

The Outer Circle

The Official Newsletter of the
International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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THE ISO ENCOURAGES GROUPS TO REPRODUCE *THE OUTER CIRCLE* SO THAT COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS. *THE OUTER CIRCLE* IS MAILED FREE TO ALL WHO REQUEST IT.

MEMBER DONATIONS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED.

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ISO Board Actions

The following are actions taken by the Board of Trustees at the March 21, 2009 Teleconference.

- **Changes to Delphi/New Business Procedures at Delegate Meeting**
That the Board adopt the following changes to the Delphi and New Business procedures for the Delegate Meeting at the annual convention:
 1. The Board Chair, prior to the Delegate Meeting, shall appoint a “Delphi Committee” consisting of at least three but no more than four members. Prior to the start of the Delphi process at the Delegate Meeting, this committee shall review all new business proposals submitted for the Meeting and make recommendations to the Chair of the Meeting when a proposal may be out of order. This committee may also make recommendations to champions for minor wording changes in proposals. If possible, members of the committee should include a parliamentarian, a current Board member, a non-Board member and a past Board president.
 2. The cutoff time for submitting an item for new business is changed from 1:30 pm to 11:00 am on the Friday of the Delegate Meeting.
 3. During New Business (after the Delphi Process) the time allowed for a Champion to present his or her motion is changed from 5 minutes to 3 minutes.
 4. The ISO board encourages each champion to discuss the proposal with her or his home group for its support before making the proposal.
- **Committee on Committees Response to DAC Proposal 4** That no disclosure statement be included on the Office’s unattended telephone message.
- **Adoption of Internal Standing Committees for Board** That the ISO Board set up three standing committees. These committees shall be referred to as “internal standing committees of the Board.” The three committees are listed below, with some of the possible areas likely to fall under each committee’s purview (the lists are not intended to be exhaustive):

Finance and Operations Committee

This committee would be a place for the operations side of the ISO, including such things as:

- Budget questions
- Audits
- Personnel and office matters
- Fundraising
- Business matters pertaining to Lit Com

Fellowship Committee

This committee would deal with issues pertaining to the fellowship at large, including such things as:

- Outreach
- International development
- Convention and delegate meetings
- Intra-fellowship communications
- Non-business matters related to literature

Policy Committee

This committee would deal with various policy matters coming before the Board, including such things as:

- By-law proposals
- Procedural matters
- Questions about voter eligibility
- Board development/education
- Regional meetings
- Code of conduct

The Policy committee, perhaps more than the other two, could also function as a “catch-all” committee that deals with any miscellaneous topics not covered elsewhere.

The committees would be set up and structured with the following procedures:

1. The Chair of the Board would appoint the chair and members of the three committees based upon their interests and experience.
2. Each Board Rep and Alternate would serve on one standing committee. Each committee would have a minimum of two Board Reps.
3. Matters could be referred to a standing committee either by the Board Chair at his or her discretion or by a majority vote of the Board (using a motion to refer).

4. The committees would meet regularly between Board meetings. Committee chairs would be charged with setting up the committee meetings and coordinating the committee agendas, and would assign someone as secretary of the committee charged with keeping minutes and forwarding those to the Board.
- **DAC Proposal 3: ISO Office Procedure to exclude all names from internal reports.** That the ISO Office Procedure Manual Section C-3 (Inquiries), Number 3 (Handling of Information Which May Require Reporting, including Abuse or Neglect Of Minors), Item f (Reporting), Sub-item (3) is amended by appending “, including information which may identify other members who handled the disclosure” following the phrase “with identifying information redacted” to read:

“Both reports will be forwarded immediately to the Board of Trustees and the Disclosure Advisory Committee (DAC) via e-mail with identifying information redacted, including information which may identify other members who handled the disclosure.”
 - **Nomination of Chris X. (U.K.) as At-Large Trustee for 2009-2010 Service Year** That the Board of Trustees nominates Chris X. of the U.K. to serve as at-large Trustee during the 2009-2010 service year.
 - **Change to ISO Account Signatories List** That the Board authorizes the addition of Chris F. of Houston, TX (current Business Administrator) to the approved list of signatures for ISO checks, and the removal of Jerry B. of Houston, TX (former DFS) from the approved list of signatures for ISO checks.
 - **Additional ISO Office Paid Holidays** That the Board of Trustees authorizes an increase in the number of paid holidays from eight holidays to ten holidays and allows the Director of Business services to determine the specific holidays.
 - **Appointment of John F. to the Office Oversight Committee** That the Board of Trustees appoints John F. to the Office Oversight Committee.
 - **Pocket Edition Green Book Pricing** That the Board authorizes the sale of the pocket edition of the Green Book at the same profit margin received from the large edition of the Green Book.
 - **International Group Starter Kit** That the ISO of SAA start a two year

pilot program whereby an “International Group Starter Kit” (consisting of the regular Group Starter Kit plus two SAA basic texts) would be provided at no charge to any two sex addicts residing outside the USA and Canada who wish to start an SAA meeting.

Volunteer Openings Available

Our Fellowship relies on hundreds of volunteers to work on committees, staff intergroups, perform functions for individual groups, sponsor and serve as Trustees for the Board. We have a need for volunteers in all areas. Please take a look at the committees below and use your talents to provide service to the Fellowship.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees serves the Fellowship of SAA by maintaining services for those who seek help through the Sex Addicts Anonymous Fellowship. Each region has a board representative, who is elected by the delegates from their region.

ISO Literature Committee

The SAA Literature Committee serves the Fellowship by editing, preparing for publication, and reviewing SAA Literature. We supervise the content of SAA Literature. The literature committee has several subcommittees, which follow:

- **Operations and Policy Subcommittee (OPS)**

The OPS is responsible for planning and oversight of issues to be considered by the whole LitCom.

- **Major Works Subcommittee (MWS)**

The MWS is responsible for the ongoing review and editing of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, as well as production of a pocket version of the basic text and development of our own meditation book.

- **In-reach Subcommittee (INR)**

The INR is responsible for the projects focused on supporting members within the Fellowship.

- **Outreach Subcommittee (OUTR)**

The OUTR is responsible for projects that target persons outside the Fellowship – addicts in search of recovery, counselors, law enforcement officers, concerned friends, and family members.

- **Periodicals and Website Subcommittee (PWS)**

The PWS is responsible for content and oversight of the ISO newsletter, *The Outer Circle*, and the SAA websites.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee reviews the budget and financial reports of the ISO of SAA Inc., and reviews or initiates recommendations that involve finances.

Fund Raising Committee

The mission of the ISO Fund Raising Committee is to encourage donations from individual SAA members and SAA groups by executing Board approved direct solicitations, by publicizing existing donor programs or vehicles, and by developing and proposing to the Board new programs or vehicles through which members and groups can support the ISO and its work.

General Outreach Committee

This umbrella committee was formed by the Board of Trustees in 2006, and consists of the five subcommittees listed below, which are designed to address specific areas of outreach for the SAA fellowship.

- **Teen Outreach Subcommittee**

This subcommittee seeks to address issues confronting underage sex addicts, including attending meetings, relating to adult sex addicts, and safety and liability issues for groups, members, and the ISO. Additionally, all inquiries to ISO concerning underage sex addicts are reviewed.

- **Public Information Subcommittee**

This subcommittee develops documents and procedures to support the sharing of the SAA message outside of the fellowship.

- **Men's Outreach Subcommittee**

This subcommittee is focused on serving under-represented segments of the population, including male members in isolated communities, communities with new or foundering fellowships, or male members in under-represented groups including ethnic, sexual identity, etc. Women and transgender members are most welcome to participate.

- **Young Adult Outreach Subcommittee**

This subcommittee's focus is on carrying the SAA message to young adults aged 18 to 39, with a current emphasis on college students.

- **GLBT Outreach Subcommittee**

This subcommittee is tasked with developing and providing more effective methods for outreach to sex addicts in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities, as well as current SAA members who are GLBT.

Interfellowship Relations Committee

The Interfellowship Relations Committee discovers common ground: They determine specific forms and methods of cooperation in which SAA can appropriately interact with other twelve-step sex recovery fellowships (S-Fellowships).

Intergroup Communications Committee

The Intergroup Communications Committee (ICC) has a two-fold purpose. The first purpose is to create an Intergroup Guide which will provide a set of suggested principles and procedures for SAA groups that are interested in starting or growing a local SAA Intergroup. The second purpose is to identify and implement strategies for improving communications and sharing of best practices across the local SAA Intergroups throughout the world.

International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is committed to carrying the SAA message to sex addicts still suffering across the globe. The Committee develops strategies in which the ISO can support these international groups by providing outreach, sending literature at no or less than normal cost, and requesting that those groups communicate to the ISO about their current needs.

Office Oversight Committee

The mission of the Office Oversight Committee is to serve the SAA membership by ensuring accountable, effective and efficient execution of the ISO Office's responsibilities. The Committee shall: hold the ISO Office accountable through regular review meetings, support it with all available resources, report its actions to the SAA Board, and to recommend Office policy to the Board when asked or as it deems appropriate.

Online Presence Committee

The Online Outreach Committee is responsible for exploration and employment of internet technologies and methods in service to the outreach efforts of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

Prisoner Outreach Committee

The Prisoner Outreach Committee's mission is to facilitate contact between SAA members and people who are imprisoned and reaching out for help in recovering from addictive sexual behavior.

SAA Women's Outreach Committee

Reaches out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behaviors and help them find our Fellowship for recovery.

Disclosure Advisory Committee

The DAC reviews ISO reports about calls that contain information about ongoing sexual abuse of minors and acts in an advisory capacity to the Board and the Director of Fellowship Services. The DAC works on recommendations to the Board for guidelines for other levels of the SAA Fellowship with regard to procedures for handling information about ongoing sexual abuse of minors.

Feedback on *Sex Addicts Anonymous*

The ISO Literature Committee reminds members that the book *Sex Addicts Anonymous* remains open for feedback from the SAA fellowship. We are deeply grateful for the time and effort members spend in providing feedback, and all feedback we receive from members and groups is given full and careful consideration.

Please note that, while we do acknowledge initial receipt of feedback, the ISO is not able to communicate beyond that about how or whether a member's feedback will be used for current or future revisions of the book. Any suggested new writing, regardless of length or content, that is sent to the ISO as feedback on ISO approved literature, becomes property of the ISO of SAA, Inc. and is subject to editing and revision.

Please send any feedback to:

E-mail address: info@saa-recovery.org

Mailing address:

ISO of SAA
PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270 USA



Guidelines for Meditation Book Submissions to the Literature Committee

The Literature Committee welcomes submissions from the wider fellowship regarding the Meditation Book. Every submission needs to follow these guidelines to be considered for inclusion in the book.

The Meditation Book will consist of 366 entries, each entry representing a specific date of any calendar year, such as January 1, etc. Each entry will be one page and placed according to a specific date as decided upon by the Literature Committee. We are asking members to submit one or more complete entries for their consideration in the book.

When submitting, an entry needs to consist of the following elements:

- a) One Quotation. A quotation pulled from ISO-approved literature. Include the exact quote, the title of the literature used, and the page number. Following, in alphabetical order, are the pieces of ISO-approved literature: *Abstinence*, *Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA*, *The Bubble*, *First Step to Recovery*, *From Shame to Grace*, *Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous*, *Group Guide*, *Sex Addicts Anonymous* (also known as "The Green Book"), *Sex Addicts Anonymous* (the introductory pamphlet), *Sexual Sobriety and the Internet*, *A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer*, *Three Circles*, *Tools of Recovery*.
- b) Main body. The main body of the entry will consist of text expanding on the thought or principle expressed in the quotation, offering a perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery. The writer may touch on any aspect of recovery including the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, other common SAA tools, principles, and shared wisdom of our SAA program and the fellowship.
- c) Meditation / Affirmation. At the bottom of the page there will be a concise statement epitomizing the text of the page into a meditation, thought, or affirmation—i.e., a form customarily used by readers in a daily spiritual practice.
- d) Word total limitation. The total number of words per submission should be approximately 300 words or less, with roughly 3/4 of that total devoted to the main body and 1/4 of the total devoted to the quotation and the meditation/affirmation. These are not hard and fast word counts; rather, they are approximate guidelines.

The writer will need to sign a release form that the meditation, if used, becomes the property of the ISO. By signing the release form, the submitter also grants the ISO the right to edit, alter or change the wording of the submission in any way necessary for inclusion in the text.



Meditation Book Release Form

I hereby give the ISO of SAA, Inc., as the publisher of the SAA meditation book, permission to copyright and publish my submission. I understand additions may be made to my written material and that it may be edited or changed. I further understand that every effort will be made to ensure my anonymity. I possess the full legal right to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO of SAA from any claim by myself or my successors.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

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

ISO Income/Expense Summary As of March 31, 2009

	March 2009	Monthly Average	Year to Date
INCOME			
Net Sales	7,861	7,373	22,119
Shipping & Handling	1,630	1,513	4,538
Donations	16,131	20,357	61,071
General Donation	1,693	1,792	5,377
LifeLine Partners	5,418	5,138	15,413
Other Designated Donations	9,019	13,427	40,281
Delegate Registrations	0	28	85
Interest Earned	1,569	530	1,590
TOTAL NET OPERATING INCOME	27,191	29,801	89,403
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Wages/Benefits/Taxes	14,999	13,058	39,174
ISO Administration-Related Wages	1,390	1,292	3,877
Program-Related Wages	10,129	8,989	26,968
Employee Benefits (Wages)	1,183	776	2,328
Employee Benefits (Not Wages)	1,290	1,125	3,374
Payroll Taxes	1,007	875	2,626
Insurance	297	297	891
Depreciation	175	175	525
Postage/Shipping	24	20	61
Communications	351	339	1,017
Office Expense	256	433	1,299
Occupancy Expenses	2,803	2,285	6,855
Board/Committee Expense	1,247	1,228	3,685
The Outer Circle	2,206	1,382	4,147
Financial Charges	2,581	1,593	4,779
Bad Debts/Refunds	155	85	255
Translating/Literature Projects	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Expenses	500	0	0
Delegate Meeting	0	296	889
Travel	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	25,593	21,193	63,578
TOTAL NET OPERATING SURPLUS	1,598	8,608	25,825
NONOPERATIONAL INCOME			
2009 ISO Convention	18,473	11,663	34,990
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL INCOME	18,473	11,663	34,990
NONOPERATIONAL EXPENSES			
2009 ISO Convention	372	3,500	10,500
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL EXPENSES	372	3,500	10,500
TOTAL NONOPERATIONAL SURPLUS	18,101	8,163	24,490
TOTAL ISO SURPLUS	19,700	16,772	50,316

Financial Results for March 2009

March showed a net surplus of \$19,699. When adjusted for early Convention income without corresponding expense our surplus was \$1,226. The net surplus was budgeted at \$16,156.

There were four significant financial transactions during the month:

1. The Outer Circle printing cost was \$1,518
2. We replenished our inventory with medallions at a cost of \$4,130
3. We had to replace our HVAC unit at a cost of \$1,611
4. Our CD matured, which increased our reserve by \$1,569

Sales decreased by \$178 and donations increased by \$32 from the prior month. Group donations have exceeded \$6,000 per month for 7 months in a row.

Expenses were again under budget by \$6,000 because the staff was forecasted to include a DFS and an additional administrative assistant. The Occupancy expenses were up due to the replacement of the HVAC unit.

Overall, we showed a surplus in the month of March, which historically has not generated enough income to meet the daily operating expenses. Our cash improved by \$10,705. We were able to increase our reserves by \$5,355 including full funding for the literature reserve.

If you have any questions please let me know.

In Your Service,
Joe H.
Director of Business Services

DBS@saa-recovery.org

Where Does ISO Income Come From?

For its support, the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous depends on five primary revenue streams. These sources of income, along with last year's percentages of ISO income they provided, are as follows:

- Donations 63.5%
- Literature Sales 26.0%
- Convention 4.8%
- Endowment Distribution 3.8%
- Interest 1.9%

From these numbers, it is obvious that donations are the life blood for the ISO's ability to serve the fellowship of SAA and to do its part in carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

The Seventh Tradition

In accepting donations, the ISO adheres to the Seventh Tradition, which states:

“Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

When it comes to donations - whether money or in-kind goods or services - the Seventh Tradition means the ISO cannot accept anything unless it comes from an SAA member. That makes for a simple rule of thumb: if you are not a member of SAA, we cannot accept your support.

However, if you are a member, the ISO not only can accept your donation but needs and solicits it. The only restriction on donations from individual members is that they cannot exceed \$15,000 in any calendar year. All donations to the ISO are tax deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Each donation is acknowledged with a receipt, and those who give \$100 or more during any given year also receive a donation summary letter each January. Keeping these important details in mind, there are a number of ways you can financially support your service organization.

LifeLine Partners

In 1995, the Board of Trustees established the LifeLine Partners program as a way for individual members and groups to contribute to the ISO on a regular basis. This program has become a vital source of support for the ISO and last year accounted for 38% of all individual donations.

As a LifeLine Partner, the member or group pledges to contribute a specific amount each month, quarter, or year. Some members fulfill their pledge by sending in a monthly check, but most arrange for the ISO to process their LifeLine Partner gift using a credit or debit card. Nothing could be easier.

General Donations

Some individual members and most SAA groups that support the ISO do so by simply sending in donations without making a formal pledge. Such donations are called general donations, because they go toward funding general operating expenses. Last year, general donations made up 38% of all individual donations and 88% of all group donations.

Although there are now more than 1,000 SAA groups, only about 40% of them contribute support. Were that percentage to double, the additional support would reduce the ISO's dependence on literature sales by as much as 75%.

Giving Thanks Events

In 2003, an SAA member from San Francisco wanted to find a special way to show his gratitude for the work that was being done by the ISO in service to the fellowship and to the sex addict who still suffers. He invited other SAA members from the Bay Area into his home on a Saturday afternoon in November for the specific purpose of giving thanks to the ISO. Appropriately, the event became known as Giving Thanks I. More than \$7,000 was raised, and November Giving Thanks afternoons have been held annually in the Bay Area ever since. Most recently, Giving Thanks V raised \$22,366.

Other local SAA fellowships are beginning to follow the Bay Area's example. Initial Giving Thanks events have been held in Bakersfield, CA (\$710), Houston, TX (\$14,242), and Minneapolis, MN (\$288). Hopefully, more local SAA fellowships will follow suit.

Outreach Endowment Fund

The Outreach Endowment Fund was established in 1999 using \$22,000 in seed money donated to the Greater Houston Community Foundation by eleven SAA members. Today, the fund is worth \$131,022. There are a number of features of the Outreach Endowment Fund that are essential to understanding it and its relationship to the ISO.

Donations to the Outreach Fund are not made to the ISO. They are made to the Greater Houston Community Foundation. This offers SAA members a path for supporting the ISO without revealing their membership in SAA, e.g., during the reading of a will.

How do I contribute

To contribute now, or to find out more information, start online at our secure web page. https://www.saa-recovery.org/7th_Tradition, or contact the ISO office.

[Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of The Outer Circle reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the S.A.A. fellowship as a whole.]

From the Editor

By Mike L., Literature Editor, *The Outer Circle*

For some reason, lately I have been thinking back with some degree of longing to the years that I was in college. I have always known that if I were ever asked the question, "What was the happiest period of your life?" my knee-jerk response would be that it was those four years I spent on that campus in the northeast. I think that the reasons were twofold. First, my life, although somewhat structured, was relatively simple: get up in the morning, go to classes, come home at night and study, and go to bed, fitting in meals somewhere in there (my sex addiction didn't really kick in until later). Second, living in the dormitories as I did, I never had to look far for companionship. I can't recall a time when I was in college that I ever isolated; to do so back then would have taken a real effort with people around all the time. I do recall a very happy Saturday evening when all the guys around me decided to go to a movie and I chose to stay home and listen to some new LPs (remember LPs?) that I had bought.

Along those same lines, and especially with this being spring, I have turned my thoughts once again to cleaning. I'm not just talking about cleaning the house, although that is certainly part of the task. I'm looking inside more and have been making decisions on areas that I can clear out of my life. Not that I think there are things in my life that are necessarily damaging or harmful, but, as the expression goes, "The good is the enemy of the best." I'm probably at that point where a former sponsor of mine found himself some years back when he cut back on some things he was doing in order to bring more of the focus on himself. After a couple of years of so doing, he became more active in his outside life again. That is where I am right now. Ideally, I try to get up in the morning and spend an hour or so to myself, with perhaps some music in the background. Note that I said "ideally." Some mornings I'm still not quite there, being too focused on "doing" before I leave for work. Still, it is a new goal of mine.

I think we have an especially good batch of articles in this issue of The Outer Circle. Perhaps it is just me, but it seems as though we have even more articles than usual that focus on trust in and reliance on God. I was particularly struck by one of the concepts expressed in Eugene D.'s article, "The Blessings of Relapse." I have similarly come to believe that even those things that have happened to me that appeared at the time to be negative turned out to have a gift contained within them. I have shared this idea several times over the years at meetings; I have done this perhaps most commonly when I was going through yet another bad experience, no

doubt as a reminder to myself that I would eventually see the gift in even that situation.

We continue to be blessed with a number of article submissions to *The Outer Circle*, and it has been a while since I have felt the need to send out a reminder e-mail to our past contributors asking for more articles. I'm starting to get a bit low right now so by the time you read this I will probably have sent out another e-mail of the kind (those of you who submit your articles by regular mail are off the hook). Please give some thought to sending me an article for future publication. As always, I am looking for articles that emphasize the solution more than the problem, and I especially like to get articles that draw on our ever-increasing amount of literature. You can send your articles to toc@saa-recovery.org or by regular mail to *The Outer Circle*, c/o ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

So that's it for me for now.



Breaking the Isolation

by Valorie F.

Deep depression, fear overwhelming me, and an inability to face life in any way—this is how I felt when I came to SAA. The moment I started making meetings and talking to others, the depression lifted, fear receded, and I found I could face life one day at a time. Working the Steps really helped to break down the shame that was feeding the addiction and the fear. Turning my will and my life over to my Higher Power was huge in helping me learn to live life on life's terms.

Somehow, I stopped making as many phone calls. Then I stopped attending as many meetings. Soon, I stopped praying as much. It was not long until I was in full-blown isolation. I wasn't speaking to anyone. I wasn't sharing my feelings. I was using other things to numb myself—watching movies or reading books for escape. I was drowning with no apparent way out. I stopped calling my sponsor. I found myself back in that severe state of depression. The next step was to act out.

Yet, I was saved by a phone call from a newcomer. I got off the call and realized how close I was to going back to my addiction. I started making meeting attendance a priority again. In a matter of days, I realized that the true beginning of this downhill spiral came when I stopped working Steps One, Two and Three each morning. For months, I had begun each day with a chat with my Higher Power. I admitted my powerlessness and my unmanageability. I acknowledged that my Higher Power could free me from this bondage. I asked my Higher Power to help me stay sober and to help me align my will with His. I somehow got out of the habit, and the lack of that habit led to a downhill spiral through which I very nearly lost my sobriety, and definitely led me to an emotional bottom I do not wish to revisit.

Today, I am making phone calls and talking with my sponsor regularly. I am back to doing regular service work. I am making my recovery a priority. Most important, I am praying again. I can't afford to take one day for granted. I can't afford to forget that I am a sex addict and that there is a solution for me today. One day is all I have, but if I don't do the footwork, I won't even have that.

I am extraordinarily grateful for the newcomers who reach out for help. I am grateful that I get to be reminded of what it is like out there. I thank each and every person who calls into the telemeetings. Without the support of the people in this fellowship, I can't stay sober, and I have no chance at all for happiness. Thank you, SAA, for a new way to live.

What Does Surrender Look Like?

by Jim L

The second part of Step Eleven brings focus on knowing God's will for our lives, and we are encouraged to pray for the power to carry it out. Implicit in that statement is the idea of giving over my imperfect will and receiving in its place God's perfect will for my life. Often in discussions of this concept, we hear the word "surrender." Although able to give a dictionary definition, I have personally struggled with the practicality of how to surrender. Although convinced of the necessity of surrender, I continually ask, "What does surrender really look like in the life of a sex addict?"

During a recent discussion in my home group, the lights came on! Surrender is not a religious term, nor a social concept. It is a military term, and its implications from the military setting hold a key to my finally understanding its practical application in my life.

The defeated lays down all of his arms—in fact, all of his possessions—and gives them over to the victor. The victor then decides what, if anything, will be given back to the defeated. The defeated cannot decide to keep his sword or his gun or, for that matter, even his uniform. In surrender he gives over everything and is totally at the mercy of the victor.

Should not my surrender to God's will be similar? If I am truly defeated by my addiction, as acknowledged in Step One, and I truly believe that God can and will restore me to sanity, if I subject my will to His, as in Steps Two and Three, should I not be willing to surrender absolutely everything to the One who promises victory?

Am I really surrendering my will if I hold on to a stash of pornography? Can I claim surrender if I keep contact information for persons with whom I have acted out in the past? Is it surrender if I hold back secrets of dalliances or Internet forays from God or my sponsor when doing my Fifth Step? Have I really surrendered, if I pick back up my weapons again? No, surrender requires that I hand over everything—my old way of thinking, my old way of acting! I must be willing to give up everything connected to my addiction and place myself at the mercy of God.

My experience has been that in His mercy, God has given back to me much more than I could ever expect or imagine. Who could imagine victory from surrender?

The Blessings of Relapse

by Eugene D.

For me the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous is as much Holy Writ as the scriptures that my church esteems as the word of God. Indeed, there is no plausible explanation for the composition of this enduring work by alcoholics with less than three years of recovery other than divine intervention. And for my money, there is no more profound statement in the Big Book than this sentence which appears at Page 417 of the Fourth Edition, as part of the story entitled *Acceptance Was the Answer*: "Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake." It is a statement of whose truth I am absolutely convinced. That conviction does not come from logic or analysis, but from the experience of my life. It is a proposition that I have tried with my body and soul and have found to be a reliable truth. Ever and again I have found on reflection that events, which seemed at the time pointlessly distressing, inscrutably confounding, were part of God's beneficent plan for my life. There has been no suffering in my life that has not had within it the seeds of my betterment. When things do not go my way, when my plans are thwarted, I go to my knees to ask God to let me know what's up, to enlighten me as to where His will lies in what has happened. Usually he lets me know within a twenty-four-hour period, often more quickly.

If the statement on page 417 is true, it must be true even for my relapses, slips or assorted sexual backslidings and meanderings, those events I am apt reflexively to call failures in my recovery. Yet I have found that even in these cases the principle holds true. It has been my experience that when my addiction moves within me, it is to alert me to some area of my spiritual condition that needs remedial work. Again I take the Big Book as my guide: it tells me that I am never cured of my addiction, but through God's grace I am given a daily reprieve from my suffering, a reprieve wholly contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition. When my addiction betters me—or threatens to better me—that is a sign that I need to do something differently or need to look to some neglected part of my soul. It raises its ugly head to make me aware of something significant that I have missed, overlooked or minimized. A slip is not a defeat; it is a challenge.

I have written before that for me my addiction is a gift, an invitation to come closer to God. By the same token, each relapse or slip is another piece of that gift. It is a sign that I must look inward to see what is happening. I must remember that for most of my life, my remedy for despair and pain was sex. It should not surprise me now that when I wander lost, when I am in spiritual pain, my first reflex should be to numb my pain with sex.

Too often in meetings I hear members of our fellowship bemoaning their latest sexual peccadilloes. Not only does that desolate attitude prevent me from looking for the lesson inherent in the episode, but also it tends to lead me to an excessively rigid notion of abstinence. I must always be mindful that God has given me the gift of sexuality to bring me joy. For me, as an addict, the most

significant aspect of that joy may well be the power that lovemaking has to bond me to my partner in love, to create a safe harbor for my vulnerability, one in which I can share my most tender emotions. If I lock myself into a preconceived notion of what that lovemaking should look like or of what my lover should look like, I will surely strangle that joy with its own umbilical cord. In His own time, God will give me answers, answers based on his complete knowledge and His infinite love of me. If I insist on my own version of His joy, I will once again be running my life on self-will, leaving no room for Him to perform His miracles. If I am always worrying about whether I am going to act out, my mindset in recovery will be no different than my mindset in my addiction. In both cases I will be obsessing about sex—before about doing it, now about not doing it. Spiritually there is no difference between the two.

There are several lessons here. First, my sexual experiences and desires are uniquely mine; I have a sexual template that is unlike anyone else's. Second, since my perceptive powers and my ability to reason about my sexuality have been severely damaged by my addiction, I have no idea what I want or need and would be completely at sea about how to get it if I ever were to figure out what it was that I was after. Only God can enlighten me, and in recovery I must give Him room to let me know the structure of my own personal sexual template, let Him guide me to an understanding of what it is that I need and, finally, to that perfect partner that He has selected for me. In short, I need to get out of His way and let Him do His job.

Each person's path to God is different. If my recovery in my addiction is indeed, as I believe, an invitation from God to draw closer to Him, I must let God lead me along that path. My errant sexual behavior will itself reveal that pathway. Since I am walking blind, I may find that tangling myself in the thicket at the edge of His path is the surest way to know where the path is. Once in recovery, my mistakes enlighten me, they do not confuse me. They are part of the intuitively knowing how to handle situations that used to baffle us, as the Big Book promises. The mystery of my personal sexuality will be opened by prayer and meditation on the very actions that have defined my addiction. Recovery is often likened to the peeling of an onion. Experience with onions quickly tells us that each layer peeled will yield another round of tears.

Nil desperandum—do not despair—is my cry in recovery. It is all grist to my mill. After a slip, I do not think: how awful, now I will have to go through all this manure . . . again! I recognize rather that if I did not have to go once more through the manure, if that passage were not necessary to my recovery, I would not have stumbled into it. It does not happen by mistake. Once in recovery, God grabs me and molds me as He sees fit—not as I see fit. I need only remember that he never abandons me, he never leaves me without a guide, never leaves me alone in the dark without a light. My education is hard because, as an addict, I am stiff-necked, and it is only through the application of significant force that I can be separated from my self-will. Still, I hang in there: it gets better.

Refrain, Obtain, Retain

by Michael L.

From Webster's Dictionary:

Pride, n. A sense of personal dignity; a feeling of pleasure from something achieved, done, or owned.

Shame, n. A painful feeling of embarrassment or disgrace brought on by doing something wrong; dishonor; disgrace; a disappointment.

I have been in SAA recovery for over six years. The last nine hundred one days have been free of acting out behaviors. Of those days, the last eighty-five have included less than four minutes of unhealthy thought life. I have achieved my original goals I set when entering the program. Now that my higher power has allowed me to obtain it, I have to retain it.

In the rooms and at informal gatherings of brothers and sisters, I see a recurring theme of shame and pride hindering recovery. Let me first say, although I am blessed with higher educational degrees, none of the work was in the psychological sciences. I am not a doctor, counselor, social worker, or even a particularly good people person. My observations come from telling my own story, and relating to other's stories, as I listen. I hear people's pain and struggles and can relate, from the heart, to my own story. This short article is my way of saying what I want to say to lift my fellow addicts up. It is my hope that someone will relate to it, and therefore benefit from it.

It has been said that sex addiction is a shame-based disease. In my personal experience, I held the belief that I was unlovable if someone else knew the whole truth about me. That was, by definition, shame. I will go farther and state that my shame was toxic. Toxic shame kills people slowly over time or suddenly in a situation related to their addiction. A drunk driving accident or acquiring a lethal disease through unprotected sex both share the common theme of shame killing. Suicide is also a common manifestation of intense toxic shame. I know this because I have driven drunk, had unprotected sex with strangers, and have contemplated suicide with the means in hand. I have also listened as many others described similar situations.

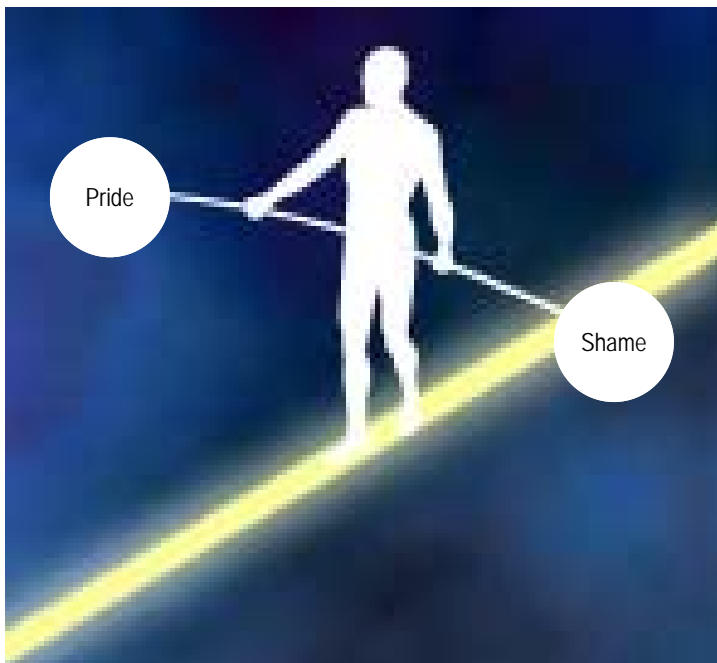
Pride is at the other end of the spectrum. One way my pride manifested itself is over-achieving in my education and career. If I looked good, I must be good. Nothing could have been further from the truth. My outside grew increasingly distant from my inside. The friction and stress generated from my pride and my shame at opposite ends of my balance beam would later be understood as the foundation of my insanity. My pride kept me from seeking therapy initially. "I can fix this myself" was my motto and that viewpoint had worked to accomplish car and home repairs. I was dealing with

something that I could not fix myself and that I was not aware of coming up against before.

Pride would not allow me to fully surrender to help from others and my higher power. Pride simply kept me sicker longer. I still see the value of my own viewpoint, and the value of deciding what fits me for recovery. In early recovery, however, my balance point on that was far too distorted and it hindered me.

Shame is the polar opposite of pride. In the definition above from Webster, one is pleasure and the other is pain. So how can a shame-filled addict be too proud to accept help? How can we have pride in our worldly success and yet harbor intense shame? I was proudly independent and self-reliant, yet filled with doubt and fear. It hurts even now to think about myself then. If I could go back, I would give myself a big hug.

The solution to this seemingly impossible and mixed up quandary is simple. It is the Twelve Steps of SAA. The Twelve Steps address shame, humility, fear, faith, gratitude, powerlessness, connection, and service. Our meetings provide fellowship and acceptance in a judgmental and condemning world. The program has worked for me and it will work for you. I pray that this reinforces the SAA message of hope. I remind each of you, and myself, to keep coming back; it works!



Selfish Sex / Addictive Sex

by Ken C.

When I first came to recovery, I came to a sister fellowship also dealing with sexual addiction. My first meeting was composed of three guys, two of whom had just had a slip the weekend before. I got some guidance after my first meeting. One of the things my advisor told me was for me to define my sobriety. He suggested that I write down all of the behaviors that had been a problem for me. He said that these are the behaviors from which I had to abstain in order to call myself sober. He suggested that I get them done in the next couple of days and that I share them with a couple of people in the fellowship. What follows is the first attempt I made back then at defining my sobriety.

In order to call myself sober, I must abstain from:

- Self-sex (masturbation)
- Sex outside of marriage
- Voyeurism
- Exhibitionism
- Adult-oriented establishments
- Pornography
- Dancing with anyone other than my wife

I shared it with my new friend by leaving a message on his voicemail. He tagged me with another message stating that it was the most thorough first attempt at defining sobriety he had ever seen. He congratulated me.

During my first two years, eight months, and ten days, I was abstinent from these behaviors. But I do not refer to myself here as “sober.” I have since found that abstinence and sobriety are two different things. It is not enough for me to simply abstain. I suffer from a deeper problem referred to as a “spiritual malady.” I have found that, as a sex addict, if I merely abstain without addressing this “spiritual malady,” I do not get better. I get worse. The behaviors have been temporarily stopped, but I am miserable. The longer I went without finding a solution to my spiritual sickness, the unhappier I became.

The behaviors that brought me into the fellowship, though they had become problematic, were not my real problem. They were a way for me to feel relief from the sickness inside me. Depression, moodiness, and a feeling of uselessness characterize the sickness inside me; my life was ruled by fear. It took a slip and years of searching to find the solution to this internal problem. No, mere abstinence was not enough. The real question was how to be happily abstinent—true sobriety. Lord knows I was not seeing it my local meetings. If the members there had long-term abstinence, they too were characterized by the same un-

treated symptoms of the spiritual malady that I was experiencing.

I learned much later on that the core of the spiritual disease is selfishness. "I want things to go my way." When they don't, I wallow in self-pity. Fear drives my decisions. And I suffer from a delusion that if I just do everything right, and if everyone will just behave the way I want them to, I can finally be happy. Above all, I want to selfishly avoid the inevitable pain that every person on the face of the planet must endure in order to grow spiritually. Again, I didn't learn these things until much later.

It's funny how God works. Just in the nick of time a new member had just moved here from another city. A couple of conversations with him told me that he not only had a solution but had been through the same things I had experienced in the fellowship. I asked him to sponsor me. When he and I sat down to look at my inner circle, he too thought that it was a solid sobriety definition. But, he asked me if I knew why these behaviors were a problem for me. He pointed out to me in the original instruction book for the Twelve Steps why these things had given me so much trouble.

"Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity,..."

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 62.

"Now about sex. We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?"

Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 68-69.

He pointed out to me that my real problem is selfishness, and that as a sex addict, I'm addicted to selfish sexual behavior.

He provided further tests from the same book as to whether the behavior was selfish or not.

"Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 77.

This means that if I'm not actually being helpful to God and the people about me, then whatever I'm doing needs to be fitting me to be of service at a later date. So, when I look at my sexual behaviors, I must subject them to this test: Is it either being of service, or is it fitting me to be

of better service later? If not, it's probably selfish.

"Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?"

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 86.

It's not enough that I clean up my past through making amends. I have to start contributing positively to this world. The next test: Is this behavior contributing positively to life? If not, it's probably selfish.

"We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well."

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 63.

He pointed out that God has been taking care of my needs all along. He said he had proof: "You're still alive. If you ever failed to get what you truly needed, you'd be dead." A "need" is something essential to my survival. God takes care of my needs. Anything above that is a "want," and that is selfish. The next test: Am I using this sexual behavior under the guise of "taking care of my needs?" If so, I'm not trusting God to take care of that. And that's fear based on selfishness.

"Men and women [act out] essentially because they like the effect produced by [acting out]. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their [sexually addicted] life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by [acting out]...."

Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. xxviii-xxix.

I use my addictive sexual behaviors to selfishly avoid the discomfort of life. Life brings pain. It's an inevitability that I must face if I wish ever to grow up—growing pains. I cannot grow spiritually unless I walk through the hardships of life. That is the real crux of my problem. I use selfish sex to avoid that pain, and by avoiding it, I never grow spiritually. The test: Am I using this behavior to gain some ease and comfort? Am I using this behavior to avoid life's pain? If so, it's probably selfish.

So, in conclusion....

"In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test—was it selfish or not?"

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 69.

Even within my own marriage, I can slip into selfish sexual behavior. For my wife and me, sex must be the physical expression of an already existing spiritual and emotional intimacy. This is the only sexual expression I have found that passes the tests. However, if she and I are at odds, then we have no business in the bedroom. If there is no trust in the relationship, then we have no business in the bedroom. If she and I have not seen each other for several days, then our first order of business is to talk and catch up, to pray together, and then, if we both feel up to it, step into the bedroom. Here is my test for non-addictive/healthy sex: Is it within a life-committed relationship? Is it an expression of emotional/spiritual intimacy? Is it mutually consenting? Is my Higher Power part of it? Is it mutually respectful?

"Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!"

Alcoholics Anonymous, pg 62.

Many might argue that not all selfish sex is addictive. I think this point is moot. We must be rid of our selfishness anyway. Why not start with the subject that brought us to this fellowship?

So far I have talked about all of this from a personal perspective. But, I was inspired to write this by another article I read in *The Outer Circle*. In it the author disparages some of the program literature. I am inclined to agree. I think there is a culture of flippancy toward defining sobriety that exists in our fellowship. If we truly understand that we have a disease that is potentially deadly, then we cannot take an experimental attitude toward our inner circle. If we begin our selfish sexual behaviors and they trigger the phenomenon of craving common to all addictions, then we have little or no control over where these behaviors will end. If they go too far then we cannot predict what the consequences will be. Like food addiction, the desire for sex is part of our biology.

Unlike food, we do not need to have sex (not having sex will not kill us). Since we cannot predict where our behaviors will end, having selfish sex could kill us. Isn't it better that we play it safe from the beginning? Isn't it better that we completely give ourselves to this simple program from the very beginning? Isn't it better that we be fearless and thorough from the very start?

Dear Grace

Submitted by SAA Women's Outreach

Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace:

To reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail receives.

Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Dear Grace:

I am new to recovery. What should I be looking for in a sponsor?

Signed,

Mixed Up in New Mexico

Dear Mixed Up:

A sponsor is a person in the fellowship who acts as a guide to working the program of SAA, another recovering addict on whom we can rely for support. A sponsor is abstinent from addictive sexual behavior, has worked the steps of SAA, and can teach us what he or she has learned from working the program. Our sponsor can help explain program fundamentals such as how to define our sexual sobriety. Most important, sponsors guide us through the Twelve Steps. A sponsor can help hold us accountable for our behavior. Often a sponsor is a person in the fellowship who knows us best. Many of us ask someone to be our sponsor who has shared things in meetings that helped us or inspired us through example. Our Green Book has a section on sponsorship on pages 13 and 14. I highly suggest you obtain one of our books from our website!

Grace

When Recovery Made More Sense Again

by Cynthia

It took time until I had enough clarity to want to grow in the insight of the need for something more than the life that I was living. I hated how long the process had taken. Yet, “the dark comes before the dawn.” I had heard that statement before. The reality of the depth of the feeling of the truth finally hit me. What took even longer to hit me was the knowledge of the direction my life had taken.

Looking back over the years of progression in my addictive life, I was one empty unit of a screwed-up individual (at least in my eyes, but not in the big picture of the God of my understanding). I had just been confused and lost, looking for acceptance, affirmation and acknowledgement from emotionally unavailable people.

When life fell down around me, the only way I had left to look was up. After the fog of another slip lifted, I saw that I had never allowed myself to engage in a healthy manner of going out with men. I can't remember much, if anything, of setting boundaries or of playing a part in determining how things panned out in regards to the relationship. Maybe in my acting out, I was the predator and the instigator, simply out of my desire not to be alone. Some clarity around the knowledge that I wanted stability, emotional and mental serenity came after a while; it had always been seemingly just beyond my grasp.

Why can't I get this thing called sobriety down pat? Was I not accepting my powerlessness around the disease called addiction? I wanted to just go about and live my life and not be always paying attention to every minute detail of feeling, as if I needed to analyze all aspects of my being every second of every day.

I had achieved consistent sobriety at one point. What was I missing or not doing? Surrendering my will after some reflection, it came to me.

Maybe I don't have to work so hard, but just get out of God's way and let his will guide me. I'll work with my sponsor, have the faith and hope that I am a worthwhile person underneath all this, do the Steps, go to meetings, and focus on helping others. If I am not always consumed regarding me, myself and I, the answers begin to come.

Thank God for leading me to SAA. It saved this withering soul and gave me a chance at a real existence and a full, rich and rewarding life!

Darkness to Light

by Carl A.

Hi, my name is Carl and I'm a recovering sex addict. I believe my sex addiction began at a very young age. I was introduced to sex early on by friends. After my first experience the need for sex was like a hunger. My sexual acting out included the use of drugs and involved much walking the streets and spending days at a time in motel rooms. From time to time I would go into a youth service center, and even there, I would receive a sexually explicit letter that would send me off into fantasy and the bubble.

Eventually, I landed in prison where the activity that turned out to be my bottom line behavior caused me to receive disciplinary actions on a number of occasions. In prison, I still didn't want to accept the fact that I had an addiction because I believed that if someone didn't like what I was doing, it was only necessary not to look. So I never felt I was in the wrong.

In February 2008 I got in trouble for the same behavior once again. This was the last straw for me. I felt dirty and shameful. I knew from that moment that I was sick with this addiction and needed help. That is when a friend looked on the Internet to help me to find support. Of the groups he located, I chose Sex Addicts Anonymous.

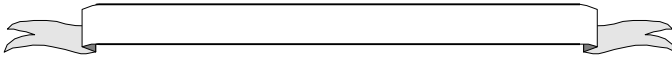
So I wrote SAA a letter admitting my addiction and crying out for help. They responded and welcomed me with open arms, immediately mailing me four brochures, four pamphlets, and a copy of the SAA Basic Text. I also got a letter from the regional coordinator giving me the option to start receiving *The Outer Circle* every month and be added to the list of correspondents.

SAA is an organization that leads by example. It is not just there for financial gain. SAA is there to help addicts recover from the addiction. The ISO staff and those participating in this program are sincere about reaching out. After being a part of this program I slowly stepped out of the darkness into the light. I now see my fault and know what it takes to prevent relapse, which for me involves avoiding looking for scenes on television and pictures in magazines and books that would trigger fantasies for me. Thanks to God and the SAA program, I have recovered and no longer have the thought of committing an indecent act.

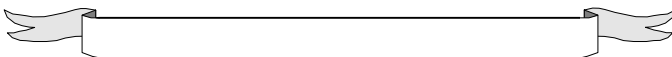
My encouraging word to those reading this article is first to believe. Once I began to believe, then I had hope. Believing is achieving. Once I began to believe in myself and came to love and respect myself, my goal was in reach. There is no such thing as "I can't do it." The first step of a failure and a failure's best friend is doubt. When there is doubt, then there is fear, and fear rejects effort. Without effort there cannot be progress and without progress there cannot be success.

To recover I had to first admit that I had an addiction. Then I sought counseling and help. I had to be sincere, have devotion and determination in order to succeed in recovering. I had to pray and apply God to my life on a daily basis. God is the key to all success in life, and not just success for those recovering from sex addiction. I allowed God the chance to use me because when I am weak he is strong and is the one to give me my strength. He knows my every want and need; he knows my heart and whether I'm sincere.

I would like to thank SAA and the ISO for its support and understanding, along with having the heart to care about me and the people who cry out for help. This is the work of God through his angels. I hope to continue the work I have done. God bless you.



The first step of a failure and a failure's best friend is doubt. When there is doubt, then there is fear, and fear rejects effort. Without effort there cannot be progress and without progress there cannot be success.



The Seventh Tradition and the SAA Group

by Bill J.

ISO seems to be having financial problems, according to a recent issue of *The Outer Circle*. I've been thinking about this for a while now, and I have a suggestion:

The Problem: I believe our groups need a simple guide for distributing our Seventh Tradition. We are a relatively new fellowship and I believe it would be helpful if SAA were to develop a one-page pamphlet (front and back) like other twelve-step programs have, one that describes the breakdown of distribution of the Seventh Tradition. Another twelve-step fellowship has a pamphlet that suggests that each group keep a percentage for itself as a "Prudent Reserve." Then it suggests keeping a percentage (after taking out the prudent reserve) for the group. Finally it suggests sending a percentage to Intergroup and a percentage to that fellowship's equivalent of ISO.

Guidance: Keep ten percent for the group (after taking out the prudent reserve); send thirty percent to the Intergroup (if the group doesn't have an Intergroup, then it can have an account and save the money for a future Intergroup); send sixty percent to ISO.

The Argument: I helped start groups in this other twelve-step fellowship while I was in Germany years ago, and we used the pamphlet to figure out how properly to utilize our Seventh Tradition money. We were new to AA and didn't understand how to handle the finances of the group, so we followed the pamphlet's suggested way of distributing funds acquired by our group. When we had questions, we would refer to the pamphlet for a quick discussion of money instead of digging through the Group Guide. We later started an Intergroup. Usually our groups get their start with one or two individuals carrying the message but who are new to sobriety and new to the twelve-step process, so they would be greatly helped by having this simple guidance that could be quickly accessed as developed by ISO.

ISO may want to make a one-page flyer in the beginning and send it out to each registered group. It could just use plain paper that could be copied on a photocopier. That would be fairly inexpensive to do. Then it could later develop a pamphlet. This pamphlet could be kept with the other SAA pamphlets and literature at group level where it could be helpful immediately. The other twelve-step fellowship to which I have been referring also has a Group Guide as we do, but it also has a specific pamphlet focused on the Seventh Tradition and describing the distribution of funds.

Conclusion: I believe this will help our groups grow faster and help alleviate some of our financial difficulties. I know that this sounds maybe over-the-top or like overkill but it worked for our groups when we had many discussions about money. Sometimes the simplest things work best, as the expression "Keep It Simple" indicates.

Butterflies

by Andrew

I have been attending SAA meetings since March 2001. I was thirty-four years old at that time. In April 2001 I asked a man to sponsor me and without hesitation he said, "Yes." I told him that I was gay and his response was "that does not matter." I was able to be honest with him without any judgment on his part.

My recovery in SAA is similar to that of a complete metamorphosis of a butterfly. The states of development for a butterfly are as follows: egg, larva, pupa and adult.

First, a butterfly starts its life as an egg. I came into this world as a result of my mom's egg being fertilized by dad's sperm otherwise known as conception. It was the love and commitment to each other that led to the beginning of my life, as I understand it. They gave me the gift of life.

Second, the larva (caterpillar) hatches from an egg and eats leaves or flowers almost constantly. The caterpillar molts (loses its old skin) many times as it grows. This was my learning stage for my addiction. From age sixteen I filled the void of love and abandonment with sex. I came out to myself at age twenty-one and engaged in every possible sexual behavior with anonymous male partners and with myself for sexual self-gratification. My addict was hungry for sex; it tried to satisfy its appetite in any way it could. My compulsive sexual behaviors became progressive over time. I was totally out of control from November 2000 to January 2001 and I hit my bottom in my addiction.

Third, the larva turns into a pupa (chrysalis); this is a resting stage. This stage is my program and the step work I have done with my sponsors. I have also sponsored others in SAA.

Taking a small break from the acting out to grow slowly with the guidance of my sponsor, others in the fellowship, and most important my Higher Power, has resulted in longer windows of sobriety. This stage of my growth has allowed me to be of service to others. I have experienced many ups and downs at this stage; however, what is most important is that when I am working my program I can't act out.

And finally, a beautiful, flying adult butterfly emerges. Technically there is no growth during this stage. The adult butterfly continues the cycle and reproduces. Over the last seven-plus years I have learned so much about myself by working the steps and listening to others. I believe my escalation of acting-out has subsided, as I stay sober one day at a time. I have achieved some maturity by being part of this fellowship. I continue to grow spiritually, emotionally, and have a better relationship with a Higher Power who loves me unconditionally. I practice the cycle of my recovery by carrying the message to others and by sponsoring others and sharing at meetings. I can observe this cycle in others in the program and reflect on where I could be at any given point in time.

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E-mail Addresses

The following is a list of Board E-mail addresses and the LitCom e-mail addresses for the various regions, and the ISO staff E-mail addresses. The Board, LitCom, and the staff are always happy to hear from the fellowship.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees also receives a copy of email to the service addresses of regional Board representatives.

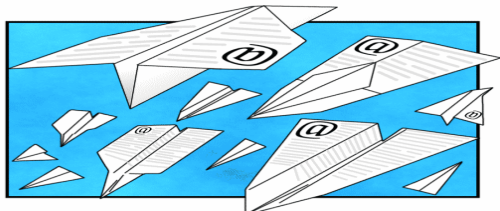
Great Lakes Board Member and Alternate: BoardGL@SAA-Recovery.org
Intermountain Board Member and Alternate: BoardIM@SAA-Recovery.org
North Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardNC@SAA-Recovery.org
Northeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardNE@saa-recovery.org.
North Pacific Board Member and Alternate: BoardNP@SAA-Recovery.org
South Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardSC@SAA-Recovery.org
Southeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardSE@SAA-Recovery.org
Southern Pacific Board Member and Alternate: BoardSP@SAA-Recovery.org

Great Lakes LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComGL@SAA-Litcom.org
Intermountain LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComIM@SAA-Litcom.org
North Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNC@SAA-Litcom.org
Northeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNE@SAA-Litcom.org
North Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNP@SAA-Litcom.org
South Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSC@SAA-Litcom.org
Southeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSE@SAA-Litcom.org
Southern Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSP@SAA-Litcom.org
At Large LitCom Member: LitComAL@SAA-Litcom.org
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Director of Business Services: dbs@SAA-Recovery.org
Administrative Assistant: info@saa-recovery.org
Outreach Specialist: outreach@SAA-Recovery.org
Information Technician: webmaster@saa-recovery.org

The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees has established an e-mail box which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff.

OOCchair@SAA-Recovery.org



How to Submit an Article to *The Outer Circle*

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: toc@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 Twelve

Submission deadlines:

Jan/Feb:	Nov 12 th	Jul/Aug:	May 12 th
Mar/Apr:	Jan 7 th	Sept/Oct:	Jul 7 th
May/Jun:	Mar 10 th	Nov/Dec:	Sept 8 th

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:** _____

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

