



.It's my first column of the New Year and nothing to write about...

So let me tell you about a *little* crisis we had late last year with the web page.

One evening the company that provides our web hosting told us the amount of data on the web page was way over what we were paying for. We were using about 11MB (11 million bytes) and were only allowed five [5]! (I still don't understand how they let us get this far over our limit without warning us, but at that moment, late on a Friday night, it was "fix it now, or else!") So all the back issues of the PBR were removed to free up space.

To give us as much space as we had been using, the company wanted twice as much per month as we were paying. So we moved the web site to a new company that allows us 100MB. Along the way I think we've improved our handling of e-mail and made it easier for us to monitor and configure the web site. We're also paying a little less money

It took us two months of arguing and begging people to complete the job. Yet I think we've accomplished a significant simplification of our operation. It's something we should have done a long time ago, but it took a little crisis to force us to make the change. Sounds like life.

ISO Office Job Opening

The ISO Office is seeking applicants for a full-time position now available. Employment will require relocation to Houston, Texas.

Job Title: Publications & Computer Programs Technician

Qualifications: Above average knowledge of computers, Microsoft Office programs, and knowledge of website operation adequate to maintain and update site.

Skills Required: Include knowledge of desktop publishing, Microsoft Office including Word and Access database program, and familiarity with website operations and maintenance.

Responsibilities: Responsible for maintaining the ISO Website, www.saa-recovery.org, for organizing, laying out, and publishing the ISO newsletter, for implementing or helping to implement a databases using Access, for teaching other office staff in becoming more proficient in use of office computer programs, for taking the lead in implementing new database to hold meeting information, for teaching others how to enter data and produce reports from the database, and for assisting Office Manager in maintaining office security and equipment.

Compensation: An annual salary within the range of \$20,000 - \$25,000

Benefits: Paid sick leave, holidays, and vacation. Health benefit.

To Apply: Send resume to ISO, Attn: Jerry B., P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270 or e-mail resume to info@saa-recovery.org.

Fund Raising Campaign Volunteers Needed

With work on the second revision of the SAA Book almost completed, the time is nearing when money will be needed to sustain and complete this important project.

The Literature Committee's first meeting to work on the first draft of the manuscript was a success and did much to move the book forward on course. A second such meeting will be needed for editing the revised manuscript. The cost will be about \$7,000.

Along the way, money will also be necessary for formatting, design, and layout. And of course there will be the cost of actually printing the book. Last year, the Board distributed to the 2001 Delegates an overall cost estimate of \$31,569. Of this amount, \$7,954 has already been spent, leaving \$23,615 still to be raised.

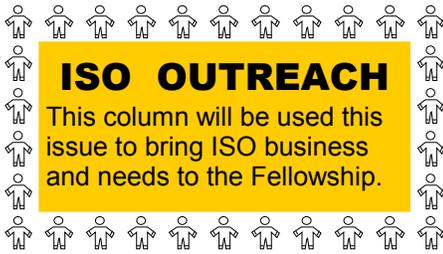
In January, the Board directed the ISO Office to locate a volunteer or volunteers to plan an SAA Book Fund Raising Campaign for presentation to the Board on March 23. If approved, the campaign would then be presented to the 2002 Delegates in May.

The person or persons who volunteer will not be expected to implement or carry out the campaign but rather only to come up with a detailed campaign proposal.

Anyone with fund raising experience and a willingness to undertake this project is invited to contact Jerry B. at the ISO Office (info@saa-recovery.org or 800-477-8191).

No degree of knowledge attainable by man is able to set him above the want of hourly assistance. --Samuel Johnson

Depend on no man, on no friend but him who can depend on himself. He only who acts conscientiously toward himself, will act so toward others. --Johann Kaspar Lavater
[Sent by Howey-aka-Rob/Reno]



ISO OUTREACH

This column will be used this issue to bring ISO business and needs to the Fellowship.

ISO Board meeting 1-19-02

The Board met for four hours on Saturday, January 19, 2002. Here are the motions considered by the Board, excluding those that merely accepted or approved reports. The wording of all motions is subject to final approval by the Board at its next meeting, scheduled for March 23, 2002.

In addition to the motions listed below, the Board, without a vote, directed Jerry B. to write an article for the PBR seeking volunteers to work on an SAA Book fund raising campaign. Also, to place a short article in the PBR about the full-time office position. The job description approved by the Board is too long and too detailed to print.

NOTE: See page 2 for the advertisement for the "full-time-position" at the ISO Office AND the article seeking volunteers for the:
SAA Book Fund Raising Campaign Committee.

1. **PASSED:** That in future SAA convention contracts best efforts will be made to have the same room rates extended to COSA.
2. **PASSED:** That SAA not enter into joint contracts with COSA and that all future decisions continue to be made through the Board's existing by-laws.
3. **PASSED:** That workshop presenters continue to decide whether workshops are open or closed to guests.
4. **WITHDRAWN:** That it is also acceptable to invite COSA as guests provided COSA does not benefit financially and no funds are commingled. We also believe it a prudent course of action for any conference that SAA chooses not to co-locate, we recommend the SAA Intergovernmental Relations Board member Liaison extend such an invitation to both COSA as an organization and individual COSA members and, when available to SAA, to offer a room and area for them.
5. **PASSED:** That co-location [of a COSA convention] may be mentioned in the conference brochure.
6. **POSTPONED (until May):**
Proposed SAA Guidelines For Relationship Between SAA And COSA (Based on AA's

Guidelines)

Question: How may SAA and COSA cooperate in area and regional conferences and get-togethers?

Answer: In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a conference would be either SAA or COSA - not both. However, most SAA conference committees invite COSA to participate by planning its own program, and the committee arranges for facilities for the COSA meetings.

Question: When COSA participates in an SAA conference, what is the financial relationship between the two fellowships?

Answer: The relationship and the financial arrangements usually follow one of two patterns:

When an SAA conference committee invites COSA to participate with its own program, SAA may pay all expenses (for meeting rooms, coffee, etc.) and keep all income from registrations, etc. in a single fund used to pay all conference bills, after which any excess income reverts back to SAA.

Alternatively, COSA may have a separate registration and pay its own direct expenses, plus a proportionate share of common expenses of the conference. COSA, in this case, receives its own share of the registration income and also shares in any losses that may be incurred.

Question: Should an SAA conference committee make a contribution to COSA from the financial profits of the conference?

Answer: In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both fellowships and to abide by the concept of "cooperation but not affiliation," it is suggested that SAA should not make gifts or contributions to COSA. By the

same token, SAA should not accept contributions from COSA. If separate registrations have been kept for both SAA and COSA members, however, income may be easily assigned.

7. **PASSED:** To authorize the Literature Committee to hold a face-to-face meeting to edit the second revision of the SAA Book and to authorize an expenditure of up to \$7,371.00 for this purpose.

8. **PASSED:** That, in the event the second revision of the SAA manuscript is not completed by February 1, Roger B. ask Elizabeth S. and/or the authors for a proposed timeline.

9. **PASSED:** That the revised SAA Book manuscript be received and distributed in the same manner as was the first draft.

10. **PASSED:** To authorize advance travel payments out of the Board or Literature Committee designated funds.

11. **PASSED:** A job description for a full time Publications & Computer Programs Technician.

12. **PASSED:** That, if no acceptable candidate [for the new full time position] comes forward from within the SAA membership, recruitment will extend to the general public.

13. **PASSED:** To inform the Literature Committee that its recommendation to present the

[PSA] storyboard to the fellowship at large for a vote by the delegates prior to its production was considered but that the Board decided to follow the timetable presented to the 2001 delegates.

14. **PASSED:** To accept the Jonestreet bid of \$22,995.00 for production of the public service announcements.

15. **PASSED:** To amend the last sentence of the current delegate meeting procedures to read, "After five minutes for minority presentations, there are to be five minutes allotted for a second and final vote, which will carried out by counting the number of delegates voting for or against as well as the number of those abstaining and by recording the count as all such counts are to be recorded, and this will conclude the item. (Note: The business procedures in their entirety will be published in the "Call to Convention" that will be sent to all groups in February)

16. **PASSED:** To adopt the 2003 ISO Budget proposal and to recommend it for approval by the 2002 delegates. (Note: The 2003 ISO Budget proposal will be published in the "Call to Convention" that will be sent to all groups in February)

17. **PASSED:** That the 2002 Delegate Registration fee be set at \$20.00.

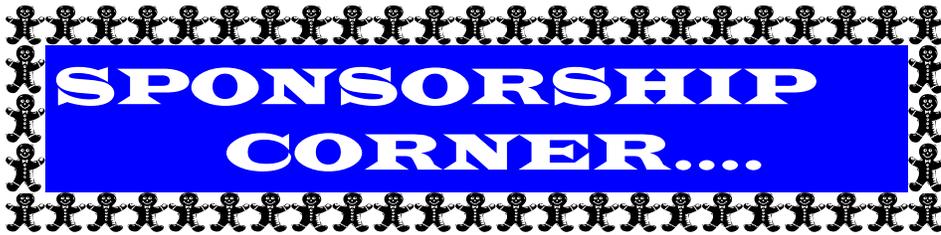
18. **PASSED:** To accept for this year the 2001 delegate recommendation that the suggested criteria for international service at the delegate level be amended to read "six months" sobriety rather than "two years" (in both places) but to bring the issue back to the delegates in 2002.

19. **PASSED:** To approve as written the 2001 delegate recommendation that in line with the Sixth Tradition, that when requested by outside concerns for permission to list the SAA name, phone number, website address, and/or logo, that a statement of non-endorsement is included. (Note: The ISO Office is to draft a statement of non-endorsement, which is to be presented as Old Business in March.)

20. **PASSED:** To accept the subcommittee as outlined by Francie E. and composed of Francie E., Mike C., and Frank B. to draft guidelines for ISO Office telephone procedures. (Note: This item concerns protecting against violations of the Sixth Tradition)

21. **PASSED:** That Article 1, Section 1B of the By-Laws of the ISO of SAA, Inc. which states "that an SAA member group is an SAA group that has registered itself with the International Service Organization of SAA, and follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of SAA" is interpreted by the ISO of SAA, Inc. Board of Trustees to mean that, when the steps are read at an SAA meeting, the steps to be read are the Twelve Steps of SAA in order for the meeting to be considered a registered meeting of the ISO of SAA, Inc.

22. **PASSED:** In regard to a 2001 delegate recommendation to "move toward discontinuing the sales of outside literature through the ISO after our basic text is released," the Board voted that it is premature to make a determination on



SPONSORSHIP CORNER...

SPONSORSHIP MATERIALS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

In the Sponsorship Corner column in last issue of the PBR, it was noted that we have no fellowship approved literature on sponsorship; however, there are some groups and intergroups that have developed materials for their own use. That column asked readers send in those writings to share with the rest of SAA.

The first piece received is a handout from a one day workshop organized by the Indiana SAA & COSA Intergroups held in 1996. (It was sent courtesy of the SAA Intergroup.) The handout is divided into five parts: what is sponsorship, a sponsee's questions, a sponsor's questions, group sponsorship questions and unanswered questions. There is also a list of references for further reading. The format is question and answer with room for the participants to reflect on each of the questions (it should be noted that the "answers" are much more reflections on the questions than directives telling how to do sponsorship). I would guess that there was also one or more speakers addressing each of the questions over the course of the workshop. What follows is a brief summary of each section.

The first section exploring what is sponsorship sets the tone for the rest of the paper; in the first sentence it notes that "Sponsorship is a powerful, important part of spiritual growth." The author (s) repeat this focus on spirituality many times and keep reminding participants that sponsorship is one of many spiritual tools in the program.

A sponsee's questions explores how to choose a sponsor, what a sponsorship relationship is like and changing sponsors. Two questions from this section merit repeating: First, do I still need an SAA/COSA sponsor if I have received outside treatment? While not answering yes or no, the response points out that outside help may teach us much about sex addiction, the sponsor's job is to help us live with it. Second, is it ever too late for us to find a sponsor? The answer

points out that the spiritual growth available to us through the program is unlimited and that a sponsor is a key part of continuing that growth.

The longest section is a sponsor's questions. It addresses qualifications, duties, things to avoid, coping with difficult behaviors from a sponsee and letting go of a sponsee. A particularly thoughtful

question is "When the sponsee resists the program's spirituality, what can we do?" The response begins, "Take it easy!" It then goes on to note the freedom that each of us has to choose our own spirituality and Higher Power. It further notes the differences between spirituality and religion which are an important distinction for many newcomers.

The group sponsorship section, while short, reminds us of a key point: sponsorship is the responsibility of the group. It offers a number of suggestions for groups: a sponsorship committee; a newcomers meeting; greeters to welcome newcomers; announcing the presence of a key person in the group who will help people connect with a sponsor; a discussion in the group focused on sponsorship problems and opportunities; and a collection of materials on sponsorship for newcomers to consult. This section also suggests a role called "service sponsor." This is an individual who helps promote the spirituality of the group by matching tasks to be done with willing members.

The section on unasked questions is a series of blank lines for the workshop attendees to bring up other concerns that they may have.

While this may sound like a long document (which has not really been done justice in this column) it is in fact only eighteen pages long, with most of

that being empty space for the workshop participants to write reflections on each section. I wish I could have been at this workshop.

I will risk putting the Indiana Intergroup on the spot and suggest that any individual or group that wants a copy of this handout may contact them at: Indiana Intergroup of SAA/ P.O. Box 20834/ Indianapolis, IN 46220. If in quoting this document I have drawn on copyrighted materials, I apologize. The handout did not say that it was copyrighted nor did it give any indication that the questions and answers came from any copyrighted sources.

This is one document addressing the issue of sponsorship. Does your group or area have something you would be willing to share with the rest of the fellowship? If so, please send it by e-mail to: the PBR mailbox,

pbr@saa-recovery.org; please type "sponsorship" in the message box. If you have only hard copy, please mail it to: Sponsorship Corner/ PBR-ISO of SAA/

".....The group sponsorship section, while short, reminds us of a key point: sponsorship is the responsibility of the group...."

ATTENTION All Regions !! How about a hand ???

As you well know, your ISO Board and Literature Committee members continue to perform their trusted servant positions for the benefit of all members of the Fellowship of SAA, and do so without pay, of course. In past years, anyone who served in such capacities had to scrounge their own funds for meetings and travel. That meant that each member had to beg at the local and intergroup levels in hopes of gathering enough funds to make any given trip for a meeting. In many cases then, had to make up the difference with their own funds. In these last several years, expenses have been reduced by meeting in telephone conference except for the face to face meetings as required at the annual SAA Conference and Convention. Additionally, you, as diligent members of the Fellowship, have, through your contributions and purchases of literature, made it possible to assist these Trusted Servants with such travel and expenses. But this has also been possible because of our annual request for special donations for travel of your representatives.

It is respectfully requested, again, that you search your recovery to see if you could make a special contribution for those in your region to do their important work on behalf of all of us. Remember, it's tax deductible. How about it? Can



POETS PAGE



NOTE: The poem below was incomplete last issue. It is reprinted here completely...

A Cry for Help

By Jim W.

Here I sit in my cell at Shelton Prison so blue.
Sometimes the pressure builds up
and these four walls seem to get smaller and
smaller.

I sit here at times in my pain and shame
with nothing to do and nothing to gain.
Who will reassure me, who will understand my
pain
and heartache of being locked down so many
hours a day?

Who shall hear my cry as I weep in my pillow at
night?

My life as I knew it before has come to an end.
Where do I turn and what shall I do?
Where do I go from here?
Waiting, waiting, waiting,
the hours and the days sometimes seem so long.
Who loves me now?

God give me strength and see me through an-
other day.

Help me understand my pain.
Show me the way through these hurts deep
inside.

Give me the strength and courage
to surrender to you and change my way.
I open my heart to you O Lord,
guide me through the dark nights of my soul.
So many years of hurts and pain see me
through.

So I may turn and love again
not out of need and desperation.
I have no place to turn but to you.
My heart is heavy with sadness
and with the losses of my life.

Show me the way.
Help me love myself enough
to make the right choices in life.
Jim W.

Denial—

I have no problem
(The problem has me).
I have complete control—
(The problem does, not me)
I have no problem here
(But what do I fear?)
I am in control
(The problem controls me).
I have no problems at all
(But they all use me).
There is no problem here
(Not one, but many, I fear).
Because I can stop whenever I want
(But I don't want to yet...)
I have nothing to hide—
(So why the hidden stash)
My life is an open book
(So why all the secrets).
I am rigorously honest
(When it suits me and not before).
I am open, trustworthy—
(Until you turn your back)
I have nothing to hide
(Except my compulsion, my obses-
sion...)"

FRANCIS W.
Columbus, OH

Need More Recovery material in PBR, Heath writes....

what works in recovery and other peoples expe-
riences.

Since there are no 12-step meetings in
prisons here, the PBR turns out to be the only
'meeting' that we have to learn from other ad-
dict's experiences. It's very valuable for us pris-
oners, but we often find that most articles deal
with business in the ISO or future convention
issues. While I realize how important that is to
most members, could you offer us more stories
of recovery (tools, experience and hope)? Per-
haps SAA or prison outreach would consider
publishing a smaller newsletter just for pris-
oners or people that don't have access to meetings.
I try to make a smaller version of that for my
friends here translating E.S.H. from 'Shame to
Grace', advice from recovery books, several

Simple

"If you can do this simple plan..." I hear it
twice a week.
This program doesn't seem that way to me.
I've led a double life, it seems, since I could
barely speak.
How simple, then, is total honesty!

I came from such a lonesome place of
fear, regret and shame.
'Til someone that I love confronted me.
But love beyond my wildest dreams I found
here when I came
from those who shared their own recovery.

I'm taking steps to be prepared to make
amends and such,
compiling lists with brutal honesty.
My moral inventory lists the folks I've hurt
so much.
Atop the list of those I've harmed is me!

I'm learning now that on my own I'm power-
less to cope
For my addiction's far to strong for me.
I have a higher power now, His care is now
my hope
I ask him daily for serenity.

Sometimes I wonder just how many go to
twelve-step meets --
how large a movement can this program
be?
But you or I will never know the millions in
these seats;
It all depends on anonymity.

"We are not here for therapy," "We never
give advice,"
"Our first concern if for our unity."
And yet the last time I was there I heard
some good advice:
"Keep coming back, it works," they said to

FROM HEATH G.-in Brazil [See his article, page 6]

Greetings from Brazil! I'm sending the
following submission for your consideration.
These are some of the tools that I've found use-
ful in dealing with fantasies and masturbation. I
share these with some of the fellow prisoners
that are working on recovery together with me.
Please print it if you feel that it's appropriate to
our newsletter.

I enjoy reading the PBR here, and end up
translating some of the useful articles into Por-
tuguese for some people here in Brazil. I wish
that there were more 'practical advice' articles -

Heath needs your letters write... To get Heath's address and take part in the Prison Outreach effort, see Mike L.'s address and e-mail on page 6.

newsletters and so forth.

Thanks for your time, I hope that God
will bless you in your efforts. Merry Christmas!

Yours in Recovery,
Heath G.
In prison in Brazil

PRISON OUTREACH – by Mike L.

One thing I have learned in this program is I never know when a seed that has been planted will blossom.

I remember some years ago we got a meeting started at a private prison near Houston for a group of men who had been sent down here from Oregon. Because of circumstances, we only had two meetings before the prisoners were sent back to their home state. At first I was inclined to believe that the time the three of us spent preparing for and going to the two meetings we had with the group were a waste of time but I would be proven wrong on that score.

I still occasionally receive letters from one or another of the group who attended one or both of the meetings and for a while I was even hearing from one individual who didn't attend either meeting but who knew about them. In the past six months or so, I have been blessed to receive two phone calls from one of the men who has been released. He is struggling with various issues but is still in recovery and doing well. Because he has the kind of job that will be taking him to various parts of the country, once he is able to leave the state where he currently resides, it is my hope that we will eventually be able to meet again in person.

This man has been a blessing to me on more than one level. Through him I have learned that although those meetings did not turn out the way I originally envisioned them, God used the meetings to give gifts to those of

I occasionally receive requests from prisoners for more than someone to write to. Here are the requests I have received since my last PBR article:

us on both sides of the walls.

Alvin H. of Oakdale, IA, tells me that his unit has started Friday night SAA meetings. The group is looking for sponsor(s) to answer questions. The sponsor should be from the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids area and possibly able to drive to Oakdale from time to time to visit the group.

Todd A. of Missoula, MT, is looking for a sponsor in the Missoula area.

Bob H. of Lincoln, NE, wants to know if there is anybody in SAA in the Lincoln area who would be willing to come to his unit on a one-time basis to speak and give testimony on how SAA has been a help to him or her.

Michael J. of Lubbock, TX, wants to correspond with a man from the Omaha, NE, area, since he is planning to move to Omaha when he is released at the end of the year.

If you are able to assist any of these folks with their requests, please get in touch with me at P.O. Box 27544, Houston, TX 77227-7544,

or elrojo9701@yahoo.com.

And of course, I'm always looking for volunteers to write to prisoners as well.

Blessings to all of you until next time.

Mike L.

Many in the SAA Fellowship struggle to maintain a progressive recovery. In prison it is nearly impossible without outside support of we who have not lost their freedom.

How can I, on the "outside," contribute to another persons well-being? By doing MY OWN work. "What work," you say? The steps and traditions.

No better way to continue Step 12 and Tradition 5 than to send your own message of experience, strength and hope to our incarcerated brothers and sisters.

Write to Mike c/o the ISO Office, or e-mail elrojo9701@yahoo.com.

SAA

FROM PRISON IN BRAZIL Heath G. writes...

Help with Fantasies and Masturbation:

This has been a really hard area with me and one that I've been working on a lot these days. It's never easy, especially since I've been using these to cope with problems and seek comfort since I was a child. I have, however, learned a few things that are helpful.

Foremost, we need to avoid triggers - things that excite or arouse us sexually. For example, I know that I usually have problems with the urge to masturbate when I'm angry, sad, worried or anxious. At these times, I tend to watch tv and flip channels looking for something interesting to watch. This usually turns out to be something with a boy in it (a trigger for me). The same goes for magazines and catalogs - if I'm triggered, instead of simply reading an interesting article, I end up looking for pictures that are stimulating, and after a while give in to that urge to masturbate "just this once." That old habit dies hard.

It's important for us to remember that these urges aren't really about sex. They are about changing our moods or numbing our emotions that we don't want to face. I don't want to feel worried or lonely, and I discovered early in life that masturbation and acting out

could numb those feelings (but only temporarily). Recovery means finding new and healthy ways of understanding and dealing with these emotions that we've blocked for so many years.

When I'm triggered, I know that I can't be alone or isolate somewhere. It's better to find something healthy to do quickly, before I give into that urge. That will always happen if I let these fantasies and thoughts roll around in my head for too long. Something healthy could be talking or writing to another group member, reading a recovery book, praying, or just being around other people where I can't act out. When we don't give in to that urge to act-out, after around 30 or 60 minutes, it will go away. The trick is to fill that time with healthy activities and stop those thoughts. I try to remember that I've made a commitment to myself, my group, and my higher power that for today and only today I will remain sober. There's no yesterday, and I can't worry about tomorrow or next week. I only need to stay sober for today, and I can do that with a lot of help.

When I've got the urge to return to my fantasies and masturbation, that's a good sign there is something wrong in my life. If I only look deeply enough, I usually find that I'm bored, or angry or worried over things that are out of my control.

I try to avoid certain things that I know will trigger me. If I come across a picture like that, I find it easier to just throw it away, even ripping it out of a magazine, than to keep it for a day that I "need" it - that's just too hard to resist on difficult days.

You know what really bothers me? News reports about people that commit the same types of crimes that I did. People being caught for being involved with child prostitution, sexual abuse or child pornography. Therefore, I need to avoid certain types of new programs that report a lot about that. For many people, that's not a problem, but for me it's a poison that stays in my system for days tempting me to remember 'just this once, it won't hurt'. When that happens, it's time to stop isolating quickly - the longer that I keep those thoughts in my head, the harder it is to avoid giving up and masturbating. Over time, we learn to change our thoughts as soon as we realize that we're crossing our boundaries.

Finally, I discovered that when I take good care of myself, I normally don't have many problems. That is, if I'm praying daily, doing some kind of recovery work daily (reading, writing or helping others, and working the steps), and eating well/ exercising, I seem to be fine. It's when I don't do these things - get overworked, stop praying, and don't do anything related to recovery, that I get the strongest urges to act out. Once I stop, I learn to deal with my emotions in

"When I've got the urge to return to my fantasies...that's a good sign there is something wrong in my life..."

Happy New Year from the Columbus, OH Saturday Morning Circles Meeting

nying all of this!

My addiction has consumed me for more than half of my 30

Super Ideas from the Saturday Morning Circles Meeting in Columbus, OH

of SAA (we've been meeting for over a year but are just now getting around to filling out the meeting registration form...).

We do a lot of writing in our meeting. Our *Welcome To Newcomers* reads, "Writing meetings' are a way to practice journaling, focus our thoughts, discourage cross-talk, and allow members who might not be able to speak openly an opportunity to work the Steps through writing." We generally take 15-20 minutes to write, and afterward members are afforded the opportunity to share what they've written.

The first Saturday of the month focuses on the corresponding step. This morning we read some literature related to Step One, one selection each from two daily meditation books, the article *The Outer Circle* by Don B. on page 7 of the December-January online issue of the PBR, and the "Firecracker" article by Robert S. on page 9 of the same issue. We then read two questions from the SAA booklet *Working the First Step* (I think they were question numbers 5 and 12, which deal with recalling our last acting out experience and with rationalizing/denial...).

We decided this morning that members could have the option of handing in what they wrote, and that one of the members would type up the selections and send them to the PBR. Almost all members turned in at least a portion of what they wrote; members' length of time in the program ranges from 2 days to 5 years.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year!

In Fellowship,
Paul M. for The Saturday Morning Circles Meeting of SAA Columbus, OH

"Today is my second meeting that I have attended since facing my addictive behaviors. I am here to face my problem and the Demons that go along with it. This I cannot deny. In fact, I am happy to be here. This is the first real peace I have felt in the past four months.

I have been in denial for a very long time. What am I afraid to admit? That I have a problem! There is a need, desire or yearning inside me to act out and enjoy what I should not do.

However, I am in denial about so much more. Who am I? Well, I am a Husband, a Father, a Son, a Friend, a Neighbor, a Businessman, and most of all a Person. I have been de-

years on this Earth. It has caused me the loss of countless friendships and the end of my first marriage. I cannot let this addiction

take what I have now: energy, desire to heal, my family and my health. This I can not deny!"
ERIC B. Columbus, OH
"Denial.

Denial was a big part of my life. I always had a good excuse to explain away my addiction. "It's not my fault." "I can stop anytime I want." "This wouldn't have happened if she hadn't dressed the way she did."

But all they were was excuses. I tried to deflect the blame onto someone else. Even when I was arrested for my behavior, I still lied to everyone - especially my family and friends in order to cover my tracks. "You know me. I wouldn't do something like this." "It couldn't be me; I didn't even know where she lived."

Again and again it was denial. The psychiatrist wanted to refer me to an SAA group, but again I was in denial. "How will that help me." "No one attends those meetings, but perverts and the dregs of society; and I'm not either one."

It wasn't until after I was arrested the second time, that I hit bottom and decided to get over my denial. I knew that I was in over my head, and I needed help. I had to break this cycle of self-destructive behavior and start on the road to recovery. I didn't have the strength or the willpower to do it myself. So I turned to my family and to God.

In church the reverend's words stuck with me. "No matter what you have done in your life, God will forgive you." I draw upon his strength, love and forgiveness to get me through. I take one day at a time, and attend SAA meetings and church regularly. Denial isn't the way to live. One lie led to another until I felt trapped. "What will my family think of me if they knew the truth?"

The truth is so much easier to live with. My

family is supportive, and so is SAA. Plus I know God always will be.
The truth shall set you free. "
FRANK M.
Columbus, Ohio

I used to think that it didn't matter if I acted out, because nothing outside of me mattered. During the worst of times, when I was acting out on a number of addictions in addition to sex, I was crazy and didn't even believe that anything outside of me even existed, let alone mattered. I be-

lieved that if I died, my partner would cease to exist because he (and everything else) was only a figment of my imagination. Hence, there was no harm.

This extremely self-centered, self-seeking and selfish behavior took me to places I don't really want to see again (most of the time, that is). I would spend hours, sometimes the better part of the day, looking to get my fix. It would involve many people in succession, and after each one I would wonder if the next one was going to be enough—if it was going to be enough to quiet the fear inside me so that I could go home and pretend to be happy. It would involve being at the computer for 3, 5, 7 hours, looking at pornographic pictures until early morning hours, with a pornographic video playing in the background, smoking a pack or two of cigarettes—this was at my office, too. It would involve acting out in public places, with the threat of those around me perhaps being undercover law officers creating an even greater opportunity for a fix.

My most recent acting out episode was on Wednesday—3 days ago. Immediately before and after individual therapy, I cruised a park. During the second run, I got my fix with another person. Two precious hours of my life went unliked that night—two hours wasted on trying not to feel.

On Thursday I had an awful day at work. I needed the help of my support system, particularly my partner, to get me through. However, we have a 24-hour "disclosure" agreement, and I had to tell him no later than Thursday evening that I had acted out. What an uncomfortable realization to have—that I intentionally put myself in situation that make me feel worthless and make it difficult for others to support me. How could I go in to him on Thursday night

and say, "I acted out yesterday, but please validate me because my boss thinks I'm a piece of shit and I think I'm a piece of shit"?

Self-imposed isolation, self-imposed pain, self-imposed pity party. Through the Steps my actions are changing and my thoughts are changing, but I want, and I need, to work it harder, to do more."

PAUL M. Columbus, OH

"Denial? My addict wants to trick me most of the time. It's always there telling me, "No, you're normal, everyone thinks like you." "Lots of people do it."

When I am not active in my Outer Circle behaviors I am more prone to believe the ad-

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Columbus Circles Group sent the above items, a poem on page 5, and at least as many others that we did not have room for in this issue !! What dedicated work on the part of these members! The rest of these submissions will be in the next PBR. Thanks

TRIBUTES TO A GREAT FRIEND AND TRUSTED SERVANT – ARNOLD D.

Harry S. writes of the funeral service:

The little church was mostly filled Thursday to celebrate the life of Arnold D and to lay him to rest. We recognized many of our friends from SAA, but there were other people we did not know. The minister of the church said an opening prayer and we sang a hymn together, heard scripture and prayed.

There was a second minister who spoke and then invited members of the congregation to speak.

Person after person talked about what Arnold had meant to them as a sponsor. Some people said it was a meeting. The theme was the Second Step. Person after person said that because of Arnold's presence, his example, his recovery, that we came to believe for ourselves that a higher power could restore us to sanity. We had seen it happen in Arnold and had come to believe it for ourselves.

One of Arnold's daughters spoke. We remembered when Arnold had done a Ninth Step with her, when she was already an adult. We felt some anticipation.

She said she had the worst childhood that anyone could have had. She told us that when Arnold married Ila, she felt guilty for not having warned Ila's family. Then she spoke to the privilege she received in getting to know her father these last seven years, in his recovery.

We drove very slowly on the long drive to the cemetery. We gathered again, prayed, and left Arnold's body to be laid in the ground.

At lunch at the church, we talked with Ila and her step daughter, and had the opportunity to affirm their family

recovery, and acknowledge our feelings of caring and support for them.

If I didn't meet Arnold D. at the first SAA meeting I attended, it was at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th meetings for me. At that time he was filling many trusted servant roles. Three or four years later he told me he had had a major slip, right after having done a significant piece of service. Arnold restarted his program at that time and worked the steps in a much deeper way. That was something like 8 years ago, and the results showed. I have never admired any achievement quite so much as the way he picked himself up and

Arnold's service sticks in my mind. In 1994 he was the chair of the (then) NSO board when he resigned to apply for the position of office manager. I know, because I became chair for the tumultuous convention that followed in Louisville. There, a number of contentious organizational issues fell into my lap.

One mess the NSO had to clean up was, in spite of a well managed convention, we had to pass the hat to be able to pay the convention hotel bill. Those there will remember the story, and I retold the story at the convention in 2001. Another change made at that time was the decision to change office managers and subsequently move the NSO office, which became the ISO the following year. At the time I admired Arnold's dedication to give up something for the chance to serve full time.

Arnold's more lasting contribution to my program was his dedication to prison outreach. It inspired me to start attending the SAA meeting at the Harris County Jail in 1995. I've helped the prisoners there have an SAA meeting there since then.

Kevin K.-Houston

To me, Arnold (and Ila) stood for everything that is good and noble about the SAA (and COSA) recovery fellowship.

Arnold (and Ila) seemed to have absolute faith: In the 12 Steps; in the Fellowship; in his (her) Program; and, above all, in their Higher Powers. Under their special circumstances, it would have been fully understandable if they gave up on GOD. They did not!

Claude E.

I knew Arnold for a period of seven years and I had him as my sponsor for a short period of time. I was blessed by him and humbled by his sheer FAITH of his programme.

Sadly, for me, I was unable to keep up or maintain our relationship due to the obsession returning in my life. His wife Ila is a tremendous source of spiritual strength to my wife and has been for the last few years. I believe Arnold is in HEAVEN and is experiencing GOD like he truly desired. Thanks for your love and strength, Arnold. I love you and I will see you someday.

Love,
Derek B
SAA SCOTLAND

Arnold has been part of my recovery for at least 14 of my 16 years in the program. He was a gentle man, whose compassion was so evident. He was so thrilled when his wife, Ila came to one of our national conferences. The night that sticks out in my mind is when he shared his life's story at the Saturday night banquet. The humility and courage to share the pain of an addiction and to have your wife present and give her side of the story, as a COSA, was so moving for me. Arnold, I miss

Having only the opportunity to meet Arnold & his wife but once they really made an impression upon me and Peg, particularly reading Ila's book "One Breath at a Time."

That story of recovery should be a must reading for any new married person starting the long process of recovery from the consequences of addiction. Arnold is half of the story and I feel honored to be able to know him and also the debt the program owes him as leader in the prison outreach field. Thanks for opportunity to comment about Arnold and his life upon me, a recovering addict from SD. My condolences to his wife and family.

Yours in recovery,
John G

During the Fall of 1990, I attended my

first SAA meeting. The meeting was located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was there that I met Arnold. He was the Trusted Servant for the evening. Like most people at their first meeting, I was filled with fear, guilt, and shame. Yet, I still wasn't sure if SAA was for me. Once the meeting got under way, I sat next to Arnold in the First Step section of the meeting. After he and the other men shared portions of their First step, I felt a sense of joy and relief. It felt good to know that I was (finally) in the right place to deal with my addiction. As it came time to close the meeting, we stood in a circle and Arnold said, "We will close with the Serenity Prayer. However, in this meeting we say the prayer with our heads held high; we've held them down in shame long enough." Since that day, I've been saying my prayers with my head held high.

Aaron in Minneapolis

I didn't know Arnold well. I only met him during the few conventions I attended. In my eyes, Arnold was a gentle giant. I think he appeared so much larger than he really may have been, because Ila was so petite. They made a wonderful pair. She surely was his match.

I was extremely impressed with Arnold's vigilance and perseverance in the Prison Ministry. I'm sure, through his work, many broken folks found recovery. Yet, he was always humble about it. I shall never forget the year both he and Ila spoke at the convention. It was dynamite. From what I had know of him, up to that time, I would have never expected he had gone through such pain, because of his addiction.

Arnold was a stellar personality, dedicated and loving towards his wife, his family and our community. He was professional in the way he did things, and he got things done. Arnold's light shown brightly for all those who knew him, and my life was brightened, because I had that privilege.
Bob R.

TRIBUTES TO A GREAT FRIEND AND TRUSTED SERVANT — ARNOLD D.

As current chair of the prison outreach committee, I am very much indebted to Arnold's trailblazing efforts in this area. Arnold believed very strongly in the importance of remembering and reaching out to the folks behind bars and spent many, many hours writing letters in long-hand to them.

He also instituted the prison outreach workshop at the annual SAA conventions and ran them himself until his health no longer permitted him to attend. Furthermore, he wrote a very detailed memo on prison outreach guidelines, first presented at the 1997 SAA convention, based on his years of writing to prisoners and visiting and starting meetings in prison.

Prison outreach is still gaining strength in SAA. But it was Arnold D. who initially believed in it and got it going. Thank you, Arnold, for what you have given us.

Mike L.

I facilitate SAA's Hope and Recovery Prison Outreach Program that Arnold D. started at The Thumb Regional Correction Facility in Lapeer MI. I thank Arnold posthumously for all that he has done for me. It has been an honor and spiritual blessing to be able to follow his footsteps in the prison outreach program.

It is just one of the ways that Arnold's work has helped me in my recovery. In fact he is still helping me to remain sober in this very moment as I write instead of acting out.

I started recovery twelve years ago at the Saturday morning Swartz Creek group. I did not meet Arnold for a while because I was too shy to go to the Thursday evening group. However, I immediately started hearing about this guy named Arnold that seemed to be everywhere doing everything. He was going into prisons, he was going to inter-groups, he was going national conferences. I didn't know who this guy was but I thought that I would like to be like him. The rest of the "regulars" in the Saturday morning group moved on and I found myself the only "regular" at that meeting.

I was discouraged and ready to shut the meeting down. Arnold finally came, and encouraged to continue. He encouraged service work in the form of committing myself to be there to chair that meeting every week regardless of attendance, in order to maintain the recovery resource for anyone who might need it. I did that for a few years. And some did. In spite of working third shift Arnold came to that meeting occasionally to support it and ME. I don't know if I would still be in recovery if he had not encouraged and supported me. He

always encouraged service work.

I started participating in Prison Outreach with Arnold a few years ago. He then became ill and was unable to continue attending the prison meeting.

I have the opportunity to carry on some his work and I am very honored to do that.

As a result of his illness these last years, I have enjoyed a little time with him every couple weeks, sitting in silent prayer and meditation. These times have been many of the peak spiritual experiences of my recovery. I did what I could for Arnold; he has done so much for me.

After writing this, I feel sober again.
Thank You Arnold -
Ray G.

Very early in my recovery I had incredible rage at all sex addicts for making my life so miserable. Arnold's presentation and presence at the Colorado conference showed me how recovery could heal and change people. Hearing his story gave me hope for my own troubled family. I began

to develop compassion and forgiveness after meeting and knowing Arnold.

Karen

I was very sad to hear of Arnold's passing. In 1992 I became a member of the Board of Trustees for SAA. He was the chairperson at the time. I remember when we were thinking of hiring a new office manager. He very readily offered to take the job. He was always ready to help. I have a friend in prison as a consequence of his sex addiction. Arnold helped me to write a letter to the Chaplain at the prison. He helped so many people so they could reach out to the addict who still suffers. He was very generous with his time. It helped

A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN THE PROGRAM by Tim...

Hi T ___ -

I got your message last night. Thank you, and I am glad that you reached out. I appreciate your telling me about having acted out, and I guess I get why it's hard to be in touch after one has gone out. But one thing I've learned in order to stay sober and enjoy the other changes that are happening through SAA, I have to do things that go against my will and my nature. Staying sober is relatively easy for

Faith / Discovery - in Prison. by Kristopher D.

I didn't know or interact with Arnold D., but I would like to share the following:

We talked about faith last night at the meeting that I went to. I explained that before I was busted and headed for prison, I didn't have faith. I was still running on self-will, ego, my addict, and control (which are all the same thing to me). That it took me violating someone's boundaries in a way I'd regret for the rest of my life and end up in prison before I could even begin to let go. I didn't see it as an excellent learning environment at first, all I did was feel the hopelessness, despair, worthlessness, etc., and thought that I deserved what I got.

Slowly, I began to see that what happened was exactly what needed to happen to me before I could even have a chance to become metamorphosed into a spiritual being who could start letting go of his expectations, control, addictions, etc., and I did it by embracing the program and using the other inmates who were writing to P.B.R. as part of my support group. I continue to do this even though I've been out for nearly a year now.

I have faith today that things will work out exactly the way they are supposed to; not as I want them to or expect them to. That doesn't mean that I don't have hopes or goals. I have them and work for them but the results are not up to me. All I can do is what I can do and that doesn't include feeling bad if I don't get things done exactly in the time frame I had planned or making myself sick because I'm forcing myself to exert more than I can do safely. I'm an addict and I'll always have to be working on overcoming those feelings that want me to believe that I'm not good enough, worthless, and stupid. Things are not perfect and neither am I; and that's what makes the world just right for me today. Be blessed my brothers and sisters.

me now (believe me, I know I could act out today) I think because in all honesty I have made working this program my priority. Yeah, sometimes there are things I'd rather do than my morning practice, but by now, after a lot of regularity, I remember that that stuff has done a lot for me, and my resistance to it is not very formidable.

Perhaps at some point I got over the
(Continued on page 12)

Affirmations, a Tool of the Program.. Jan H.

Change - "Yearning for more"

Often when I think of affirmations as a tool of the program, I think of an old story I have heard.

There are two men playing golf. One player is not very good and hits a number of poor shots. After most bad shots, he berates himself by saying things like, "That sure a stupid shot." Or, "I'll never be good at golf." After hearing a number of these remarks, the friend asked his buddy, "if I made a poor shot, would you say things like that to me?" The poor player responded, "of course not!" "Then," the friend said, "You should respect yourself at least as much as you do me, and speak good things."

Many sex addicts have ingrained into their brains, many years of negative thinking. Some people told us often how bad we were and we begin to believe it after a while. Consequently, it behooves the sex addict who carries a baggage of negative thinking to practice positive thinking. These positive thoughts are called affirmations.

Affirmations can be very simple thoughts like, "While I am here in the woods looking for my golf ball, I enjoy seeing the flowers." An affirmation that has meant a lot to me over the years is, "I am a child of the Universe no less than the trees and the stars; I have a right to be here." (From the Desiderata). Affirmations usually take the form of an "I am" statement. "I am a child of my higher power." Or, "I am glad to be able to go to work today." Another type of affirmation can take the form of an encouragement. "I did my best on that job." "I can improve with practice." Or other positive "I will" statements. "This is the day my Higher Power has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it." If you have trouble thinking of affirmations for yourself, try thinking as if you were being called upon to say something positive about another person. Usually, the positive thing can be said about you as well; you are just not in the habit of saying positive things about yourself. You can affirm yourself with thoughts such as, "I have a desire to recover."

Some people have difficulty with affirmations because they worry affirmations can cause a wrong sense of pride. However, I think this is a misunderstanding of what it is to be wrongly proud or wrongly humble. Wrong "affirmations" always compare. "I did this job better than so and so." Rather than "I did a good job on this." Wrong humility is the reverse but is also uses comparisons: "I can never do as good a job on this as he can." While it may be true that I can never play basketball as well as Michael Jordan, the comparison is not necessary. "I enjoy playing basketball." Or, humility says simply, "he can do a good job on this." Wrong pride is self boosting at another's expense. Good pride is self boosting at no one's expense. Humility boosts another at no one's

expense.

Wrong pride says, "I am farther in recovery than others."

Appropriate pride says, "I am in recovery."

Wrong humility says, "I can never recover as much as she is in recovery."

Appropriate humility says, "Your story of recovery means a lot to me."

Because of the many years of practiced negative thinking, it might take years of practi-

I am a different man heading into 2002 than I was a year ago.

I'm sure I was more of a different man heading into 2001 than in any previous year, but it was not so apparent to me as it has been in the last 12 months. I can attest that I owe much of my emotional improvement and strength to recovery.

God has been in my life for 23 years, but not nearly as powerfully as he has been in my recovery.

I have been in recovery for sexual addiction for 3 years. I am excited that I am on the verge of receiving my one-year chip. The thing that sticks in my mind that made this recovery milestone a reality is help. Help from attending meetings, reading program material, calling program buddies, trusting in my affirmations, having a morning recovery routine, praying, calling my sponsor almost every day, talking things out with my sponsor, working the 12 steps and believing the serenity prayer. It boils down to learning how to reach out for help. This important life skill developed after I finally

We share the PBR at our meetings, and we all appreciate the wisdom in it.

A thought for it might be an issue that we have been talking about in our meeting. We have discussed the relationship between working the steps and recovery. For some, it has taken the form of a direct connection - If I work the program well enough, I will get recovery. If I don't get recovery (meaning if I still have problems with my addiction and struggle with acting out), it means I am not working the program well enough and that I have to try harder. Eventually, if I can try hard enough (and don't burn out in the process) I will get the relief I am looking for (and, if not, what difference will my acting out make - I might as well go ahead and do it).

What we realized is that we uncovered one of our assumptions as addicts - that we are in control and we alone are responsible for our recovery. God's role was left out.

Lately, we have been talking about God's grace. Our chips say, "From shame to grace." What we are coming to see is that God is working in our lives and our recovery is progressing, even if we continue to have slips and even if we are not perfect in working our program. Our meeting is pretty close, and we are good at giving each other feedback. We have been noticing recovery (different attitudes, more honesty, deeper intimacy), even though the person has not seen it in himself.

The message in this, of course, is that we are not in control of our recovery. God is! It is a difficult message for most of us to accept. We want to persist in the idea that we are in control, just this time through the power we get by working the program. Allowing ourselves to trust recovery to God and just work the program in our own imperfect way is difficult for us.

I don't know if this subject will be suitable for the PBR, but it is yours to do with as you chose.

Jim B. Arcata (California) Tuesday Night

believed and accepted that I could not do it alone.

This has been the most difficult transition for me so far, but it is providing the onset of peace as well as the awareness of who I am and the incredible value in life. The primary benefit I have derived is learning how to let go and not be so hard on myself. I feel so much more in touch with life. I feel the freedom to be myself while I am slowing down and learning to experience serenity and contentment.

I value reading Answers in the Heart every day. Some of the nuggets in this devotional reading are so poignant

"CHANGE"

By Andrew M.

and penetrating that it tweaks my thinking and causes my brain to pause. I am grateful for these revelations that help me appreciate my life and the life around me. Recently our group's beloved mentor, Carl, mentioned the word authenticity. It stopped me in my tracks. I paused significantly at this word much the same way I did with intimacy. I knew authenticity was also what I wanted. Tad later shared that authenticity is irresistible. The truth of this statement hit me so hard that it is now a permanent part of my thinking.

I am grateful that my life now has meaning and purpose rather than the aimless and meaningless existence I experienced when I was mired in my sexual addiction. One of the most wonderful aspects of recovery that I have learned to embrace is that life and recovery are all about progress rather than perfection. Serenity is becoming a reality for me. I experience peace knowing that gratitude is becoming

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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 !!

LETTER TO FRIEND IN THE PROGRAM ... by Tim [from page 9]

(Continued from page 9)

hump. And I have some idea how our human, afraid, comfort-seeking minds work, and I believe that MY OWN will sooner rather than later get its way if I let my program work (calls, meetings, steps, spiritual practices, etc.) slip.

I spoke at the meeting last night for twenty minutes. I don't like to tell my story because I feel shame and fear in doing so, but I know that I need to do it, in part at least so that I might have a chance to help someone else like

I have been helped since coming in here. And I know that my story is different from yours and many others'. However, even without the behaviors that were my "bottom", there is no question for me that I more than qualify for this program. Just the stuff I would do in solitude was enough. It ruled me. It blocked me from what I really wanted. But before I came to SAA, that afraid, comfort-seeking mind of mine would block that image of what I really wanted from entering my consciousness. And the work I have done and am doing has been pretty hard

at times- but I am so glad to no longer be living in ignorance.

I really wish you well T____. I don't know you or your circumstances all that well, just the bits and pieces from sporadic contact. But it SEEMS to me that you will have to accept making a big change in the way you do things if you want to free yourself from the slavery of your addiction. The good news is we don't have to do it all in a week, and we don't need to throw the baby out with the bath-water.

This is probably a good point for me to sign off - I can tell when I start using sayings like that and words like "slavery"!

Thanks again T____, I hope to hear from you

Now!!

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