

The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Volume 4, Issue 6

November - December 2010



**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.

ISO News Articles	
<u>ISO Board News</u>	
ISO Board Actions	Page 2
<u>Literature Committee News</u>	
Miscellaneous	
Announcements	Page 3
Meditation Book	
Submission Guidelines	Page 5
Teleworkshops	Page 6
Personal Story	
Submission Guidelines	Page 7
<u>Committee News</u>	
Committee Reports	Page 9
<u>ISO Financial News</u>	
Income/Expense Summary	Page 12
Financial Results Letter	Page 13
<u>From the Editor</u>	
By M ke L.	Page 14
<u>General ISO Information</u>	
E-mail Addresses	Page 30
ISO Structure & Contacts	Page 31
<u>Article Submissions</u>	
Guidelines, Deadlines, and	
Topic Suggestions	Page 32
General Release Form	Page 32
Articles from Members	
Letter to the Editor	Page 15
Trusting My Higher Power to Speak to Me	Page 16
Step Eleven	Page 18
Open the Door	Page 19
Dear Grace	Page 20
Step Twelve	Page 21
Not Mine	Page 23
Tradition Eleven	Page 24
Morality vs. Addiction	Page 26
Putting 110 Percent into My Recovery	Page 28
Step Eleven: I Didn't Pray Today	Page 29

© Copyright 2010 International Service Organization of SAA, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
 Except for the purpose of redistributing *The Outer Circle* as a whole, *The Outer Circle* may not be downloaded, copied, reproduced, duplicated, or conveyed in any other way without the express written permission of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

® Registered Trademark *Sex Addicts Anonymous* and the SAA logo are registered trademarks of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

The Following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees at the August 21, 2010 Teleconference:

- Motion approved to set the 2011 convention rates (as shown in the Convention Rates Motion presented to the Board).
 - Motion approved to renew our Sex Addicts Anonymous book distribution contract with Health Communications Inc. for a term of three years beginning June 08, 2011 and ending June 7, 2014.
 - Motion approved that the Online Presence Committee (OPCom) be dissolved and replaced with the Information Systems and Online Presence Committee (ISOPCom), which shall
 - a. Provide management oversight and support of all online functions of the ISO on behalf of the Board of Trustees, operating with protocols identical to the former Online Presence Committee,
 - b. Advise and support the outreach efforts of the ISO Board and ISO Literature Committee by encouraging and implementing innovative use of online methods to carry the SAA message to the addict who still suffers, and
 - c. Advise and support the ISO office in the full scope of planning, development, implementation, and maintenance of the information systems and technology needed to optimize service to member groups and the fellowship-at-large.
-

The Following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees at the September 18, 2010 Teleconference:

- Motion approved to approve the 2012 convention hotel agreement (as presented in the Motion).
- Motion approved that, without endorsing any local safety guidelines, the Board invite and enable local groups to share their own experience of conducting meetings including underage members.
- Motion approved to approve funding not to exceed \$800.00 for expenses of food and lodging for a mid-year face-to-face meeting of Literature Committee members, on October 21-22, 2010, one day prior to the Indianapolis annual retreat.

Literature Committee News

ISO Literature Committee Report November 2010

Monthly teleconferences of the ISO Literature Committee were instituted this service year in order to address more effectively the growing workload of the LitCom stemming from growth in the Fellowship and its service committees. Most Literature Committee projects are delegated to specific work groups, chaired by LitCom members. The following work groups met by teleconference during recent months:

- Meditation Book Work Group
- Meditation Writing Tele-workshop
- Green Book Work Group
- LitCom Handbook Work Group
- Sponsorship Pamphlet of Authors Group
- Audio Review Work Group

The Meditation Book Work Group is delighted to announce the appointment of Don S. of California as the new Meditation Book Editor. Don brings an extensive background in writing and editing, as well as a long-standing record of service to the SAA fellowship. With hundreds of members' submissions awaiting review, the Editor and Work Group have an exciting and challenging job ahead of them. The newly designed online literature review system is being expanded by the ISO office staff to accommodate the volume of work involved in creating and editing this new book.

Meditation Writing Tele-workshops continue to meet on the fourth Sunday of each month, to help fellowship members in writing and submitting meditations for the upcoming book. Contact the ISO office for call-in information.

The Green Book Work Group continues its systematic and detailed review of the SAA Green Book, utilizing feedback from the fellowship in accordance with the criteria outlined in the ISO By-Laws and the Literature Committee Handbook. An online literature review system has been instituted to facilitate this process. This system will be adaptable to the uses of many Literature Committee projects, as well as those of other service committees within the ISO.

Members of the ISO Literature Committee remain grateful for the continued support of fellowship members and the ISO Board and service structure.

Inquiries and suggestions are always welcomed.

In fellowship,
John R.
Chair, ISO Literature Committee

SAA pamphlets now available to read online!

The International Service Organization of SAA is pleased to announce the availability of SAA pamphlets on the SAA website (www.saa-recovery.org). The pamphlets may be found by following the “SAA literature” sub-tab from the Home page. Also available online are the pamphlets in Spanish and the “Pathway to Recovery” pamphlet in French.

This milestone has been accomplished by the combined efforts of the ISO Literature Committee, the ISO office, and the ISO Board of Trustees and its committees, specifically the Online Presence Committee and the International Development Committee. We believe that ready access to SAA literature online will greatly enhance the capacity of member groups and individual members of the fellowship to carry the SAA message of recovery more effectively and more efficiently.

As before, the printed pamphlets are available for purchase from the ISO – either through the online SAA Store or by telephone or postal mail from the ISO office. Don't forget to ask about our volume discount.

This development is a good example of how the ISO is working to support members of the fellowship and member groups. As you benefit from having access to the SAA pamphlets online, please remember that the ISO is totally dependent on financial support from members, member groups, and intergroups to offer and maintain this type of service for the fellowship. If you appreciate what the ISO does for you, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today.

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 on next page). 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 Approved 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>Writing to Prisoners</i>
<i>Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous</i>	<i>Group Guide</i>
<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Pamphlet)</i>	<i>Intergroup Guide</i>
<i>Sexual Sobriety and the Internet</i>	<i>Three Circles</i>
<i>A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer</i>	<i>Tools of Recovery</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 e-mail to:
meditation@saa-recovery.org

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

Meditation Writing Tele-Workshops

All those interested in contributing to the Meditation Book are invited to attend one or more tele-workshops. We will go over the guidelines and process for submission; there will be ample time for writing, and time for sharing as well. Please consider joining us for this unique service opportunity!

All workshops are the 4th Sunday of the month at 5:00 p.m. Central Time and last until 6:30 p.m.:

Sunday November 28
Sunday December 26

To register, call the ISO at 1-800-477-8191,
or send an e-mail to:

meditation@saa-recovery.org

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).

Submissions and a signed release form may be e-mailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at info@saa-recovery.org.

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*.

New Project: History of SAA

The ISO Literature Committee is pleased to announce plans for a new project to compile and document the history of the founding and development of SAA. The research and initial writing will be done by a long-time member of the fellowship, who has graciously volunteered to spearhead this project.

Questions about the project and information or anecdotes for possible inclusion in this volume can be sent by postal mail to the ISO office, or e-mailed to:

litcom@saa-litcom.org

Committee Reports

2011 Convention Committee News

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE SAA WOMEN'S WELCOME RECEPTION
at the "Reach for the Heavens in 2011" Convention!!

Arrange your flights! Let's get the convention started out with fellowship and connection.

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2011
Place: Women's Outreach Room at the
Convention Hotel
Time: 7pm – 9pm Central
Who: All SAA women members
and women newcomers

**Reception is sponsored by the Women's Outreach Subcommittee.
Hope to see you there!**

And calling all SAA Women Members...

Do you feel called to offer service at the 2011 Convention,
but aren't sure how?

Here's an idea! Volunteer to help staff the 2011 Women's Outreach Table in the registration area and/or the Women's Outreach Room at the Convention Hotel. *Women are needed to help serve as greeters to welcome women in the registration area, as well as in the Women's Outreach room.* Two-hour shifts will be available starting at 7pm Thursday evening through Monday afternoon (not including sleeping hours).

If you're interested in volunteering for the Women's Outreach Table, the Women's Outreach Room or for the convention in other ways, email your first name, day(s)/times you're available, and contact information to:

2011@saa-convention.org

Or call the ISO at 1-800-477-8191 or 713-869-4902.

We encourage all forms of service as a vital tool of sobriety!

ISOPCom News

OPCom is now ISOPCom!

At the August meeting of the ISO Board of Trustees, the Online Presence Committee (OPCom) was renamed the Information Systems and Online Presence Committee (ISOPCom). The new name signals an expanded scope of work, which, in addition to responsibility for the SAA websites and online outreach, now includes advising and working with the ISO staff on matters related to all of the components of the office computer and information systems.

As one of their first tasks, the ISOPCom is undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the current systems used by the office. It is anticipated that this extensive review will result in recommendations for how to streamline the computer-based operations in order to support ISO operations and to serve member groups and the fellowship more efficiently and more economically.

Other active projects within the ISOPCom include developing an interactive site map for the outreach website, as well as dynamic home page content that would reflect current news and events within the ISO and the fellowship-at-large. The posting of all SAA pamphlets and booklets online in read-only format has already been accomplished this service year. This feature also includes all of the approved Spanish language literature and the *Pathway to Recovery* pamphlet in French.

In addition, the ISOPCom in collaboration with the ISO office staff, has implemented a password-protected work area on the new service website for use by the LitCom Green Book Work Group, which is presently reviewing *Sex Addicts Anonymous* in anticipation of a Third Edition.

Visit the SAA outreach website (www.saa-recovery.org) to see some of the things the ISO is doing to support member groups and the fellowship. While there, consider making a donation to help support the ISO.

Outreach Committee News

“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, Chapter 5 “Our Purpose – Service”, pg. 75)

Outreach to Minors Subcommittee

The Teen Outreach Subcommittee has been re-named. The subcommittee will now be known as the “Outreach to Minors Subcommittee.”

For more information, questions or suggestions for this committee, you may now contact us at our new e-mail address:

genoutreach.minors@saa-recovery.org

2012 Convention News

Are You Planning to Attend the Convention in Canada in 2012?

If you are planning to attend the convention in Canada in 2012, please be aware that Canada has strict laws on people with past criminal histories entering the country.

Depending on the nature of the crime, whether it is a misdemeanor or a felony (by Canadian standards, which are sometimes different than U.S. standards), and how long ago the offense took place, it can take up to 18 months to get permission to enter the country and will involve a nonrefundable fee for processing the application which in the case of felonies can be quite steep.

More information about the requirements is available at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1082.html

We hosted a workshop on this subject at the recent convention and a ***CD of the workshop is available*** from the ISO office.

ISO Income/Expense Summary

As of September 30, 2010

	Sep '10	Monthly Avg	Jul-10-Sep'10
Income			
Sales	17,637.81	17,219.80	51,659.40
Shipping & Handling	1,638.00	1,528.04	4,584.12
Donations	19,976.48	22,297.08	66,891.25
Interest Earned	35.01	36.48	109.43
Convention Revenue	3,407.00	1,185.67	3,557.00
Total Income	42,694.30	42,267.07	126,801.20
Total Cost of Goods Sold	9,066.86	8,920.04	26,760.13
Gross Profit	33,627.44	33,347.02	100,041.07
Expense		0.00	
Wages	18,393.33	17,665.78	52,997.34
Payroll Taxes	1,420.66	1,370.50	4,111.49
Payroll Expenses	17.33	15.86	47.57
Employee Benefits (Not Wages)	3,636.92	3,768.18	11,304.55
Insurance	306.96	297.11	891.33
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	525.00
Office Postage	53.59	89.03	267.09
Communications	510.95	509.92	1,529.77
Office Expense	858.73	1,335.67	4,007.02
Occupancy Expenses	1,484.03	1,476.90	4,430.71
Board/Committee Expense	2,046.63	1,545.28	4,635.83
The Outer Circle	2,530.34	1,800.60	5,401.80
Financial Charges	1,071.17	1,175.76	3,527.29
Bad Debts/Refunds	11.00	103.75	311.24
DELEGATE MEETING	0.00	138.00	414.00
CONVENTION EXPENSES	797.53	365.51	1,096.53
Reconciliation Discrepancies	-260.36	-86.79	-260.36
Total Expense	33,053.81	31,746.07	95,238.20
Net Income	573.63	1,600.96	4,802.87

Financial Results for September 2010

In the month of September we ended with a surplus of \$2,540.63.

Our sales for the soft cover of our SAA Green Book were below our estimate by \$186.53.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$1,096.82. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$484.00, and our chips exceeded our estimate by \$179.00.

Our total sales for September exceeded our estimate by \$1,222.81.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$203.66, and group donations exceeded our estimate by \$3,153.82.

Our "Freedom From Addiction Week" Seventh Tradition event has received a total of \$6,020.71. We estimated this Seventh Tradition event to raise \$6,000.

Our total donations for September exceeded our estimate by \$3,357.48.

Our product inventory is valued at \$46,805.68.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$1,449.81.

A summary of the current service year:

- Sales exceeded the budget by \$2,414.40
- Donations exceeded the budget by \$14,534.25
- Expenses exceeded the budget by \$3,779.20
- Net surplus exceeded the budget by \$7,100.87

Our operational reserve amount is fully funded at \$118,322. This is the estimated amount needed to run the office for four months and is reset each January. 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

[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 SAA fellowship as a whole.]

From the Editor

by Mike L.

Greetings. It occurs to me that the reason that I begin a lot of these little pieces with the word "greetings" is that one of the rogues at the office answers the phone the same way, and so I unwittingly get into that energy when I sit down to write.

I am very pleased with the articles and pieces we have received for this issue. Besides an article on this month's topic, Coming to Trust in My Higher Power, we also have brand-new articles on Steps Eleven and Twelve and Tradition Eleven. In order to pay a bit of attention to Tradition Twelve at the end of this year 2010, I thought I would say a few words about it here.



I want to suggest a topic for the July-August 2011 issue ... the topic that comes to mind is "SAA Service."



When I recently read Tradition Twelve in our Green Book, the sentence that stood out for me this time was the last one, "Protected from the inevitable divisions and conflicts of our personalities, SAA is able to continue helping sex addicts find freedom and serenity." What really jumped out at me was the part about the "inevitable" personality conflicts. It reminded me of how the AA Big Book says on page 84, "When [selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear] crop up, we ask God at once to remove them." Just as this quote reminds me that these things are going to happen—which is why the book says "when" instead of "if"—the Green Book tells me that the same is true of personality conflicts. I can't say that I have been completely free of them over the years. It's probably not a coincidence that "detach with love," a phrase I learned from a third Twelve-Step program, comes to my mind in this context." If I can keep the "with love" part of that phrase before me while dealing with these "inevitable" personality conflicts, perhaps they will be just a bit less inevitable.

We've been promoting of late the topic articles, the articles on the Steps and Traditions, and the Letters to the Editor. Something else I'd like to toss out, as Rod Serling used to say, "for your consideration," is the idea of an ongoing column. A few years ago we had a wonderful column called "Sponsorship Corner." There were many pearls of wisdom in that column from which I am still deriving much benefit. And now "Dear Grace" has returned. If there is a tool or topic around which you feel some energy and about which you would like to write a continuing column, please get in touch with me. I can be reached through the ISO of SAA Office at P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949, or by email at toc@saa-recovery.org.

And speaking of topics, I want to suggest a topic for the July-August 2011 issue. With this being the end of the year, when folks ponder resolutions, the topic that comes to mind is "SAA Service." This of course can take many forms. In what areas have you enjoyed doing service work for SAA what has this service meant to you, and how have you been blessed by it?

So with that, I'll close, wishing you a very happy holiday season. So, good-bye until the next time I get to say "greetings."

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I hear and can identify with the struggle described in the article by Phillip G. entitled "Step Eight" in the September/October issue of *The Outer Circle*. I have heard many others in the fellowship state similar concerns; however, I have come to believe that there is no such thing as self-forgiveness. Three lines of thinking have led to this conclusion.

First, forgiveness, by definition, is a transaction that involves two parties. Trying to forgive myself suggests a lack of integration of the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of my person.

Second, the idea of self-forgiveness is inherently self-centered – a core character defect in many of us – myself included.

Third, the struggle here seems to be described more accurately as difficulty accepting God's forgiveness. If God has forgiven me, I am no longer guilty. I no longer owe the debt. It is, then, inappropriate for me to "feel" guilty, because my "crime" has been pardoned. If God forgives me, and, in like manner, I forgive others for the harm I have caused in their lives, then I am free, and I have no need for self-forgiveness.

In gratitude for the forgiveness I have received and in hopes of being able to forgive, as I have been forgiven,

Jim L.

Trusting My Higher Power to Speak to Me

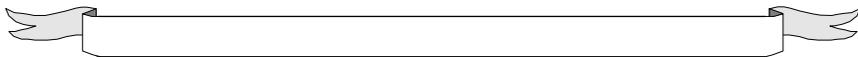
by Joe S.

Step Eleven talks about prayer and meditation. I've always thought of prayer as talking to my Higher Power, and of meditation as my Higher Power talking to me. However, I have also learned that my Higher Power doesn't only talk to me through my own meditations.

My Higher Power may, for example, talk to me through things I read. I remember people telling me when I was younger about the Book of Proverbs having thirty-one chapters. I was told that if I went to the chapter corresponding to the day of the month it was when dealing with a particular situation, I would have my answer by the time I finished reading the chapter. As I have progressed in my recovery, I have come to realize that these chapters are not the only way that my Higher Power talks to me, and to expect as much is a way of straitjacketing him.



*“Everything will turn out okay in the end.
So, if everything isn't okay,
then it isn't the end.”*



Today I have come to rely on receiving answers from my Higher Power in several ways. My Higher Power may talk to me, not only through things I read, but also through situations or through other people. I have learned that when I have a question or problem, all I need do is to give it to my Higher Power through prayer and then wait for the answer. I have always quickly gotten an answer. I need only pay attention and I will have my answer before long.

I might, for example, turn to today's reading in a meditation book. I often find an answer to my question by taking that one action. Perhaps the next conversation I have with somebody will contain the seed of the answer I am seeking. Or I may get it from the reading at the next SAA meeting or hear it when the leader expounds upon the chosen topic. Or I may be reading a novel or watching television and the hero will encounter a situation similar to mine.

The AA Book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* cautions us in Step Eleven against thinking that I have gotten an answer from my Higher Power when I am merely engaging in “unconscious rationalizations.” Accordingly, the only caveat I have about being open to what my Higher Power says to me is that I must be very careful not to interject the answer I want into the messages I receive, especially if I have only received one message. The more I hope for a particular answer, the more careful I am in this regard. In those cases, I look for confirmation by waiting to receive the same answer several times from a variety of sources.

Somebody recently said to me, “Everything will turn out okay in the end. So, if everything isn’t okay, then it isn’t the end.” Accordingly, when, on a rare occasion, despite being as open as I can to my Higher Power’s will, I don’t get any answer at all, let alone the answer I am looking for, I trust that there is no action I need to take for the time being.

In any case, I know my Higher Power listens to me and answers me. As I have learned to trust my Higher Power more and more, I have come to believe that, even though I might not always get the answer from him that I want, I will always get the answer that will benefit me the most. Thus, I don’t have to fear that the good has ever become the enemy of the best.

Step Eleven

by Mary F.

Step Eleven is about exchange: praying and meditating, talking and listening, asking and allowing, giving and taking. Because it is about exchange, I must be involved. I must be praying about something, talking about something, asking for something, giving something. So, this step is highly active and creative for the individual.

Here are some examples of how I have worked this Step in my life:

Praying: I pray daily for better boundaries. I ask for understanding and courage in protecting my self.

Meditating: I read books about boundaries and they inspire and motivate me.

Message: Boundaries are an essential part of my recovery and there are ways that I can continually learn and practice them.

Talking: I was walking in the park and allowing myself to feel deeply the loss of a dog I had been caring for. I talked to God about why I lost her. I was grieving to the point of tears.

Listening: A woman, whom I did not know, was walking by and thoughtfully asked me if I missed the dog. She had seen me walking her in the park.

Message: It is okay to grieve. I am not alone. God and others care.

Talking: I talked to God one day about feeling the need to cry and not allowing myself to.

Listening: That night I cried deeply in a dream and woke up crying in a healing and cleansing way.

Message: It is okay to feel sad. God can do for me what I cannot do for myself.

Talking: I talked to God about wanting to sell my car. Selling it was not logical, since it was paid for and still in great shape.

Listening: I sold the car and when I walked out of the Honda dealer to catch the bus, I felt relieved, free, more environmentally responsible, and full of joy.

Message: My needs and wants are valid and my feelings will tell me so.

Asking: I asked God for a free space to create and store my artwork. I asked my landlord if I could use one of the extra storage spaces in the building, free of charge.

Allowing: My landlord agreed.

Message: I can ask for what I want and God and others will help me get it.

- Giving: Out of a sense of belonging and gratitude, I do kind and thoughtful things for my neighbors.
- Taking: I accept gifts and invitations from them.
- Message: I do not have to be fearful, ashamed, and isolated any more. I have much to give and my gifts will be reciprocated.

From these interchanges with my Higher Power, I heard messages and answers from books, people, dreams, and feelings. By asking and receiving the answers out of my own personal circumstances, rather than just reading about them in recovery, I began to own the answers and know they were real for me. Step Eleven makes recovery real for the individual and its methods are always available: praying and meditating, talking and listening, asking and allowing, giving and taking.

Open the Door

by Bill B.

In my recovery I have had problems understanding the program. The problem was that the program was simple and I was baffled by its simplicity. I do Tai Chi and I like the challenge of learning new moves. What I found was that the easy moves were hard and the hard moves were easy.

As I was standing in front of my door I thought all I have to do to get into my house is to open it. I don't need to do research on the door, and find out who built the door or what the door is made of. None of this information will get me into my house. I like to analyze things and think if I get things figured out I will move forward. Logic won't help and some things can't be explained. This program isn't about the steps we analyzed, it's about the steps we took. I can take action and not let fear run my life and trust HP that it will work for me.

Dear Grace

Submitted by SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

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:

What was it like going to your first face to face meeting and being the only woman there?

Signed, Scared to Go.

Dear Scared to Go:

When I went to my first SAA meeting I was greeted at the door by sober men who shook my hand and told me they were glad I was there. One of the greeters asked if it was my first meeting and took me over to the literature table and made sure I collected all the literature before the meeting started. He told me I did not have to hug anyone and that the meeting was focused on recovery, not acting out. He offered me a safe seat by myself, since most of the chairs in the room were actually couches shared by two or more people. Then he introduced me to other people in the room and explained to me that I did not have to speak if I didn't feel comfortable. I have been going to this meeting and others for many years now. The men in the rooms are my sober brothers and I would not be sober without them. It is normal to be scared to go to your first meeting. If I did not walk thru my fear I would not be sober today. Try a meeting and write back to me again!

Grace

Disclaimer: We cannot guarantee that every woman has had or will have this experience going to her first meeting, but we do hope that will be the case in the future. – SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

Step Twelve

by Sam R.

As much as I love the basic text of AA, which I find inspired and inspiring in so many ways, I also find numerous nuggets in our own Green Book that give me extra insights into our recovery program. For example, one of my favorite sentences in the section on Step Twelve in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* is “We continue to ask our Higher Power’s help in carrying the message of recovery, so that we may be a channel of God’s love and wisdom” (p. 60). I took a little time meditating on this sentence and comparing it to “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts” (p. 58), the related language in our Step Twelve, and I came up with some thoughts that I want to share. I will take the concepts in reverse order of their presentation in the Green Book.



The Higher Power of my understanding is patient with me ... I believe that my Higher Power is with me in all my activities.



First of all, “that we may be a channel of God’s love and wisdom.” The first thing I thought about in terms of being a “channel” is a well known prayer known to many as the Eleventh Step Prayer. While I love the idea of being a channel, what struck me even more strongly is the contrast between what the Green Book says and my usual concept of the middle section of Step Twelve, the part that I have always interpreted to mean that I must be active in carrying the message. While I understand that this can be as simple as helping set up the chairs before a meeting, it is also true that I can also just be a channel while God does the work.

I recently read in a recovery-based magazine one person’s praise of another because of how that person was always calm, regardless of what might be going on about him. The lesson the writer derived from the other’s ability to be calm was how well the program was working for him. Hmm. So maybe I don’t always need to be ready to do the active carrying of the message. Maybe just the way I carry myself will have just as much weight in that area.

Next, the role of my Higher Power. I've been told that good Seventh Step work on my character defects requires both my participation and that of my Higher Power, that neither of us can do the job alone. And I've thought of how sponsoring requires both my Higher Power and me to be doing the work. (I'm fond of saying, "I never take credit for a sponsee staying sober because then I have to take the blame if he doesn't.") Yet, it was only when I read this part of the Green Book that I was reminded to rely on my Higher Power in the area of carrying the message.

Finally, the word "continue." A well known dictionary gives "persevere" as a synonym of "continue." I think back to the days when I persevered in my addiction, seeking greater and greater stimulation to achieve what I hoped in vain would be the same high I experienced in my earlier days. I never hesitated to persevere, whether that meant staying out a little later that night or, if the night was about to come to an end, making plans to return to the fray the following night. I didn't realize right away that I could use this same character trait in going to my Higher Power for help. The Higher Power of my understanding is patient with me, and I suspect he will even welcome my continuing to persevere in asking him to help me carry the message.

I believe that my Higher Power is with me in all my activities. Even though my reading of the language of the Twelfth Step itself tells me that I'm the one carrying the message, I was happy to be reminded that my higher power is very much there also when I'm doing the carrying.

Not Mine

by Francie E.

Around 1991 – six years into recovery – I got in touch with and dealt with a mountain of shame. You see, when my mother was pregnant with me at age forty-two, she denied that she was pregnant and told no one except her husband and another daughter, because her oldest daughter had had a baby out of wedlock. So, when I was born, my mother was depressed and resisted nursing me.

I wrote this poem and read it at her grave. Afterwards, I pulled up a stem of grass from the place over her heart and placed it in my journal as a sign of peace between the two of us.

Shame, accumulative mountain
weighing on me, squelching my self-worth...
I have named you, you black cloak
that has smothered my giftedness.

I will pierce your darkness with truth,
dismantle your power with courageous
confrontation sweep you aside to nurture self-worth.

You descended upon me in the womb
in my innocent embryonic state.
my delicate nature oppressed with
my mother's shame.

I disown you! You are not mine!
I will pull out your deep reaching roots
from my embryonic center.
I will remove every last one of them!

Self-worth, crushed, crippled little thing,
I will find you, I want you, and I love you!
Let me gently hold your fragile,
frightened center. Trust my hands
to protect you, shape you, guide you
into the God-given gift you were meant to be.
It will take time...and that we have...

Tradition Eleven

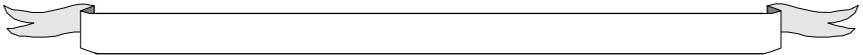
by Richard T.

“We act on the belief, confirmed by our experience, that a simple declaration of who we are, and what we do, will serve as an invitation to those seeking help, giving them the opportunity to try our program and find out if it feels right for them.” – *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 94

Tradition Eleven talks about anonymity “at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.” SAA, nodding to advances in technology, added “TV.” How much more might we add nowadays! And yet, there are many opportunities for sharing the program that never rise to the level of any of these public media.



*So, to paraphrase the final words
of a familiar AA thought,
“I am, if anything, even more responsible.”*



I sometimes worry too much about my own personal anonymity. I have found myself involved in conversations and group consciences where I have expressed my fear that somebody I know might see me walking into a building where an SAA meeting was taking place. In so saying, I never stopped to consider that even if somebody did see me, he or she likely would not know what my purpose. On the other hand, when I was in my addiction, I never cared who saw me going where, even if it was into a building that existed solely to house a sexually oriented business, let alone that the whole time I was in there, my car was visible for anybody to see.

However, the words that really struck me in this quote were “a simple declaration of who we are, and what we do.” There were times that I didn’t hesitate to make such a declaration about my acting-out activities. My favorite acting-out activity was a fantasy for many gay men, and so I would occasionally share one of my stories, just to bask in the envious responses.

Yet, when it comes to it, making that same simple declaration of who I am and what I do as a recovering addict often isn’t quite as simple. (I know somebody in the program who closes his e-mails with the phrase “Doing what I do,” which makes special sense to me in this context.) I’m not

saying that it is common for somebody outside the program to come to me and tell me about the details of an acting-out experience where I would have a springboard to sharing the program. Nevertheless, nowadays stories of public figures engaging in behavior I consider to be acting out abound. If I were to hear somebody talking about one of these stories around the proverbial water cooler, it could be an opportunity for me to talk about how the program has changed my life. Obviously, I wouldn't need to go into any gory details, at least not at that point. Still I would have whetted an interest, if interest there were to whet.

One advantage of the new technologies I mentioned is that someone who wants to know more about our program can find it out, including information about meetings, without having even to talk to a live person about it. So in a way these new technologies obviate to an extent the necessity of press, radio, and so forth of the early days of AA. And, if anything, the importance of the initial face-to-face sharing about the program has become even more relevant. So, to paraphrase the final words of a familiar AA thought, "I am, if anything, even more responsible."

Morality vs. Addiction

By Ed W.

An evening radio show host made the statement, "There's no such thing as addiction, just immorality. This is just people looking for an excuse to have an affair." Needless to say, her statement could really set us off. As an individual who finally realized that I have been a sex addict for about two decades, I found that her statement carried many implications. For the rest of the drive home, all that I could think about was what she had said.

Where does that leave us? Many of us have been persons of "faith" for most of our lives, some even considering entering the ministry as youths. But as we become embroiled in our sex addiction, we can turn away from our beliefs. We probably didn't plan this course for our lives, but have made many inappropriate choices regarding sex. We may have started with going to strip clubs, viewing a little pornography, going to night clubs to pick up women, and eventually frequenting massage parlors and picking up street prostitutes. Upon learning of the SAA program, and finally attending our first meeting, many of us very quickly came to identify with the stories of our fellow addicts. We soon learned that few of us chose to become sex addicts.

We eventually became totally driven by the compulsion to:

1. Anticipate and plan our next acting-out episode,
2. Act-out on our plans,
3. Maybe have guilt and shame,
4. Start planning and scheming for the next episode.

Eventually, guilt and shame can even shut down. We just don't want to get caught!! Now acting-out has evolved into an obsession.

All religions throughout history have dictated a certain "moral code" of conduct, yet people throughout history have also had issues with sexual conduct. Laws and the legal system are based upon the "moral codes" of our societies. These codes are a part of the historical development of mankind. Our initial adventures may be of an "immoral" nature, if we are married. We can rationalize that our acting-out was just an "adventure" or for "entertainment." We might not have regard for marriage vows, just wanting to get high on our "drug of choice," which was sex.

But something changes as we progress in our addiction. Our last episode needed to be topped by the next. We needed more risky, more "taboo," behaviors, to get high. Many of us can actually say that we're glad for our "bottoming out" experience, which led us to the program and sobriety. We

finally realize that if we hadn't gotten in the Program, gotten a sponsor, and worked the Steps, our addiction would have led to disease, jail, or death.

My "family of origin" was very religious, but also had serious issues. My father was an alcoholic. My mother was codependent toward my father, and doting and controlling, going to the extreme of emotional incest towards me. My ex-wife had an emotionally abusive, self-centered father. My ex-wife's mother was very codependent. I don't list these situations as an excuse, but they probably contributed toward those learned behaviors which have plagued both my ex-wife and me. Though my family and church teachings were very "moral," the examples and subtle behavioral messages from our families certainly had a powerful influence on our lives. I cannot allow myself to use this as an excuse, as recovery and sobriety require me to take responsibility for my actions. But it is most helpful to realize the pull of ingrained stinkin' thinkin' from our family background. I now realize that the stress of my childhood and the pressure to achieve goals, have led me to turn to sex as my drug of choice."

My initial steps toward addiction certainly reflected a violation of my personal moral codes. I knew that acting out wasn't right, but the development, progression, increasing risks in my behavior, and being unable to stop without intervention and support, define my exploits as an addict. So many times I'd say to my ex-wife and to myself, "Never again." Then within a few days, as the penalties for getting caught would subside, I'd start looking for and planning the next episode of acting out. I was caught up in a repetitive cycle that grew in intensity, risk, and frequency. Six months between events became six weeks, which became six days, which eventually controlled six or more hours of every day, all the while increasing in the danger and risk. This is way beyond just an immoral act – this is being "hooked" – this is addiction.

The good news is that I don't have to be hooked for the rest of my life. Thanks to the program of SAA, I can begin to experience that "never again" only one day at a time.

Putting 110 Percent into My Recovery

by Domenic M.

I first contacted SAA in September 2009. I'm not only a sex addict, but a sex offender as well. I was in a sex offender treatment program, but something was missing from my recovery. Nothing in the program seemed to help with my constant craving for sex. Then I got the information I requested from SAA and I felt a glimmer of hope. Maybe I wasn't alone after all. There were others like me!

By November I was in contact with my prison outreach coordinator. He helped me move past my fear of trusting others and accept my addiction. But could I really work through the Steps? I didn't have the confidence to do so at first, but over time I built up the courage.

So I started working the steps in February 2010. I completed the first Three Steps overnight and started on Step Four. Then I received my first copy of *The Outer Circle*. It was the March/April 2010 issue. The stories shared in the newsletter helped me to realize I was cheating myself by not putting 110 percent into my recovery. The story "The Program Really Works" shared by Henry N. was a great inspiration. Hearing how another offender is using the program with success gives me the strength to keep moving forward with my recovery.

Today I am working on Step Five. For years, sex was my higher power. There was no god, be it Jesus, Buddha, Allah, Zeus, or any other god...just sex. Sex could solve any problem and always made me feel important. Now that I realize sex isn't a higher power, just something that has become a problem for me, I am searching for my Higher Power. I know I can find my spiritual way. It will just take some time.

Thanks to SAA, my sponsor, and those that shared their stories, my recovery is off to a good start. I can feel myself growing as a person and I'm proud of the work I've done. Not having to battle this addiction alone is very helpful. Those first steps are hard, but I can see that all this hard work will be worth it in the end.

Step Eleven: I Didn't Pray Today

by Rich B.

I didn't pray today.

I got up thirty minutes ago and knocked a canister of flour off the pantry shelf while reaching for a box of cereal. Flour spilled over other items. I picked up the flour canister. Only a small amount of flour spilled out. I put the top on it and put it back on the shelf, shut the pantry door and poured myself some cereal. About one minute later, my wife opened the pantry door and said, "Do you know you spilled flour in here?"

I got up from the table, picked up a towel and proceeded to wipe off the bottles on the pantry floor that had flour on them. As I did this, my wife said, "Never mind. All the bottles will have to be cleared out, and I will have to vacuum the pantry."

I put the towel on the sink and I went over to my cereal, picked up the morning paper and the cereal and walked into the living room for some peace. As I walked by my wife, she said, "Don't get mad at me."

I sat in peace eating my cereal for about two minutes. Then my brother-in-law Ray who has been living with us for seven months walked into the living room, didn't say a word, and turned on blaring talk radio which it seems like he listens to every moment of every day. So much for peace.

I got up and went into the TV room and turned on the VCR to finish watching a movie. I couldn't finish watching the movie last night because my brother in law Ray sleeps on the floor in the TV room, and my wife had come in and said "Ray needs to go to bed."

The problem is not the flour. The problem is not my wife. The problem is not my brother-in-law. The problem is me.

I didn't pray today. I need to go pray.

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 e-mail 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
At Large Board Member: BoardAL@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

The Outer Circle Editor: toc@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

ISO Office Location

3890-D North Freeway
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: (713) 869-4902

ISO Office Mailing Address

PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Toll Free: (800) 477-8191

Website: www.saa-recovery.org

Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

The Outer Circle e-mail: toc@saa-recovery.org

Office Staff

Director of Operations: Joe H. director@saa-iso.org

Associate Director: Chris F. business.assistant@saa-recovery.org

Outreach Specialist: Klaus P. outreach@saa-recovery.org

Information Technician: Jonathan C. webmaster@saa-recovery.org

Admin Assistant II: Tim D. info@saa-recovery.org

Admin Assistant I: Daniel B. djb@saa-iso.org

Admin Assistant I: James M. jamesm@saa-iso.org

The Outer Circle Staff

Literature Editor: Mike L. toc@saa-recovery.org

ISO News Editor: Chris F. business.assistant@saa-recovery.org

Design & Layout : Chris F. business.assistant@saa-recovery.org

REGION REPRESENTED	BOARD MEMBER	BOARD ALTERNATE	LITERATURE COMMITTEE	LIT. COM. ALTERNATE
Great Lakes	Richard S.	<i>Vacant</i>	Morris B.	Steven W.
Intermountain	Eric M. <i>Chair</i>	Kelley K.	Michael H.	Sean C.
North Central	Tim T.	Thea D.	Tom N.	<i>Vacant</i>
Northeast	Wayne K. <i>Treasurer</i>	Carl D.	Chris J.	Dan H.
North Pacific	Staci S. <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Bill I.	Enoch D.	Jesús G.
South Central	Byron W.	Michael B.	Ken C.	James D.
Southeast	Tom W.	Shira K.	John R. <i>Chair</i>	Kasey S.
Southern Pacific	Doug C.	Mike P.	Dejon M.	John K.
At Large	Chris X. <i>Secretary</i>		Cecilia P. <i>Secretary</i>	
At Large			Steven P.	
At Large			Andrés P.	

