

# The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Volume 3, Issue 5

September - October 2009



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.



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## ISO Board Actions

### The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees at the Saturday, June 20, 2009 Teleconference:

- **Group Guide Editing:** Motion approved that the Office issue a contract to Elizabeth S. for editing the Group Guide with the following terms: \$25.00/Hr not to exceed \$500.00 maximum; Work to be completed by 2009/09/01; The office is to mail the contract and an electronic copy of the Group Guide to Elizabeth S. by 2009/06/30.
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### The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees at the Saturday, July 18, 2009 Teleconference:

- **Disclosures:** Motion approved that the Board amend the ISO Office Procedure C-3 number 3, section 3. Handling the Call by appending an additional paragraph as follows:

“7) Disclosures frequently occur when a group member asks the office for advice on how the group should handle disclosures they have been or may be subjected to. In such cases staff should limit their advice to the following statement:

Although the twelfth tradition of SAA states that anonymity is a core tradition on which the program depends, some members may decide in good faith to report disclosures of illegal behavior to the authorities. Before making any such report they may find it helpful to seek the advice of sponsors, trusted advisors and the group conscience as well as to avail themselves of local laws governing confidentiality and such reporting.

Members uncertain about the implications of disclosing their addictive sexual behavior may find it helpful to discuss them first with a sponsor or trusted advisor before sharing in a meeting and also to seek advice on local laws governing confidentiality and reporting. The focus of sharing at meetings is on experience, strength and hope in our recovery.

Workshops on disclosure and reporting are held at the Annual International Convention of SAA. Recordings of recent workshops are available at <http://saa-store.org/>”

just before the final text of that section:

"In Texas as in many other jurisdictions there is a legal requirement for callers, staff, members and others to report information about abuse or neglect to the authorities."

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## **Committee Reports**

### **Prisoner Outreach Committee Report**

For several months this committee has been discussing how to get the message of SAA into the prisons to the people who need it. We feel there is a need to educate prison officials on what we have to offer, and show them we are a resource for them. We also do not want to waste a lot of finances with useless bulk mailouts. We feel there are key prison officials that need to know what we can offer. All prisons deal with issues differently, even within the same state. So, we are leaving it up to the Regional Coordinators to target the prisons we should contact. Of course, we want to contact the prisons where we already have prisoners who contact us, but other prisons may be prime opportunities for our work. So, a bulk mailing to the identified prisons is one of our major goals for this year.

Over the last year we have had a number of requests from prisoners regarding how to set up an SAA meeting in their prison. There have been a number of successful SAA meetings going on in prison. Some have been set up by local groups, and others were set up by the prisoners on their own. All prisons are different in what they require. The Prisoner Outreach Committee cannot accommodate all the requests for local outside assistance. We try to contact local groups to generate support, but that is all dependent on who has time and interest. Right now, the best we can do is offer information on how to set up their own group, unless we have local volunteers. We cannot organize all of the prison SAA groups, and that is something we don't think the committee should do. However, we do not have a good idea of the meetings already being carried out in prisons, because they were originated by local groups. We would like to know who is conducting meetings so we can put them in contact with people who want to start meetings, and we can offer support of literature if needed. So, we would like those carrying the message into prisons to let us know what they are doing. It would really help us get other groups started elsewhere.

Finally, the Prisoner Outreach Committee is always looking for people willing to work with prisoners. Some regions have more needs than others. So, if this is a service project that interests you, please contact us. Any questions, suggestions, comments or offers to volunteer can be sent to the ISO marked, "For Prisoner Outreach."

Those of us that are involved in the committee find it a very rewarding service project.

## General Outreach Committee Report

“Our voluntary efforts are essential to the success of the fellowship and the recovery of every sex addict who is a part of it.”

*Sex Addicts Anonymous (p. 75), Chapter 5, “Our Purpose; Service”*

### General Outreach Committee:

This umbrella committee was established by the ISO Board of Trustees in 2006, and consists of numerous subcommittees, which are designed to address specific areas of outreach for the SAA fellowship:

- Public Information Subcommittee
- Teen Outreach Subcommittee
- Men’s Outreach Subcommittee
- Young Adult Outreach Subcommittee
- GLBT Outreach Subcommittee
- Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Outreach Subcommittee (in the process of formation)

General Outreach Committee welcomes all SAA members who desire to be of service in these areas. Monthly teleconference information for General Outreach and any of its subcommittees can be obtained from the ISO office.

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach@saa-recovery.org)

### Public Information Subcommittee:

The Public Information Subcommittee works to create documents and processes to carry the SAA message of recovery through the Twelve Steps to the addict who still suffers. Recent Projects include:

- Development of an SAA Speakers Bureau and Training workshops
- Development of an SAA Speakers Manual to establish standards, policies and procedures for the SAA Speakers Bureau to accurately present the SAA message to outside organizations and media
- Establishing a process to respond to media requests
- Producing a draft revision of the Anonymity Letter
- Development of a Public Information Work Book

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.pi@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach.pi@saa-recovery.org)

**Teen Outreach Subcommittee:**

The Teen Outreach Subcommittee works to create tools and materials to support addicts from age 13 - 17 to find recovery. Supporting teen sex addicts is a complex and sensitive issue, yet it is our task to do everything possible to make our program available to anyone who wants help, according to our Third Tradition. This subcommittee is currently developing a set of guidelines for carrying the SAA message of recovery to teen sex addicts, and is developing informative pamphlets describing some options for the SAA fellowship in helping teen sex addicts.

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.teen@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach.teen@saa-recovery.org)

**Men's Outreach Subcommittee:**

The Men's Outreach Subcommittee is tasked with reaching sex addicts who do not have the ability to attend a local meeting in their immediate vicinity. A men's Contact list has been established for the purpose of contacting others for support and/or sponsorship. It has been, and continues to be, an effective tool for supporting those who wish to recover, but lack local support. Members are needed to keep this group active and to help carry the message to those in remote areas.

This subcommittee is currently dormant, and is seeking members to actively participate in service. Please consider including Men's Outreach in your service activities. Women and transgender persons are most welcome to participate on this subcommittee.

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.men@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach.men@saa-recovery.org)

**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. College-age adults are being exposed to the dangers of sexual addiction at a rate that seemed impossible just a few years ago. Pornography and dating services are available to anyone with the touch of a keyboard. "Sexting" (Sex Texting) is also becoming rampant among young adults. Up until now, in our fellowship, there has been little focus on carrying a message that specifically targets the college-age population. The goal of the Young Adult Outreach Subcommittee is to explore and develop ways to effectively reach out to those young adults who need to hear the message of recovery that SAA has to offer. Activities have included sending an informational letter about SAA to approximately 200 college counselors. An informational article

about SAA targeted to college newspapers has been drafted for possible distribution.

Currently this committee is not meeting, as there are no active members. If you are interested in participating on this committee, or for information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.ya@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach.ya@saa-recovery.org)

### **GLBT Outreach Subcommittee:**

The GLBT Outreach Subcommittee is tasked with developing and providing outreach activities to sex addicts in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender communities, as well as to current GLBT members within Sex Addicts Anonymous. SAA members of all genders and sexual orientations are invited to participate in developing methods to best carry the message of SAA recovery to sex addicts within these communities.

Since its establishment in early 2008, our members have responded to over 300 inquiries per year to our Outreach email address, providing information on SAA, as well as support and sponsorship. Recent projects include sponsoring a monthly Public Information announcement in a national GLBT newsmagazine, and drafting pamphlets focusing on the needs of sex addicts in the GLBT communities.

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.glbt@saa-recovery.org](mailto:genoutreach.glbt@saa-recovery.org)

### **Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Outreach Subcommittee: (currently in the process of formation)**

“For some of us, the compulsive avoidance of sex and intimacy became a destructive pattern, dominating our thoughts and actions.”

—*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, pg. 6

Members interested in participating in forming a service group to address this important issue are invited to join us. After appropriate approval by ISO service structures, this group will pursue outreach efforts including: to provide outreach contacts for those struggling with compulsive sexual avoidance (or sexual anorexia) issues, and to create literature about recovery from compulsive sexual avoidance.

For information, questions or suggestions, email:

[genoutreach.avoidance@saa-iso.org](mailto:genoutreach.avoidance@saa-iso.org)

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## Literature Committee News

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### 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](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)

Mailing address: ISO of SAA  
PO Box 70949  
Houston, TX 77270



## **Personal Story Submissions for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:**

### **Do you have a personal story to tell?**

The ISO Literature Committee continues to accept personal stories for consideration for future editions of the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

### **Guidelines for Submission of a Personal Story**

Stories in the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, are an intensely personal way to help carry the SAA message to the addict who still suffers. While there are no absolute requirements for the content of a personal story, the Literature Committee recommends that a story describe:

- What it was like before entering SAA.
- What happened to bring you into SAA.
- What happened within SAA.
- What it is like now with the ongoing experience of SAA recovery.

It is recommended that a story emphasize the experience, strength, and hope found in SAA recovery. It is further recommended that the writer disclose his or her length of sobriety (or abstinence from addictive behaviors).

Personal stories are intended to help carry the message to the addict who still suffers. As much as possible, highly explicit descriptions of places, people, or acting out behaviors should be avoided. The best stories provide sobering details of unmanageability contrasted with the hope of recovery from sex addiction.

The preferred format for manuscripts is double-spaced with one-inch margins on all four sides in MS Word (or similar). Each submission must be accompanied by a signed release conveying ownership to the ISO of SAA, Inc. The release form is available on the last page of this newsletter, or from the ISO office or SAA website. ([www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org)).

Submissions and a signed release form may be emailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at

They may also be sent in hard copy by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee at ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.



## IMPORTANT

**Please carefully read the following  
before submitting a personal story for  
*Sex Addicts Anonymous*:**

Every story submitted for possible inclusion in the SAA book will be thoroughly reviewed and given in-depth consideration by the ISO Literature Committee, which is deeply grateful to every member who takes the time to write and submit a story.

The ISO of SAA, Inc. and the ISO Literature Committee do not guarantee that any particular story will appear in a future edition of the SAA book. Once submitted with a signed release form (located on the last page of this newsletter), the written story becomes the permanent property of the ISO of SAA, Inc., and may be edited or modified as deemed appropriate by the ISO Literature Committee.

Please also note that, while the ISO Literature Committee will acknowledge the initial receipt of a story, the ISO may or may not communicate further with the author about the suitability of the story or the likelihood of publication in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

## **ISO Literature Committee Guidelines for submission of entries to be considered for the *SAA Meditation Book***

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission of entries from the fellowship-at-large for possible inclusion in the SAA Meditation Book. The Meditation Book will consist of 366 entries, one for each day of the calendar year.

To ensure consideration, submissions should follow these guidelines:

A short quotation should be taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list below). The quote must be exact and followed by a citation that includes the name of the publication and page number, using the following style: *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 20. Submissions using quotes from other sources will not be considered.

The main body of the entry should be a thought-provoking expansion of the topic or principle expressed in the quotation, ideally including some fresh perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery from your own experience, strength and hope.

At the bottom of the page, a concise statement in the author's own words should summarize the main idea of the meditation or offer a poignant challenge or affirmation.

Each entry should be 200-300 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation, so that each meditation will fit on a single page. Multiple entries may address slightly different aspects of the same subject.

Submissions must include your name and contact information and be accompanied by a signed release. By signing the release, the author grants the ISO of SAA, Inc. sole rights to edit, alter, publish, or reject any submission. A blank release form is available in this newsletter or may be obtained from the ISO office or downloaded and printed from the SAA website.

### **SAA Literature**

<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Book)</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
<i>Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA</i>	<i>The Bubble</i>
<i>First Step to Recovery</i>	<i>From Shame to Grace</i>
<i>Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous</i>	<i>Group Guide</i>
<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Pamphlet)</i>	<i>Tools of Recovery</i>
<i>Sexual Sobriety and the Internet</i>	<i>Three Circles</i>
<i>A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer</i>	

**Send your meditation, contact information,  
and signed release form to the ISO.**  
*(release form is located on the last page of this newsletter)*

**Send by postal mail to:**

ISO  
PO Box 70949  
Houston, TX 77270

OR

**Scan and email to:**

[meditation@saa-recovery.org](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org)

**You will be sent confirmation that your  
submission has been received.**

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## **Interested in helping with the SAA Meditation Book?**

Yes, you can write meditations for the new book!  
Are you not quite sure how?

Come to one of the LitCom teleconference workshops  
to learn how to write a meditation.

These teleconferences will be based on the workshop  
presented at the last convention.

Learn step-by-step what is involved,  
and practice writing a meditation during the workshop.

Please join us at one of these times  
for an hour and a half of creative service.

### **Meditation Writing Teleconference Workshops**

Sunday September 27, 5:00 p.m. CT

Sunday November 22, 5:00 p.m. CT

**The workshop is free, but you need to  
make reservations to get the call-in number.**

Please call the ISO office at 713-869-4902 or 800-477-8191  
or send an email to:

[meditation@saa-recovery.org](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org)

# ISO Income/Expense Summary

As of July 31, 2009

	July 2009	Monthly Average	Year to Date
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>Sales</b>	21,764	16,705	116,935
<b>Shipping &amp; Handling</b>	1,586	1,517	10,619
<b>Donations</b>	13,724	16,406	114,839
<b>Delegate Meeting Registration</b>	0	1,084	7,585
<b>Interest Earned</b>	7	231	1,618
<b>International Convention Revenue</b>	901	14,520	101,642
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>37,983</b>	<b>50,463</b>	<b>353,239</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF GOODS SOLD</b>	<b>11,241</b>	<b>9,273</b>	<b>64,908</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>26,741</b>	<b>41,190</b>	<b>288,331</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
<b>Wages</b>	15,432	14,081	98,568
<b>Employee Benefits (Not Wages)</b>	1,443	1,210	8,468
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	1,194	1,097	7,681
<b>Insurance</b>	264	270	1,893
<b>Depreciation</b>	175	175	1,225
<b>Postage/Shipping</b>	87	58	406
<b>Communications</b>	382	359	2,516
<b>Office Expense</b>	691	601	4,208
<b>Occupancy Expenses</b>	1,515	1,741	12,188
<b>Board/Committee Expense</b>	1,670	1,601	11,207
<b>The Outer Circle</b>	2,319	1,229	8,600
<b>Financial Charges</b>	891	1,562	10,934
<b>Bad Debts/Refunds</b>	378	141	984
<b>Delegate Meeting</b>	0	1,443	10,101
<b>Convention-Related Travel</b>	488	3,118	21,829
<b>International Convention</b>	0	10,129	70,902
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>26,929</b>	<b>38,816</b>	<b>271,711</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-188</b>	<b>2,374</b>	<b>16,620</b>

## Financial Results for July, 2009

July was the first month of our new budget. Our income for July showed a loss of \$187 dollars, which was budgeted to lose \$3,527 dollars. We did receive an additional \$901.48 dollars from the convention committee, which was left over from their fundraising. We also processed a late request for expense reimbursement for convention-related travel.

Our product inventory is valued at \$44,601 dollars. This is a reduction of \$2,917 dollars in inventory value from last month.

Sales increased by \$6,699 dollars and donations decreased by \$989 dollars from the prior month. A large percent of the increase in sales was due to a large order made by South Africa. Individual donations exceeded group donations for a fourth straight month. This follows a four-month period in which group donations exceeded individual donations.

In using the new budget, our July expenses were \$858 dollars less than budgeted. July included the expenses for our latest newsletter, *The Outer Circle*.

Our operational reserve is fully funded. Our other reserve accounts, which are funded based on sales, were all fully funded.

If you have any questions please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Director of Operations

[director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)

*[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*

Greetings to all. I hope that you are having an enjoyable summer and that it has been cooler in your area than it has been in mine.

In both of the meetings I attended today—one in SAA and one in another twelve-step program—the topic was the seventh step. I imagine that is to be expected, given that we are in the month of July as I write these words. When I first got into twelve-step recovery, I didn't think I had any character defects, so I figured I'd be able to blow through Steps Six and Seven pretty quickly. After I did my fourth and fifth steps, I realized that my original assessment of my character defects might be wrong.

As I went farther along, I discovered that working on my character defects was like peeling away the layers of an onion. Each time God and I made what I considered to be some significant progress on a character defect or two, I discovered that there were another couple of defects lurking beneath the ones to which I had been devoting time. And some of these, gossiping or using profanities, for example, were things that never would have struck me as character defects in my early days of recovery.

My original attitude toward my character defects was something like an early conception I had relating to knowledge and learning. I remember telling my father at the age of seven or so that I probably didn't need to keep going to school or studying because I already pretty much knew everything that there was to know. My father didn't, however, take me out of school based on my insight. Now, some fifty years later, I keep discovering areas of knowledge that I want to devote study to. While I'm not quite as willing to discover new character defects as I am new areas of study, I at least have a similar level of enthusiasm regarding the efforts that are in front of God and me in terms of working on them.

I think we have a particularly good group of articles this month. Lack of space prevents me from commenting on the articles in particular, other than to note that we have two articles this month on Step Nine. I do, however, want to mention the poem "Anguish Forever" by John W.

While the poem perhaps focuses more on the problem than on the solution, there was something about it that grabbed me more than the other occasional articles we receive with a similar focus. Initially, it was the use of a prescribed ending for each of the six lines of each stanza, which reminded

me of a similar prescription in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the *Inferno* of which I read in a sophomore English class. But more than the scheme, the words of the poem reminded me of the suffering of the individuals in the hell described by Dante.



*If you have a reaction ... write a letter  
to the editor, a format within the publi-  
cation that we are trying to resurrect.*



If you have a reaction to the poem or its appearance in *The Outer Circle* (coincidentally, Dante's Hell was also divided into circles), I would love to hear about it. In fact, it would be a good topic about which to write a letter to the editor, a format within the publication that we are trying to resurrect.

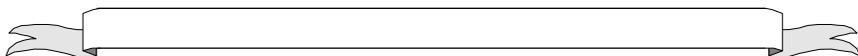
I have been blessed to have the opportunity over these last few years of being able to share my written thoughts with you concerning my recovery and growth. I have been saying for a while that it is time for me to spend less time behind the computer and more time with others who are recovering and growing. I have always called this type of work "being in the trenches." I think missing this year's convention brought this resolution back home to me in a big way, and so I have started trudging that road once more. What I was not expecting were the little miracles that have been coming my way since I made this decision, miracles that, as so often has been the case in my life, took the form of other friends of mine.

Just when I was thinking of reconnecting with my men's group after a couple of years of being absent from it, two men from that group called me on a Saturday morning needing help with an emergency. While I was not able to give them the immediate help they requested, I did make some phone calls looking for someone who could, and thus connected to some other men in the group.

Similarly, I was easing back into another of my twelve-step programs by attending a group some thirty miles from my house where it would not be so obvious that I was somebody returning after an absence. And, lo and behold, two folks I knew showed up at one of *those* meetings, even though they were just out exploring, and invited me to a new group much closer to

home at which they were regular attendees. Miracles both.

In terms of SAA, my miracle took the form of a man who had been a regular at meetings I attended in my early days of the program. Twelve years ago, this man moved out of town and we had not been in touch since that time. Out of the blue, he e-mailed me a couple of weeks ago and said he would be back in town and could we get together. So we attended a Monday night meeting and then went out to dinner. And our connection was as though the intervening twelve years had never happened. In parting, I told him he was my "SAA miracle." I think of all these recent "coincidences" as the Grace of God working in my life.



*...the suggested topic for articles for  
the May/June 2010 issue:  
The Grace of God.  
How has that grace  
worked in your life?*



And that brings me to the suggested topic for articles for the May/June 2010 issue: The Grace of God. How has that grace worked in your life? You may have something that qualifies as a little miracle, such as the several I have experienced lately, or it may be something more subtle. If you have a story to share, please send your article by March 5, 2010, to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org) (in either Word or WordPerfect format, or as inline text), or you can mail your article to *The Outer Circle*, c/o ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

Just by way of reminder, the topic for January/February (due November 5) is "in and out of the bubble," and the one for March/April (due January 5) is "acceptance." For all the suggested topics, there is not a particular way that the article should look. In other words, the approach to the topic is completely up to you.

In November/December we will be looking forward to articles on the topic of "practicing these principles in our lives." I look forward to talking with you then.

## Walking the Path

by Andy B.

Hello! My name is Andy and I'm a sex addict. That's not the only label I attach to myself, and it's not my favorite, but I've concluded that it's useful and helpful to remember and affirm this heavy tendency in my life.

This life has been no cakewalk, but I'm clear—for many reasons—that I can't blame it on anybody else. I've created every bit of this. And finally, in the last sixteen and a half years, I've allowed God's grace to operate in my life.

Unfortunately (or so it used to seem), it took me getting physically imprisoned to begin this journey of true recovery—of living life on life's terms, living consistently by spiritual principles. This was my third felony conviction—all sex offenses—and this time my parents couldn't, and wouldn't, buy me a probation sentence or a lesser sentence. I finally had to deal with heavy enough consequences to get me to acknowledge that my way was not working and I would continue to reap bad fruit as long as I pursued my way.

So, I finally became teachable. A combination of diligent approach to religion and to twelve-step meetings and step work set me on my way. In both areas, I followed directions from those who had what I wanted in the way of peace, love, joy, courage, discipline, humility, and servanthood. I was hungry, and they fed me well, and I began to get some of that good fruit in my life.

Thanks to the availability of a good Substance Abuse Treatment Program and several other recovery meetings in our state's prison system (no SAA yet), I was able to make it through all Twelve Steps with the help of an inmate sponsor and several good counselors, volunteers, and other inmate supporters. But that was back when we had a state governor who was both pro-rehabilitation and a member of a twelve-step program.

Since that governor left office, we have been struggling along with just an occasional twelve-step meeting. Until about 2003 or so, the system kept up the appearance of having a minimal Substance Abuse Treatment Program, and I helped serve as a counselor's assistant, giving participants an idea of how to utilize the twelve-step and other support group meetings. Since then, we've gotten by with three or four twelve-step meetings per month—not much opportunity to share, but better than nothing.

Sadly, I'm one of very few sex addicts in here who's brave and desperate enough to utilize twelve-step meetings and the steps to recover from my many dysfunctions, sex addiction being primary. Only at the county jail (for three months in 1993) and in one of my prior units in 1995 were there any

SAA meetings. Some attempts at step work were being made, but mostly guys stayed stuck in their sex addiction's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Frankly, after a sex addict is locked up, there is very little opportunity to address the underlying issues and get some recovery from applicable support groups and programs. Sex offenders in our state are only offered a Sex Offender Treatment Program as a pre-release program. If someone (like me) has a long sentence, he is left to struggle along on his own.

Fortunately, there are a few gracious volunteers within SAA who are able and willing to correspond with incarcerated sex addicts. Overall, our prison system and our society in general are still too afraid to deal with this "taboo monster," so they avoid dealing with sex offenders and their issues, and they reject our attempts (so far) to get SAA meetings into prisons—except for a few exceptions, which are usually short-term or eventually terminated by an authority figure who doesn't understand.

Nonetheless, I'm here to report that if a sex addict in jail or prison really wants recovery from this ugly disease, it is available. But we need to be flexible, open-minded, and willing to work with other twelve-step groups to have access to the Twelve Steps and those who know how to work them. Differences between addictions are not that big or dramatic; I know this from almost seventeen years of experience in here, and another five years out there.

Substance addicts can understand and help sex addicts. It is my experience that very few substance addicts have been free from abusive or compulsive sexual behaviors. So when it was time to do my step work, I was not shy about getting all the skeletons out of the closet, even if I didn't have access to fellow sex addicts.

When I share in other meetings, I keep my sharing at a generic level, as in "lifestyle," or "I'm experiencing success/struggling/slipping in my program." I've also found that it's in my best interests to lose that binding shame of my behaviors and convictions, and just get down to work on overcoming those dysfunctional habits and character defects that fuel my addiction.

I've found that I am not nearly as unique and as god-awful to the core as I used to think. It was a big revelation to me, after completing my Fifth Step for the first time, with a complete stranger who belonged to another program, that I was just a regular ol' struggling, suffering human being, just like everybody else. My subsequent study and practice of Eastern spiritual paths also led me to the same conclusion: that "disease" I suffer from—regardless of how extreme or dramatic the symptoms appear to be—is actually just the normal human condition. Whenever those symptoms get too painful to bear any more, that's when I become truly able and willing to do what it takes to experience lasting relief from those symptoms.

I have been a member of Sex Addicts Anonymous since 1987. I was fortunate to have a psychotherapist—to whom I'd lied for years—who informed me that SAA was available in my home city, after I'd been caught in my second felony offense. Sadly, it took me two more months to get free of inappropriate behaviors, while being on bond and going ahead with plans to get married on October 24, 1987.

I maintained good boundaries for thirteen more months, but I never truly surrendered my whole being, and my sex addiction in particular, to God. Even after going through a high-dollar inpatient treatment program in the fall of 1989—right before the birth of our daughter—I still wouldn't let go and let God relieve me of all those burdens that were driving me.

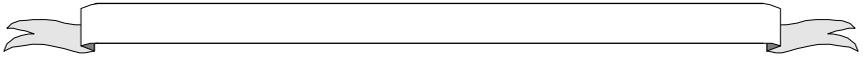
But, thanks to God and the Twelve Steps, I finally did surrender as soon as I got locked up in July 1992, and I began the process of getting free from all this. It certainly has been a path of progress, not perfection, for me. But I finally reached a point in recent months where I feel confident that I can and will be a harmless, appropriate, helpful, contributing member of society, and that this would be true even if I were soon released. Through working the Steps and the other spiritual practices I have, I feel quite content and complete within myself almost all the time. That's just two of the major blessings I've gotten in this wonderful journey. No regrets!



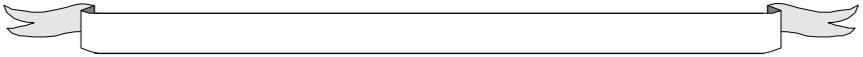
## Step Nine

by Rand L.

I came to SAA years ago after having tried unsuccessfully to find a sponsor in another local S-group who had worked the steps past Step Four. I was sick of spending two to six hours at a time cruising internet porn sites when I had planned just to log on to read my email, I was sick of feeling filthy all the time, and I was sick of the constant intrusive sexual ideation that plagued my waking thoughts.



*But with the right sponsor,  
someone completely unshockable and  
nonjudgmental, it certainly is worth it!*



I was lucky to find a sponsor who had worked Steps Five through Nine, and so I spent one summer writing my fingers off and reading stuff to this virtual stranger that I felt certain would cause him to throw me out of his office in revulsion. And I had little hope that any good would come of it all. After all, I had been in therapy off and on for years, and that had not even slowed down my addiction.

To my shock, by the time I finished Step Nine, I was astonished to discover that the guilt and feelings of filthiness that had plagued me for years had been cut by a good two-thirds. I also realized that beneath my addiction was a history of covert incest at the hands of my mother, an issue with which I had never dealt. (This was not “recovered memory” syndrome; I had always remembered the things she had said and done, but had assumed that she had been correct when she had branded me a “mid-Victorian touch-me-not” who was as oversensitive as “the Princess and the Pea.”)

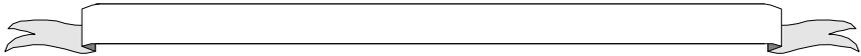
Final note: I have a better idea now why I have seen some twelve-steppers not progress beyond Step Three. Only desperation drove me to do it, and it was the hardest thing in the world for me to do. But with the right sponsor, someone completely unshockable and nonjudgmental, it certainly is worth it!

## Lifeline Partners

by Richard S.

Sometimes I find myself caught up in the busyness of life. Cutting grass, pulling weeds, and watching my favorite TV shows. It was in those times that I would forget about how much of a difference recovery has made in my life and how grateful I am for that difference. In the old days I would spend \$20-\$30 a week on my addictive behavior and think nothing about it.

Initially, I had the perception that putting a dollar or two in the collection basket as it was passed at the meeting was sufficient for giving back financially to my recovery program, particularly since I was attending four meetings a week when I first started out. As time has passed and the value of the dollar has diminished, I realized that I needed to become serious when it came to supporting my recovery program.



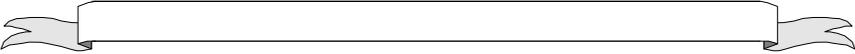
*I have a great sense of satisfaction  
that I am giving back to the program  
that has given so much to me.*



Without SAA I would literally be a mess. Before the program, I was struggling with issues around relationships, isolating, spending large sums of money to keep my addiction going, and being a selfish, egocentric, self-absorbed individual, caring only about what I needed, when I needed it and how I needed it. Of course I didn't realize the self-destructive nature of my addiction.

So as a means of giving back to the program that has meant so much to me over the years I became a part of the Lifeline Partners Program. I called the office in Houston and asked them to set me up for monthly contributions through my credit card; all I have to do is pay the bill when it comes. The personal satisfaction is immeasurable and I feel as if I am doing my part to keep my recovery program alive.

I invite every one of you that reads this to join Lifeline Partners and become a part of a group of recovering addicts who “pay it forward.” Simply call the office in Houston, 800/477-8191, and give them a credit or debit card number; they will be pleased to sign you up for this wonderful program of giving. The amount you contribute is entirely up to you.



*The personal satisfaction is  
immeasurable and I feel as if  
I am doing my part to keep my  
recovery program alive.*



The Seventh Tradition tells me that I have a certain responsibility as a recovering person, a responsibility I try to fulfill to the best of my ability. The monthly amount I give to the ISO isn't that much by itself, but with other members of the Fellowship who participate in the program it has a very profound and needed impact on the financial stability of SAA. And I have a great sense of satisfaction that I am giving back to the program that has given so much to me.



## Step Nine

by Andrew

*Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

I am a gay man and have been attending another S-fellowship since 2001. My program has had many ups and downs over the last seven years. No matter if I have had a bad day, or if I have acted out, I still keep coming back to meetings. Step Nine has been a healing step for me.

There are three things my sponsor told me to take into consideration for this Step. He listed them as the three Rs: accept Responsibility; show Remorse; and make things Right.

On Saturday, November 29, 2003, I made direct amends to my father during my visit with him for the Thanksgiving holiday week. I waited as long as I could to make the amends and just one hour before my flight back home I made my amends to my father.

The amends process is about me taking care of my part of the damage I have created with the other person. This is the amends I read to him face to face.

“Dad,

“As I have been in my twelve-step program for the last thirty-three months I have realized that I am responsible for my own actions. There have been periods of time when you and I have not spoken for months, and for that I am truly sorry. I am making amends to you for the lost time between the two of us and I want to work on building a stronger father/son relationship.

“For the last twenty-five years I have carried a lot of anger towards you. You and I spoke about this in June of this year and that has been a mountain lifted off of my shoulders. My story about how you left me at grandma’s house when I was eleven was totally incorrect. You helped me learn the truth about that event this summer.

“I have always loved you, dad. I have always had trouble expressing the words ‘Dad, I Love You.’”

Just before I headed out to the airport my father gave me a big hug at his house and said he was very proud to have me as a son. He told me he loved me just the way I am. He said I did not have to be ashamed of who I am or of my past.

Today I am building a stronger, healthier relationship with my father and I can tell him I love him at the end of each telephone call.

## Anguish Forever

by John W.

*[Author's note: Following is an example of sestina poetry. It contains six lines in each of six stanzas with an alternating numerical pattern using the same six words at the end of each line, with one three-line envoi. This poem is about the realization of how much harm I've caused my victims and indirect victims by committing my crimes. Also, it is about me coming to terms with denial, and recognition of the anguish I have caused.]*

Banging around in these cemented walls of torment.  
Wallowing in desperate times to return,  
    from this hopeless cage of sorrow.  
Who gave this wholehearted present,  
    Unbearable disaster forever,  
Was none other than my wicked heart.

What of those loveable feelings in my heart,  
    striking sharply against the walls of this torment.  
From these despairing times forever,  
My bloodshot eyes bulging with tears to return  
    from this unwanted gift, a hateful present.  
Scraping my nails as my feelings bleed with so much sorrow.

Embedded anguish rolls with my sorrow,  
    and leaves deadened scars on thy heart.  
This is the present,  
    and I recognize my torment.  
The lashings of despair's whip will return,  
Bringing again and again with each slash the pain forever.

I placed myself on this walk forever,  
    and truly didn't think of others' sorrow.  
Moving in this way I deserve to return,  
    and forgetting not each heart.  
Embracing my self-prescribed torment,  
    So as not to forget the present.

This is the present,  
and a lasting horror forever.  
That within these walls I escape no torment.  
I face each feeling of sorrow,  
with my tarnished heart.  
and if I falter outside these cement walls I will return.

With empathy I escape the return,  
And keep each life affected in the present.  
So that with truth I face thy heart,  
And the pain welded I remember forever.  
That I not ignore their sorrow,  
For I was their torment.

*It is a permanent torment,  
And my wicked ways should not forget their sorrow.  
Such is the pain and anguish I branded forever.*

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## What Keeps Me Sober

by Paul C.

I have been in recovery from porn addiction for over seven years and have had a hard time staying sober. I would get thirty to sixty days, or maybe only a week, and then slip. I consider myself religious, so this was a double frustration: my prayer life didn't seem to be doing the trick, although applying the program to all other areas of my life has made a "life-changing" difference for me, especially in my relationship to God. I just wasn't staying sober on the internet.

Then I was at a religious retreat and picked up a used book. The author said this: if I am tempted, it is because there is an unmet need or stress that immediately preceded it, and I reach for the addiction as an antidote. He said that I should not fight the temptation directly, but instead to ask God to soothe the unmet need, whether it was loneliness, anger, betrayal, boredom or some other unidentified need. Then I should wait two minutes and see how I felt.

It works every time. I was used to running the first three Steps on any temptation to act out—I'm powerless, God has all power, I surrender this to His care—but I never identified the cause in the moment. Even in the middle of the night I use this prayer to be released and go back to sleep, and know that I'm never alone.

## Thank God for SAA—Truly a Better Ending

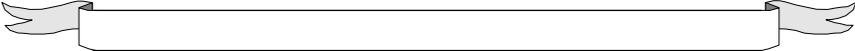
by Cynthia

Just recently, a thought came to mind along the lines of “what would have life looked like had recovery never entered the horizon of my destiny?”

The idea took on an ominous quality for a second. I was grateful that I only had to think of that possibility for a fleeting moment, for I had come to know life within recovery. I did not have to live the story out “to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of an intolerable situation as best I could.” I was able, as the basic text of our predecessor program states, “to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at my feet” and walk from disaster into some sort of semblance of serenity. I was learning my life could become serene, compared to what it had been.



*God had been there all along,  
waiting for me to run back to his arms  
of forgiveness and loving acceptance  
that in this instance took the  
human form of a group of others  
who struggled just as I did.*



In the early days of finding SAA, much in my life remained foggy, even on and off within the program, if I did not stay on track and focused. From the perspective of a seriously sexually addicted mind, things were surreal, especially when I tried to comprehend life outside of this seemingly safe and secure world that I had created for myself. Slowly but surely, it all was coming unraveled around me. Legal ramifications were awaiting me at the end of a dead-end street. My alternative was to hit the brakes soon and do an about-face with regard to some behaviors that had crept back into my life. I had once kept these behaviors at bay, but they were becoming obsessive and compulsive once again.

At one point, shortly before I entered SAA about four years ago, prostitution had come back into the picture. I did not want to once again feel, or rather continue to feel, this empty, self-loathing, and depressed state of mind. My spirituality and my relationship with the power of the God that I knew restored my sanity when I lived a good program. These things were becoming jeopardized. My isolated existence had cut me off from people I considered my support network. I was about to act out with another person after a number of months of supposed sobriety, but really only a couple of weeks of broken celibacy.

I began by getting honest with my group. I made some calls. I went to my therapist's office and cried. I journaled; I prayed. I got real with what truly was missing in my life and the source of this lack. I felt a sense of utter relief drop like a ton of bricks from my attempted strong façade of "I can do this" and "I am okay."

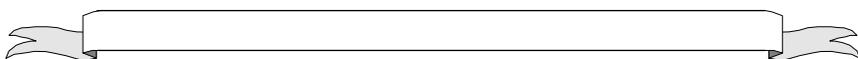
God had been there all along, waiting for me to run back to his arms of forgiveness and loving acceptance that in this instance took the human form of a group of others who struggled just as I did. I just had to drop the pride and ego and get humble enough to see that we are all alike. I needed to stop fighting my worst enemy: myself. I came out of a dark place into the light of a renewed reality of tapping into my innermost intimate thoughts and feelings again. Even as uncomfortable as it all was, and even as a bit of shame rolled off my "feathers," I knew I was going to be okay.



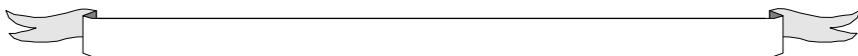
## Influences

by Ron M.

I could feel myself entering the bubble once again. A business trip was fast approaching and I had not spent enough time lining up potential acting-out partners. I was getting anxious as I couldn't let those nights go by all by myself or spending them constructively with co-workers. No, my addict couldn't let a golden opportunity like a business trip pass us by.



*When I let my addiction influence my decisions, I am choosing a path towards death and darkness ... When I let God influence my decisions, I am choosing a path towards life, light and recovery.*



I wish I could say this was just a story, but it happened countless times during my addiction. The thrill of the hunt would propel me down the insane road of sex addiction. Once I entered recovery, I had to reconcile how my higher power (God) could have allowed me to do the things that I did. Theologians for centuries have debated the notion of free will. While I will not be able to answer those questions, I want to offer up some thoughts that came to me about six months into the program; it's all about influences.

My sponsor has taught me the importance of understanding words. My step work has been filled with defining the words in each of the Twelve Steps of SAA. I found this definition for influence: "the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of others." I think about all of the influences I have in my life and how they have shaped my actions and behaviors. Our society is filled with so many sexual influences, it's a wonder more people do not become addicts.

When I was convinced that my addiction was cunning, baffling and powerful, I was then able to understand how it had influenced my decision-making. The addiction was never my friend, it only sought power and influence over my life. How could I be in a committed relationship yet continue to cheat? How could I continue to cross boundaries even though I knew the potential consequences could be devastating? How could I spend countless hours mesmerized at my computer watching porn and acting out? How could I continue to choose my secret life over my public life? I was powerless over the influences of my sex addiction.

*When I let my addiction influence my decisions, I am choosing a path towards death and darkness.*

Influenced by a disease that had grown inside of me for over thirty years, I finally reached my bottom in late 2006. However, I do not believe that hitting my bottom was influenced by my addiction. I do believe it was God saying "enough is enough." It was now time for God to have influence in my life. Steps One through Three are the key to a spiritual recovery.

If I can truly turn my will and my life over to the care of God, I will have new influences in my life. These healthy influences have led me to a life of honesty and sobriety. I used to face situations that were baffling, especially when dealing with emotions. Now, I have a new clarity. My heart has been opened. I am able to communicate and resolve problems in a healthy manner. When God is in my life, there is no reason to medicate through my inner circle behaviors.

*When I let God influence my decisions, I am choosing a path towards life, light and recovery.*

I am always thrilled when a sponsee or friend in the program finally "gets it." It can come weeks or months into the recovery process. It is that moment when the light comes on and he realizes, "I do have choices." I can choose to listen to my addict and continue down the path towards death and destruction, or I can choose to listen to my Higher Power and move down the path towards recovery and health. For me, it is this spiritual awakening that is critical for my recovery.

I think of what I hear during first steps. I think of where my addiction could have taken me. For me, there were still boundaries I did not cross; I still have my health; and I was never sent to prison. I do believe God watches over all of us in recovery and during our acting out. However, since the dawn of mankind he has given man choices. Today, I choose to let God influence my life. I choose to be a recovering sex addict.

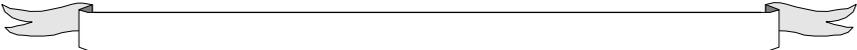
## Hope: Recovering with Others

by Barry M.

Being in—remaining with—the fellowship of SAA’s recovering addicts is a challenge. On the one hand, there is indeed the *hope-in-recovery*—ever grateful to the title theme of a still-valued book on sex addiction—tied and connected with other fellow human sufferers also in recovery. On the other hand, there is the inevitable anxiety of hoping for another’s recovery—along with one’s own—and yet often witnessing the slips and relapses. Hoping for the sufferer’s well-being, trying to encourage day-at-a-time step work and regular meeting attendance, but often wondering if others are meaningfully in recovery, especially when I judge them to be absent, not returning calls, or manufacturing excuses.



*Is there not then something about the very decision to “show up,” stay and partake, sit and engage with others that engenders the birth of hope and/or the reception of the spirit of hope?*



It is certainly easy to want to control another’s recovery, too—by projecting one’s own remedies or recipes on to another, and failing to see, and worrying incessantly, that the program is not working for them. We thus may well find that anxiety about another’s recovery, or lack thereof, is deeply if not intimately linked to our own. How could it not be?

The tensions in hope, and the feared loss of hope in recovery with relapses, invite prayerful and meditative patience, for the short and the long haul. It is to be hoped that patience leads to perspective, just as another’s slips may well become part and parcel of his or her long-range recovery; going deeper and drawing further than what otherwise would be desired and previously thought possible. Thankfully, the meditations in a much-used meditation book related to sex addiction assist here. I think of the succinct opener to one of the entries, that “in the difficult are friendly forces, the hands that work on us.”

A slip or relapse may challenge, invite, and involve another addict in opening up to help, whereas before, to that point, one was merely going on his or her own. How strongly conditioned we are, when it comes to this entrenched individualism—and often, its accompanying isolationism! Equally, how wedded we may be to “going it on our own” and, when that fails, to “try harder” or knuckle down all the more! “Hitting bottom” is one reality saying that comes to mind, too; as long as this opens us up, then and henceforth, to the movement of hope.

What then, is hope? It seems not a simple, immediate possession—otherwise, why hope? Hope is not likely a permanent possession either, lest it be a “false security” kind of hope. Hope indicates a shared, steadfast, and spiritually rooted process. Easy to state and commend; harder, surely, to live.

Have you ever really been to a SAA meeting, or any twelve-step meeting, and felt let down, disappointed? I have not, though plenty of times, I went disgruntled and even scornful, to the point of looking for that chance to exit by the back or side doors, with lots of self-projecting onto others. Is there not then something about the very decision to “show up,” stay and partake, sit and engage with others that engenders the birth of hope and/or the reception of the spirit of hope?

May this be so! As one SAA'er shared recently: “I come often feeling apart from others, and yet leave in the hope-engendered sense of having partaken.” Again, the meditation book helps: while honor begets honor and respect begets respect, crucially “hope is the mainspring of life.”

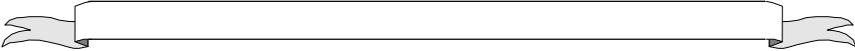


## Spiritual Growth in Marriage

by Jim H.

I want to write about two instances of growth in my relationship with my wife before I forget them. The first took place on the way to the movie theater. We were chatting with the children who were sitting in the back seat, and I mentioned something about my twelve-step program of recovery and relationship issues, perhaps alluding to the sexual slavery in a PG-13 film which my eleven-year-old daughter and I were shortly going to see while my wife and seven-year-old saw a different film.

That was when my wife “shushed” me (a big anger trigger for me) and said “demasiado,” Spanish for “too much,” which is the language she uses when she wants to keep something from the kids. This felt like a real insult because I felt I was being circumspect enough, of course, and because, being a sex addict, I have an over-developed sense of ego and an over-sensitive self esteem which are easily injured.



*By turning my will and life over  
to the god of my understanding,  
I can find the willingness and  
humility to let go of hurt pride.*



In the past (the very recent past, not to imply that I’m “over” my immaturity), I could easily have retorted back and made some angry comment, thus setting the stage for an escalation. Instead, I felt the sting and sat with it for a few seconds (My God! Some restraint of tongue!!). Then, my wife inadvertently made a comment with an unintended sexual innuendo in it, and I was able to simply repeat “demasiado” back to her. The wonderful thing is that we both laughed and our tension was released rather than exacerbated. I was able to put my arm around her and feel good about her when only minutes before we had been on the verge of a fight.

Lately, thanks to the steps and SAA, hopeful developments like this one have been occurring with more frequency and clarity. It’s almost like I’m being given a new ability to pause during certain moments of conflict, wait until the adrenaline levels off and then make a more reasonable response based on my higher power’s will and not just my own resentment, fear, and hurt pride. Step Four has taught me that while it’s okay to acknowledge my re-

sentment and fear in a particular situation, it is also essential to look at my part in making the situation worse.

Without Step Three I would never have been willing to even consider this concept. After all, she has hurt me and snubbed me in front of the children; why does she deserve a reasonable response? Step Three asks me to let God be the judge of that. By turning my will and life over to the god of my understanding, I can find the willingness and humility to let go of hurt pride. Of myself (i.e. my over-sized ego), I would only be able to minimize, rationalize, and project blame. Perhaps in some small way, I am being restored to sanity (a belief germinating from Step Two) around my relationship with my wife, which had been so badly battered due to my addiction and abundant defects of character.

Another example occurred while we were doing the laundry the other day. I had put the dark Levis in with some of the whites because I thought the whites were hardy and color-fast. My wife came out and saw this and angrily began transferring the wet Levis from inside the washing machine to the empty clothes basket, then putting the other whites in with the whites in the washing machine; this is the way she believed it was supposed to be done.

I was arguing with her the whole time, trying to get her to understand that it makes sense to put "heavy duty" clothes in together even without always separating whites from darks. In short, she believes in whites with whites only and I believe in delicates with delicates regardless of color as long as the item is color-fast. Well, my wife didn't buy any part of my argument and so she stubbornly completed her clothes changeover while ignoring my protests.

Normally this might have really angered me because she was both second-guessing me and redoing my work—two of my worst pet peeves (i.e. resentments). However, again God or our HP or our combined growth stepped in to save us. At the end of the clothes changeover, my wife, for some reason, decided to add one more item into the now almost-full washing machine—the outer shirt off her back! And that broke both of our stubborn, angry bubbles. So instead of fighting and alienating each other, we laughed, giggled, hugged, and kissed a little.

Would this have been possible even eight months before? I don't know for sure, but I do know that my willingness to take different actions while triggered by anger marks a change. I believe that the change is a sign of a teeny, tiny spiritual awakening occurring in my life which allows me to do things that heretofore I had been unable to do myself.

It is the small changes like these which encourage me to continue my spiritual program of recovery. Thanks for providing a forum where I can share my experiences in recovery with other sex addicts whose marriages, like mine, may still be suffering from the ravages of sex addiction.

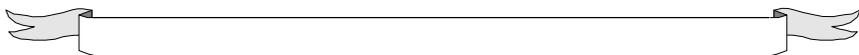
## What Format?

by Bill J.

I just got back from my Wednesday meeting of SAA here in my home state. I have to drive about sixty-five miles one-way to get to an SAA meeting. I recently moved from another state, and I have to go to any length to stay sexually sober, so I start out early and return late. This is only my second meeting here in my new home state, although I've been in SAA for twelve years now and have attended many meetings.



*It is comforting to go into a meeting of the other fellowship anywhere in the world, hear the same readings, and feel that I am home. I hope soon that SAA groups will adopt this format from the SAA handbook.*



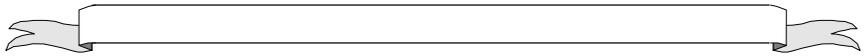
The meeting tonight was a little different. We discussed our group format. The secretary suggested that the format is too long. I agreed. I do like many aspects of the format here because we count off and go to different rooms in small groups to “check in.” This is less intimidating to me than talking to the entire group. I have a problem with some of the readings, though.

I've been to other groups and have seen all kinds of formats. Some are still using the readings from our mother program, some have written their own formats and readings, and some have adopted our format readings from our *SAA Group Guide: Handbook for SAA Groups*. I would like to see our groups use the readings from this format because they come from our literature. We don't have to borrow someone else's ideas. I'm okay with adding things and moving things around, but I would like to see the basic readings be utilized.

During the discussion, people raised their hands and presented their views. Finally and reluctantly, I presented mine. I suggested a

break from the other program's readings and I anticipated the reaction I would get before I opened my mouth. Most were not in favor of taking the break I was suggesting. I asked if I could bring a copy of the suggested format the following week. I also e-mailed a copy to our group secretary the same night.

We are young in SAA but I believe we are coming of age. In our mother program there is a book that references "coming of age" in its title. Right now I think that SAA is coming of age; that is to say, maturing. There are groups adopting SAA formats that best emphasize our recovery. That is why I requested we use the suggested SAA format readings. I am grateful to our mother program for what



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it has done for me. At other SAA meetings when I first heard the suggested format from our handbook, without outside readings being read, I felt there was something missing. But after a while I could see that we needed to be "our own fellowship."

The format is in our *Group Guide: Handbook for SAA Groups*. One thing the other fellowship has adopted that SAA groups worldwide have not is standardized readings. It is comforting to go into a meeting of the other fellowship anywhere in the world, hear the same readings, and feel that I am home. I hope soon that SAA groups will adopt this format from the SAA handbook. It would be nice to go to a meeting far away from home and hear the same readings read as at my home group. These readings are being repeated each hour in each time zone where meetings are held. It would be very powerful to have the same readings repeated hour by hour in each time zone around the world. That to me has a spirit of power.

I would like feedback on this article. Please feel free to send yours to *The Outer Circle*.

## Writing to Myself from a Correspondent's View by Kasey S.

I have a somewhat different perspective from most on writing to prisoners since I was once a prisoner myself who requested correspondents from SAA. Now that I'm out in the world, I want to offer my own experience, strength, and hope to those who are still incarcerated. Sometimes I feel that I am writing to myself as I read letters from those still in prison.



*I write prisoners to give back what has been so freely given me. I find that doing this Twelfth Step work helps me maintain my own sexual sobriety. I have to give it away to keep it.*



I know that every week our central office receives many requests from prisoners all over the world seeking recovery from addictive sexual behavior, which they cannot stop, even in prison. I couldn't. They ask for literature, sponsors, and someone to correspond with them. They seek our experience and hope while in a place where there is none. I had lost hope. Many of these prisoners have been convicted of a crime relating to their uncontrolled sexual conduct; they feel powerless. I did. They seek our strength in surroundings that honor violence.

Usually, they have little or no family support. I lost all my support. Seldom do they have access to sexual recovery resources inside their institutions; and if they do, it is often limited. There wasn't any for me. They seek our hope in an environment which is often hopeless. Like us, they are told time and time again that they are beyond any help and should remain incarcerated for the rest of their lives. I was told this by medical professionals in prison.

Much of my prison experience was negative. The only bright spot was the letters I received from SAA correspondents. I want to continue to carry the SAA message of experience, strength, and hope in recovery to other sex offenders. I write to help meet the needs of these seemingly forgotten human beings.

I write prisoners to give back what has been so freely given me. I find that doing this Twelfth Step work helps me maintain my own sexual sobriety. I have to give it away to keep it.

For me, reaching out to other sex offenders is a way to actually work the Ninth Step by making indirect amends to those I have harmed. Now that I have a new life and am living in the promises, I want to share my own happiness, joyfulness, and freedom.

I have found that in writing prisoners I've gained clarity to my own recovery that I did not have before. I've had to "teach" the Steps and actually live in them. This process has enhanced my life and recovery tenfold.

I knew from my experience in prison that corresponding with a prisoner was to become a sponsor to that prisoner. Before I began this task, I reread the section on sponsorship (p. 13) and the Twelfth Step (pp. 58-61) of the SAA basic text. It was also helpful to me to read the chapter "Working with Others" in the basic text of another fellowship.

Without someone on the outside telling me that I was not alone; I would have been forever lost in my addiction. The Prisoner Outreach Program saved me from reoffending. By writing prisoners I want to give them back that hope which was so freely given to me.

I encourage you to talk to those of us who have been writing prisoners and to the Regional Coordinators. I work closely with mine when I write other prisoners.



## E-mail Addresses

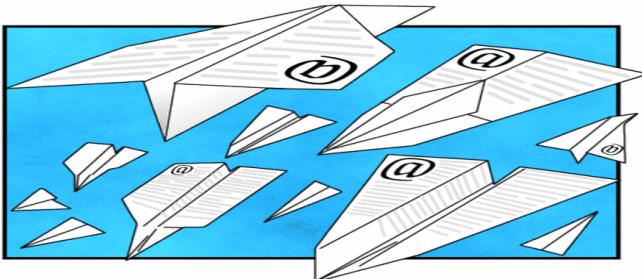
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The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees has established an e-mail box which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff. [OOCchair@SAA-Recovery.org](mailto:OOCchair@SAA-Recovery.org)



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

**First:** Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say. Suggested Topics are listed below.

**Second:** Send your article: by e-mail to: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)  
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Mar-Apr, 2010	Jan 5, 2010	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4, and <i>“Acceptance”</i>
May-Jun, 2010	Mar 5, 2010	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6, and <i>“The Grace of God”</i>
July-Aug, 2010	May 5, 2010	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8
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