

The Plain Brown Rapper

The official newsletter of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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THE ISO ENCOURAGES GROUPS TO REPRODUCE THE PLAIN BROWN RAPPER SO THAT COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS. THE PLAIN BROWN RAPPER IS MAILED FREE TO ALL WHO REQUEST IT.

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"I thought I was healed... I gave my books away and even stopped writing my sponsor. Well, I went right back to my old way of thinking and acting out." See Page 12

"My sex life in recovery is better than it ever was before, because I can have real intimacy with another person. That's what great sex is all about today." See Page 21

Long-Awaited SAA Book Soon to Be a Reality!

By Mike L.

The news has to be big to knock the convention off the front page of the May-June PBR, and this year it is. The SAA Book is slated to be in the hands of the fellowship by this time next year.

We have been blessed since the inception of this fellowship to be able to count on the literature of the other 12-step groups, in the meantime slowly putting together literature of our own. Still, the dream of many has been to have our own book. Now, thanks to the hard work of the authors and the literature committee, the book will soon be seeing the light of day. The authors have created two separate full-fledged drafts and the literature committee has had two retreats devoted to the book, not to mention all the day-to-day work that has gone on over the years.

At this point, the editors are working on the final edits to the text section of the book, and the stories remain to be selected and edited. The literature committee plans to vote on final approval of the book at their upcoming August teleconference.

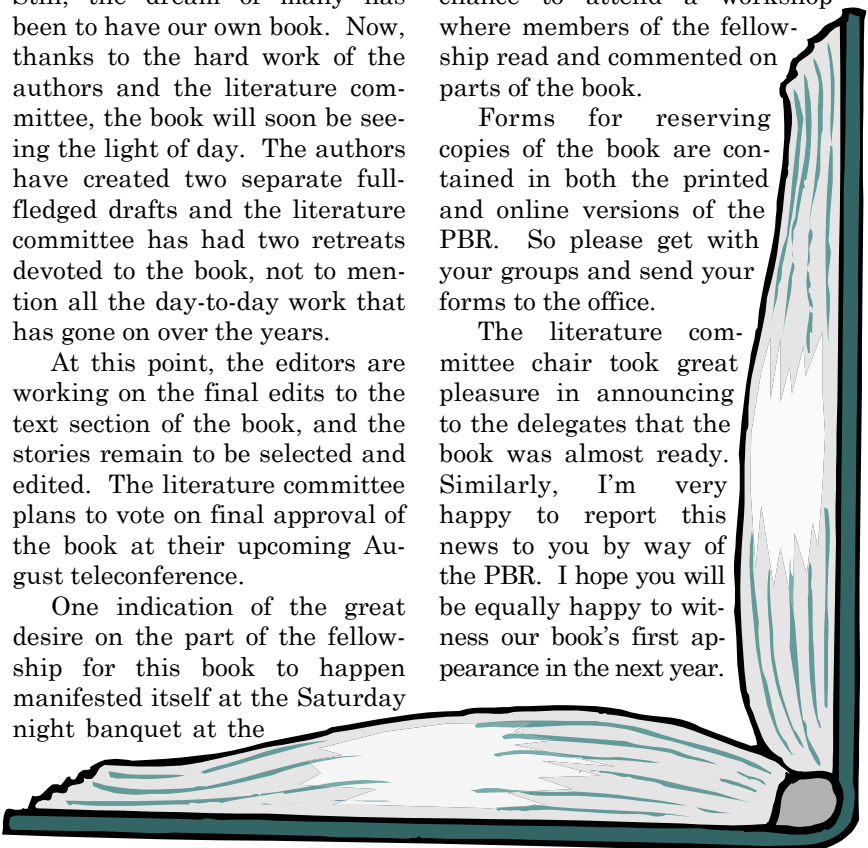
One indication of the great desire on the part of the fellowship for this book to happen manifested itself at the Saturday night banquet at the

recent Dallas convention. The board chair announced that we needed \$10,000 for the first printing of the book. That night the fellowship at the convention donated \$7,892.62 while an individual member came up with \$2,500, allowing the board chair to announce on Sunday afternoon that we had reached our goal. The plans are to make the book attractive and durable.

Those at the convention had the chance to attend a workshop where members of the fellowship read and commented on parts of the book.

Forms for reserving copies of the book are contained in both the printed and online versions of the PBR. So please get with your groups and send your forms to the office.

The literature committee chair took great pleasure in announcing to the delegates that the book was almost ready. Similarly, I'm very happy to report this news to you by way of the PBR. I hope you will be equally happy to witness our book's first appearance in the next year.



Our community should
 come first; personal
 needs upon S. A.
 U N I T Y
 A. Y.

DALLAS—FT. WORTH

2 0 0 4

Seventeenth Annual SAA International Convention a Rip-Roaring Success!

By El Rojo, Convention Junkie

The first SAA convention to take place in Dallas, and the fourth in Texas, happened at the Marriott Quorum by the Galleria from Friday, May 28, through Monday, May 31. There were roughly 250 in attendance.

This was in many ways a transitional convention as the ISO office took a much larger role in the preparation of the convention than in past years. What did not change from previous conventions was the smoothness with which it came off, with the convention committee and the office once again making it appear as though pulling off a convention was as simple as falling off a log.

Many of the usual events were there: the keynote speakers at the various banquets, the guided meditations, the Saturday night entertainment, the

various SAA meetings sprinkled throughout the weekend, the talent show, the gay/lesbian candlelight meeting, the memorial service (this year the latter two were combined) and of course the many excellent workshops. Some workshop topics have become pretty much expected over years, such as workshops on the internet, on spirituality, and on prison outreach. This year there were also workshops on such subjects as keeping a journal, relapse prevention, starting to date, and having fun.

After the Friday evening kickoff, many of the members chose to stick around for what was very possibly the largest SAA meeting in the history of the universe. Of course, an SAA meeting, be it large or small, is still about people

getting real about what is going on with them and in that sense, this meeting was no different from any other.

Attendees also had a couple of chances to preview the SAA Book. The literature committee put on a workshop where members were able to read out loud several sections of the book. Also some 22 posterboard-sized reproductions of pages of the book were posted in the bookstore for members to read and comment on at their leisure.

Conventions always present a forum for members to express their creativity. This always takes the form of a well-attended talent show. This year, there was also a silent auction. Convention goes bid on such beautiful items as water color prints, color photographs, black and white photographs, a wood sculpture, a wood craft, and a hand made necklace and anklet made from sea items, all created and donated by members of the fellowship.

There were also various opportunities simply to relax. The hospitality room provided both nourishment and gave members the chance to just sit back and visit with each other. Similarly, the beautifully decorated meditation room was the perfect setting

to get away from all the hustle and bustle and just spend a few moments (or longer) in quiet meditation.

And speaking of relaxing, another standard feature of conventions has gotten to be the chance to see Stuart save his family (not quite) on Saturday night. Such lines as "Is there any way you can get to a pound cake?" never lose their appeal.

Adding to the safe environment of the convention was the presence of a number of onsite sponsors, ready at a moment's notice to share with anyone needing help. Also the Monday morning re-entry workshop gave attendees a chance to prepare themselves to return to the real world "sober, safe and supported," in the words of the title of the workshop.

We also got the good news that there are host cities lined up for the next two conventions. So attendees can start making their plans now for the next couple of years.

As with each convention, everything is the same and everything is different. If you haven't ever experienced an SAA convention, it is truly something to remember. Fortunately, they are going to keep coming, year after year. Hope to see you at the next one!

My Sponsor

By John O.

I have recently been trying to think of some great story I could relay to you to show how great and awesome my recovery is going. I wanted a story for pure bragging rights. In actuality, my life is plain and common and there is nothing very awesome about it at all. In truth, the most awesome thing I care to report is that I have a Sponsor.

He is an individual of some greatness because he is the product of a great sponsor. He is kind, relentless, and patient; all good characteristics of a great sponsor.

My recovery is standard, not shiny or glossy; not very much to talk about. I go to meetings, pray

to my higher power, ask for understanding, and forgiveness, and I recover.

I wish I could say I am something more than myself. However, I am just an ordinary sex addict trying to pick up the pieces of my life, after years of lying about it.

I would like to have people say, "There goes John O. He is wise or he is a great man," but reality is I am just one of many John O's trying to make sense of my disease. Someday, maybe people will see me as more than just an ordinary sex addict. However, that day is probably not today.

On Step 10

By a Member, North Pacific Region, sober six years, one day at a time.

This week I took Step 10 with my sponsor; it is my second time working through the steps formally, and I have gotten a lot more specific in the practice of this step--I recently had heard someone at a meeting talk about how he used to review his day in a very vague way, with the result that he really didn't have to, or get to, look at painful stuff. I see that it also prevents me from truly appreciating the things I do that are bringing me health and happiness. I am basically using the AA format, and address seven areas: resentments, fears, dishonesty, sexual inventory, where I

could have done better, where I did well, gratitudes.

It's been taking me sometimes 20 minutes to write it out, but I think it's just another of those little things that helps me to stay sober and to know that I am completely (more than adequately) giving myself to this simple program. It is very comforting to know that I am on the bus; I know personally how painful (guilt-inducing) it is to be just sort of on the bus. It's not like I've got somewhere better or more important to be.

Thanks!

The 12th Step Miracle

By Edward C.

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Today I sit at the brink of celebrating five years of sobriety in SAA. It has been nothing short of a miracle to reach this point. But as

I sit here, I am wrestling with a behavior that is really toxic to me. You see, pornography is the first element in my inner circle. I can't have any form of it. My addiction responds most readily and strongly to images

of nudity. My use of pornography is what led me to Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Recently though, I began flirting with this part of my addiction. It began innocently enough (as so often a slip does). While surfing on the Internet, I came across a dating website where members could post nude photos. This type of Internet surfing is very old behavior for me. In addition, this site had banners advertising other adult content sites. But

this site was different, in that the images were quite provocative and toxic to me. I would visit the site, then kinda half report it to my sponsor, stay away a few days, and then go back to it again. Each time I went back the effect on me was very strong, I stayed there longer, and I noticed that I craved more than what I

“...some days are just filled with struggle. When I have times like these, I have found that a certain approach has proven to be invaluable...”

was getting at the site. I began to think that clicking on one of the adult banners wouldn't be so bad; or that there had to be more sites like this one with even more to show me. Needless to say, I had become

powerless over this site, just like the videos, adult bookstores, and strip clubs.

After several weeks away from the site, I was able to see and admit that I was in serious boundary behavior. While going to this site, I had laid a nice path toward a slip. It was crazy for me to go to this site considering my inner circle. During those weeks away from the site, I had to make many program calls, get honest at meetings, and do my Step work. I set some limits with my feedback group around my

The 12th Step Miracle **Continued**

By Edward C.

Internet use also. The most difficult part was getting fully honest with my sponsor. I had not been conveying the full extent of my middle circle behavior and it was eroding my serenity. To be honest, I still feel a pull to go back to the site, but today I want the benefits of sobriety more than the surge of my addiction.

I share this experience with you as part of my 12th Step work. A large part of my program includes working with others as their sponsor. I have found that sharing my experience with others does wonders for my program and it has helped my sobriety at times when I couldn't seem to use other tools.

Actually, I would like nothing more than to present to you that things mostly go well for me. I would like to offer that middle circle struggles rarely visit me because I have almost five years' sobriety or because I'm sponsor to five other people or even because I spoke at an SAA Convention. The truth is there are times when struggles seem to be all around me. Whether it is getting sexual hits from the Internet, objectifying people, living in fear about my job, or a myriad of other things, some days are

just filled with struggle. When I have times like these, I have found that a certain approach has proven to be invaluable. The willingness to follow through on this approach has proven to help me get back to having the full, rich life that living in sobriety has brought so far.

As part of completing my 12th Step, I would like to share my approach to climbing out of the hole that digging in my middle circle puts me.

1. Get Honest

- Tell my sponsor the whole truth and nothing but the truth; being specific really clears the head and heart;
- Talking about what I've been doing at a meeting also helps me and usually there is someone else going through the same thing.

2. Pray

- I take the time to tell my Higher Power specifically where I am struggling and ask that my Higher Power's will be done with respect to this struggle;
- It helps me to actually get on my knees and say out loud "I need help with _____."

3. Change the Behavior

- Mostly I have to be open to suggestions in changing my behavior that are offered by

others when I am reaching out to them for help during my struggle. Often the suggestions include doing something I would rather not do;

- If I'm struggling with the Internet, I look at changing the amount of time I'm on there, or book-ending my Internet time, or even taking some time where I just don't go on the Internet;
 - I have had to go to lengths like closing my apartment blinds in the evening, change from showering at the gym to showering at home after workouts, and not reading certain publications. All of these were done to change my behavior or routine around a certain middle circle struggle;
 - I have also had to consider adding additional behaviors that are particularly demoralizing to my inner circle.
4. "Move toward IT"
- Often my middle circle struggles arise out of my unwillingness to face that thing that is right in front of me: e.g., difficulty in a relationship, job pressures, a Step I am working on, money issues, matters with my family, the list is long for me;
 - When I am "moving toward IT", sometimes all I can manage is very small progress: just one phone call to a bill collector, writing down two lines about my feelings toward an individual or situa-

tion, spending just 10 minutes on my 12 Step work, or completing 15 minutes on a project from work. I usually feel really good afterward making even a small movement forward and often I get additional willingness to do more after accomplishing a small task;

- It always helps me after I have made any progress to tell someone else about it. Sharing progress or success reinforces that good feeling that I've gotten and highlights the difference between that good feeling and the feeling I have after being in my middle circle or boundary behavior.

Part of why I am sober today is because someone else followed through on sharing their experience, strength, and hope with me. They carried the message to me, another sex addict, and I was able to see them trying to practice these principles in all areas of their life. In turn, I am trying to do the same thing. I am traveling this path each day like the rest. It is my hope that in sharing what is happening in my program, I may truly help someone else on their path of recovery and that I may continue to experience the miracle of recovery from sex addiction that comes from working these 12 Steps.

The Things We Can

By Kalen C., Ohio

During some of our local meetings, members share their “triggers”—those things they feel increase the inclination to act out in a sexually addictive manner. During the first few months of early sobriety (this is my third time around utilizing the steps for sexual addiction recovery), I felt more than a little glad about my ignorance regarding what my “triggers” were. Initially, if pressed about triggers, I would have probably responded with “breathing” since almost everything I did seemed to result in my wanting to act out during early withdrawal. Eventually, the intensity of early withdrawal subsided and there were noticeable moments when I did not feel triggered. My sponsor and other members of S.A.A. helped lead me through the steps again with sexual sobriety as a focus. Corresponding to the welcome changes resulting from working the steps, my blissful ignorance about my own triggers began to dissipate.

While I believe it is best to keep my inner circle defined by clear, specific behaviors, I find that my triggers are primarily anchored in the realm of feelings. Three types of triggers that are palpable to me are feelings of inadequacy, feeling vulnerable, and feeling constrained by situations related to some past abuse. When any of these feelings reach a cer-

tain threshold, my desire to act out sexually or act out in some other manner can be very strong. I would like to rationally talk myself through such feelings. However, if I am caught in their emotional web, then I find rationality to be elusive. Prayer, making program calls, and working the steps are some actions that I can employ to get through such times without acting out.

Once a trigger is known, it isn't necessarily easy to rid oneself of it. Yet, if I work on the underlying root of the trigger, then, in my experience, I receive a little more sanity restored to my daily life. For example, my feelings of inadequacy largely stem from my comparing myself to others. Now, when I compare myself to others and start to feel inadequate, one of two things is happening: either I'm feeling envy because I believe another person to be better off than I or I'm experiencing low self-esteem while simultaneously being codependent. Working on envy is fairly straight-forward by working steps six and seven regularly. Working on self-esteem is somewhat more challenging although “doing esteemable things to gain self-esteem” is an axiom I've been grateful to learn from the

rooms of recovery. I've also learned that my codependency can be a real barrier to self-esteem. Codependence is something I need to monitor closely because, if not careful, I'll try to do things I think others esteem rather than what I esteem myself. There is no way I can increase my self-esteem by trying to fulfill my perception of others' expectations about, say, accomplishments--unless I also hold those same accomplishments as estimable. Counterproductively, time and again I have found myself accepting responsibilities that others value and I simply do not value as much. With such codependent accomplishments, I begin feeling like I'm not accomplishing enough while everyone else around me seems to be making excellent headway. Perhaps if I were working on my own self-esteem rather than, in a sense, yours, I wouldn't feel inadequate. Fortunately, S.A.A. offers a number of ways to enhance my self-esteem. From a program standpoint, service and twelfth step work are both things I find estimable. Also, doing Steps Four and Five can help me discern what I'm actually about--what I find important. After a while of working Steps Six and Seven on my shortcomings and acting in ways that increase my self-esteem, I usually feel less inadequate compared to others and, subsequently, less triggered to act out.

Other triggers usually have

something else behind them also. Feeling vulnerable may occasionally stem from generalized fear--which can be counteracted by practicing faith in my higher powers. However, feeling vulnerable is usually simply more codependency via my fear of others' disapproval (I find I seldom fear others' approval). Feeling constrained by situations related to some past abuse ties into feeling helpless. While I've learned to be hopeful even with the powerlessness of the first step, simultaneously feeling helpless and powerless doesn't yield much hope. When I'm triggered in these ways, I need to do something other than my ingrained responses of acting out, or compulsively thinking about acting out, to cope

The underlying feelings and fears of triggers can be mitigated by some constructive action. I can learn something new through reading a book, I can pursue an artistic endeavor without concern if anyone ever sees it, I can physically exercise, or I can engage in some other non-acting out behavior. During times of being triggered, I have to act my way out of detrimental thinking rather than try to think my way out of it. The actions provide hope that something can be done. Fortunately, by doing some constructive action, my time is employed in an endeavor other

The Things We Can Continued

By Kalen C., Ohio

than acting out and as time passes, I eventually emerge from a time of compulsive thinking.

For all of my acting out triggers and underlying problems, the solution seems to be some form of action. And if I am being overwhelmed by too much activity, I've found the solution for myself is the action of quiet meditation. I may never be able to be entirely rid of my triggers. I suspect other members of the program feel the same. I consistently see my

fellow members of S.A.A. take actions of service work, starting step study groups, starting new meetings, forming an inter-fellowship group, planning fellowship activities, answering phone helplines, etc. Other constructive things we addicts can do include physical exercise, further education, artistic endeavors, various forms of volunteering, and a host of other choices. I am grateful that rather than focusing on the things I cannot do, the meetings and S.A.A. program help me practice the things we can.

Support

By Lloyd A.

[Editor's note: Lloyd sent us this article from a prison unit in Texas.]

This is my first time writing in. I just felt that I should share something with you. I jumped in the 12-Step program head first, I read over everything and had a good feeling that this would work for me, I worked through all 12 steps in three months, got a sponsor, "I have a problem with masturbating."

I thought I was healed. In a couple of months I gave my books away and even stopped writing my sponsor. Well, I went right back to my old way of thinking and acting out. I felt so low and bad I did not want to even look at myself. I remembered that we

are powerless, so I cried a little, thought about it, and I knew what was wrong. I can't do it alone, I can make the choice to stop, to work the steps, but I'm weak, I'm human, and I need my sponsor. We have to be here for each other, helping each other along the way.

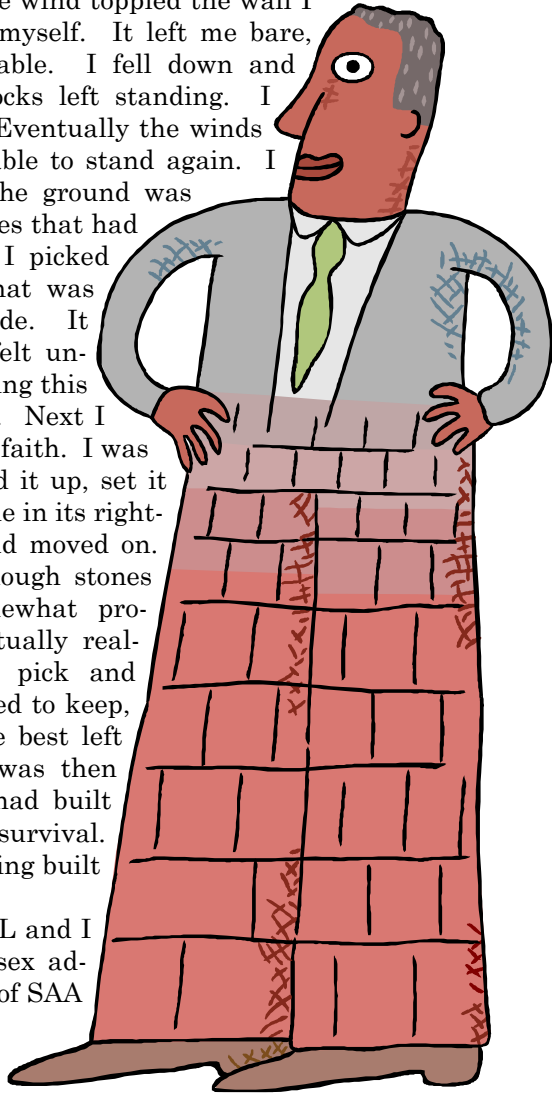
I've been without acting out for five days now. I've asked for another copy of the books, and I can't emphasize enough my need to slowly work the steps, and not to be afraid to talk to my sponsor or friend when I feel I may be about to act out. Support is what keeps me strong. Thank you for allowing me this time.

The Wall

By Mike L.

Ten months ago, a strong wind blew through my soul. The wind toppled the wall I had built to protect myself. It left me bare, exposed, and vulnerable. I fell down and clung to the few blocks left standing. I waited and prayed. Eventually the winds softened and I was able to stand again. I looked around and the ground was littered with the stones that had once protected me. I picked one up and read what was scratched into its side. It was impatience. I felt uncomfortable just holding this stone and dropped it. Next I saw a stone that said faith. I was drawn to it. I picked it up, set it on top of another stone in its rightful place of honor and moved on. Eventually, I had enough stones erected to feel somewhat protected again. I eventually realized I was able to pick and choose stones I wanted to keep, and stones that were best left on the ground. It was then that I discovered I had built the first wall for survival. This new wall was being built for living.

My name is Mike L and I am recovering from sex addiction with the help of SAA and the 12 steps.



Listen

By Anonymous

[Editor's note: A member of the Houston fellowship dropped this poem by the ISO office. It has also been circulating on the internet.]

When I ask you to listen to me
and you start giving advice
you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way
you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems,
you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen,
not talk or do—just hear me.

Advice is cheap; 25 cents will get you both Dear Abby and
Billy Graham in the same newspaper.
And I can do for myself, I'm not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do
for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel,
no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince
you and can get about the business of understanding what's
behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I
don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for some people because God is
mute, and He doesn't give advice or try to fix things. "They" just listen
and let you work it out for yourself.

So, please listen and hear me. And, if you want to talk,
wait a minute for your turn; and I'll listen to you.

Life's Little Kindnesses

By Ric M.

Little kindnesses, rays of hope,
The cords that bind and support.
A strong lifeline, Life's rescue rope,
Pulling me back from the endless abyss.

A smile from someone I have yet to know,
Simple chat that inspires one to grow.
The warm hug of a true friend,
Their warmth strengthening me, so I may reach Life's end.

A heartfelt compliment, parting clouds of gray,
Sunshine splashing on my face,
Candles whose luminescence lights the way.
Faithfully guiding me through Despair's gloom.

A friend standing by me when I need,
Mending the cuts inflicted by others on me,
Staunching my life which flows forth as I bleed.
A guardian who gently guides me from this pain to health.

A hug from my daughter whom I deeply love,
Sent to me from on high, from up above.
The light that shines forth from her steel-hued eyes,
Transforming to blue my darkest of skies.

A voice in the fog that calls, "Stay the course!"
No matter the headwinds and breakers, spoken with no remorse.
Calling me to veer clear of rocky shores,
Leading me to the deeper sheols, guiding me ever more.

A good joke mixed with light hearted mirth,
Laughter echoing from humor's oft-overlooked worth.
Merriment that can lighten even the darkest of days,
Ointment for the wounds I have borne, treasured rays.

**RESERVE YOUR COPIES
OF THE SOON TO BE PUBLISHED SAA BOOK**

The SAA book will describe our addiction and tell about the effect it has on our lives and the lives of our friends and family. It will describe our purpose, our program and our fellowship. It will tell how working the program can lead to recovery from our addiction and to a spiritual awakening. It will tell what our life will be like in recovery. It will describe The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA and how these and service to others are key components of our recovery program.

There will also be stories written by SAA members who tell how they became addicted, the nature of their addiction, and how the program has led them to recovery.

You have the opportunity now to fill out the form below to tell us how many copies of the SAA Book you want to reserve. This will be used to determine how many copies to print in the first run and to insure that you will be able to order yours once the price has been set. Reserving copies **does not** obligate you to buy them. You will actually order and receive your book(s) after you know their price.

Please indicate how many hardbound and paperback copies you want for personal use and for group use.

You will be notified when the price is determined.

✂-----

Please Print Clearly

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ and/or e-mail _____

Hard Bound

Paperback

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Mail to: ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Please Make Copies For Your Group!

Sexual Addiction

By Anonymous

Her car's not in the drive anymore
Cause I'm a spastic little whore
You see I messed around too much
And fell in love with any old such

But now its dark and I'm sitting alone
Ain't no calls on my cellular phone
Too many times I've hid and strayed
Too many times her heart's been played

I'd seek her forgiveness but it's just no use
I reek from all this self abuse
She never thinks there's anything wrong
When in truth I sell our love for a song

It's not right this nasty thing I do
Can't stop myself but there's no proof
And that's the only plain simple truth

She forgives me and thinks that it'll all go away
While deep inside I continue to stray
I feel so hollow, an unholy sound
I can't even follow my conscience around

I try not to listen to her cries in the hall
And I watch as all my morals away fall
Here I go for the last time I swear
Another promise racing home to a deaf ear

As I sidestep the truth, I'm a silly old goose
It's a mirror house without good use
Twisting on an axis to nowhere I go
These acts are far beyond being a ho

It's always words without much clout
You're always at question, there's never a doubt
You chase a dream that you cannot define
Just play out a rhythm without the rhyme

It's life at its basest neediest quotient
And for the cure there is no potion
Its quiet hellos and quick goodbyes
The summation of it: it's all just lies

Its smiles on emails, the promises made
It's just a big ole love parade
The misleading way you cater to them
To get their treasure - that sweetest gem

It's a dilemma cruel and hard for sure
Not to mention the shame that you'll endure
You beg them - plead them - play to their whims
You cancel yourself to get to their trim

Then waltz right in and get what you came for
Then later defer all of the blame for
It's the saddest thing that you can ever imagine
To end up empty handed without the passion

To give up something that's good and true
For a moment of bliss inside of you
It's an endless craving for something complete
But once you have it you forgot what you ate

From the Editor

By Mike L.

As I write these words, I am safely back from the seventeenth International SAA Convention in Dallas, Texas, my tenth convention, and I had my usual wonderful time. If anything, the attendees were even friendlier and more outgoing than they have been at previous conferences. I haven't spent any time in Dallas during the summer months before and I was amazed to see how much drier it is there than in my hometown of Houston.

Being a part of the Literature Committee, I was especially gratified to hear announced at the Delegate Meeting on Friday that the SAA Book is finished and will be available by the 2005 convention. Seeing the excitement of the delegates was certainly one of the highlights of this year's trip for me. It's going to be wonderful to finally have our own book.

The hotel where we stayed was very nice. I requested vegetarian meals as I always do (I am a part-time vegetarian, still working my way toward full-time) and I must say that these meals were easily the best of those served at the conventions I have attended. For once I felt like the staff put some real thought into what to prepare, and I felt absolutely no envy for my meat-eating companions. On Sunday we were all vegetarians as the hotel had some tasty vegetable choices in their buffet to replace the standard bacon and sausage.

I see it as one of my unofficial duties at these conventions to introduce as many people to *Stuart Saves His Family* as possible, and once again I had the chance to do so on Saturday night. Most of the other folks who chose to watch the movie, as opposed to dancing/karaoking or drumming, had not seen Stuart before and really enjoyed him.

I had a number of responsibilities at the convention, my favorite of which was without a doubt having the opportunity to emcee the Talent Show on Sunday evening. We were fortunate to have a number of very talented individuals sharing with us this year, and the two and a half hours fairly flew by.

Each year I continue to see more interest and excitement around Prison Outreach. All I can say is that I hope that this trend continues.

I came to the convention carrying some sadness around some personal things going on in my life and so I spent a fair amount of time recharging my batteries and regaining my serenity in the beautifully furnished Meditation Room. Had it not been for that

room, I think I would have had a much more difficult time being fully present for the things that I had to be fully present for.

And of course I'm excited about next year's convention. If the convention is half as good as the show the convention committee put on for us on Monday morning, it's definitely going to be one not to miss.

If you attended the convention and want to tell us about your experiences, the PBR is the perfect vehicle. As a matter of fact, I'm really looking for articles of all sorts for the July-August PBR. I welcome other submissions as well. If you're interested in submitting an article, you can send it via the internet to pbr@saa-recovery.org or you can send it to the office: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949 and they will forward them to me.

I hope you enjoy reading about the convention in this issue of the PBR and I look forward to talking with you again in a couple of months.



The Outer Circle

By Tom B. (sexually sober since 9/9/97)

The Outer Circle is one of the most important concepts in SAA recovery, for we are not simply abstaining from addictive sexual behavior, we are growing toward a healthy expression of our sexuality. Just as was the case with individual Inner Circle behaviors, what comprises healthy sexuality can take as many different forms as there are members, and things that are healthy for one person may not be for another. What follows is my own experience with the Outer Circle.

First and foremost, my Outer Circle includes sexual behaviors that are enjoyable, exciting, loving, and life-giving. They are characterized by emotional honesty, mutual respect, and genuine intimacy. This is the good stuff. So much of my life in active addiction was spent in isolation, acting out in solitude or victimizing people. Even when I was with another person, there was little or no connection or closeness. Today, I get to have real sex with a real person, not a picture or a fantasy or a glimpse from a distance, but the real thing. Not only that, I can experience a deep emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical connection with another human being. My sex life in recovery is better than it ever was before, because I can have real intimacy with another person. That's what great sex is all about today. In my active addiction, I wasn't even aware of my own feelings, let alone being sensitive to someone else's. Today, I can have sex within a

meaningful relationship and deal with all of the feelings that go along with that through the principles and tools I've learned in the Twelve Steps. I can be fully present during sex, experiencing the full intensity of this sacred union.

My Outer Circle also includes other expressions of my sexuality. During times when I was not sexually active, I have found occasional masturbation to be a healthy expression of my sexuality, as long as it was in the privacy of my own home, did not involve fantasy about acting out, and was not more than once or twice a week.

As less direct expressions of my sexuality, I like to dance erotically to sexy music, dress and groom myself to be attractive, even cross-dress on special occasions (like Halloween!). I can enjoy feeling attractive to others without thinking I have to actually have sex with them to "prove" I'm attractive or sexually powerful. In general, I want to celebrate this God given gift of sexuality as a beautiful part of my humanity.

In early recovery, my focus was only on the Inner Circle, trying to keep from acting out and slowly backing away from the bottomless pit of my addictive behavior. Then, at some point, I turned my back on my addiction and faced outward, to embrace the limitless possibilities of the Outer Circle.



ISO News



ISO Literature Committee, ISO Board, & Board Committees

ISO Board Minutes

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc., met before the ISO Convention in Dallas, Texas, on May 26-27, 2004. The following is a report of votes taken.

Accepted: The following Literature Committee SAA Book report for the months of March and April:

March Monthly Report

Since the Board accepted the editors/authors plan for completing the draft of the SAA Book on February 29, the editors have completed revisions of Steps Five, Six, and Seven, which have been posted to the secure website. We made some revisions to the Step Four section, which had already been posted, and also made some changes to Chapter Two, in response to comments that had been received. A revision of Step Eight is very close to being finished and also going up. Two stories have been added, bringing the total on the site to forty. Sections that remain to be edited from the original drafts include Steps Nine through Twelve and a chapter on Life in Recovery.

The Traditions chapter has yet to be written. In our editors/authors calls on February 17 and February 24, One of the authors made it clear that although he wants to be involved in the process as far as reading and commenting on the draft goes, he will be unable to commit to any new writing. The other author originally wanted the current incomplete version of the Traditions taken down from the website and offered to attempt a rewrite. On March 9, he reported to us by email that he wanted to clarify the impression that he wanted to revise and resubmit that chapter. He stated that it was not his highest priority at this time and said it was fine with him if we went ahead and wrote the chapter or asked someone else on the Literature Committee to write it. He added that he would write the chapter if no-one else on the Literature Committee came forward to write it, due to his contractual obligation. We responded on March 14 that we would take a stab at writing a draft of the Traditions chapter.

We have arranged our next editors/authors teleconference for April 6.

In service,
Elizabeth S.
Chris D.



ISO Board Minutes Continued

April Monthly Report

Since our last report, edited revisions of Steps Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven have gone up on the website. The revision of Step Twelve has gone through several drafts and is almost ready to go up as well. A new story (from the book *From Shame to Grace*) has been added, bringing the total to 41.

Our next big chunk will be the "Life in Recovery" chapter. The outline approved at the Houston retreat requires subsections on Other Tools, Relapse (and Prevention), Outside Resources, and Healthier Sexuality. We are on track to getting this section edited before we meet in Dallas. Meanwhile, Joe T., Southeast Region, has volunteered to work on the Traditions chapter.

We met with the authors by teleconference on April 6. One of the authors provided extensive verbal feedback on Steps Six through Eight. The other author asked a question about the revision of Steps Two and Three. He then stated that he had decided, after consultation with others, that he felt it was best to let go of the editing process as it is now proceeding and to no longer provide feedback by email or teleconference. We had some discussion as to what this would mean in light of the agreement we all came to in February. We decided that the editors would continue to email drafts of each section as it was completed to both authors and continue to invite both authors to monthly editors/authors calls as well as all LitCom meetings and teleconferences, but it would be up to each author to determine how much he wanted to participate. We all agreed to this. We also discussed the upcoming convention and the LitCom-sponsored workshop, which will present portions of the text for fellowship feedback.

We set up another editors/authors call for May 11. One of the authors stated his intention to definitely be on the call and to continue to participate in teleconferences. The other author asked to be invited to the May 11 call and may participate. Due to family obligations, neither author plans to attend the convention in Dallas.

Our last report, which reported on our work in March, was incorrectly titled "April report." This report covers our work for the month of April 2004.

In service,
Chris D.

ISO Board Minutes Continued

Elizabeth S.

Approved: A motion to purchase an additional pertinent domain name when it becomes available.

Approved: A motion that, when the SAA Book is published, we pay royalties of fifteen percent to be divided by the Authors.

Approved: A motion to instruct the ISO Office to inform the caller that before the caller continues with details about specific behaviors we must inform him or her that according to Texas law there is an obligation to report abuse of minors to authorities; further a motion to also form a committee to draft guidelines for handling information about ongoing illegal behaviors.

Approved The request of the Alberta Province to join the North Pacific Region.

Approved: A motion to review again Sexuality in Perspective as being approved for sale by the ISO.

Approved: A motion to formally acknowledge and applaud the commitment, time, and effort of the Literature Committee, and the editors particularly. As a result of their efforts we expect that a book will be published by next convention. The entire fellowship and each addict that enters sexual recovery will be influenced by their efforts. Our deep gratitude goes out to each of them.

Approved: A motion to give Rich S. permission to use the registered ISO trademark "Sex Addicts Anonymous" accompanied by the registration symbol and followed by one of the official self-descriptions.

Accepted: The Indiana Fellowship's bid to host the 2006 ISO Convention [in Indianapolis].

The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc., met during the ISO Convention in Dallas, Texas, on May 30, 2004.

The following is a report of votes taken.

Elected: Roger B., Great Lakes Region, chair of the Board, Greg B., North Central Region, secretary of the Board, and Don K., at-large member, treasurer of the Board.

ISO Board Minutes Continued

Ratified: Mark H. and Jerry O. for three-year service terms on the Office Oversight Committee.

Approved: A motion to set up a system for reserving a book from the first printing, either hard cover or soft or both, and to communicate this plan to the Literature Committee through the Board Liaison to the Literature Committee.

Approved: A motion to authorize the Literature Committee to supervise the design of the book and to further authorize the Literature Committee to prepare the book for printing.

Directed: Shelley K. as Board Liaison to open communications with the Literature Committee about translation of approved SAA literature.



ISO Literature Committee Minutes

The ISO Literature Committee met during the Annual ISO of SAA, Inc. Convention held in Dallas, Texas, May 26 -30, 2004. The following is a report on approved motions.

Approved: A motion to recommend developing the radio PSA based on the storyboard script already approved for the video PSA.

Approved: That the existing structure for accumulating money for the Spanish translation of SAA literature be kept in place for the translation of the SAA book and other future SAA literature as directed by the Literature Committee.

Approved: A motion not to translate *From Shame to Grace* and the *Group Guide* at this time.



ISO Delegate Meeting

The following is a report of the actions taken and the recommendations to the ISO Board of Trustees made during the Delegate Meeting held in Dallas, Texas, May 28-29, 2004.

Approved: The Annual Report of the Board of Trustees

Approved: The ISO of SAA, Inc. budget for 2005.

Elected: Don K. as at-large member of the Board of Trustees.

Ratified: A change to the ISO by-laws to conduct an audit of the ISO Office "at the change of the Director of Fellowship Services or of any other principal employee whose position includes significant, independent handling of ISO finances, unless Board action shall deem it unnecessary." (Having been approved by the 2003 Delegates and ratified by the 2004 Delegates, the by-laws have been changed as proposed)

Decided: Using the Delphi Technique, the conference chose to keep *The Plain Brown Rapper* as the name of the ISO newsletter.

Recommended: To establish a cap on the amount of money that can be distributed directly from the Outreach Endowment Fund to the ISO Office and this cap is to be equal to 15% of the previous year's operating expenses.

Note: According to ISO by-laws, recommendations made by the ISO delegates must be considered by the Board of Trustees.

Approved: "To amend Article I, Section 2, of the ISO by-laws, changing the office and principal place of business of this corporation from 1003 Studewood Street, Houston, Texas 77008 to 3890D North Freeway, Houston, Texas 77022."

Note: By-law changes must be approved at one ISO convention and ratified at the following year's convention before they take effect. This provision also applies to the next two actions taken by the 2004 Delegates.

ISO Delegate Meeting Continued

Approved: "That Article V, Section 3 of the ISO of SAA, Inc. By-laws be amended to read: "The Literature Committee shall have supervisory authority over the content of all ISO publications. It shall not, however, enter into any contracts, exceed the budget voted it by the preceding international convention, own any copyrights, grant permission to anyone to use ISO copyrighted materials, or in any other way act as a business corporation. The Literature Committee or its representatives appointed to subcommittees for specific tasks shall always be consulted by the Board for advice and input in any business matters relating to ISO publications."

Approved: To amend the by-laws, Article III, Section 3, to read as follows: "Recommendations approved by a majority of the delegates and authorized alternates voting at an international convention must be followed by the ISO Board of SAA, unless such recommendations are deemed to be unfeasible because of financial or administrative concerns, i.e., the ISO does not have the funds to follow the recommendation, or does not have the means or equipment to put it into action without damaging its ability to maintain services. If the Board deems such a recommendation to be unfeasible, it will present a detailed report to the delegates at the next international convention explaining why the recommendation could not be followed, and be available to answer questions from the delegates regarding this report. In its deliberations the Board shall ever bear in mind that the ultimate authority and power in SAA lies in the body of the fellowship, and the Board acts as the Trusted Servant of the fellowship."



ISO Financial News

Financially, the biggest news coming out of the 2004 Convention was not about how well the convention did. The biggest and truly amazing story was the response to an appeal for money to fund the printing of the SAA Book.

When the Board learned from the Literature Committee that the book manuscript had been finished and would soon enter the phases that will prepare it for printing, it decided to ask those attending the convention to kick off a campaign whose goal was to raise \$10,000.

During Friday's Delegate Meeting, Francie E. announced that a special appeal would be made during the Saturday Night Banquet. The appeal itself was made by Robert S. When he was finished, members streamed up to the front of the room, stopping the evening's proceedings for approximately half an hour. When the offerings were finally counted, the tally was \$7,892.62! As good as this news was, it got even better.

Alerted by a program friend who was attending the convention and on the same day when people were responding in Dallas, an anonymous SAA member pledged and has begun to fulfill a series of monthly gifts that put the campaign over its goal!

Such generosity made it unnecessary for the Board to extend the appeal to individual groups and intergroups. Instead, it can now go to the fellowship at large offering individuals and groups the opportunity to reserve copies of the book. Those who make reservations will insure themselves of getting as many copies of the first printing as they indicate. They will also be helping the ISO determine how many copies to order for the first run. More details are available on the reservation form that is printed in this issue of the PBR and that has also been inserted with the mailing. Members are asked to duplicate and distribute the form as widely as possible.

As chronicled in previous issues, 2004 was a transition from the old way of hosting the annual convention to a new way. Much of this year's labor burden was shouldered by the ISO Office, much more so than in the past but less than will be necessary in the future when local committees will again play a major role.

Given its unique circumstances and judging from feedback, this year's convention went surprisingly well. Although not as big as in some years, the net surplus of \$7,124.71 was still sufficient to bring the Operational Reserve to full funding and to at least partially cover Board and Literature Committee travel expenses.

Letter From Peter B.

At the time of the convention, Peter B., former Board member and beloved friend of many, was in a hospice, suffering from cancer. He wrote the following letter to the Board. It was shared with those who attended the Unity Convention and is shared here with all who know him.

Dear Boarders,

If I could be anywhere right now, it would be with you.

My time spent in these rooms with you has been the most fulfilling in my 23 years of 12-step recovery.

I feel honored that you shared yourselves with me, your recovery, your sobriety, your stories, your struggles, and your triumphs over them.

By continuing to show up to do service, I've been surrounded and held by people with a very deep level of recovery. At a convention, with all of you, all of our energy interacts and bounces around and gets strengthened and I get to take it all home with me. So even though I can't be there, I have all of you here with me in my heart.

Love & XXX's
Peter B.

Note: Those who would like to drop Peter a note can send them to the ISO, P. O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270. Write "For Peter" on the outside of the envelope, so they can be forwarded unopened to Peter.



How to Submit a PBR article

First:

Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

Second:

Send your article by e-mail to: PBR@saa-recovery.org

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

Third:

Send the **Article Release Form** below. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step 12

Submission deadlines:

Dec. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1

Release Form: I hereby give this newsletter, its successors, assignees, and those acting on its authority permission to copyright and/or publish any articles, poems, other written material, or art work pertaining to my personal story of recovery from addiction and my personal experience with or opinions about the SAA fellowship or program. I understand that additions may be made to my written material and that it may be changed or edited. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO newsletter from any claim by myself or my successors.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS: _____ **DATE:** _____

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Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from their sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Our fellowship is open to women and men regardless of religion, race, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, or profession. Our members define their own sexual boundaries with the guidance of their sponsors and other group members. We encourage our members to discover and explore what healthy sexuality means to them.

Region

Board Members

Board Alternate

Literature Committee

Lit. Com. Alternate

| <u>Region</u> | <u>Board Members</u> | <u>Board Alternate</u> | <u>Literature Committee</u> | <u>Lit. Com. Alternate</u> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
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| Intermountain | Shelley K. | Jeanette W. | Chris D. | Chris T. |
| North Central | Greg B. <i>Secretary</i> | Jim A. | Tim L. | Thea D. |
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