



News from the Web...

By: Bob D.



It's that time of the year again. Oh, the leaves are turning, there's a crisp feeling in the morning air, and ... no, no, no, that's not what I'm talking about.

It's time to start thinking about renewing meeting registrations with the ISO Office. As you may remember, the ISO Board requires that meetings must re-register annually.

This means that someone has to fill out and mail in the Group Registration Form for each meeting. The form has to be signed by two members attesting to the fact that the meeting is an SAA meeting that follows the 12 steps and 12 traditions of SAA and is not affiliated with any facility or outside enterprises.

What happens if a meeting doesn't re-register? A few things: First, it gets several pleading reminders from the ISO Office. Second, and more important, the meeting is dropped from the ISO list of registered meetings. This means when a newcomer calls the ISO looking for a meeting, they won't be referred to your meeting. Additionally the meeting isn't listed in the Fellowship Directory nor is it listed on the official SAA web page. This makes the meeting inaccessible for many newcomers.

Maybe you're not sure what the status of your home meeting is? "Did we send in the form or did we forget?" you might be thinking. There's any easy way to check. Take a look on the SAA Webpage, <http://www.saa-recovery.org>. When you get there, go to the "Member's Area" and under the "Meeting Information" heading, click on "Registered Meetings." You'll see a list of all meetings and the date they last registered. If you need to re-register by Dec 31st, the listing will say so.

By the way, if you do need to re-register your meeting, you can get copies of the registration forms from a link on the same web page as the meeting list.

Hope this reminder saves you some grief (and keeps me from having to put your meeting back on the web in January!)

Bob D. SAA Webmaster

— NEEDED — STORIES FOR SAA BOOK

To facilitate the process of editing and revising the upcoming SAA book, the Literature Committee has decided on a deadline of January 31, 2002 for the submission of personal stories for the book.

As we've said earlier, we encourage any member who wishes to share experience, strength and hope, to send his or her story to the ISO Office at [address on page 12] or e-mail it to info@saa-recovery.org.

Whether you are an old timer or new in the Program, all submissions are welcome and will be considered. We thank you all for your participation.

The Literature Committee - Chris D, Chair

Should Sex Addicts Mention Other Groups in an SAA Meeting?

This question was posed at a recent meeting of the Southern California Intergroup by one of its members who was greatly distressed by this question. It seems that the people in his home meeting were identifying themselves as Sex and Love, members of SCA, or mentioning some other S-group. One of the main reasons why this distressed him was the fact that it states clearly in his groups' guidelines that everyone *must* identify as a sex addict. He took it to mean that everyone can only identify themselves as a sex addict. Was he right or wrong?

This is one of the many tricky questions that come up when one tries to have an organization with no actual governing body. But that doesn't mean the problem is untenable, just sticky. Let's take for example the answer the Intergroup Members gave to the question. We concluded that since each group is autonomous that his group had to decide whether to ban the mention of other S-groups. We admitted that while some of us had misgivings about that practice (I don't just for the record) we can't tell him what to do as long as it follows the Big Twelve.

Here's where the plot thickens, because since his group also could not govern they could not make a rule against the mentioning

other twelve step groups either. I mean come on, just try banning the mentioning of AA in a group and you'd have a riot.

So to be perfectly honest there is no *exact* answer to the question of mentioning other groups. It's similar to being a strict constructionist or a loose one (I'm talking about the constitution) either we interpret the Big Twelve with stifflingly little lee-way or with frighteningly too much. I used the words frightening because that's how I felt when I heard that the ISO had allowed our name to be used in a movie, but claimed that they weren't endorsing the movie. That's frightening. But that's also my interpretation.

Bottom-line people, we're here to help sex-addicts. So as long as someone doesn't *just* identify themselves as a cocaine addict or a gambling addict, and they have severe problems with human physical and emotional relationships in almost anyway, then they're probably going to find solace in an SAA meeting.

Remember SAA wouldn't exist unless the creators heard of or attended an AA meeting.

---Kam.

(A Sex Addict, but I also have a problem with chocolate, too)

**“Pain is Growth...
If you’re not
growing, you’re
DYING”**
Ken C.

Response to:
“FIRST STEPS MAY BE A PROBLEM FOR
LEVEL 2-3 OFFENDERS” [June-July-01]
-An Added Alternative... Michael J.

Ken C.
Today I was writing an e-mail to my sponsor. I was checking in on some of the stuff happening in my life. Some of it started bringing up some toxic memories as I was writing. I was bordering on euphoria when I began feeling this overwhelming feeling of vulnerability. I wasn't sure what was going on but I managed to bring the feeling with me to a meeting. It was there that I managed to experience it and work through it.
We have often likened the "addict" to a guy who is out there pumping iron. That vulnerability I felt was me feeling as though he was pounding at the door. It made me feel very small and child like. I stayed with that. I felt like a small child hiding in a room and the big bad addict was pounding at the door. I could see it vibrating with his effort. I could just imagine it shattering at any moment.
Why did I feel so small and helpless? I think that it stems from a lack of faith and belief in myself. Where does **that** come from? I was told lies as a child. A mother who shamed me, a father who would rather read a book than spend time with me, and the false images of God that I was fed, all led me to a path of self destruction. I am a small child who has no faith or belief in himself, who sits afraid of the big bad addiction bursting in on and destroying his life at any moment.
I thought of how comforting it would feel if a recovery buddy, my sponsor or my wife, would hold me and tell me that they believed in me or had faith in me. But I realized that that would only be a quick fix. Instead, I have to remind myself that God has faith in me and believes in



me. I came away in with a new affirmation. "I have faith in me. I believe in me." I know these things in my head. I just figure that if I say them often enough my heart will start to listen to that instead of those lies of my childhood.
Some other things that I came away with were some interesting observations. The guy at the door and the small child hiding are actually different sides of me. And here's the irony: that big strong scary guy at the door is my weakness and the small child is my strength. I kind of got a chuckle out of that.
Pain is growth. Don't hide from it. Stay in it and walk through it. After all, if you're not growing, you're dying. It is a journey worth making.
That's all I have for now. I feel like I did some hard work today. My body is tired but my brain is still abuzz. So, I thought I'd take this time to share with you.
God's love to you all,
Ken C.

Michael J. writes from New York...
I am writing in response to Jon C.'s "First Steps may be a Problem for Level 2-3 Offenders." The Twelfth Tradition reminds us that "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions." If a mandatory reporter wishes to disclose to the authorities information shared confidentially in a meeting, s/he would first have to learn the identity of the person and be willing to violate the spiritual foundation of our fellowship.
Jon C.'s guidelines are similar to the statement in "How It Works": "Our stories disclose in a general way..." This kind of self-censorship may solve the problem, but it still leaves the burden with the person who meets "the only requirement for membership," rather than with the person who cannot, or will not observe the anonymity and confidentiality so necessary to our program. I would like to suggest an alternative.
Before any First Step or check-in sharing, an announcement could be made to the group, such as: "If there are any present who, because of the nature of their profession or because of their personal beliefs, would feel compelled to violate the anonymity of this group or the confidentiality of the information shared here, please identify yourself by a show of hands." At that point, the recovering person who might be at risk should s/he share certain information would know that it was not safe to do so. Those who identified themselves as persons who were unable to keep information confidential might even be asked to meet in another area of the building during the time of sharing.
Whether or not an individual member agrees or disagrees with the concept of mandatory reporting, it is an outside issue, and ought not to affect the conduct of the meeting.
Yours in recovery, Michael J.

SPONSORSHIP CORNER

One of the most difficult times I have ever had as a sponsor was with a man I'll call Job. He came into the program with many years of success in AA. He knew the Steps and had worked them and was open-minded enough to recognize that he needed to start over in SAA. He asked me to be his sponsor, read, prayed and called me daily for a year, did Step work and attended 2 to 3 meetings a week.

He would get clean for weeks to months at a time and then relapse. After a while, we noticed that he always relapsed around some emotional crisis. What I realized (but he didn't) was that Job had a very serious psychological problem other than his addiction.

The nature of his problem is not important; the impact of it on his recovery is. Through no neglect or fault of his own, his mental health problems destabilized him so much that he could not muster the resources of the program to keep himself from acting out. He became very discouraged and self-critical when this happened.

We literally tried everything I had to offer him to maintain abstinence from acting out. There was nothing more I could do as a sponsor to help him.

This points out a reality about being sex addicts that we often don't discuss: many of us have other mental health problems as well. This is true for people in every recovery program not just SAA. Sponsoring a person who has additional mental health problems is very difficult.

There is one distinction to be made here. Many of us came into the program with depression or anxiety problems because we were living the life of a practicing addict. With all the pain and stress of that lifestyle it's no wonder we were an emotional mess. Getting into recovery and working the Steps changes that lifestyle and the emotional turmoil fades. Many of my sponsees have come into the program having been given one of these diagnoses only to find later that SAA helped improve their mood and was a lot cheaper than an antidepressant. Sponsoring them is about introducing them to the program and pointing out that the more they work it the better they

feel.

Job and others like him come to us with problems more complex than just addiction. In fact, the addiction may be an important way that they cope with the distress these problems cause. Their emotional crises may actually be worse in the short term if they don't have their sex addictions to fall back on. We know that in the long run, their lives are further damaged by acting out. But look at the horrible choices that are left to them: act out to ease some of the emotional pain now, while paying a price later, or don't act out now, and suffer a worsened mental health crisis. This was the choice Job faced.

What do we do as sponsors? The first thing is to remember that we are there to help a person work the SAA program; they are best served if we do not try to act as mental health professionals as well. Even those of us who are therapists find that it is important not to mix counseling with sponsorship. We can support these sponsees in seeking counseling and encourage them to integrate their sex addiction and mental health recoveries. (We can pray that their counselors support the same approach.) Second, we can help them adjust their programs to fit their needs. This may mean taking the Steps slower and not as deeply as other sponsees, encouraging them to explore with the therapist some of the things that come up in their Step work, or deferring to what the therapist suggests to the person about working sex addiction recovery. At an extreme, it may mean helping these sponsees accept that for a while, they can work on abstinence in the good times and it is OK if they act out in the bad times. While it pains me to write this (because I believe that abstinence is absolutely essential to recovery), for their survival it may be necessary for them to act out in the bad times. Looking back, this was probably true for Job. It may not be that way for long, for with the help of a capable counselor they can

eventually avoid or lessen the impact of the bad times. They may need us to help them accept their need for intermittent abstinence in the near term.

There may be some readers who protest: "The program is all that people need to recover from any problem." While I agree that it can help any problem, I would also point you to the insight of the AA founders as stated on page 133 of the Big Book. "God has

abundantly supplied this world with fine doctors, psychologists and practitioners of various kinds. Do not hesitate to take your health problems to such persons. Most of them give freely

of themselves, that their fellows may enjoy sound minds and bodies. Try to remember that though God has wrought miracles among us, we should never belittle a good doctor or psychiatrist. Their services are often indispensable in treating a newcomer and in following his case afterward."

This is one way to work with sponsees who have other serious mental health problems. Are there sponsors who would be willing to tell what you do with them? Will some of the people who have had helpful sponsors please share what they asked you to do? Please send contributions, questions or any other feedback to:

Sponsorship Corner
ISO of SAA
P.O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270
or e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

WHEN A SPONSEE HAS OTHER PROBLEMS

"...The most formidable chains are forged from beliefs..." "One needs to begin by taking an inventory of **self** [bold print is ours]. What is this conglomeration of beliefs, likes, prejudices, habits [behaviors?- question - ours], customs, and thought processes that make up self?..." "...Although the freed self is the source of all knowledge, most of us are imprisoned in a false sense of self, the authority for which is often little more than transplanted prejudice and half-truth."

From: "Give Me Liberty"
by: Gerry Spence
St. Martins Press
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POET'S PAGE



I'm Nuts Today...
by Craig R.

A little tired,
A lot frustrated,
Feel misunderstood.
Know what I want to do yet?
My addict is up to no good.
Flirtin' with the idea
Try to reach out again
Tired, misunderstood
No answer, derision, upset
At me?
Well then why the Hell not?
The door opens, my addict walks in.
I know where to go
I know what to do
It only takes minutes
Then its through.

@\$@%^^&#%\$
I don't like this one bit
Yet I am the one doing it.
Is it my bad reactions
To those around
Measuring my life in the sound
of a voice as it hangs up on me
again

Do I really need
that others' opinion?
Do I have to care what they think
or how they react to my comments?
Is it just their stuff coming up as
well?
or is it all mine being cast on them?
My addict seems to shrink.

I'm crazy today...
Feel like I'm in a tail spin
Thought I left it behind
Not sure where to begin
Thought I had peace
It's anger instead

I lose the battle
While my guts churn
Wondering where else this is
My brain begins to turn
Looking for a chance to escape
A chance to run away
From what, I just can't say
I fear, my thinking is a worry
of unfathomed intent
I don't want to confront
I just want to vent

Becoming accountable, using a tool
Appearing a fool...
Falling down again and again

Getting used to picking myself up
to self-made laughter
Deriding my own efforts in a moments
loss
A flip of a coin or a toss
What will it be today...
Me or my other way?

It hurts to realize what I do
Brings a frown to the brow
Not knowing who
I realize now
I have no other choice
I have to choose me
A healthier place to be

And being nuts is okay...
Because I have you
A place of safety to report to.
A source of inspiration, honesty
Recognition and truth
A guide to help me
To show me a way
Back from craziness
For today.

Craig R.

We got some poetry....

It may not all be poetry, but might go
on this page. It's been a long time
since we've had much submitted.
And we don't know how these pieces
will be accepted, just like we don't
know how **any** of the PBR is ac-
cepted. Just as you may write about
the poetry, we invite your comments
on anything else. For instance,
Michael J.'s letter on page 3. Maybe
we need a "letters" column, eh????

Sobriety Sucks

I've finally stopped acting out with the Inter-
net.
I've got 2 months of continuous sobriety
from compulsive masturbation.
And all I can say is "Sobriety sucks."

It's taken 2 months until I can sleep again.
I still miss the high I'd get from getting off
late at night.
"Just once more time – To go to sleep."

I miss the adrenaline rush.
I'd sneak off to the computer at night –
Searching for hours to get the "perfect" fix.
Sometimes I wouldn't get caught.

Life is so boring.
I don't have to spend time plotting about
how I'm going to act out next.
I don't dream about finding the perfect girl.

My wife is beginning to trust me – A little.
She doesn't give me funny looks when I
give her a reason for not being with her.
She's even asked me to make love with
her.

I'm able to relax a lot more.
I don't rush around trying to get all my work
done, so I've got time left to act out.
It's OK just spending time with her.

Yea, sobriety sucks.
But I still like it.
RD

In The Field Of Love

Grains of sand create a sea of light,
using my eyes and my heart I can see
a carpet of flowers.
Off to the left my imagination
builds a bucket for water, and my rec-
ollection of what I've seen crafts an
oasis for dipping.
With my one bucket I use the faith
of God to water the desert, bringing
the bloom of acceptance to the flow-
ers of my relationships.
All around me, my ears pick up the
sounds of nurturing, bring to my mind

the sentiment of hope.
And my soul, fully encasing my body
with its everlasting energy enlivens my
mind, guides my body and mind to con-
nect in awareness of love.
In love with my self-connection I realize
that I am connected to you, and you, and
you, and all.
I move up 10 feet, 100, 1,000, and then
10,000. Looking down I see us all in a sea
of humanity, a carpet of flowers, in a field
of love.

Peter F

WARREN'S STORY- THE PATH WHICH, IF FOLLOWED, LEADS TO HEALING, AND MORE.....

The first Monday night of August, 2001, was probably the most incredible night of my last ten years.

June 1991 I succumbed to shame, hurt, and watching my family fall apart, and, what I found out later was, a presumed pressure to bring out into the open the horror of my life-long addiction to compulsive sexual behavior.

On June 17, 1991 I admitted to my then wife that I had been "sexual" with all three of our kids. Even though it had been almost 20 years since it had ended with the older two, and that with the youngest it had been a brief incident 8 to 10 years earlier, I still had to get it out. The fear and shame that led up to that night was incredible. I was sitting on the floor, next to the sofa, she was sitting on the sofa. She hugged me sort of between her knees around my shoulders and said that we would work through it.

We barely spoke to each other for a few days, but I could tell that she was talking to at least our oldest daughter, Robin. By Friday her anger began to come through and by Monday she was gone. I was devastated. We had been married for 31 years. For that entire week I only slept maybe 5 or 6 hours, I ate the equivalent of 2 meals. I could not do my job, which I had been at for 24 years. The following Monday I went to see our family doctor to ask him for a prescription so that I would be able to sleep, eat, and gain some kind of functionality. He refused. He said that the only thing he had to offer me was a phone number--for a local psychiatric hospital. I accepted, and the work began.

River Oaks Hospital is a hospital that believes in and promotes 12 step programs.

As a matter of fact the Monday night group at River Oaks began in July 1991 for the purpose of having S.A.A. in the facility, available to the patients. I attended my first S.A.A. meeting there as a patient.

I spent the first two weeks there being a good boy, hoping that my family would see what I was doing **for** them, so that they would forgive me and all of this would go away. But as I suppose the reader can understand, that didn't have a prayer of happening. A very wise therapist, after 2 weeks or so, saw my manipulation, and cut off all communications with the outside world. He started me working on a written first step, and instructed me to begin paying close attention for 4-5 hours per day, to the patients in the group who had suffered

sexual trauma.

I worked most of the way through my first step, most of the way through "Out of the Shadows," and most of the way through "How It Works." And with the hours of one-on-one with a recovering alcoholic/counselor named Jim, I began to see that if I was not in the program for me, I would probably have the taste of gun oil in my mouth once again, and perhaps with a different outcome.

The horrible shame of listening to the stories of the young men and women with whom I was in group, triggered a recognition in me that I could no longer deny. I could see in them the same anger, and now I recognize the same hurt, shame, and even hatred, that I had seen in my own children.

On July 28, 1991 I left River Oaks, grateful to be alive, grateful to have what appeared to be a second chance, with my wife, my son, my youngest daughter, but not so sure of Robin. It would be inappropriate for me to write of her feelings at the time, perhaps "Don't you ever use the term DADDY with me again" may give the reader a clue as to what it was like then.

In "Hope and Recovery," in the ninth step, it says "Changing our behavior was the most powerful thing we could do in making amends". I am now told that was perhaps the very tool that reached Robin.

In the group, that I am in, we place a high value on marking recovery with the presentation of the S.A.A. medallions. We average 20 to sometimes 25 members, and each member gets to affirm the recipient after which the recipient says a few words about how it works for him and what it was like. Sometimes it takes a whole meeting to present one medallion. But that's OK, because we are a very close group with a strong love for one another. Sometimes the newer members question the process as being too time consuming, but after they have experienced it a few times the value gained in each life comes through, and they grow even

from that experience.

One other thing that we do, is we do not separate for check in and when we introduce ourselves we include the things that "earned us a seat in the group". Which I should do now so that the reader will fully understand the impact of the first Monday night of August, 2001.

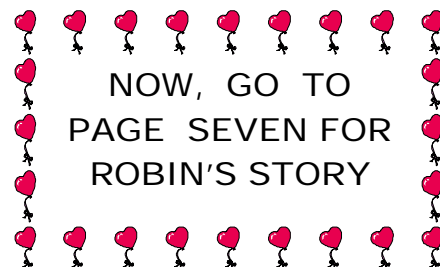
"Hi my name is Warren, and I am a recovering sex addict. The things that earned me a seat in this group are: compulsive masturbation, pornography, voyeurism, exhibitionism, the sexual abuse of my younger sister, a male cousin, and all three of my children, numerous affairs in my first marriage, anonymous sex with both men and women."

On August 6, 2001, I received my 10 year medallion. A group conscience allowed my wife to be there. She said some wonderful things about and to me. The chip was presented to me by my daughter, Robin. After introducing herself as a recovering victim of sexual abuse, she said some things to and about me that I still find hard to understand. She spoke of love, respect, commitment, and above all forgiveness.

It is with many tears of gratitude that I say that I have not done anything on my own. With out the help of a loving supporting group, and a loving, supporting, forgiving God, I would still be sitting on the edge of the bed making the worst mistake of my life.

Thank you God, River Oaks, Monday night, My family and friends, and above all, thank you Robin.

DAD (she said I could say that)





ROBIN'S STORY...

Does your group have activities which are unique only to it? Does your group conscience function to provide all the support the individual members need to maintain sobriety? Let us know about your group and what you do to make Tradition Four alive....

Dear Robert,

My name is Robin. My dad is Warren H., who recently wrote to you about his experience with his 10 year medallion presentation. He told me about your newsletter and also told me that he was sending you his story as a submission to that newsletter. He also called to ask for my permission before doing so.

I felt compelled to write to you as the "recovering victim" of my father's sexual abuse so that you could incorporate, if you wish, my words to him at that presentation. This is basically what I said to my father and I hope that if you decide it is useful for your purposes, it will help someone, somewhere.

My father and I have an agreement. I see his addiction as just that. It's an addiction, just like alcohol, drugs, etc. As long as he attends his meetings and stays committed to his group, I in turn would do my best to be a part of his life. His ten year medallion to me represented a commitment that I never dreamed he had in him and a love for me that I never thought that I would ever see. I know that I am not the only reason he's there, but I know that if not for his love for me, it would be perhaps easier for him to turn away from his commitment to recovery.

When my dad told me about his ten year medallion, I felt very strongly about being there. I had no idea what to expect, but he did tell me that if I felt like I wanted to do so, I could say something at this meeting. It was then that I remember that it was a few years ago that I told my dad that I forgave him for everything that happened to me in my childhood. The week before the presentation of his medallion, I thought about that a lot. I realized that when I said those words, I really did mean them, however, the feeling of a true release of it all was not there at that

time. I tried so very hard to pin-point the exact moment that that release had happened. I can't.

I have since come to the conclusion that forgiveness is not a choice, it truly just happens. I believe that it happened for me because of my dad's commitment, hard work and consistent behavior over the years. Because of all of those things I think that my heart told me that he was deserving of my forgiveness. Like I said, I can't tell you when that burden was lifted from my spirit, but I know that it's gone and because of that, we are on the road to a relationship that I only dreamed of having with him as a child.

I read somewhere that most victims have a problem with watching movies that are based on, or the story line is all about abuse. I've always had a problem with movies like "Father of the Bride." But now, we are on the road to that kind of relationship.

I'm proud of my father's hard work and I know that he will continue to strive to be the kind of dad I have always dreamed of having. I also want to say that my recovery has been a long and hard road, but I know that without my dad's hard work and commitment to his, I would not be in the place that I am today with my soul.

If I could say one thing to the perpetrator of sexual abuse, who is truly seeking in their heart to be a better person and seeking to mend some of their victims' pain, I would say this: be completely committed to your group, completely committed to your recovery and work hard to be consistent. Sooner or later, your victims will hopefully see that you are deserving of a second chance.

It happens. I'm living proof.
Robin C.

The "ASK-IT-BASKIT" meeting in Reno "Every SAA Group is Autonomous..." Another Example...

Robert B. writes...

I do not know who or when the idea of the Ask-it-Basket came about. However, when I began attending the group in Reno in 1997, it was operating then as it does now using the following format:

1. Open the Meeting with several readings using SAA materials including the enclosed "Introduction" and a reading from inspirational 12 step literature;
2. Pass out small slips of blank paper and pencils or pens;
3. Ask attenders to write down, anonymously any questions about recovery, sobriety or the SAA program;
4. The slips are not to be signed but folded and dropped into a small basket or box in the center of the room;
5. The basket is then shaken and someone, often the secretary for the evening, draws the first question and answers it in his or her own way;
6. After that first person finishes answering it, the slip of paper is passed around and the next person in the circle answers it, if they wish, it is not mandatory;
7. After each person has had the opportunity to answer the first question the slip can be discarded;

(Continued on page 12)

SCOTLAND GROWS -Derek B. reports

(For almost ten years, Derek B. has pioneered SAA in Scotland, many times no other recovering addict by his side. But not so today.

Here is his report from The Highlands)

SAA SCOTLAND celebrated it's first annual gathering in the beautiful settings of Nunraw Abbey Monastery, a spiritual retreat in the rural countryside of the best green lands in the world.

Ten of us gathered and we dedicated the day to the First Step - calling the gathering: First Step To Freedom. We had a marvelous time, getting to know each other and spending a considerable amount of time and efforts better understanding our addiction.

We all did our best and we enjoyed the day with the monks - sharing lunch with them and generally, spending quality time with mother nature and our fellow journey people in SAA Scotland.

Our region is growing as we all build in our efforts and recoveries. Serenity and stability have finally arrived in the small lands of Scotland - thank God and with quiet humility. Ten out of fourteen possible attended and we are doing dandy nowadays.

Of course, we are looking for ways to make our programme attractive and here I, as the Outreach guy, am asking if any other groups work with the penal or court system? We are looking specifically to target local prosecutor offices with the view of hitting the law enforcement folks with details of our groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The plan is to drop them a letter with details of SAA Scotland, including our reporting laws and to target guys or gals who have been arrested for minor crimes such as flashing, indecent phone calls and "kerb-crawling" for prostitutes. Under Scottish Law, we do not have the

right nor do we have the capability to handle level three offenders. Maybe one day we will, in a specialized partnership with the penal system. We will appreciate feedback with some ideas.

There will soon be four meetings of SAA in the region of Scotland. God bless PBR and ISO and also to the bravery and humour of all our local members and visitors - SAA Scotland is carrying the message as prescribed in our twelfth step and with integrity!

Write us via the ISO Office or e-mail DSOBER24@aol.com"

Love you all,
Derek B.

ages I've seen in the days since the recent tragedy was a photograph retrieved from a camera that survived the fall. That photograph was of a man standing at the top of the center with the city in the background.

Then, in the last few days, I saw that some tornadoes had done some serious damage to the University of Maryland campus where I went to college from 1969 to 1973. Some of the worst damage was done on the parking lot outside of my beloved Easton Hall where I lived for all except my junior year. I really loved being on that beautiful campus and have felt pain at seeing the extent of the damage, including many 100-year old trees that were uprooted.

What has struck me the most about these events is the reminder that even things that I count on being there day after day and year after year can be gone in a flash. Likewise, it will one day be my turn to depart this earth and all I will have left behind me is whatever good I have done. **I've been fortunate to be able to serve in a**

DOING GOOD WHILE I CAN -

Mike L. speaks of work yet to be done on Prison Outreach within the Fellowship of SAA

number of areas and one of those is prison outreach. I receive verbal outpourings of thanks throughout the year and lots of Christmas cards during the holiday season, many being homemade.

I've witnessed a number of events this past summer in areas where I've had connections; that have really brought home for me how fleeting life as I know it, can be.

We started out the summer here in Houston with some major flooding, probably the worst this city has ever seen. I'm fortunate to live in an area where we don't even get water standing in the street, but I had a close call driving home. If I had headed home along that same route half an hour later than I did, my car probably wouldn't have made it through the rapidly rising waters. I shuddered when that area was on television the next day and saw that all that was visible was the very top of a few tractor-trailers.

At an earlier point in my life, one of the places my sex addiction took me was to New York City, where I lived for roughly two months in 1980, before getting deathly ill and leaving the state. I've only returned to New York City once since then, back in 1986 when I experienced the breathtaking view of New York City at night from the top of the World Trade Center. One of the saddest im-

The need for folks to write to prisoners is still very great, so if you'd be interested in getting involved in this important ministry, please get in touch with me. I'll send you some information to get you started, and also the name of a prisoner or two you can write to.

Here in Texas, one of our prison units has had an SAA meeting for a number of years. A few years back, the prisoners made a plaque to show their appreciation. I saw that plaque presented to Arnold D., who was then Prison Outreach Chair, at the 1995 convention in Ann Arbor. The meeting is in east central Texas, roughly 3-4 hours from Houston, Dallas and Austin. I understand from one of the prisoners who has written to me that it could use some additional support from the outside, so if you live in east central Texas and would be interested in helping to support that meeting, please get in touch with me.

My mailing address is:

Mike L.,
P.O. Box 27544
Houston, Texas 77227-7544
or: mike.l@puertorico.com.

IN THE PROBLEM? OR IN THE SOLUTION?

JOEL SHARES SOME INSIGHTS

An interesting topic this past Tuesday night at one of the Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) meetings I regularly go to here in Houston. The question or topic was: for most of us, we are either "in the problem" or "in the solution". What does being in the solution mean and what do you do?

I did not get a chance to share, but here is some of the information that I think helps keep me in the solution these past 6 1/2 years of recovery.

DO IT ON AUTOMATIC.

Did you ever drive to a place over and over again, until one day you there and don't remember how you got there? Like the whole trip passed in a fog? Why does this happen? Just habit. Yes but its more than just a habit. You don't even think about it anymore - you act on a subconscious level - sort of like memorizing the words to a song and your mind can be on a completely different topic while you sing it perfectly. Recovery can be the same way. The struggle to do things like meetings, step work, meditations, etc is only at the beginning – only if you do not do it enough and regularly. After almost 7 years, I do not go through a thought process of whether I need to go to the Tuesday night meeting. Its automatic -- I go. The solution means making as many recovery and healthy topics an automatic thing.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

Others follow my lead (unfortunately, that can work both ways!) The point I merely want to make here is that if I really believe what I say and do, then I may see them emulate or duplicate my actions. So I look around and just passively see what those who touch my life are doing -- if they are moving in the 'right direction', then perhaps I am as well. This is not an exercise in vanity because I am their solution -- A simple way of saying this is to

do my own thing towards my recovery, perhaps someone will notice, and I have been of service.

ACTIVELY LOOK FOR COINCIDENCES.

How do I communicate with that outside of me? I have to use my senses at some level. Communication goes both ways. I get 'messages' in return. For me, the return communication must come in a physical way but for me it comes as a 'coincidence'. I look for things - - sometimes obvious, sometimes really subtle to see whether there is an embedded message. But to make things more complex, even if I know there is a message, I am often not exactly sure what that is. For me, when that happens, I look for the message and continue to do so since it may not be something 'revealed' or obvious when it first happens

DO NOT LIVE FOR ME.

My sponsor says it best -- 'surrender wins the war. I have been taught my whole life that only I can achieve my objectives, hard work pays off, etc. So how can it ever be possible that if I forget about myself and forget about my goals? I don't have to know the solution to live in it. And yes, doing this can mean that others take advantage of me. But I do not have to live my life aspiring to be on the top, to be the CEO, to be in charge. From others' perspectives, I may be wimping out or not ambitious enough. Perhaps from their lifestyle perspective, I am doing that. But I do not have to be share their dreams and aspirations to be happy and successful. In fact, by being in the solution, which emphasizes others rather than me, I can even be monetarily successful.

SPIRITUALITY.

Books have been written on this. For me, spirituality has some sort of component that I really do not understand that involves the dimension of time. Have you ever stood in a location where some event of sig-

nificance has happened in the past? It could be personal -- like going back to the location where you got married. And when you are standing there -- you can 'feel' the event somehow, not just a memory recall. For me, I believe that events somehow continue in to move through time and have an impact in the future as well. I am touched somehow when I am there.. When I am in the solution, past history impacts me more than just as a memory or story -- maybe a spiritual dimension, feeling things I have not been able to experience in any other way.

I CANNOT STAND STILL --

I am always going either forward or backward. This is the scariest one for me. Because being in a solution means that I am going to have to constantly grow. When I was in my addiction, the same thing happened. But then I called it 'escalation'. The same thing is true for the solution. I can never be content just repeating the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. Staying in a comfort zone drags me down -- my fears hold me back. I am a powerful person when I confront my fears.

So what the solution here tells me is that to keep moving forward, I have to constantly 'stretch' -- move myself into uncomfortable situations. Do things I am resistant to/ I am AFRAID of failing. I feared in a new job situation. I didn't ask for it, but I went with the flow. I stumbled, made a few mistakes but as long as I lived in the solution, things seemed to work out. I do understand that going in the forward direction can be done without being in control. It is sort of like getting somewhere without knowing all the directions and planning ahead -- pretty scary but still achievable.

So the final part of my being in the solution is never being content with the present. My life is a constant journey -- the train does not stay at the station very long.

Joel

Reports of Recent Retreats and goings on..

About the **Glorietta** retreat near Sante Fe, NM, Aug. 3-5th

Hey Robert! [Just as she wrote it...]

Our retreat (actually turned out to be a one day conference for local New Mexico "S" group members) was a real success. We are going to do this again, however probably at the Pecos Benedictine monastery instead. Next spring perhaps.

The highlight of the day was a group hike we did together into the Glorietta wilderness for a couple of hours. It was a great opportunity for us all to fellowship, talk about our addiction, our spiritual thoughts, and just be intimate in a non-sexual way. We hope that next time we do this, we'll have more visitors (from out of state.). Our topics of discussion for the day at the meetings were "fantasy and intrigue", "intimacy" and the 11th step, with speakers leading in on the first 2 topics. We found that inviting the other 2 "S" groups to participate was powerful.

Take care,
Vicki

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From Mike L. on the **Panora, Iowa** Retreat, Sept 21-22-23

Mike said attendance was down from previous gatherings but all enjoyed good fellowship, frisbee golf [he won...], and discussions on **Slips, Relapse, and Boundaries**.

Next year's reservations at **St. Thomas More Center** are for Sept 27-28-29, 2002.

IMPORTANT REQUEST !!!

Would all attendees please send Mike your names and addresses? [He lost them]. His e-mail: MWilder425@aol.com.

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<<<THE LOUISIANA INTERGROUP >>>

Members of SAA from Lafayette, Baton Rouge and New Orleans met on Sept. 15, 2001 in Lafayette.

There were discussions on Prison Outreach experiences and related issues by Tom S. Also discussed was the SAA Basic Text, now being written.

Francie E., board rep, encouraged people to attend the San Francisco Conference in 2002. She reported that COSA has voted to try to hold their an-

nual meeting there at the same time. Francie will be attending the Intrafellowship Forum in San Diego on Nov. 10th. She urged members, when making financial amends, to remember the ISO each month. At our local meetings, pass a second basket for ISO operating expenses.

The fall retreat day will be in Baton Rouge on October 20th. The spring retreat will be April 26-28, 2002 at Rosaryville near Hammond, LA. Our website will carry the information. Our official name was adopted; it is "The Louisiana Intergroup," and will meet in March, June, August and November.

Outreach has been reviewed. Bi-annual mailings have been sent, this one to therapists in the Baton Rouge area. The phone system of outreach was presented. Costs are \$90.00 per year

The Intergroup has a web-site which is linked to the ISO Web-site. The cost is \$95.00 per year. It is thought we are the first to register a group with the ISO of SAA.

The annual Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner will be held at the Church of the Annunciation, 4505 S. Claiborne Ave on Thursday, November 15, 2001 starting at 7:00 PM. This is a pot-luck supper and meeting..

The next intergroup meeting will be November 4,2001 in New Orleans at 2:00 p.m.

After the meeting, we enjoyed barbecued ribs and fellowship.

COMING EVENTS AND RETREATS....

Retreat dates for 2002 have been set for **Southern California**. In addition to this notice, the **SAA Website** will contain the listings.

The Date:

◆ April 5-7,2002

Open to all SAA members.

Enrich your recovery with a weekend of fellowship, workshops and recreation.

Location:

Calvary Monastery in the mountains overlooking Santa Barbara.

Lodging:

11 double rooms (\$145)

8 single rooms (\$165)

30 persons maximum.

Price includes lodging, meals and snacks. Participants and speakers are SAA Members.

Retreats begin with dinner on Friday, ending with lunch on Sunday.

First-come, first-served so please reserve early

For more info or for registration, contact Roark W. at 626-797-6213 or

email: lastsafarii1@earthlink.net

From Roark W.

<<<<MORE ON COMING EVENTS>>>>

FOURTH ANNUAL MICHIGAN SAA STATE CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 3, 2001

Bridgeport Community Church, 3821 State Street, Bridgeport, Michigan

Registration 8:30 am, conference 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Theme: The Twelve Steps, From Shame To Grace

Co-sponsored by the Michigan Intergroup and the Mid-Michigan Intergroup

Hosted by the Mid-Michigan Intergroup

Speakers, discussion, fellowship, sharing

All "S" groups and "C" groups welcome

Lunch and dinner included

Cost is \$20 per person until October 15, \$25 after that date

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE – first come, first served. If you would like scholarship assistance, either Check "scholarship requested", and write the amount of assistance up to \$20, on your registration form. Or,

Ask your home group to request a scholarship for you anonymously. You may add a contribution for scholarships by checking the second box on the registration form.

Contact for information:

Norbert B, 989-835-2832, norbert@tm.net

Mike H, 810-720-1266 home, 810-528-6420 pager, wubbagubba@cs.com

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)

Lifeline Partners is a program that challenges all members of the SAA Fellowship to pledge to help the International Organization by sending in a monthly donation....

This month's ISO Outreach column will be used to highlight the **LIFELINE PARTNERS** program to continue to fund the outreach processes of the ISO Office, especially at this time when we move to add personnel to accomplish the work of maintaining the ISO Website, the layout of the PBR, and continuing needs of the everyday functions of the ISO Office. We need your support Sign up today !

By committing to **REGULAR** support, you help insure that the ISO has the resources to carry out its daily work of outreach, membership services, and inmate support. You help pay the rent and utilities, provide a toll-free number for those who seek assistance, maintain a staff to carry out the day to day operations, and to operate the SAA Website, and the layout and distributing FREE the Plain Brown Rapper, and to fuel a continuing effort to nourish all Fellowship growth.

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LIFELINE PARTNER ENROLLMENT FORM

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Member Name _____
 Member Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Country _____ Phone _____

My Pledge is: \$ _____ Per Month

Enclosed is my initial Gift of: \$ _____

Or I choose GIFT EXPRESS with my credit card as follows:
 [circle one]

American Express Discover MasterCard Visa

_____ Account Number Expiration Date

Please charge my account automatically each month on the

_____ [date of each month when charge should be applied]

Customer authorization: I authorize the ISO of SAA, Inc. to initiate charges to my account. I have indicated the account and understand I will need to call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191 to make changes to my payment arrangements.

_____ Signature [this is required] Date

All donations to the ISO of SAA, Inc., are tax deductible
 Mail this completed and signed form to:
 ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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ISO INFORMATION

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North East	Peter M.	Prison Outreach	vacant		Tony Z.	vacant
					Robert S	n/a
					PBR	

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Jerry B. Office Manager
 Klaus P. Asst Office Manager

Office Hours [Central time]
 [Staffed-M-F] 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Phone answered at all times except when staff is on the phone. Leave Message; call will be returned, usually within the hour.

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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 !!

(Continued from page 7)

8.OR, if the question was a good discussion/share starter, the slip of paper can be re-folded and dated and retained in the binder for those later nights when no one has a question;
9.About 45 minutes after the hour we observe the 7th tradition but not interrupting any of the answers;
10 The acting secretary then begins to close the meeting by asking for any "burning desires" or desires to

get current;
11.The meeting closes with a circle including a closing prayer such as the Serenity Prayer. We use a one hour format.

He continues:
 "The main idea is that anyone who wants, can ask the questions they have about recovery and sobriety. There is no requirement to ask a question, nor on sharing about

any question. There is a "tag" format so that all have opportunity to share before moving to the next question. The questions are anonymous, and not signed.

The Ask-it-Bask-it is considered a "Home Group" so any member may commit to service or attendance, without any requirement to do so.

Robert B.

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