

The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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The Following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees at the June 18, 2011 Teleconference:

- Motion approved that the Director of the ISO shall receive a one time, 3% increase in annual salary, an increase in monthly expenses of \$50, all other previously affirmed conditions of his employment shall continue; the contract extension shall expire on March 30, 2013.
-

Volunteer Services Needed

Want to be of service to the Fellowship that supports you?

Not sure where to get started?

Contact the ISO Service Coordinator!

e-mail: service@saa-iso.org

Phone: 713-382-3187

or go to www.saa-iso.org/

and select "Volunteer" to fill out a volunteer form.

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 eighteen 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 2010 convention and a *CD of the workshop* is available from the ISO office.

New Electronic Formats Available for the SAA Green Book and Convention Audio Recordings!

SAA e-Book

The ISO is pleased to announce the immediate availability of the SAA Green Book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, in downloadable electronic format.

The eBook can be purchased for \$8.95 from the ISO office, or online from the SAA Store at www.saa-store.org/book/.

After online purchase is complete, you will receive an e-mail with a link to download a zip file that contains both the mobi (Kindle) and ePUB (Nook) versions of the book. One of these formats can be read on most e-readers available today.

Special thanks go out to an anonymous member of the fellowship, who took the time to create the eBook version. Such generous help from volunteer members enhances the capacity of the ISO to support member groups in carrying the SAA message of recovery to sex addicts everywhere.

mp3 Audio Downloads

Many members of the fellowship have found our convention workshop recordings to be a valuable tool in their recovery. Previously, these recordings have only been available in a compact disc format.

Now the ISO is pleased to announce the immediate availability of mp3 format downloads of our convention workshop and speaker recordings.

The files are in mp3 format, which may be played on almost any portable music device or computer.

Currently, the mp3 files are available for convention years 2004 through 2011, and can be purchased for \$3.95 per download from the SAA store at www.saa-store.org/mp3/.

We will be uploading the remaining past convention years over the next few weeks, as we get them formatted.

ISO LITERATURE COMMITTEE REPORT

The ISO Literature Committee has seven newly elected members for this service year, and interest and enthusiasm are high. Over twenty active projects are on our roster; some highlights of our recent work include the following.

- The Literature Committee confirmed its support for the newly developed e-Book edition of SAA Green Book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*. This e-book is now available for downloading at the SAA Store on the ISO website www.saa-recovery.org.
- The Green Book Subcommittee is following feedback from the fellowship and committee members, as this subcommittee continues to review our text for any areas that may benefit from improvement.
- On the Meditation Book Subcommittee, meditations submitted by the fellowship are prepared by the editor and reviewed in batches of 10 each by the Subcommittee, in order to forward to LitCom for final approval. The first batches of edited meditations have been posted to the Online Literature Review system of the ISO Service website, for review and approval of the subcommittee.
- Meditation Tele-Writing workshops are held monthly by teleconference to assist members in composing meditations. Our meditation book will be composed entirely by meditations written by fellowship members. Member submissions are still needed; please call the ISO Office for call-in information.
- The Audio Review Subcommittee has developed criteria for evaluating recordings from international conventions for technical quality and adherence to SAA's recovery principles, and is proceeding to review the inventory of past recordings.
- Following requests from the fellowship, expanded explanations of the fundamental concepts of anonymity and confidentiality were approved at the Houston convention and will be posted soon on the ISO website.
- Several draft pamphlets are nearing completion, including subjects such as compulsive sexual avoidance, retaining women in meetings, GLBT sex addicts, and sex offenders who are sex addicts.
- The Literature Committee Handbook contains detailed explanations of

LitCom policies and procedures, for use by LitCom, ISO service components and fellowship members. It is currently being reviewed in detail by the Handbook Subcommittee for submission to LitCom for final approval this year.

- An internal report has been developed to enable LitCom to more closely monitor and assist its subcommittees on their work projects. The Subcommittee Liaison report is compiled monthly by the LitCom 2nd Chair.

LitCom representatives and the Information Systems and Online Presence committee are developing systems for implementing ISO Board approved policies regarding copyrights, trademarks and linking local websites.

The ISO Literature Committee meets monthly on the second Sunday of each month at 2:00pm Central. Concerned group members are always welcomed to attend. Please contact the ISO office for call-in information.

Members of the ISO Literature Committee remain grateful for the continued support of the ISO Board and service structure and the SAA fellowship. As always, any inquiries and suggestions are welcomed and can be forwarded to litcom.chair@saa-recovery.org.

In grateful service,
John R.
Chair, ISO Literature Committee

Audio Version of SAA Green Book Now Available for the Visually Impaired

The National Library Service has recently produced an audio version of our SAA Green Book (*Sex Addicts Anonymously*).

This audio book was produced by the government and is not available for sale by or use by the ISO of SAA, Inc.

However, those who qualify for eligibility under the government guidelines may receive the SAA audio book from the National Library Service.

The website address for the National Library Service is:
www.loc.gov/nls/

***If you know of someone that could benefit from this service,
please let them know about this exciting development!***

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. What we're looking for is your experience, your strength, your hope, and your voice.

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>

Meditation Book Vision Statement

(approved by the Literature Committee)

“The SAA Meditation Book carries the message of recovery by collecting into one volume diverse voices of the SAA Fellowship to serve as a resource for meditation and prayer for the addict in recovery and the sex addict who still suffers.”

Send your meditation, contact information, and signed release form to the ISO.

(release form is located on the last page of this newsletter)

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the email) to [**meditation@saa-recovery.org**](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org).

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send a release form – one per author - before submissions can be considered.

You can also send your meditation, contact information, and signed release by postal mail to: ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

If at all possible, please send your submission in digital form. We will, of course, consider all submissions. You will be sent a 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, September 25

Sunday, October 23

Sunday, November 27

Sunday, December 24

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

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

History of SAA Project

The ISO Literature Committee is working on a 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:

info@saa-recovery.org

ISO Conference Charter Committee Seeks Input from Fellowship

By vote of the delegates at the 2010 ISO Conference in Albuquerque, a Conference Charter Committee (CCC) was established to research and draft a document that would define in greater detail the organizational structure and operating procedures of the ISO delegate assembly. For the past year, the CCC has primarily worked on reviewing the charters of other Twelve-Step fellowships, drafting an outline for a possible charter, and developing a game plan for how to proceed in crafting a formal charter.

In planning for these tasks, members of the CCC have been appointed as liaisons to other ISO service components that have overlapping interests or responsibilities, including the ISO Board of Trustees, the Board ISO Structure Work Group, and the Board-appointed 2012 Conference Committee. The purpose of these liaisons is to maintain open communication throughout the ISO service structure and to share ideas and stimulate discussion about the future structure and function of the ISO Conference.

The activities planned for this service year include refining the CCC Mission Statement and expanding the draft charter outline to include a glossary of key terms and more detailed definition of how the Conference might be structured and operated. In addition, the CCC plans to publish regular reports about its progress and to solicit feedback from a broader segment of the fellowship. It is also anticipated that, as the plans for the 2012 Conference are finalized, the CCC will want to develop one or more motions for consideration by the delegates, as an ongoing effort to lay the groundwork in preparation for eventual presentation of a completed charter to the Conference.

The ISO exists primarily to coordinate and support the activities of the member groups in accomplishing their primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. The delegate conference is an essential component of the ISO, through which the ideas, interests, and needs of the fellowship can be expressed. We will all benefit by a well-organized and smooth running delegate assembly.

If you are interested in how the delegate assembly is organized and how it operates, the CCC invites you to participate in the process of developing a charter. Teleconferences are held at 10 a.m. CDT on the third Sunday of each month to review progress and plan next steps. In addition, draft docu-

ments will be available in the near future on the ISO service website for review and feedback from the fellowship-at-large.

For more information about how to participate in this important work, Contact the ISO office at 800-477-8191 or info@saa-recovery.org.

GLBT Outreach **Subcommittee Report**

The GLBT Outreach Subcommittee meets monthly to discuss issues relevant to GLBTQ members of the SAA Fellowship.

The Subcommittee is seeking ideas and projects to increase outreach throughout the U.S. and around the world. One example is the need for additional submissions to the SAA Meditation Book currently in production.

Share your experience, strength and hope with the SAA Fellowship at large by writing a meditation from the GLTBQ perspective. Also, if you have an idea for outreach activities that can be coordinated for the 2012 International Convention, let the group know.

If you are interested in volunteering and bringing your ideas to fruition with the help of the GLTB Outreach Subcommittee, please contact the group at:

glbt@saa-recovery.org

ISO Income/Expense Summary As of July 31, 2011

	July 2011
Income	
Sales	12,259.43
Shipping & Handling	1,267.00
Donations	22,600.96
Interest Earned	34.15
Other Income	9.90
Total Income	36,171.44
Cost Of Goods Sold	7,265.31
Gross Profit	28,906.13
Expense	
Wages	19,041.79
Insurance	320.54
Payroll Taxes	1,461.19
Employee Benefits (Not Wages)	4,101.17
BUSINESS TRAVEL-RELATED	500.00
Office Postage	9.62
Communications	544.11
Office Expense	1,497.35
Occupancy Expenses	1,551.02
Board/Committee Expense	1,389.03
The Outer Circle	2,528.21
Financial Charges	762.63
Bad Debts/Refunds	0.00
Translating/Literature Projects	1,000.00
Depreciation	175.00
Payroll Expenses	19.99
Total Expense	34,901.65
Net Income	-5,995.52

Financial Results for July 2011

July represents the beginning our current service year and the beginning of our new budget. In the month of July we had a deficit of \$5,995.52. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$18.38.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book was below our estimate by \$1,076.29. We did have sales of \$796.55 or about 88 downloads for our new ebook.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$928.65. Our bronze medallions were below our estimate by \$200.00 and our chips were below our estimate \$248.50.

Our total sales were below our estimate by \$4,496.57. We saw a drop in non-saa sales of around 57 percent and a total drop in sales of 27 percent.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$179.85. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$661.11 which was due to a \$3,200 donation from the Bay Area Intergroup.

Our product inventory is valued at \$48,062.41

A summary of the current service year: (July 1, 2011 to July 31, 2011)

- Sales are below our budget estimate by \$4,496.57
- Donations exceeded our budget estimate by \$840.96
- Expenses exceeded our budget estimate by \$2,468.35
- Net surplus is below our budget estimate by \$5,977.22

Our operational reserve amount is \$123,808.00 and is fully funded. This is the estimated amount necessary 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.

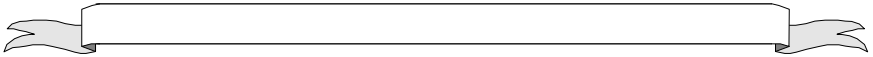
In Your Service,
Joe H.
Director of Operations
director@saa-iso.org

[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.

Last night I was going through some paperwork in a desk drawer and ran across a receipt from April of 1991. It was a partial and final rent payment for the apartment where I was living. The reason it was partial and final is that that was the month I moved into my house. April of 1991 was also the month I joined SAA.



*So “willingness” is the topic for the
May/June 2012 issue...*



It would make a nice addition to my story to be able to say that it was obvious that my Higher Power wanted me in the SAA fellowship because I was led to move to a part of town where there were lots of meetings. However, the opposite was the case. I was actually moving away from the area where most of the meetings were, and into an area where there were actually no meetings.

I remember how desperate I was for the fellowship and for healing back in April of 1991, and so it never occurred to me that the fifteen or so miles I would have to drive from my house to the meetings was any sort of imposition. Then again, it was about a forty-mile drive from my apartment to my preferred acting-out location, and that fact never seemed to bother me. So if my Higher Power was telling me anything with regard to this move, it was that I had better things than to drive (now) fifty miles to the place where I acted out. The only real difference between two different kinds of trips was that when I was heading to an SAA meeting, I didn't get into the bubble on the way there as I did when I was acting out. On the other hand, I did feel much better heading home after a meeting than I did

after acting out; a no-brainer trade-off if there ever was one.

At the end of a Sunday night meeting in those long-ago days, I got a confirmation of my belief about distances. Somebody made an announcement at the end of a meeting about an SAA-related event that was about to happen, and somebody else grumbled about the distance to get to that event. The response was quick and to the point, "You've driven a lot farther for a lot less." The resultant laughter told me, "Yeah, I've been there." Driving those distances certainly required an effort, and it was an effort that I was willing to make.

And willingness was one of the primary things that has helped me over the years in working the SAA program. Willingness to give a First Step in front of a group because my sponsor told me that I need to do it to stay sober; willingness to trust my sponsor for that matter. Willingness to stay in town at the end of a long day because I haven't been to a meeting in two or three days, and it's time that I got to one. Willingness to get up a couple of hours earlier on a Sunday morning because somebody is counting on me to hear his Fifth Step that morning and there isn't another time that is good for both of us. Willingness to hang around after the meeting for fellowship. Willingness to call my sponsor and to reach out to others in the program when that phone weighs a ton. I could go on and on.

So "willingness" is the topic for the May/June 2012 issue of *The Outer Circle*. Sometimes willingness has been the thing that has enabled me to knock down a wall standing between me and something I did not want to do and knew I had to do. If you have an experience to share around your own willingness, please write it up and send it along.

I also want to keep the continuing momentum going on our Steps and Traditions articles, so if you have a piece percolating around any of the Steps or Traditions, please send it in in time for the issue of *The Outer Circle* "relating" to them. For May/June 2012, the relevant Steps and Traditions would be Five and Six.

I am of course looking for Steps and Traditions articles and topic articles for the issues of *The Outer Circle* before next May/June. The listing in the back of this issue indicates the topics for each upcoming issue and the deadlines for those articles.

Please remember when writing any kind of article for *The Outer Circle* to focus on the solution rather than the problem. Also, I am really looking for an emphasis on the SAA Steps and the various other tools of the SAA program; in other words, the things that are really unique to SAA and our program of recovery.

Articles for *The Outer Circle* can be submitted to toc@saa-recovery.org or by mail to ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949.

I look forward to talking with you again next issue.

Step Nine: The Humility Step

by Lisa B.

The overflowing gift to me from Step Nine has turned out to be humility. This humility takes the form of my having a lot of faith in God.

My sponsor showed me how to write out on index cards my story, based on the fourth column of the Fourth Step, the column that talks about where I was wrong. There were many times that I wept as I wrote, as there was so much grief in owning my own story, owning my own part in it in preparation for cleaning my side of the street.

Then my sponsor and I got together, and he helped me to hammer out each amends, based on the story that I wrote. He helped me in choosing words that would not reopen the wound in myself or in the person I was giving the amends to. He also helped me to sum up what I had done, being specific enough to cover all bases, but again not specific enough to dig up the hurt.

I wrote the actual amends on the other side of each index card, and I found this to be the most humbling part. Many of my amends include living amends, meaning that they represent behaviors that I am agreeing to change from this point forward. It is like taking a mirror and holding it up to my soul: I am making an agreement to take action to support my amends, because taking these actions is more in accord with the authentic type of person I am now. I am no longer blaming or pointing the finger at someone. I am stepping up to the plate and taking responsibility for myself.

Now, there is a lot of emotion that leads up to getting the index cards ready. After that, there is even more fear, worry, preoccupation, and high stress between the time that I finish writing the amends and the time that I give them. Step Three comes in and gives me God to lean on. To surrender these stressful feelings allows me to move forward even though I cannot possibly know how the other person is going to react. Speculation is pretty much a given. I begin to see a lesson emerging: that I do not have control of another person and cannot stage the amends to get a certain result. What I can do is to use the Third Step prayer (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 63) to remind me to put everything into my Higher Power's hands.

No matter how a person responds, I have cleaned house by making amends and by adhering to my word. I have done what I can do. I cannot force anyone to respond in the way that I want, and this is humbling. I am not God. I am not my own Director. I am not my own Principal. God alone is all of these things.

I had many amazing spiritual life-changing experiences while working the Ninth Step. The first amends I prepared for was the one to my mother. I

had lied to her my whole life. I put her down for staying with my father. The day I gave my amends to her, we sat at a picnic table underneath a tree. I read her the amends. I started crying, feeling so vulnerable and ashamed of myself. When I was done I looked her in the eye and it was as though we were seeing each other eye to eye as two adults for the first time (I was thirty-nine years old at the time). I felt like I had grown up.

Another of my amends was to my brother. I had a lot of shame about how I had wronged him. I was shaking really badly in fear that he would hate me. He didn't. With his vivid sense of humor, he laughed after I read it. Later, we walked around a park and he turned to me and said, "I know that you're a very good person, that you've got a good heart."

The next day I woke up, and all the shame of the disease and beyond vanished. I felt intensely happy for days afterward. It was amazing.

The process of the Ninth Step brings up a lot of emotion. After all, there is a lot of ego infused in the refusal to take accountability for my actions. It is humbling to really look at myself and take responsibility for what I have done, especially when I have fought with myself for so long and have dodged the bullet of responsibility.

For me, to work the Ninth Step is to be humble. To be humble is to bow down at the feet of my Creator and not only ask for help, but also to ask for guidance through surrender to get me through this step.

Getting on the Good Foot to Healthy Sexuality: An Experience with Step Ten

by Chris A.

I consider dancing salsa to be both a passion and a great challenge for me as a recovering sex addict, anorexic and intimacy avoidant. Whilst dance can be one of the most exhilarating experiences when in sync with a partner in full flow, it can also be very nerve-wracking. I have had traumatic times on the dance floor. There have been times when I've left clubs on the brink of tears or even gnashing my teeth with frustration because I have got something wrong and felt silly and humiliated in front of a woman and more experienced dancers.

At such times, I feel that I cannot manage intimate situations and I fear that I will never be a proper dancer, as though I feel out of depth in relationships with women. I wonder where perhaps I lack some special knowledge and curse my bad luck. I vow never to go back; but my love of the music means forces me back.

Also, dancing salsa forces me to confront my character defects. I had to do a Step Ten recently, having gone dancing with a female friend. I was messing up on the dance floor and she corrected my lead which, as someone who is resistant to be criticized by women, I found very hard. I overreacted and spent the rest of the evening sulking. I was behaving like a child and did not consider her feelings. She texted me afterwards to say that I needed less ego and more patience. And you know what? She was one hundred per cent right. That night I did a Step Ten inventory around my dishonesty, perfectionism, intolerance, envy and pride. I also did a Step Nine where I apologized for having overreacted. This was not an easy thing to do for prideful me but it was worth it as it served to clear the air.

I have reflected recently on how similar learning how to dance in a couple is to learning how to be intimate and relational. They both involve trying something new, leaving one's comfort zone, needing to be vulnerable, taking healthy risks, assuming responsibility when one makes mistakes and above all—and this for me is the kicker—sticking around when all I want to do is to run!

Contrary to popular belief, the keys to being a good salsa dancer are not great rhythm, low centre of gravity or good foot co-ordination, although those things are very important. Rather, it requires a willingness to be selfless, to consider one's partner's feelings, to make him or her look good, to be intimate, to be attuned to another person, and to be able to make and learn from one's mistakes. Other vital qualities are humility and the sensitivity to realize that learning requires submission.

Before I came into the programme, as in many other areas of my life (not least in romantic relationships), I was selfish on the dance floor, obsessed with how I looked and getting every routine perfect, terrified of eye contact and of making mistakes and, whilst recognizing my need to learn, rigid in mindset and not willing to recognize that I had gotten into bad habits. This meant that while I danced, I never really got to the point where I could let go and enjoy myself.

Whilst some friends comment that I am a good partner dancer, I find it nerve wracking to dance with a woman and be present with her. This really means welcoming her into my space, gauging her skill level, maintaining eye contact, and leading her in a sensitive and caring way that respects her individuality.

However, as I continue to work the programme and see the promises coming true in my life, I gradually become less fearful, more confident, more attuned to women as we dance, and more able to enjoy the experience. As with dating in recovery, the onus is on me to keep trying, choosing life and growth, even when it means confronting my fears and identifying character defects. This means I often need to do spot Step Ten inventories to take out the trash! I know now that true recovery involves courage not only to ask someone to dance but to be present when on the dance floor. This is also true for dating and relating women, so when the music of love calls me, I'll need to get on the good foot!

A Snapshot of Humility

by Jim L.

For me, humility is that highly desired but elusive character trait that emanates from a right relationship with God and a proper view of fellow human beings. Everyone wants it; few have it. If I pursue it, it runs away. If I claim it, I don't have it. I can't buy it or conjure it up. I can't get it by mimicking someone who has it. But, if I have it, others see it. When I see it in others, it is very attractive, and I want it.

A first cousin to serenity, humility is a close friend of acceptance and forgiveness. Humility is not concerned with self-esteem, but is acutely aware of self-worth. Humility grows from a spirit of gratitude. Humility motivates the spiritual principle of anonymity.

Humility is repelled by anger and resentment. It is snuffed out by fear and shame. Humility lives only in the present. Humility thrives only in the presence of honesty and transparency.

If all this sounds familiar, it is because humility spins out of the principles we practice in the Twelve Step program. The Big Book of AA (p. 62) reminds us that the root of our problem as an addict is selfishness—self-centeredness—and that our troubles are of our own making.

But the Twelve Step program does not leave us there. It goes on to give us hope. It suggests specific Steps that we can take to achieve recovery with its many beneficial side-effects—serenity, peace, happiness, and, yes, humility. If we are willing to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand God, humility will follow. Like freedom, humility comes when we surrender.

In the final analysis, humility is a gift from God. It is to be received, not achieved. To the extent that we strive for humility, we will fall short of it. To the extent that we strive to improve our conscious contact with God, we will begin to experience it. Humility is a classic illustration of what God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Tradition Nine

By Ed G.

SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Utter chaos! How on earth can a meeting be conducted without some sort of organization? Who runs the meeting? What format and/or agenda?

A lot of questions can be imagined if anyone has ever been part of any other organization. I know for myself that I have held a variety of positions in several formal organizations and found, as touched on in Tradition Nine, arguments, dissensions, and frequent difficulties in finding officers to fill a necessary position, so that the organization can function. That, in essence, forces an obligation upon someone to be at meetings, sometimes grudgingly.

Having been associated with SAA for some six years, I have experienced the simplicity of non-organization. With a meeting guide to go by (and this can take many forms) approved by the group conscience, attendees can concentrate on the hope, strength, and experience that each brings to the meeting without all the formal proceedings as found in other organizations getting in the way of that goal.

Yes, we have a trusted servant to start the meeting off and usually another trusted Servant to handle donations. The big difference here from other organizations is that normally that person wants to be at the meeting. Depending on the size of the group, a few other trusted servants may be needed. But instead of one or two members running the meeting, the prepared format may be passed around so that many, if not all, attendees, have a chance to contribute. There is no burden of trying to find officers—we don't have any. There are no elections pitting one or more persons against each other. The simplicity of our program makes finding a trusted servant easy. He or she is there for the same purpose—to seek recovery from our addiction.

On a higher level, there are boards and committees to oversee the larger SAA entities such as intergroups and at the international level. However, those serving in such positions have accepted the responsibility and are beholden to the membership they represent to see to it that the principles of SAA are maintained.

No organization? Yes, indeed! It is men and women working together for the common goal of recovery from sex addiction. In our program, its strength lies in its simplicity.

Tradition Ten

By Ed G.

Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Every organization I have ever been a part of, and there have been many, has a stated purpose for its existence—and they are good, worthwhile purposes. But they are none of SAA's business. SAA has its purpose as well, and similarly speaking, it is not the business of any other organization. Its purpose is to bring hope, strength, and experience to those suffering from sex addiction. And that is its sole purpose for being.

As with any addiction, it takes focus on the problem and the pathway out of it to gain a sense of freedom. To bring other issues into a meeting or a discussion on sex addiction would inevitably weaken our program. In our one-hour meeting there is just enough time to remind each member why he or she is there and to give each one an opportunity to share hope, strength, and experience with other kindred souls.

Yes, I think I can safely say the majority of the public is unaware of SAA and sex addiction as a whole. But SAA must stand alone and not be confused or compared to any other organization so no other issues can divert and/or subvert its purpose. Many of the other organizations have sub-issues that are inherently part of their program. As stated earlier, SAA has one purpose and one purpose only, to be there for the individual(s) still suffering from this most baffling, cunning, and powerful illness we call sex addiction.

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,

I attended a meeting recently but I was the only woman there. I am not sure I belong there. Can you connect me with a women's-only meeting?

Dear Questioning:

Unfortunately there may not be a women's-only meeting in your area. Not all areas have a lot of female members. It is not uncommon for there to be only one or two females in an SAA meeting. Regardless, our experience is that women *do* belong in SAA.

If one woman can push through the possible discomfort of being the minority in a meeting, she may be able to greet the next woman and slowly build female membership in that local area.

It may be helpful to read "A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer" which can be found on the literature section of the SAA website. You can contact the ISO Office or visit the SAA website to locate any women's-only meetings near you and get information on women's-only telemeetings. The Women's Outreach Committee offers an e-mail list for women in recovery. To obtain more information on the e-mail list of women in SAA, please email grace@saa-women.org.

Welcome to the Fellowship and know that you are a pioneer in sexual recovery in your area and there are women around the world available to assist you!

Grace

Disclaimer: we cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

– SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

Do I Have Time?

from the Men's Outreach Committee

I turned on the computer to check my e-mail from the day. It had been a hard day, stresses at work, concerns about my kids, demands around the house, and requests from my wife had filled my head with intruding, self-absorbed thoughts. Life is full of things that always seem more important, more demanding, more pressing. Three messages in my inbox; two were junk mail...delete those. The last had the title of "Help."

I started in my recovery six years ago in a remote town. I was fortunate in that the town of around 6,000 people where I lived had an SAA meeting that my therapist could refer me to. After contacting the individual who ran the meeting, I attended for the first time. There were just three of us in the room.

I opened the e-mail and started reading. "I live in a small town, and have been struggling with my sex addiction. I have been attending a meeting in my town; there are four of us here, but no one has worked the steps," it said.

I looked to the meeting and my therapist for ways to stay sober. I worked the steps with the help of different books, with people in co-sponsorship relationships, and with my therapist. I started another meeting to try to attract others who might have more experience. I looked to other fellowships for hope. I was doing anything I could to stay sober, to not act out, but things inside of me did not change; I was still in turmoil.

The writer of the e-mail continued, "I feel like I'm going insane! Like I'm holding on as tight as I can but that it's all slipping away. I'm so afraid that I'll go back out again, that I'll act out. There is no one around who can help me. Are you available?"

Eighteen months into my recovery journey, I found my current sponsor. He was leading a workshop that I attended, sharing his experience, strength, and hope. He lived two hours away from me, but was willing to sponsor me. We talked on the phone, he gave me assignments, we met when we could. I had a spiritual awakening. By the grace of my Higher Power, and through the wisdom of my sponsor, I am sober today, this day.

I have so much going on in my life, there is that project at work, I want to continue my education to get that promotion and raise, my wife wants to spend time with me, where is my time? Am I available to help this man? Can I afford not to? "Yes, I'm available to help," is how my answer starts. I hit the "send" button.

The e-mail described above is based on e-mails that I have received and

answered. Each one tells the story of what I experienced in my early days of recovery. Having feelings of needing, of wanting, someone with more experience to guide me through the Steps, and that person not being available. The details change: sometimes there is a meeting in the area, sometimes not. What is the same in every one of them is that there is a suffering sex addict who needs a sponsor. A suffering sex addict with no one to guide him or her through the steps to a spiritual experience, who needs to be relieved of the urge to act out. Our fellowship has grown impressively in the past few years, with meetings being started at an inspiring pace, but sponsors are not always available.

Soon after completing the steps with my sponsor I heard about the men's outreach list. The list contains contact information of individuals who are willing to be contacted by others in remote areas who need someone to guide them through the steps, or who are willing to be someone to contact in times of trouble or stress. Brimming with the urge to carry the message, I immediately joined the list.

It wasn't long before I was contacted by an individual who needed help. I would love to say that this man is sober today, but I don't know. We talked for a while, worked a few steps, and then I didn't hear from him any more. The second man I talked with, we worked the Steps for over a year. We talked at least once a week, and I was able to help him until he was able to start a meeting and find a sponsor in his own area. I have been talking with another man for over three years now. We finally met this year, when he joined me at the workshop run by my sponsor. It was like meeting someone from my home group.

The connections that I have made through the men's outreach list have enriched my life. They have given me contacts in every state, and even other countries, that are available to me as resources in my recovery. I truly know that, as my addiction knows no bounds, my recovery is not limited to those I see every day either. No matter if we are in the same area code or different country codes, the addiction is the same, and the need for someone to reach out to is the same.

The men's outreach committee maintains the men's outreach list. If you are available to be a resource for an addict who is still suffering, as a voice on the other end of a phone, or as a sponsor to work the steps with, contact men4saa@saa-recovery.org. Help is always needed.

Coming to Recovery

By Jimmy W.

There has been trouble within my heart and in my life since birth, at least as far back as I can remember. As of today I'm still hurting, confused and very much troubled. With every bit of my heart I'm crying out to God, asking for His help to give me some understanding and a sincere heart to live a life that's not of this world. At this point in time I'm sitting here in prison realizing that the actions that I have taken in my life are not the result of someone else's actions, although for some reason I always thought that they were.

I want to share my recovery and I hope that I'll be able to make sense out of this, if not for anyone else, at least for myself. I'm looking for growth in myself so that maybe I'll be able to break this cycle of excruciating pain that I've been living with that hurts not only me but others as well.

Please understand that I will try my best to keep my story nothing but the truth because one of my character defects is a tendency to exaggerate. I have always used exaggeration to get approval and respectability.

As I look back to a very young age, I remember that I was always happy and on the move. But for reasons unknown, I would start crying a lot which caused me to get into trouble. So I tried my best not to cry around anybody, and I started getting good at finding hiding places. Then I found something new that felt good, and that was bed wetting; while doing so it felt good to act out.

I lived in a very small town; I was very curious about many things. I always wanted to know why seeing girls excited me so much. At times I would get so excited that I would go to one of my hiding places and act out in a way that felt better than wetting in my bed. I met this girl and we both enjoyed getting out of our clothes; we would only hug each other. I later discovered the next phase in the addiction; I remember eventually getting caught and into trouble, but it didn't come close to stopping me in my addiction. The addiction continued to grow like a wild weed.

We moved to a new neighborhood in the same small town. Here I met some older children who were at the age of puberty. They would take me to the woods to play games with names like "cowboys" or "war games." They began doing things to me that hurt me really bad; I began being afraid to go around them. At the same time my stepfather started acting out with me and I felt the same way with him that I did with the older children. My curiosity and addictions were steadily growing, but at the same time I was not comfortable with the neighborhood boys or with my stepfather.

While I was in elementary school my addiction kept growing. I had tried

something with a girl that I had learned from the others. She stabbed me in the leg with her pencil. That scared me away from everyone for just a little while. Then I met a neighborhood girl who taught me more things that I would use in my addiction.

A few years later, my family moved from our small town to a bigger town where there were many more opportunities, such as drinking and older girls. At that time I was reaching the age of puberty. At that point in time, I thought that I knew everything, I didn't want to hear anything anybody had to say, and I was tired of living with my family. So I ran away, back to the neighborhood in the first small town where I lived. Things didn't work out there so within a week I was sent back to my family. I hated it there so I ran away again, but this time I ended up learning a life in the big city that played right into the addiction that I had been trapped in since I was very young. I was introduced to a world of prostitution for money, drugs, and at times just a place to sleep, shower, and eat.

My addiction was way out of control; I really didn't care because I was acting out in all of the other addictions I had acquired, and going even deeper in my sex addiction. I have many addictions, and I have come to realize that only the grace of God makes it possible and gives me the determination to establish a way of life and to experience a life of recovery.

I have been helped only through literature from an outreach member at ISO. Here in this prison environment and society I have never been allowed to speak about what is really on my mind and heart; it's unacceptable. Instead, I am "helped" by receiving medications to help me deal with my life.

I'm very tired of running and hiding, and I want to face life and deal with a growing positive way of life that may help others instead of hurting them. As of today I know within my heart I'm able to do this, not alone but with the support of my fellow recovering addicts who live by one of my favorite sayings, "it works if we work it." And as long as we keep opening the doors to others, I believe that peace and recovery will help this world to be a better place.

As for my abstinence, I'm still working on it because I'm still a suffering addict who is trying my best. I'll keep on keeping on and giving my best. With help from other addicts along with my Higher Power, whom I call God, I can be successful.

Addiction: A Fear-Based Disease

by Santi L.

We all live with fear to one degree or another every day. Even the simple act of leaving the house to start another day can have some fear attached to it. Depending on our agenda for the day, fear can creep in unexpectedly, at any time.

For some, a degree of fear is acceptable or otherwise used to achieve peak performance. For example, an athlete can use the fear of losing to provide additional incentive to win. For a police officer or a fireman, a fear of dying can provide the necessary respect for the suggested safety disciplines.

Fear is a natural and valuable part of life. It alerts us to potential problems and increases our awareness of opportunities to conquer ourselves. Fear can be useful, but rarely for an addict.

It is not by accident that we are forced in our Steps Four through Seven to encounter our fear-based disease. We must effectively deal with our fears lest we continue to be ruled by them and act accordingly. After we address our most visible fears we must continue to address them as they arise as part of our ongoing recovery program. Remember the most important word in our recovery program is "continued."

Sometimes we are the last to recognize our own fears as we have become adept at hiding them and ourselves with them. The worst and most debilitating fear is the one that stops us in our tracks and keeps us from moving forward, from functioning. It can keep us under the sheets and literally lead to depression if not met head on.

For us, fear is usually evident and active when we are concerned about losing something we have or not getting something we want.

Sometimes fear appears as a little hesitation before doing something new or unusual. Sometimes we make a conscious decision to stay in a fearful place. We think whatever is coming up must be worse than the morass we feel now. Oh, how we fear the unknown!

Do we really need to talk about the fear of the Fourth Step? I do not think so. Most of us in recovery have seen men and women "struggle" to face the truth about themselves and stay in spiritual limbo between the Third and Fourth Step for months and sometimes years, followed always by a certain relapse and subsequent slip.

F E A R = Fear Expressed Allows Relief

The best way to confront any fear is to do something, to not let it seep in. Because fear is a feeling, it is important that we address it by breaking it down, analyzing it, logically examining it, but first we must deal with the

immediacy of it. As soon as recognition is made, we can stand up, walk around, and put some time and space between ourselves and the source. We can do something totally unrelated to the cause of the fear. The physical act of movement releases the tension in our muscles so we can retain control of our emotions. We can use the adrenaline of fear for action, rather than paralysis, and we keep moving. Then we can begin the intellectual and spiritual process of dealing with the situation.

First on the list is getting assistance with it, and so we call upon God and our trusted spiritual advisors (sponsors included) to assist us in breaking it down to palatable, eatable morsels. We try to discover its root and determine the best way of dealing with it, in the moment and then long-term. It does very little good to acknowledge the fear and do nothing about it. As in dealing with addiction, we must get down to causes and conditions.

Typically, as in most emotional reactions, there is a secondary emotion and a primary cause. We might experience fear when we hear someone yell, but it is not enough to know that. Perhaps by examining it we can learn that our fear comes from growing, seeing, and hearing a lot of abusive behavior, and so we react fearfully to loud voices. Having examined the true source of our emotional upheaval, we can now set out to tackle it.

Sometimes it is best to do a mini-business plan to deal with it. We may want to address it using a carefully planned installment methodology. For example if we have a fear of heights, it may help to try to move to different height levels; as we become used to the issue of not being "on the ground" then we can add additional height to the process. Other times it will be best to address the issue head-on.

I remember I did not begin driving a car until I was nearly forty. I had lived in New York, Los Angeles, and Florida, and had managed not to drive for all those years. Frankly, I had grown up justifying my fear and storing it under a differently labeled box. When I came to Charlotte I decided to address the issue head-on. I enlisted the aid of a driving school, took lessons, prayed a lot and eventually overcame my fear.

Whatever our fears are, whether fear of failure or success, fear of "being found out" and exposed, fear of abandonment, fear of not measuring up, fear of not being liked, fear of God, fear of hell, fear of not measuring up sexually, we know that unless we take action these fears will continue to rule us. Isn't it time we addressed them? Nothing will change until something changes!

The practice of the Twelve Steps in our personal lives can bring incredible releases from fear of every description, despite the wide prevalence of formidable personal problems. When fear does persist, we know it for what it is, and, under God's grace and our willingness to take action, we become able to handle it.

A Letter to Myself

by Spencer M. from Missouri

Dear Spencer,

It's okay to be you. You have done the best you could have done. I forgive you, Spencer. I forgive you for all the mistakes you've made. I forgive you for all the times you should have stood up for yourself, but didn't. I forgive you for hurting nice men who wanted to be with you. I forgive you for using people just for sex, and not valuing them as human beings. I forgive you for dragging yourself into porn stores and nasty, dirty places that took a little bit of your soul each time you entered them. I forgive you for watching such a large amount of pornography, losing the ability to know how to have real, authentic sex. I forgive you for going through depressions, giving up on yourself, hating yourself, wishing yourself dead. I forgive you for hurting yourself sooo much, for believing you were only good for sex, for believing you weren't worth very much. I forgive you for believing you deserved to live with a drunk who made your life unmanageable and out of control. I forgive you for letting people put daggers in your heart with their words, and for letting those daggers stay there. I forgive you for giving up on life and yourself, for not believing that recovery is a viable option.

Spencer, it's okay to hurt and to cry. It's also okay to feel joy and the sensation laughter brings throughout your whole body. Embrace both; accept both. Whatever each day brings, whatever each moment brings, embrace it, accept it as part of your life, come what may. There will be times you don't think you can take one more ounce of pain in your life, but God will do for you what you once thought impossible. And joy will come. Joy has come.

You have helped so many people in your life. You have made a true, substantial difference for many. You care about other people. And there are many people in your life who love you and truly care about you. If you were gone, your absence would be palpable and painfully missed by many. You are in the thoughts of so many.

Spencer, it is time to let go. To accept your fate, whatever that is. To stop fighting. For today is the day you have ceased fighting anyone or anything. Today is the day you have made your stake, your claim to peace, albeit peace in sadness at times.

I forgive you for not being perfect. For damaging so many people. Using them for sex. I forgive you for hurting nice guys who deserved the truth. They didn't deserve to be lied to and deceived. I forgive you for being a liar, promiscuous, and a cheater. I wipe your slate clean, and dissolve any claim I have for revenge. You are forgiven. I forgive you for being a sex addict who used people for selfish reasons, not caring about their souls.

Spencer, it is now time to move on. Forgive yourself. Forgive others. Love yourself. Love others. Let go of the weight of unforgiving and perfectionism that has dragged you down.

Just let go.

Stop fighting.

Fall into a place of grace where being perfect isn't an option.

Just be who you are.

Don't stand in fear when others tear you down, and try to steal your soul. You have permission to rise up.

Spencer

Reflections on Recovery, Part Three

by Karl W.

[Editor's Note: this article is the third in a series of brief reflections on recovery submitted by Karl W. to *The Outer Circle*.]

Asking for Help/Taking Care of Myself

I have been used to living in crises and I have failed to ask for help or put things off. In recovery, I can realize that I need help and can't do everything myself. When I am engaging in addictive behavior, usually there are crises or issues around me that don't feel settled. Unfinished business is deadly.

I have gotten my finances in order. I am better, eating right, taking care of myself, have made doctor and dentist appointments, and gotten my hair cut.

I am exercising, walking, calling people, spending time with others, going to SAA meetings and keeping my commitments. Parts of me want to be angry or out of control, but I surrender that to my Higher Power. The hush of heaven holds my heart today. Thank you very much. Amen.

Being Present—Humility

Three months of sobriety. My Higher Power has assisted with these things, these choices. The sobriety comes from me being present, not living in the past, and not living in the future. But with being here in the program and walking the path with others who have a desire to stop the addictive sexual behavior.

Humility has been a challenge at times, but right now I don't want to be a master of the universe or step in someone else's shoes. I need to be happy exactly as I am. I realize when I seek to connect, I am present and humble.

Letting Go

In coming back to meetings after traveling, I find that everything is working just fine without my presence, without my guidance. I see in other places there is not as much focus on fear and negativity. I need to stop the attention on these things and look to the good and realize that love can begin at any time and any place.

Letting go of perfectionism is the way for me to work my program. Many times I want to hold onto some story, some reaction, some way of being,

but this sets me up for failure, as many emotions will rise up with the story.

I am grateful for love entering into my heart. The hush of heaven holds my heart today. Thank you very much. Amen.

And He Paints a Beautiful Sky

by Mike P.

Wow . . . the sunrise
God was at work this morning
And He paints a beautiful sky

Each day we go about our routine
Each moment we plan for the next
But He is with us always
And He paints a beautiful sky

Wonders of Life
And thoughts of shame
He forgives us each and every day
And He paints a beautiful sky

Life is in service of the Lord
Life is teaching the young
He has given us the gifts
And He paints a beautiful sky

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
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South Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardSC@saa-recovery.org
Southeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardSE@saa-recovery.org
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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

Information Technician: Daniel B. djb@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

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