



News from the Web...

By: Bob D.

**TWENTY NINE THOUSAND !?!?
WOW!!**

Over 29,000 people visited the SAA Website in February. That's a new record!

Who are all these people and what are they looking at? Many of them just look at the introductory material about sex addiction and then leave. About 20% of the people take a look at the meeting list, others stopped by the SAA store, 10% read the on-line PBR, and 1,500 checked out the Spanish version of the web page.

But only about 300 read the Member Functions listing. Do you know what that is? It's a service we're providing to members and groups who want to advertise their local events on-line. A way for you to promote your event to the whole world. Sort of an SAA community bulletin board.

While the Member Functions page hasn't been too popular, I think it's because many people don't know about it. Yet one group said several people show up at their local workshop who learned about it through the web. So it works. And as usage grows, maybe it will become more popular. **Right!** We have a notice about an October Retreat on the Oregon coast. There's even a link to a Webpage with pictures and more information about the Retreat.

Can you promote anything you want on the SAA Webpage? No, **the event has to be related to SAA, not some outside enterprise.** Full details are on the page --- **Take a look for the Member Functions link.**

So let us help you promote your next event.

Bob D. SAA Webmaster

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Nice to hear voices from afar, after a long time... And blow up the ego of the Editor too!!!! Kristie S. writes from ND

Hey there Robert!!!
How goes? It is always nice to have a message from you here on the screen. I went to a meeting up in Bismarck this weekend and really enjoyed seeing some of the old faces and some new ones. Visited [] and she asked about you, had the pleasure of letting her know we were able to have lunch with you one day and you're just as feisty as ever. ha.

It's interesting as I read your message looking for info for the PBR, I thought about the meeting on Sat. We read the 3rd step. As I sat and listened I began to think about my journey in recovery over the past 8 years. I realized as a matter of fact that March is my birthday month. It is hard to believe today that 8 years has slipped by, or maybe rather that someone was able to pry that time out of my hands. At times that is how it was. I wanted to hold on so tight to each moment out of fear to go on to the next, but also too afraid to go back. I had a group at the time who had a collective wisdom that was irreplaceable.

Meeting by meeting, week by week they helped me move ahead and learn to start letting go and trusting that God could and would take my hand and walk with me when they couldn't be there. And you know what, they were right. As we read the 3rd step and it discussed learning how to flow with life rather than fight against it, those words really jumped out at me.

How hard I fought initially, I guess that's because I believed that life was a fight. Fortunately with the help of my group and God I have learned life is not a fight but a gift. It is something I have been given to find pleasure in, enjoy, relish and share with those people around me. And there certainly are wonderful people all

around me.

SAA meetings helped me to start to see people first as people rather than objects for my pleasure and gratification. Those meetings also helped me to develop a foundation on which to start building my life.

I believe I am who and where I am today due to several factors, but I will always be grateful for my group, and the ability to walk into that room for the first time and feel cared about and understood. So I think I will finish by wishing myself a happy 8th birthday, looking forward to my 9th one day at a time. Robert, I want you to know that you have also been a significant part of my recovery for me and my marriage. Thank God for you and RCA as well. I hope that many others have an opportunity to get to know as well. Thanks for all the work you have done for this organization.

Bonded by SAA, your friend,

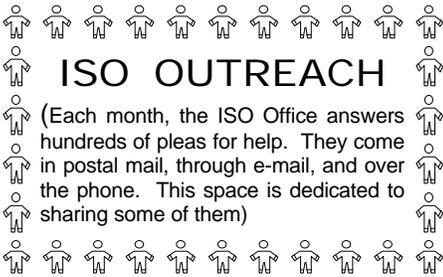
Kristie.

And the PBR Editor Remembers...

It's nice to hear a kind word from a great friend! I first met Kristie when I went to Bismarck to visit the prison there, and to give my Step One story to 50 or so inmates. Following that I attended one of the "outside" groups; Kristie was there, along with others I will have seen [when you get this] on April 8th, for the Northern Tier Intergroup Meeting.

As the years have gone by, and as I have departed ND, it's so refreshing to recall the days of SAA and RCA as we all continued recovery together. ... Thank you all for the memories!

And thank you, Kristie, for prompting this old brain into recall!
Robert S.



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)

Brad is an SAA member who had to move, leaving behind the meetings and friends who had walked with him and supported him when he first began his 12-step journey. Arriving in his new city, he was confronted with the fact that in order to stay sober he would have to start a new meeting. He did not relish the undertaking, but he had no alternative. He found a place, got literature, registered the group, and worked out a way for the ISO Office to relay prospective members to him in a way that protected his boundaries. As the weeks went by, the calls began to come in. Brad received each one with enthusiastic gratitude. Soon he had a meeting.

The following is an e-mail Brad wrote to his former home group. I asked his permission to submit his message to the PBR because I wanted to share the courage, honesty, humility, and joy I found in it. -

Jerry B.

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Hey everyone.

A share: (Would someone please read it at a meeting?)

I am happy to say that our group down here has had a business meeting that addressed all the basic issues vital to having the meeting progress in a healthy manner (format, structure, treasurer, etc.).

This took place last Thursday night. I am relieved that it is over. I never thought I could become so strong willed in the area of business in 12-Step meetings. Through the years of attending meetings I always saw business as being an area that I wouldn't be so overly concerned with.

Boy was I wrong. Did I forget that being an addict has got everything to do with wanting to be in

control of everything and evrybody? Yep, I did. I just wanted the meetings to resemble what I knew from my old meetings.

But I was advised to pray for true GROUP CONSCIENCE and we even prayed before the business meeting. It was all very positive and acceptance abounded from everyone. I am happy that my sponsor was there to help guide us; he has the most experience of our small group.

Sex addict-wise I have located a new place to rent adult videos that I haven't yet told to not rent to me. On that note, it is not the video stores' job to keep me from renting videos. How pathetic! But I already did what I did.

For today though, I don't want to act out or go rent a video. I have come so far and I am doing well. My relationships with God, me, my girlfriend, and my sponsor are all improving greatly. I have serenity that I never dreamed of....why would I want to act out?

Sure I've got lots of stress and problems but I've also got a Program to work and wonderful people and God to love. Just for today I know the light. I choose to keep walking towards it. Thanks for listening and for all the help you all gave me there and while I have been down here.

Thanks to the ISO for all of your help. With God and the Program I can recover and stay sober!

Sincerely,

Brad

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN TO FINANCE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEOS

Last year, the Delegates mandated that the Board of Trustees raise \$15,000 - \$20,000 to produce a quality public service announcement for national TV and for use by the fellowship at the local level. These videos will be geared to providing public awareness that help is available. Raising this amount of money will be difficult but it is certainly not impossible.

Our traditions mandate that we be self-supporting; therefore, our initial plea is to the 384 SAA meetings that are currently registered with the ISO - those meetings that are receiving this Call To Convention and that are eligible to be represented at the 2000 Delegate Conference.

If each member group or intergroup will donate at least \$50.00 to help finance production, we will have these invaluable outreach tools ready for distribution by convention time next year! To reach this production goal, we will need to achieve our financial goal by this Fall.

Several different videos will be available to member groups at cost; however, as an incentive, groups that contribute at least \$100 will receive a free copy of a different video for each \$100 donated.

Please act generously.

Please act quickly.

[Clip the following. Send with donation]

Count us in!

We are excited about the use of Public Service Announcements to spread the news to the still suffering addict that help is available.

We, the members of [group] pledge \$_____ to help finance the production of high quality film/video PSAs. We enclose \$_____ now and pledge to pay the balance of \$_____ in monthly payments. (Please include Group/Intergroup mailing address with your gift or pledge):

Group/Intergroup Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

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

Robert,

Chris C. here. An idea I have been batting around in my belfrey for a few months for the PBR. How about a column on sponsorship, called say the "sponsorship corner." This would be a place for experienced SAAers who are acting as sponsors to share experience and tips with each other (and by default with the whole fellowship) on how to handle this important recovery role. I suspect that in some areas of the country groups are doing more than in other areas, but in my limited experience of the broader fellowship, we are lax in this area.

What do you think? If this interests you, how about one of us writes up a notice for one of the next PBRs and asks for fellowship-wide expression of interest and contributions/questions from people who are sponsoring others. Let me know what you think. [From PBR Ed: Passed this to LitCom; got favorable responses. Readers! Respond too!]

"RELEASED FROM THE INSIDE..."

Part two...

DAVID S...

It has been a very good change to be out of state prison. Things take time as I adjust to being out. Is very different than it was on the inside. A lot more a person has to deal with daily life. My only fears are my past, the people I hurt and, not finding a job for the past four months. Then there is all the pain my addiction caused over the past 22 years of my life. I am very thankful for the SAA group; it gives me joy that I'm not alone in all my struggles

I have spent a long time looking for a job. I filled out job applications for a many jobs; no response back. I have a lot of thoughts of giving up on finding a job. Most of the places where I sent applications hired some one else for the jobs. I started working with JTPA program for one month. They tried to help me although they could not find a job for me. I told the JTPA rep. that I should go to the Career Learning Center in South Dakota. I called the Learning Center to set up and appointment. I had one set up for Tuesday, February 22, 2000. After the appointment I spent the rest of the day shopping in Rapid City, SD. On the way back to Belle Fourche, I lost my wallet and did not remember where I left it. I was a total wreck for three days. When I called the Career Learning Center to reschedule my Appointment for Personal Employment Opportunity Workshop I found where my wallet was. The director of CLC said he would bring it to me. I got it back on February 29th. I had my wallet back! I still had

to find someone to stay with for the week of March 6th. I talked to Robert S about my problem; he said I could stay with him for the week. He came to Belle on Sunday around four to pick me up. I spent the week in Rapid City. It was a good week. I took the PEO workshop and finished it; now I have to find a job.

The group had supper together and had a "mini-meeting" before Robert brought me back to Belle. I think this SAA group has a closeness that brings people [me!] back. It does work to find a meeting!

I was trapped by my addiction and thought there was no way to have a better life. There is help. Find an SAA group! There are many people out in this world who still suffer from addictions; not only one but many. I suffer from a lot of addictions; like alcohol, pain addiction, & fire addiction. Most of those addictions were in place so I could stay away from the problem of the sex addiction. [switching addictions].

Most of us with a sex addiction who still struggle with it believe there is hope that we can have a new healthy life again. A goal of every SAA member should be to have a better life by using the recovery tools that are there for us. It not easy to have a healthy life but, there is hope that I can make it through a day without a slip.

David S.



The Office Oversight Committee voted to have me write this item and submit it to the PBR...

Jerry B.

With the addition of more pages and an upgrade in the quality of its cover, there has been a significant rise in the cost of producing the Fellowship Directory. An item that had at one time cost only 42 cents to produce now costs \$1.26. Despite this, the Office Oversight Committee recently decided not to recommend to the Board that the selling price of this useful and popular publication be raised.

Even taking into account the "spoilage cost" absorbed whenever the directory is revised, it is hoped the current \$2.00 price will still provide enough margin for the ISO to break even.

During discussion prior to its vote to hold the line on price, committee members took into account that SAA members who travel extensively might have to buy several editions each year to insure that they have access to the most recent meeting information.

Jerry B.



POET'S PAGE



The preceding poems reflect the growing up in a shaming environment.

By George S.

Debilitating shame affects our ability to form loving relationships and honor our sexual selves. I have always felt guilty when I reflected on my past. Only recently have I acknowledged the shaming environment of my childhood. We learned to block those feelings with compulsive behaviors. Some of us became alcoholics, overeaters, codependents, substance abusers, gamblers, and many of us became

SEX ADDICTS.

Unfortunately the feelings of helplessness that accompany our sexual addiction are too familiar. The more powerful our addiction, the greater our urge to act out and the more helpless we feel. We depend on acting out for self-power and self-worth. If we continue to search for external resolution, we will become more powerless and experience feelings of hopelessness. Our poetic journey now embarks on the road to recovery. We can begin to accept the past and know that God is present and cares about our

"Future"

Out of the ashes I've created helplessness turned to hope
 Recognizing the pressures with which I must cope.
 I feel very sorry for all those I have hurt
 I regret all the unhappiness caused by my life in the dirt.
 I've lived all alone never feeling the care
 Offered by loved ones who were constantly there.
 Now it's the piper, he must be paid,
 I've been stripped of the loved ones
 By this life I have made.
 I need to be able to live with the hope
 That I'll conquer those demons with which I must cope.
 I know there's a reason in His grandiose plan.
 I feel all that's needed is to reach out with my hand.
 To stretch when I'm falling for the help I truly need
 understanding that the love offered is my fulfilling seed.

With these words we begin a new journey.

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By: George S....
 We have all heard "The Promises" remind us that "we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it". We must believe that in this part of our recovery, this is our

"Time"

Think of a time, a time when you cared
 A time when you felt all love's passion was there.
 A time filled with happiness, enjoyment and thrills,
 A time when you conquered all life's daunting hills.

Think of this time as your youthful, happy years,
 This time sped by quickly leaving only sad tears.
 This time filled with disappointments, struggles, and pain,
 Can never be forgotten or tempt you again.

Remember this time as the years pass you by,
 This time is not endless like the stars in the sky,
 This time with its limits keeps you focused and well
 As you navigate your journey in this private hell.

You have other options, please consider them well,
 Don't ever be satisfied in your private hell,
 Search under each leaf until you finally uncover
 The happiness you desire. Then love one another.

If we are able to remember a pleasant memory in our past, our recovery process will develop a root system to support our new tree of life.

"WHEN YOU CROSS THE LINE, IT DISAPPEARS."

From:
 "Postcards From The Deep"
 copyright: 1998
 by Bob Parker

[Ed Note: This is the last of 10 poems that were submitted by Bill R. beginning a couple years ago. Thanks to Bill for letting us use them these past several issues. There is a final story at the end of these that we'll run if we can get Bill's permission to do so.]

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This started to be about one thing, but apparently I really needed to write about my father.

By Bill R.

Making the Old Man Proud

What is it about the here and now
 That lets me still so easily withdraw?
 Oh, I can linger and be present now
 A little longer than before -
 Linger ... loiter might be closer
 To the truth -
 But I find myself
 By far the most productive
 When fabricating yet another
 Whimsical delusion
 To lose my way in for a while.
 That same energy spent
 To maintain at least a foothold
 In this reality
 (Or so I have been told it is)
 Might help me make the old man prouder
 Than he was - he told me that he was -
 At my near escape from my vile passions
 Decaying despair.
 "I'm not ashamed of you."
 He said it as a blessing,
 And I clutched that sow's ear
 As though it was, indeed,
 A purse of finest silk.
 The blessing I could truly hold
 To moor me in this fragile sea though
 Came when he died,
 And chose to die,
 That last and final breath expelled,
 As on the final broken note
 Amazing Grace I sang for him.
 We had gathered for his passing
 And all loving hands extended
 To secure his feeble flesh
 For just a moment longer -
 One more last farewell -
 With tears and gentle sobbing -
 He seemed to struggle so.
 And we all wished
 Though not his leaving
 But at least an easy rest,

(Continued on page 6)

POETRY
CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 5

(Continued from page 5)
A peace he might sink into
As we loved him to his grave.
And I, unsteady, fearful,
I so often got it wrong, you see,
And he would loud inform me
Of its wrongness.
Its wrongness, not my own.
But I somehow
Always seemed to see the two as one.
A wrongness that, unbidden, crept
From out a soul all black and hollow.
But I sang.
Unsure in both its rightness
And my singing,
All snuffing, broken-voiced forlorn.
And as I sang,
Though me it troubled all uncertain,
Him it seemed to calm and ease.
Until, at last, that last note sounded
And with his death
He gave his final seal,
And one that I at last believed,
That in at least one thing,
It, the song and I, the singer,
Held together by our common joy
At such a sweet embrace,
It had been completely right.
No better bounty could he leave
Than that final moment's
Oh so loving, merciful reprieve.
Now I carry in my heart
A love that all before
I'd only had inside my head;
A father's love that bears me now
Through other pilgrim journeys.
For knowing, truly knowing,
That he loved me as his son,
Is all I ever needed of success.
So, yes, my mind still wanders,
And distracts me to my folly,
But I now no longer follow
For it seems more as a habit
Than a need I must fulfill.
And it's tugged now more by boredom
Than it's pressed by fear and shame.
And when the shadows beckon
I hear Amazing Grace again.

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"FROM THE INSIDE"
Kasey S. - Charles H. - Thomas C.

Dear Thomas,
I am writing to thank you
for your article "Step Two" in the
most recent PBR.

As a sex addict who is
incarcerated, I can't tell you how
uplifting I found your article to be.
I especially liked, "...By this time,
I had been beaten into a state of
reasonableness by my dis-
ease..."

I never knew what was
wrong until I came to prison.
Now, I have found others through
SAA correspondence who have
helped. Although my letters are
limited to two persons, they have
been able to be supportive in
sharing their experience, strength
and hope.

Tom, I am grateful to you
and other authors who also share
their ESH through the PBR for
those of us who are prisoners
because of our disease.

I, like you, have struggled
with this step and found your sim-
ple "discovery" warm and touch-
ing. Good luck on your further
adventures through the 12 Steps.

May God always be with
you.
Sincerely,
Kasey S.

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Letter from Thomas C.
To Whom It May Concern:

Hello, good day!
My name is Thomas C. I'm 21 years old. I'm writing to
you concerning a request of your SAA Newsletter. I ran across
one of them through a friend and I was wondering if it is possible
that I could get the [PBR].

I tend to find your SAA letters very interesting and
helpful. I hope that I'm not asking for too much. I look forward to
hearing from you.

I thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Thomas C.

The Plain Brown Rapper
To Whom It May Concern:
My name is Charles H. I
have been convicted and incar-
cerated in the MDOC for 2 1/2
years. I would like to receive the
[PBR] as I'm in SAA self-help
group. That's how I got your
address

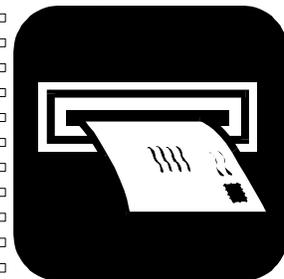
Please place me on your
[regular] delivery. I would really
enjoy and appreciate getting the
newsletter to help myself.

Also, if it is possible,
please send as many past issues
[back issues] that can be afford-
ably sent.

Looking forward to read-
ing the Plain Brown Rapper, and
thank you very much!!

Charles H.

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THE FOLLOWING IS "STOLEN" FROM THE WINTER ISSUE OF THE 1997 INDIANA CHECK-IN: THE TOOL BOX...

Bibliotherapy - n. 1. the reading of books to remedy a mental or physical disorder.

While Alice sat under a tree reading her books, little did she realize I she was to fall asleep and take a profound trip to Wonderland.

There she realized that everyday life played-out in the most unusual scenarios and with characters unlike she had ever met before. In your recovery, you may also share a like experience. People, places, and ideas often foreign to your mind and spirit may present you with arguments for changing your compulsive behaviors.

Reading a recovery book is not unlike reading a map of an unfamiliar country through which you must travel. You listen to others who have been there before, you plot a route, look for road signs, stop often to ask directions and keep traveling. This type of recovery tool requires honesty about being lost, openness to direction, and the will to do the necessary travel.

Reading for recovery cannot be underestimated. Admittedly, it takes time but you are worth the investment and, of course, not all books will suit your personal travel needs. Still, seek out a good book, help yourself to some free advice and you may find some direction and perhaps even yourself: If you persevere, you may find this to be handiest tool in your recovery toolbox.

N.T.I. MEETING

By the time you read this, the Northern Tier Intergroup will have met. April 8th is the day and the meeting is in Bismarck, ND. Both ND and SD are in the Intergroup. The miles make the quarterly meetings difficult for some. For instance, Grand Forks, ND to Rapid City, SD is about 650 miles; Bismarck to Sioux Falls, SD, about 460. Some challenges!

Jim M., Sec'y-Treas, announced an SAA Meeting to start the session at 9:00 AM and business at or about 11.

COMING EVENTS

The Indiana Intergroup of SAA is busy again with the May 6, 2000 Workshop, "What's Love Got to do With It?". This is the 5th in a series that will focus on 12 step sexual addiction recovery. This is an interactive workshop and participants are encouraged to be creative, reaching inward for recovery-discovery ideas, and then outward with a hearty freedom of expression.

The meeting will be in Indianapolis, IN at the Christ United Methodist Church, 8540 US Highway 31S. The cost is \$15.00 at the door. A continental breakfast at 8:00 AM starts the workshop. Buz H. is the luncheon speaker. The session ends at 4:30 P M.

There are four "break out rooms" with a "Place" and a coordinator in each. Tolerance - Anna R., Kindness - Katrinka G., Forgiveness - Bill D., Truthful - Bill S. There will be four time periods for each so that all attendees may attend all sessions.

Contact Bill S, Workshop Chair, at 317-783-6264, fax at 317-783-0064, or e-mail at BuddiesX2@aol.com.

More from the Indiana Intergroup...

The Indiana Check-in is the newsletter of IISAA and its front page did a "Looking Back" at 1999. Many milestones were passed and it spoke to a lot of recovery and a lot of outreach. The newsletter itself was 5 years old last year. Five new meetings evolved, 2 folded. Eight annual picnics celebrated; 5th year of Fall Retreat with record attendance, 300 mark reached on newcomers packets delivered, record levels of in-kind contributions, and over a dozen more. According to the editor it represents a committed desire for outreach and

service work to all who struggle with sexual addiction in Indiana.

The PBR Editor received a sample of the Indiana SAA Fellowship Directory, a neat wallet sized fold-out by Anna R. that gives complete information on all meetings, including type, gender restrictions, mixed, handicapped accessibility, closed or open, and all the rest. Neat! If you're looking for meetings in Indiana, you need one.

Thanks from the PBR for

PS to other Intergroups who publish newsletters: We'd like to see them. P.O. Box 9181, Rapid City, SD 57702 will get them to us. Or send them to the PBR c/o the ISO Office, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270. Thanks in advance.

PBR STILL IN NEED...

So what's new???

Sometimes it's up, sometimes down. Kind of like what's on hand for the next PBR. I recall the days when funds were severely scarce, and Jerry B. would tell us how things just sort of "turn out". And perhaps, we at the PBR haven't done so bad either when all's said and done.

Still, there's a lack of good, concise articles of experience, strength and hope that are coming in. The long ones are accepted, of course, but some need severe editing, and that takes some time. Also may not get the point of the author across as he/she intended.

How about taking a moment to look over this issue, and perhaps some old ones, and come up with some recollections of your recovery. And write it down, do a little editing, and send it in. By e-mail to the PBR, or snail it to the ISO Office.

We do wish to thank all of our authors for previous submissions!!

KEEP 'EM COMING!!...

From the January 22, 2000 meeting of the Board; crowded out of the last PBR:

The following may or may not be of earth-shaking importance to some in our midst. It is important to note the work of the Board of the ISO and the details of direction necessary to keep the corporation not only solvent, but operational, to the extent it serves the purposes of its members. And "them" is "us". If "the devil is in the details", then the details are those that need attention, not only in our recovery lives, but in our service work as well, especially since we, as addicts, know that "service work" is recovery work. As we look to the day when we shall gather the kind of recovery that qualifies us for international service, it may be well we know what is going on at these levels.

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The Interfellowship Forum is still active and meeting regularly. The Forum is made up of members from various "S" organizations. Our Fellowship was represented by Harry S. at the January, 2000 meeting in Chicago and will do the same at the November meeting in Tennessee. Harry S. will also be an SAA observer at the SCA annual meeting in Chicago. There will be a second representative to the 2000 Interfellowship Forum elected at the 2000 Convention.

There will be some changes in the way the Fellowship Directory is published. Those meetings that are obviously inactive will be deleted. The two-part directory will list those that are registered in one section and non-registered in another. All unregistered meetings will be dropped from the website as will all cities with unregistered meetings. The ISO office was charged with six specific projects to begin immediately. They are:

- ISO BOARD - Always attending to the - DETAILS -

1. Create a database of Past Board Actions
2. Create a guide for Starting a New Meeting
3. Formulate National and International Outreach Initiatives
4. Revitalize [in some cases, Vitalize] Board Committees
5. Develop strategies for Improving Intra-ISO Communications
6. Develop strategies for Increasing ISO Income.

Bob D., Webmaster, reported on his ideas for reconfiguring the SAA website to include:

- Areas for Newcomers
- Literature purchases
- Members
- On-line meetings
- Recovery Resources

Bob will post the Group Guide on the website. The Board will also create a committee headed by Bob D. to draw up a job description for an Assistant Webmaster, and will **select** such assistant at the Tucson Convention. Jerry B. and Peter B. will assist with the job description.

Reaffirmed was the decision to use the same **Delegate Meeting Business Meeting Procedures** as have been used since 1995.

The Board authorized the British Isles to duplicate/copy tapes providing tapes are sold at no less than at the ISO office, and that they pay the ISO a 25% royalty on those sold.

From the March 25th Meeting...

Roger B. took over as the Great Lakes Board Rep in place of Rob V. who resigned. This is Roger's first meeting as a Board Member.

Peter B. is now Board Secretary taking Rob's old position.

The ISO Office had been

renting a credit card terminal and printer and agreed to purchase one for \$785.00, funds to be taken from the capital reserves.

Leo H., Fund Raising Chair, reported a campaign to raise funds to finance production of outreach videos, with flyers being sent to groups and to individual members. He also reported that the Outreach Endowment Fund had now received a permanent corpus of \$23,309.27. A resolution was passed which would authorize the Greater Houston Community Foundation to grant 80% of the income from the Outreach Endowment Fund to be made to the ISO of SAA, Inc. in accordance with the Fund Agreement, the first of which would be made before May 26, 2000.

Jerry B., ISO Office Manager, is compiling a database of all Board actions and also on the number of SAA groups currently registered in each region.

Penny K reported that a draft of the **LARGE BOOK** would be ready by May 26, 2000 and the contract was revised to that deadline. The draft will be sent to the Board and distributed to the Literature Committee. These will be numbered copies accompanied by a cover letter that includes an appropriate protection statement.

The ISO office will now offer for sale plastic "chips" for one, two, three, six and nine month anniversaries. Cost will be fifty cents each and will be available at Convention and thereafter.

Next formal Board meeting will be at 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM Wednesday, May 24, and from 8:30 to 5:15 PM Thursday May 25 prior to the Convention. A Board/LitCom joint meeting will be on Thursday.

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12 STEPS FOR A BUDDHIST - by a member...

Dear Roberto,

I understand you are wondering if an Buddhist can work the SAA program, considering the Christian-sounding language of the program.

I am a practicing Zen Buddhist who was raised an atheist. I read about Buddhism when I was in my addiction, but only went to service at the local temple once. My addiction left me too restless to sit for fifty minutes in meditation.

When I came into the program, I had a great deal of difficulty with the God references in our literature. I tried working the program by attending meetings and without working the Twelve Steps (the spiritual exercises and principles upon which our program is based). Although my life improved, I still had difficulty with my addiction. So, I decided to try working the Twelve Steps as spiritual exercises.

When I got to the Third Step ("Turned our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God"), I went to the minister at the Unitarian church that I was attending at the time. I told him that I needed to learn how to believe in God when I still didn't. He did some research and came back with information about a program called Secular Order for Sobriety (S. O. S.). He couldn't find the article in newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous, "the Grapevine", but he found the issue of "the Grapevine" for the following month. In it, members of AA were responding to the article. Many of the letters went like "I've been in AA for ten years (or twenty or thirty years) and I still don't believe in God. I just work my program and don't drink. No one has to

Robert,

Since I went to the trouble of writing this person a long-winded explanation of how a Buddhist can work the SAA program, I thought I would submit it to the PBR. If you run it, please do so anonymously. I hope it is of use to you.

*Yours truly,
Anon...*

leave AA because they don't believe in God." If I had believed in divine intervention, I would have thought it was a message to me. I decided that if alcoholics could work the AA program (on which the SAA program is based), as atheists, then I could work the SAA program as an atheist. I kept working my program and did my best to ignore the Christian-sounding language used by the program.

About six years ago, after enjoying a long period of abstinence, I had a relapse. After floundering for quite a painful period, I decided that I needed more to my program. I decided to go to Sunday services at the local Korean Zen temple. I made it a regular habit, along with annual retreats and other celebrations. It gave me a stronger spiritual sense. I have been going to the temple for nearly four years and attend Sunday services, which last two hours, as well as the Wednesday night services,



which consist of two and a half hours of meditation. I try to attend meditation retreats just prior difficult or stressful challenges.

My Zen practice supports and complements my recovery. The Buddha taught that desire is the cause of our suffering. Nowhere is that more obvious than it is with addictions. In the

"The Buddha taught that desire is the cause of our suffering."

SAA program, like in my Buddhist practice, I have learned to stop turning the wheel of Karma by abstaining from my addiction. My recovery, supports my Zen practice. When I was in my addiction, my mind was too ravaged to practice meditation, let alone be capable of the generosity and other rigors that Buddhism demands.

These days, I tend to see God now as a verb and not a noun. God is me doing my practice, being my genuine self, and expressing my Buddha nature. For me, God as a verb is capable of being the God of the Twelve Steps. I heard a nun discuss how God can be an internal presence as well as an external entity. I like that as well. God can be that quiet, true voice that I can hear if I quiet my mind and overcome the shouting of my addiction.

Lastly, there is a book called the "Zen of Recovery." I found it difficult to read, but you may do better with it than I have. Also, one of our Dharma teachers wrote a book called "Stumbling Toward Enlightenment" which is a good American Zen book.

I hope this is useful information. Please don't let the language of recovery keep you from getting our message. We need more members from different religious backgrounds in our fellowship; it is good for us.

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Picture of the Work of the Literature Committee

[NOTE: The following dissertation is that of the PBR Editor, and not the official rendition of the minutes of the meeting alluded to, since they will not be out for a while. This will try to encapsulate the business conducted as well as highlight the issues discussed.]

The LitCom Teleconference Meeting of Sunday, April 2, 2000, was one that drew upon the best recovery of those present.

The agenda was full as usual and contained 15 items of old business and two items of new. Item 6.5 was inserted before the meeting began. The Agenda items were generally made up of Sub-Committee projects with LitCom members reporting on each. They follow:

- ◆ "Large Book" -Jeff W.
- ◆ Plain Brown Rapper
- ◆ PBR Oversight -Chris D.
- ◆ LitCom Handbook -Jeff W.
- ◆ Translation Coordination-Mike L.
- ◆ Womens' Pamphlet -Elizabeth S.
- ◆ [6.5] Creating Group Guide

New Business Inserted Here:

- ◆ "Our Problem" from Sun Night Men's Recovery Group
- ◆ Special Elections

More Old Business

- ◆ "From Shame to Grace"-John H.
- ◆ Sponsorship Pamphlet -Robert S
- ◆ Guide to the 12 Steps -Jeff W.
- ◆ Internet Pamphlet -Jeff W.
- ◆ "Questions and Answers on Sex Addiction" -Jeff W.
- ◆ "Our Addiction" -David B.
- ◆ "The Problem" -Jeff W.
- ◆ Abstinence Statement -Jeff W.
- ◆ Schedule Next Meeting
- ◆ 5 minute discussion
- ◆ Close

The issue of the Large Book and the writing thereof was brought into question. It was reported that the contract with the author had been revised [see Board actions, page 8]. As indicated there, the document will be ready for LitCom distribution at the Convention.

Jeff W. stepped down as Chair of the LitCom but retained his seat as Great Lakes Representative since his



Why a Sponsor? Why a Group? Why Worry?

term will be complete in May.

David B., Vice Chair, then assumed the Chairmanship.

Robert S., PBR Editor, reported on the status of the newsletter. He recommended for consideration, that the ISO Board and the LitCom agree to publish the PBR from the ISO Office, using the payment to the Editor to offset such expense. The idea was thought to be placed on the Board/LitCom meeting agenda for Thursday, May 25th at the Convention.

The PBR Oversight functions are minimal, having only two participants contributing, and no one doing so this last issue. No action at this time.

Jeff W. was hoping to have the Literature Committee Handbook tentatively approved by the LitCom for Convention. It was written in August of 1999, and is undergoing scrutiny at this time.

Spanish translation issues revolved around the cover page of the SAA pamphlet. Mike L. was given authority to make an appropriate change and it was approved as changed.

The Women's Pamphlet is ready for final conference approval. The LitCom is grateful to Elizabeth for her fine work for the last three years or more on this important piece of literature.

There was a short discussion of a new Group Guide.

With time running out at 2 and 1/2 hours, the meeting closed by noting the time of the next meeting as 8:30 AM on Thursday, April 25, 2000, at the Convention.

Meeting closed with the "We" version of the serenity prayer.

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Over these past 10 plus years, I've been told by several counselors, SAA group members, and others, that a SPONSOR is worth his/her weight in platinum. I'm convinced.

In the beginning it was hard for me, a narcissist, to admit I needed anyone, or anything, to help with my recovery. I did a "co-sponsorship" with a person who had about 6-8 months on me. We seemed to work together and were able to share some of our most shameful issues and deepest hurts and feelings. Since he had a long history in another "A" group, he knew more about this sponsorship "thing" than I did. I

learned a lot from him. Some of it was written on a place mat or two over coffee. I owe him, and others.

Recently, like last week, I had some company coming to stay with me. There were some old thoughts and anxieties thrashing around in my mind. Old tapes maybe. I was concerned. I'd had old memories and dreams coming around over these years and have reported them to my group as they have arisen.

This seemed different; it was more intense, I was say, "worried".

So I called my long distance sponsor, the one who'd pulled me up from down under before. We visited quite honestly about this. Since he'd been where I had been, and done what I had done, his ESH was needed; badly. So we talked. That's all, just shared.

Then, the same night, I reported these anxieties, feelings, worries, to my group. Just shared, talked, listened.

The next day was the day. Spent in working, visiting, playing. To bed late, up late next AM. Another day of just being, and being close to my company. Another night of comfortable rest, breakfast and separation from my company during the afternoon. No fantasy, no urges, just calm.

How? Damned if I know. It must have had something to do with the ability to be honest with another person, or persons, then listen. Then to be aware that my concern was a valid fear, one to face, one to talk out with another. I'd never had that in the "old days". I was calm and assured as I acted out my addiction on myself and others.

It's taken me a long time to get honest, and to get up front about those things that represent relapse dynamics.

Practice, practice, practice. With a Sponsor!!! And a good Group!!!

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At Large	None	None
PBR Editor/Member		Robert S.



STEP THREE...

Dwayne, John, Gerard

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.”

As we ponder on what to write for this article on Step 3, I am reminded of what Step 2 is all about. It is stated in the big book that I had [sic] to believe in a Higher Power. And, if I believed in that Higher Power, logic tells me that making the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood him is what comes next. Making this decision is essential to completing Step 3.

The decision is to turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power's care because I am powerless over my compulsive sexual behavior. By turning it all over to my Higher Power I get out of my self-centeredness and those old thinking patterns, i.e.; I can do it on my own, which for me, the perfect me, means that I need nobody.

That decision, that I need help, that I could no longer lie to myself, clearly shows me that my life is unmanageable. So, I need to surrender my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power. It is my will for His will. That decision takes willingness, wisdom and courage, but after I've done that my life takes on new hope versus the

hopelessness that I have known for so long.

To make the decision is to recognize that I need help, and to choose **not** to choose is still making a choice.

I have come to realize that I'm still that same person, who is standing in the same spot, but looking at life from a different perspective. I still have all my baggage with me! This decision clearly shows us that the promises are real, and if I look beyond myself, I am promised that my Higher Power will take care of me by placing program people, the tools necessary to work my program and those opportunities to make healthier life choices, before me.

No matter what happens during my program of recovery I am still loved regardless of where I am, which makes it possible to surrender my will over to the care of God. It is still a 24-hour program and each day I must commit to the process. I must make this decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand him, each and every time that I am faced with a choice.

Dwayne, John and Gerard
The Wednesday SAA Step Study:
Virginia Beach Virginia

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! Thanks !!