisco

(Continued from page 8)

sions were dominated by people's difficulties with romantic relationships or with childhood trauma and family problems. We wanted something different, something that was specifically for sex addicts who wanted to stop acting out and to stay stopped.

We made every effort to structure the meetings around the solution, rather than the problem. We did not want to make rules about how people could share, but we also tried to create a group culture that did not support people wallowing in the problem.

We wrote to Houston and got some of the basic literature and the Group Guide. We used what seemed relevant to us. Mostly we relied on the AA Big Book and the concepts from the Three Circles.

We met every Tuesday night at my house. Most of us were supplementing this weekly SAA meeting with AA meetings, as we felt there was a wealth of sobriety there we could learn from. We liked that in AA there was a conscious effort to focus on practicing the Twelve Steps, on carrying a message of sobriety to the newcomer, and on finding a Power greater than us who could solve our problem. Five years ago, when we would open up the meeting on Tuesday nights, almost everyone raised their hand when we asked if there were any newcomers. It was humbling for us to keep raising our hands as newcomers, but we didn't care. It was much more important that we now had a way of running our group that was focused on sobriety and honesty. We also decided that we wanted sober secretaries in the meetings. If a secretary acts out in

his inner circle, he steps down from the position.

To some people who had been in other S-fellowships, this idea of identifying as a newcomer after a relapse was a new concept. Though some resisted it at first and did not like having to accept that they were, in fact, a newcomer to sobriety, those who stuck around were eventually grateful for having this kind of rigorous honesty built into the meeting format. It is not hard to see the difference in recovery between those who remain completely free from the inner circle and those who go in and out.

I felt that one thing we needed desperately was some people with long-term sobriety from their inner circle in SAA. We did not have it, and my experience in S-fellowships had proven what I had long heard in A.A.: if you don't have it, you can't give it away. In search of some of these sober SAA old-timers we had heard about, I called Los Angeles. The SAA office there hooked me up to a few people in the fellowship. I had lots of questions, but the most important ones involved searching out someone with solid recovery: who is your sponsor? And how long has he been abstinent? And who sponsors him? Etc.

I finally got in touch with Steve L., who at that time I think had been sober for about eight years. I told him what was going on up here, how we were starting a meeting at my house, and how I felt I needed some support from a more established group. He was very willing to help. If there is one thing we would recommend to those who are starting a group, it would be to hook up with some people who are having suc-

Marathon Recovery

much stronger than I do." I knew the talk, but I also knew how to bring myself back to the present moment: "Joel, run your own race." I was running the marathon for my friends Steve and Greg, both SAA members, and both my dear brothers in the program. I dedicated this run for them.

The gun went off at seven in the morning and runners began to shuffle past the starting line and slowly jog into their early pace. I kept reminding myself to "run my own race" because I wanted to be willful and motor through the first mile. This would be a mistake and I knew it well. My first time through the Steps, I had worked diligently and quickly to get to some imaginary finish line. On Step Six, my higher power taught me about "God's time." Utilizing Step Seven in the marathon, I began to run the pace that I had trained. If I was grandiose about my running abilities, I could easily fade in the early stages of the race. If I was depressive about my running abilities, I could not run to my full potential. I simply had to allow my body to remember the pace of the training runs.

Running became part of my morning prayer and meditation, so I connect with my higher power when my body is in this repetitive motion. Along the marathon course I was reminded of my higher power's presence and the presence of the people in the program. Before mile three, I run past a reggae band singing a wonderful reminder: "Everything's gonna be all right." Somewhere between mile seven and eight, I heard the primitive sound of a didgeridoo, an aboriginal instrument. This reminded me of the spiritual aspect of the run and the weekend. My sponsor was also in town engaging in learning Tibetan shamanism. Around mile 15, I saw a billboard stating, "Prevent suicide, treat depression." That reminded me of a good program friend who's suffering from depression. My partner and I spent time with him the day before the marathon, and I was thankful that I got to see him at a meeting and spend time with him. I ran with the blessed people in my life. I heard their voices telling me that I could do it and that they were rooting for me.

On the out and back portion of the race course, I got to see the lead runners speed by which reminded me to

(Continued on page 10)

Marathon Recovery

by Joel D.

On October third, I found myself waiting with three thousand or so runners at the Portland Marathon. During my training runs, and past marathons, I had noticed how much the marathon experience resembled my recovery experience.

As I stood there amidst people clad in the latest running garb, I began to compare myself negatively to them: "I don't have long legs like that guy"; "He looks

Searching For The Rainbow Connection

[Edited] Joel

My Sixth Step work has been moving a bit slowly. Why am I taking so long? The Sixth Step sounds pretty easy. I don't have to take any specific actions. All I have to do is be 'willing' to give up my defects of character. In some ways, giving up the acting out behavior was easier than finding this willingness.

Perhaps a few things are holding me up. Number one, the step asks me to be willing to give up a part of myself that has seemed essential to who I am. The step is asking me to be willing to make a change in my life, to give up things that have been ingrained in me probably since childhood. Also, the things I am being asked to surrender have served me over the years and I have a big fear that what replaces them may not work as well. Finally, like everyone else, I have a natural tendency to resist changes, especially big ticket items like these.

So what do I do now? I want to address the fear. If I give all this up, who will I be? Will I survive this transformation? During the last two days I read a recovery book by a Jewish rabbi. In a discussion on Step Six, he talks about being willing to step not directly from my old self to my new self, but from my old self to nothing.

Now that's a scary thought. It's like I am playing poker and I am turning in my whole hand. Despite that I am being told my new hand will be better than my old one, my intellect (which tries to analyze the probability of this happening) gets in the way. What is becoming apparent to me is that my sponsor is right: I am still analyzing my way through the steps and not feeling my way through. I can't make it past the Sixth Step with just my head.

The step talks about willingness. It also seems to have a large trust component. I have been saying all along that I depend on others and a higher power to keep me sober.

Now I have to go to the next level. I have to trust others and my higher power/God with the most critical essence of me - my personality, not just my behaviors. How do I know I will turn out OK? Where will I end up? Step Six seems to ask for a 'leap of faith'. It's so interesting that I am talking here about willingness, then trust, and then faith. While I have been asking for these qualities to be

restored in me these last four years, it is now my turn to apply them myself.

It's scary to think I might be stripped of my defects without something immediately replacing them. How will I 'keep warm'? The book I referred to above talks about how the 12 steps will enable me to find safety and protection while am 'new and naked'. I acted out alone, but now I am in the company of recovering sex addicts who care about me and support me during this transformation. If I can rely on my higher power and the people around me, then I can find some willingness to begin letting go of my old shell.

The book talks about something else interesting. When a person loans an item to another person, the item typically comes back older and more used than before. But when a person gives something worn out to a higher power/God, then it comes back newer and in better shape. So too, may be my transition through the Sixth Step. When I turn myself over to my higher power/God, I am renewed. It is counter-intuitive, but that is OK. Step Six is something I transition through with my heart and not my head.

Now what does all of this have to do with rainbows? The book I referred to above talks about rainbows being a symbol of sobriety. In the book of Genesis, the initial world was evil and corrupt and God decided to start fresh with Noah (and the other beings on the ark). That is very similar to my life. God has delivered a spiritual flood and he is overhauling me. Like the generation of the flood, I thought my acting out

MARATHAN RECOVERY

Joel D.

(Continued from page 9)

keep tabs on my running form. The runners which are ahead are great reminders of that. In order to continue running, my body had to be relaxed in order to conserve energy for the long haul. I began to go over my physical inventory: "Are my shoulders down;" "Is my face relaxed or am I grimacing;" "Are my hands open or are they clenched in a fist." These are the questions I ask myself to find out whether I'm saving energy or whether I'm wasting it by being tense and resistant. In program, I watch and listen to the members who are working a program and are getting better. Am I doing what they're doing for my own recovery?

There is a relatively steep downhill portion of the course right before the half-marathon mark. As I approach it, I begin to take advantage of the slope. I tilt my head forward and loosen my arms and legs to allow gravity to pull me down. I quickly pass runners who are "careful" not to plunge too quickly. They may be braking. In running, like program, allowing myself to be pulled by gravity is actually saving me energy. If I were resistant to allowing the force of gravity to do the work running downhill, I would be wasting energy and possibly causing unnecessary tension and perhaps an injury. I kept reminding myself, "Don't be afraid to fall."

Running uphill towards mile seventeen, I notice some runners walking up the ramp towards St. John's Bridge. Reminding myself of the running form for running uphill, I shorten my stride, keep my head up, and pump my arms. Keeping my head up allows me to focus on where I want to go and my body to maintain it's running form.

In my training runs, I went no farther than what I could run in three hours, which is about eighteen to twenty miles. Mile twenty, for me, is when I run on faith. I trust that I could make it to mile twenty, but I needed faith for the rest of the way. I was trying to run under four hours, but when I heard my split time at mile twenty I felt I wasn't going to reach my goal of running this marathon in under four hours. My legs were feeling stiffer and I was feeling very tired.

FISCAL NEEDS - FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

No matter how you slice it, we still

International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 1999

There have been times in the past when, at the end of a given year, the financial situation of the ISO of SAA has been less than healthy. Remembering that back in the early nineties there was no reserve account, for anything, capital or operations. Perhaps the financial is a reflection of what recovery is, improving. Whatever the leadership, whatever the membership, note the reserve accounts in the balance sheet, over \$23,000. And can you imagine having all the assets paid for? With only \$131 in payables? Prudence? Perhaps.

Nevertheless, before complacency gets to any of us, we all must realize that perseverance is a continuing process, just as recovery itself. And that means that the 7th Tradition is as important as ever as we commit to reaching out to others who still hurt. Keep buying, and using, SAA Literature. Keep sending your most welcome donations. **Onward and upward!**

	Dec-99	Dec-99	Over/ Under	1999	1999	Over/ Under
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Actual	Budget	Budget
Income						
Sales	4231	3,289	942	54,116	40,620	13,496
Donations	2,946	4,072	-1,126	53,473	41,800	11,673
COSA Payments (Taping)	0	0	0	151	180	-29
Interest Earned	21	0	21	435	350	85
Uncategorized Income	25	0	25	25	0	25
1999 Convention	0	0	0	28,915	28,462	453
Total Income	7,223	7,361	-138	137,115	111,412	25,703
Cost Of Goods Sold	2,950	2,557	393	34,881	25,955	8,926
Gross Profit	4,272	4,804	-532	102,234	85,457	16,777
Expense						
Wages	3,732	2,321	1,411	32,772	29,378	3,394
Health Benefit	248	248	0	2,976	2,976	0
Payroll Tax	289	170	119	2,517	2,200	317
Sales Tax On Purchases	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation	1,548	1,500	48	1,548	1,500	48
Insurance - Brd/Comm	122	0	122	1,464	0	1,464
Insurance - Office	48	48	0	690	695	-5
Travel/Meals & Lodging	0	0	0	5,864	4,500	1,364
Meeting Expense	0	16	-16	1,506	1,200	306
Postage/Shipping	592	194	398	3,581	3,035	546
Phone	960	115	845	5,255	3,725	1,530
Utilities	45	90	-45	856	900	-44
Professional Fees	0	24	-24	1,680	300	1,380
Office Expense	163	284	-121	5,855	4,200	1,655
Equipment Leases	143	74	69	1,437	900	537
Rent	375	375	0	4,500	4,500	0
Advertising	89	37	52	288	200	88
Committee Expense	178	127	51	2,458	1,855	603
Financial Charges	82	0	82	636	0	636
Bad Debts	42	24	18	429	300	129
1999 Convention	0	0	0	19,160	21,031	-1,871
Uncategorized Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expense	8,657	5,647	3,010	95,473	83,395	12,078
Net Income	-4,384	-843	-3,541	6,761	2,062	4,699

ASSETS	
Cash In Banks	
ISO Checking	160
ISO Savings	
Capital Reserves	1,413
Operational Reserves	22,159
Health Reserves	0
Publications Reserve	1,529
Total ISO Savings	25,101
Total Cash In Banks	25,261
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable - Trade	204
Accounts Receivable - Others	0
Total Accounts Receivable	204
Other Current Assets	
Product Inventory	
SAA Literature	2,314
SAA Medallions	1,228
Non-SAA Literature	2,804
Total Product Inventory	6,346
Operating Supplies	400
Prepaid Expenses	
Prepaid Postage	474
Prepaid Security	65
Prepaid Equipment Leases	139
Prepaid Insurance	901
Prepaid Convention Expenses-2000	1,780
Total Prepaid Expenses	3,359
Deposits	
Office Security Deposit	375
Data Card Terminal & Printer	300
Total Deposits	675
Undeposited Funds	0
Total Other Current Assets	10,780
Total Current Assets	36,245
Fixed Assets	
Office Equipment	3,048
Total Fixed Assets	3,048
TOTAL ASSETS	39,293
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Vendors	0
Health Benefit	0
Total Accounts Payable	0
Other Current Liabilities	
Sales Tax Payable	131
Total Other Current Liabilities	131
TOTAL LIABILITIES	131
EQUITY	
Opening Assets	34,066
Opening Liabilities	1,665
Opening Equity	32,401
Current Equity	39,162
NET INCOME	6,761
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	39,293

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TRADITION NINE

Tradition NIne-- "A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

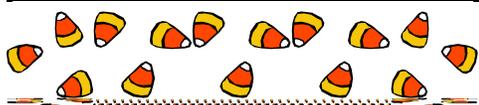
Fellowship: A community of equals, of comrades, of peers with no person having any more authority than the others. This is the essence of Tradition 9 according to the AA 12x12. When this tradition speaks of organization, it is referring to power. That is, a power structure which would set up one SAA with authority over others. Instead, Tradition nine encourages us to organize in a spirit of friendship, a community of equals. When we accept a service commitment for the fellowship we are encouraged to do so in a spirit of service rather than of power. Why does AA's 9th tradition steer us away from this type of organization? The simple answer is that alcoholics (and presumably sex addicts) will not stand for it. The 9th Tradition in the 12 x 12 says that AA intergroups, central offices, and even individual members have been trying this for years but the results have invariably been poor. Rebelliousness, mockery, and rancor have usually been the results. Just ask any "bleeding deacon" who has tried to

force his or her group into running it his/her way. Experience has shown that we best function as a true democracy with no one in real authority over another.

So how can we avoid chaos and outright anarchy? The tradition goes on to state that we can and do place people in positions of responsibility but that their only purpose should be to serve the group, not the other way around.

Some people might think this is impossible. How could it possibly work? The answer according to the 12 x 12 is that members must reasonably conform to the 12 steps or they are sentencing themselves to death. Likewise, groups must attempt a reasonable adherence to the 12 traditions or they will pass out of existence. Not by the power of a formal man/woman-made law, but rather out of natural law. The path laid out by the 12 steps shows us the way to live at peace with ourselves and our abstinence. They are stepping stones to growth not dictates laid down by society. Likewise, the 12 traditions are a blue print that we are free to follow and through painful experience have shown to result in fellowship growth.

The PBR still needs STEP and TRADITION articles. We thank Jim H. for the above, and encourage you to send your experiences as you've worked each of them. If you have any doubt, send them anyway; we'll give you a hand...



Now!! 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 time/one 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!