

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
July 16, 2011 teleconference:**

- Motion approved for the location for the 2014 annual SAA Conference and Convention.
 - Motion approved to sell the SAA Green Book in a e-book format using the ISO of SAA website. The cost will be \$8.95.
 - Motion approved to fund a maximum of \$5,500 for up to twelve Literature Committee representatives for two days of mid-year face-to-face meetings immediately preceding the Indiana retreat in October 2011. Standard travel reimbursements are requested.
 - Motion approved to have a mid-year caucus meeting for the SE region for the following purposes: (a) To encourage participation in ISO activities at the regional level, and (b) To conduct any business that may arise, including planning for future regional caucuses.
-

**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
August 20, 2011 teleconference:**

- Motion approved that, when the ISO of SAA negotiates its contract with a convention venue for future conventions, there is to be a designated room for the use of all Women of SAA, under the coordination of the Women's Outreach Subcommittee (WOSC).
 - Motion approved to have a mid-year caucus meeting for the NE region for the following purposes: (a) To encourage participation in ISO activities at the regional level, and (b) To conduct any business that may arise, including planning for future regional caucuses.
-

**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
September 17, 2011 teleconference:**

- Motion approved to fund a maximum of \$5000 for the ISO Structure Committee to meet face-to-face.

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.

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 Anonymous*). 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!***

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.

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.

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, October 23

Sunday, November 27

Sunday, December 25 - *cancelled*

Sunday, January 22

Sunday February 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 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.

SAA pamphlets 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.

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

Intergroup Communications

The Intergroup Communication Committee is proud to announce its reformation, which happened at the 2011 International Conference in Houston, TX. The goal of the ICC is to foster communication and sharing between intergroups both large and small, to foster and encourage the sharing of ideas between intergroups across the country and the world, and provide support for intergroups who are just forming. Telephone Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 5pm PST, 6pm MST, 7pm CST, 8 EDT.

For information about attending, please email:

icc@saa-iso.org

Women's Outreach

Service Opportunities exist in the Women's Outreach Subcommittee (WOSC) for members of our fellowship to get involved in some exciting work: planning of the next Women's Only retreat; planning for the 2012 Convention in Canada, with a focus on reaching out to women sex addicts at Convention; putting on a tele-workshop "Sober and Sustainable Meetings."

If you would like to get involved and help us do what we can for the addict who still suffers (in and out of our rooms), please contact the ISO Office @ 800-477-8191 or by e-mail at **info@saa-recovery.org**.

Or you may contact our Service Coordinator @ 713-382-3187, or by e-mail at **service@saa-iso.org**.

Author's Group

Opportunity to Participate

The Authors Group, sponsored by the Literature Committee, is starting to work on writing a Step Study workbook / web page based on the SAA Green Book. We would like to hear your opinions of what should be in that workbook.

We are holding the next teleconference on Dec 17 at 10 CST and you are welcome to participate. For information on how to get on the call, please contact us at litcom.ops.ag@saa-iso.org

Men's Outreach

Our newly reconstituted men's outreach committee has been brainstorming for ways to increase our outreach. The ISO office recently sent an e-mail blast to the roughly 1,250 e-mail addresses it has in its database looking for more men to be part of the men's outreach list. This has been a very successful effort, and as of this writing, about 20 new men have joined the list since that e-mail was sent.

We are also in the discussion stages of a men's outreach page on the SAA website, and the committee is also talking about putting together a pamphlet dealing with men's outreach. Both of these are long-range goals, and we are looking for something a little more immediate. The inspiration for our next step came from the Women's Outreach Subcommittee.

One of the more popular pieces in *The Outer Circle* is the "Dear Grace" column which answers questions submitted by women in the fellowship. So we have decided to do a similar column answering men's questions, to be called "Dear Will" (clever, huh?).

The "Dear Will" column will begin with the Jan/Feb 2012 issue. If you are a man in the SAA program and you have a question that relates to your experiences as a man in the SAA program, please send it to "Dear Will" at genoutreach.men@saa-recovery.org.

While "Will" will answer all questions sent to him, he will select the most thought-provoking ones for publication in *The Outer Circle*. Will recalls being told many times in school that "the only dumb question is the one that isn't asked," so please send your questions to him.

ISO Income/Expense Summary

As of September 30, 2011

	Sep 2011	Monthly Avg	Jul - Sep 2011
Income			
Sales	15,371.48	15,862.28	47,586.83
Shipping & Handling	1,337.50	1,391.21	4,173.64
Donations	24,662.99	22,818.45	68,455.34
Delegate Meeting Registration	5.00	1.67	5.00
Interest Earned	29.12	32.60	97.81
Other Income	0.00	3.30	9.90
Total Income	41,406.09	40,109.51	120,328.52
Cost of Goods Sold	6,892.35	7,640.59	22,921.76
Gross Profit	34,513.74	32,468.92	97,406.76
Expense			
Wages	18,311.72	18,675.46	56,026.37
Insurance	320.54	320.54	961.62
Payroll Taxes	1,601.46	1,538.58	4,615.75
Employee Benefits (Not Wages)	3,450.44	3,875.23	11,625.69
Travel-Related	3,173.96	1,722.85	5,168.56
Office Postage	5.16	6.80	20.41
Communications	800.82	837.71	2,513.14
Office Expense	912.83	1,094.98	3,284.94
Occupancy Expenses	1,544.08	1,562.06	4,686.18
Board/Committee Expense	1,260.25	1,277.73	3,833.19
The Outer Circle	2,271.83	1,747.10	5,241.31
Financial Charges	985.80	907.86	2,723.58
Bad Debts/Refunds	143.14	103.09	309.26
Translating/Literature Projects	0.00	333.33	1,000.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	525.00
Payroll Expenses	17.32	18.21	54.64
Total Expense	34,974.35	34,196.55	102,589.64
Net Income	-460.61	-1,727.63	-5,182.88

Financial Results for September 2011

In the month of September we showed a deficit of \$460.61. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$3,569.15.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$452.04 for September, and has exceeded our estimate by \$1,823.91 for the current service year.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$470.73 for September, and are below our estimate by \$578.11 for the current service year. Our bronze medallions exceeded our estimate by \$332 in September, and have exceeded our estimate by \$710.09 for the current service year. Our plastic chips exceeded our estimate by \$13.00 in September, but is below our estimate by \$364.00 for the current service year. Our budget for the sale of audio workshop and speaker CD's and mp3 files has not met our expectations, and is below our budget estimate by \$2,547.75 for the current service year.

Our total sales were above below our estimate by \$1,384.52.

Individual donations were above our estimate by \$787.69, and have exceeded our estimate by \$866.25 for the current service year. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$5,615.30, and have exceeded our estimate by \$8,309.09 for the current service year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$43,308.03.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$2,490.20. This includes \$3,173.96 for Literature Committee and ISOS travel expenses that were not in the budget.

A summary of the current service year: (July 1 to September 30)

- Sales are below our budget estimate by \$2,681.17
- Donations exceed our budget estimate by \$9,175.34
- Expenses exceed our budget estimate by \$7,281.89
- Net surplus is below our budget estimate by \$1,120.13

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.

I was recently invited to tell my story at a local group. It's been several years since I last told my story, and this time the occasion was particularly special because it was the same group where I did my First Step back in 1991. The bad news was that the meeting was fifteen minutes shorter than it was back then, and I had twenty years' additional story to tell. So, in



*I would like to propose as a topic
article for the July/August 2012
issue **"Carrying the Message."***



order that I not omit anything, I sat down and did an outline ahead of time. This turned out to be a good thing in more than one respect because we had a work-related crisis earlier in the day that really took me out of myself. If I had gone to the meeting without an outline, it's likely that my mind would have gone blank.

Another advantage to writing out the outline was that I really had a chance to think about the things that were important instead of what just happened to come to mind during that forty-five or so minutes that I spoke. One thing that came back to me in a big way was the reminder that I acted out in a particularly isolating way. Accordingly, I was convinced that I would never again have anybody to spend the holidays with. I embraced this consequence of my addiction to the extent I could and even proved that I was okay with it by spending the two big end-of-year holidays by myself; I did this two years in a row. Looking back, I find it sad that I truly thought that this was the best that I deserved.

I knew for roughly a month that I would be telling my story, and so I had lots

of time to reflect on many things that ended up not making it into my outline. One of the biggest ones was how I came to the realization that I am capable of being codependent not only on people with whom I am in a committed relationship, but also with friends, employers, and even organizations. As I've always said, doing a Sixth and Seventh Step is like peeling the layers of an onion, in that once I peel away one layer, I discover a new layer. So I have my work cut out for me for the New Year.

I continue to be pleased with the articles we have been receiving of late, and not just the topic and Step/Tradition articles. We have an especially good article this month on international development. I hope you will take a chance to read it (as well of the rest of the issue, of course) and give some thought to how you might be able to participate in this much-needed service work. As the article points out, it is not necessary to know a foreign language to help with international development.

I would like to propose as a topic article for the July/August 2012 issue "carrying the message." Perhaps you have a story on how the message was carried to you, or how you carried the message to another, or even how you witnessed somebody else carrying the message. If you have such a story, or any other take on this topic, please share it with us.

With that, I'll just wish you the happiest holiday season ever. I look forward to talking with you again in 2012.

ICC Needs Chairperson

The Intergroup Communication Committee (ICC) is comprised of active individuals who are willing to volunteer their time and efforts in moving this committee forward and fostering communication between the various intergroups. The ICC is currently looking for a permanent chairperson to lead it. If you feel a desire for service work and feel that you could lend your expertise to the ICC please join us on one of our telephone meetings held the third Tuesday of each month at 5pm PST, 6pm MST, 7pm CST, 8 EDT.

For information about attending, please email:

icc@saa-iso.org

Attraction, Not Promotion

by Jim H.

Ever since I began my recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, I've heard the words: "It's a program of attraction, not promotion!" Most of us don't give much thought to the seemingly simple three-word phrase "attraction, not promotion," but I believe it is one of the principles which makes SAA work. I'm really grateful to Bill W. and the founding members of AA for discovering this principle as it applies to the preservation of recovery fellowships like SAA and others. To me it means that our focus as SAA members should be to carry the message by living it rather than just preaching about it and trying to convert others to our "religion." In general, sex addicts are a rebellious people and some of us have a keen sensitivity and resistance to any kind of promotional message. This sort of promotion can be seen in advertising as well as with some religious folks, and many of us don't trust the messenger, let alone the message, when it is delivered by someone in an aggressive manner.

To me, attraction means that I must focus on working my program vigorously, honestly, and consistently, so that by the grace of God I may find some freedom from my inner and middle circles and perhaps even some serenity. When I work the steps and rigorously apply them in my life, I find the promises coming true, including freedom from fear and resentment and an ability to function more effectively, enjoyably, and peacefully in this difficult world. When that begins to happen, even a little bit, others may begin to be attracted to me. People may see me change and "want what I have." Or newcomers may just feel comfortable around me because I offer them something that they desperately need: *hope*.

Another form of attraction that SAA members can practice involves attention and hospitality. We pay more attention to newcomers and our fellow members, as our selfishness slips away. We try to be of humble service to other recovering sex addicts by welcoming them to our meetings, shaking hands, opening up and then listening, and offering our phone numbers and free literature. We listen with a loving and non-judgmental attitude, constantly thanking God for the gift of the newcomer, remembering where we came from, and empathizing with his or her struggles.

To me, this is what attraction means, and it is much more compelling than promotion. And thanks to this wonderful principle, we have another touchstone which guides us and helps us stay on the path of recovery. In the meantime, we are allowed to touch the lives of others in a meaningful way and can begin to truly understand the meaning of the promise "we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it" because we will realize that it is our acting out past, tempered by our spiritual program of recovery, which allows us to be so beautifully attractive to a still-suffering sex addict.

Prayer and Conscious Contact

by Stephen C.

“By sharing ourselves in this way [i.e., by praying about our concerns], we bring ourselves regularly into the open, into the awareness of God’s care.”
Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 56

For some years I had a rather simplistic view of prayer vis-à-vis meditation. My knee-jerk statement about Step Eleven was always, “Prayer is me talking to God, and meditation is God talking to me. God talks to me in a variety of ways, through the things I read in meditation books and elsewhere, other people, and life situations.” I clearly had more to say about the benefits of meditation as opposed to the benefits of prayer which indicated my thoughts about the relevant benefits of the two. My meditation life correspondingly took up a proportionately greater part of my “conscious contact” times than did my prayer life did. I thought of prayer as basically being me yapping at God’s feet like a little dog, hoping he would notice.

Reading this quote out of the Green Book really heightened my awareness of how I had so often given short shrift to prayer as opposed to meditation. The phrase out of the AA Twelve and Twelve, “almost the only scoffers at prayer are those who never tried it enough” in a way applied to me as well. I now began to start realizing that maybe I wasn’t paying as much attention to prayer as I might.

I started paying more attention to what others had to say about prayer. I remember being in a church discussion group where the leader of the group said “Perhaps most of us don’t spend that much time in prayer.” One man raised his hand and said, “I do. I pray three times a day; there are many other times during the day I can pray during my other activities. It’s not about getting down on my knees every time.” He really made an impression on me.

I began to spend more time in my prayer life, having faith that I would hear God’s answers while I was praying. This was a first for me, and it worked! Still, I’m sure I will always wait for confirmations in the rest of my life of these answers, just to make sure I’m not just answering my own requests and saying those answers are from God.

At the same time, just as the quote says, I have begun getting that sense of God caring for me while I am praying that I already had from my meditations. Once I started realizing how much bigger a role prayer had in that conscious contact than I did previously, my conscious contact with God improved immensely.

Step 12

by KJ

Hello everyone. I'm KJ and I'm a recovering Sex Addict. I just returned from an SAA meeting and I'm glad I went. I have had some real problems lately with mild depression. I won't go into it but what does matter is contact with other recovering sex addicts. When I get like this, I just don't want to do anything. I let my car appearance run down. My housekeeping suffers. I don't even want to pay bills, even if I have the money or continue to take care of other life's business.

When I am in contact with others I get outside of myself. There were several newcomers at the meeting tonight and I could feel their pain. Now when I'm all alone and wrapped up in myself then I get lost in the poor me's. Like someone once said in a meeting. "I'm not much but I'm all I think about." As a child growing up in the fifties I was told, "Don't complain; most kids are far worse off than you are." I didn't want to hear it but that is how I have to look at it today. I have to be grateful for even the things I take for granted. There are newcomers who don't have hope. What does that have to do with me and the Twelfth Step?

Step Twelve is my final goal in working through the Twelve-Step process: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives." When I was able to get outside of self tonight at the meeting by helping one of those newcomers, then it helped me. I didn't want to share but I did. I didn't want to talk with anyone after the meeting but I did. I didn't want to write this article but I did.

Step Twelve is about service. If I had been in my old life, of living without recovery, I would have kept these feelings bottled up inside until I melted down and medicated them by acting out sexually. I was able to break this personal cycle of defeat tonight by simply suiting up and showing up. I was able to bring hope to someone and be helped at the same time. I am a wounded healer, as are we all.

Today I am glad to be a sex addict. What if I had never found SAA? I am not sure if I would have been alive and even if I had been, I definitely would not have been a happy camper. God as I understand God has guided me here. It is up to me to take his gift and use it to help myself and others. I have had to take things minute by minute recently but that helps to humble me somewhat. I sometimes think I have all the answers and when I find that I don't then my control is gone. I feel helpless and useless. God has developed a remedy for my character flaws and it is called "No man is an island." I don't have to be self sufficient in everything I do; especially my

recovery. I have to reach out to others in order to stay alive myself. Recovery happens: "Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. [It (sobriety)] will always materialize if [I] work for [it]" (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 84 [paraphrased]).

I worked for a man I called Father Martin in a treatment facility some years ago. He asked a fellow priest about the Twelfth Step and just how far do you go to help these suffering people? The man said, "You go to any length and then...one step more." Thank you, Father Martin.

A Poem for the Eleventh Tradition

by Larry E.

Memories wedged like fissures in rocks, rutilated quartz,
Emotional alchemy transmuting abuse into trauma
In a crucible of life, a molten core deep under the surface,
Beneath layers of denial and deception, a brittle shale
Secure in place but easily crumbled by up-thrusts and fault.

Tears indistinguishable like sand in a desert storm,
Unseen when cried in the rain, falling unobserved;
Traces of salt washed away, dissolved even in mist,
Diluted on the surface by roiling oceans of chaos
But inside wearing tracks into the bedrock of the self.

Tracks become crevices dividing the whole person,
Valleys through which sustenance flows only at the bottom
Leaving so much rock dry and desolate, seemingly dead.
But nature will out; and shoots at first tiny and tender
Push down through rock to succor the nourishment below.

It is not the water deep down that draws the roots toward it.
It need not do so, for the soul of life always seeks its source.
When it is time to renew itself, the seed awakens to the chance.
As nimble roots pull from drops of dew and drenching rains,
So the soul leaches what it needs from the spiritual aquifer.

So we who fill the reservoir with experience, strength and hope
Need not direct their flow to those who thirst for recovery.
When it is time they are pulled as if by immutable gravity
To a well of recovery, reconstituted like dried fruit in liquid;
No longer parched, tasting the sweet promise of life renewed.

Seeing Others as Anonymous

by Simon B.

I have heard it said that each Step and the Tradition of the same number are interconnected. While I sometimes have difficulty relating a Step to its corresponding Tradition, I think it's a little easier in the case of Step Twelve since the Step is in part about "carrying the message," and my relations to others that are touched on in Tradition Twelve are part of the message that I try to carry. And of course, both the Step and the Tradition use the word "principles."

Tradition Twelve begins by talking about anonymity. Anonymity can take a couple of different forms. The discussion of Tradition Twelve in the SAA Green Book begins with what is probably the simplest form of anonymity: "On one level, anonymity simply means that the names of SAA members, and the details of what we share in meetings, are kept confidential and not repeated outside of the meetings" (p. 95).

Yet anonymity comes into play in those famous final three words of Tradition Twelve, "principles before personalities." When I have a disagreement with somebody else, it is easy for me to blame that disagreement on a basic "personality conflict" between that other person and me. Once I allow this thought into my head, I filter any other interactions I may have with him or her through my initial resentment and in so doing convince myself that anything that he or she may say or do is intended as a personal attack, thus ending up in full resentment mode.

This is where the concept of anonymity can be so powerful for me. Rather than developing a resentment against somebody else for something he or she has said, I can let it go and not let it color my next interaction with him or her. In other words, it is as though that person has become a complete stranger to me, almost as though he or she is anonymous. If I can successfully do this, then we have a chance of building (or rebuilding) a valid connection with each other.

As I said, Step Twelve charges me, among other things, to "carry the message." One of the many ways I can do this, in relationships both inside and outside the SAA program, is to place the principle (the person or the relationship) above the personality (whatever disagreement we may be having). When I can do this, I have found another way to "practice these principles" in my life.

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,

Can I deal with love or relationship addiction in SAA or do I have to go to a different program?

Dear Wondering:

That's a great question that many members wonder about because our name, Sex Addicts Anonymous, doesn't include anything about love or relationships, while some other Twelve-Step program names do.

It is clear in our literature that these issues can be dealt with here. On page 4 of the SAA Green Book, in the chapter called "Our Addiction," it says "We acted out in many different ways. Sometimes we had trouble with one unwanted behavior, sometimes with many. We struggled with...destructive relationships; romantic obsession...or other behaviors that involve risk to ourselves—physical, legal, emotional or spiritual—and harm to others." This tells us that even if our only acting out behavior is around unhealthy relationships, and the harms done are strictly emotional, we can deal with that here, in SAA.

This chapter goes on to say, on the same page, "While none of us fits the profile perfectly, we can all identify with some of the following traits. We chose...romantic obsession over those things we cherished the most.... [R]omantic fantasies...and seductive planning filled our minds and distorted our thinking.... Our lives became filled with deceit in order to hide our behaviors. We found ourselves isolated and alone."

If this sounds familiar to you, you are welcome here! You are home. You will find women and men here that struggle with the same issues. There is additional support available to women by sending an email to grace@SAA-women.org and requesting the SAA Women's Outreach List. There are over 200 women on that list who are available for you to talk with.

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

A Daily Inventory and Shame

by Larry E.

Admitting that I am powerless over sexual acting out, dancing to the sour notes of a wheezing calliope in a ballet on a film of slick oil, is embarrassing and shameful.

In my family of origin, embarrassment and shame were to be avoided, hidden behind a façade of smiles, and denied despite the feelings they evoked and the dishonesty they hid.

I learned the family role too well. I contrived to split existence in two, cleave reality from despair, conflate lies trivial and great, confuse wants and needs, recreate the trauma of neglect and abandonment, stand vacant but possessed on a sliver of land above a chasm whose very existence I refused to see in front of me, foot dangling over the precipice of no redemption.

That I fell into that chasm is undeniable now. But the descent was not sudden. Instead, like the frog in water raised slowly to boiling, I was unaware as I tumbled into chaos.

As if clinging to a track, I glided effortlessly down a spiral, at times negligent and passive, at times my velocity compounded by overt action, sustained by momentum and artful neglect, pushing the envelope of victimhood, my vision obscured by material goods, financial rewards, accumulated power, and ascribed status, until I came to a deep bottom.

The consequences of that bottom brought shame and embarrassment! Was there no relief? My addiction stripped away the hard shell of purposeful self-deception, the candy coating around all the pain, fear and grief that had oozed inside me for thirty years. At least I could see myself more clearly. Aided by loved ones whom I hurt and strangers who owed me nothing, I was shaken as if by an earthquake, awakened as if from a nightmare, restored to life, given firm footing on an unsinkable rock in a writhing sea, and offered the redemption I thought was impossible.

So it is challenging to inventory my day each evening, for I am not perfectly evolved, nor thoroughly enlightened. With the greater awareness and mindfulness that I am learning and practicing, my shortcomings and stand out as mountains on the moon through a great telescope.

But seeing clearly means I appreciate that those mountains are the forces and debris from asteroids that long ago gave up their energy. No point mourning those lumps of rock that geologic history has revealed in the con-

tours of the moon. The dust is thick, flying around when disturbed. So, having made amends to those to whom I could wherever possible, I am learning, without closing the door on them, to let the dust settle and to be in the moment.

My daily inventory still evokes shame and embarrassment. Some of it is toxic, filling my body with poisons, detouring my thoughts to self-pity and the fallacy that I am intrinsically bad. But I am becoming inured thanks to the passage of time, the compassion of others, the practice of empathy toward myself and others, and conscious contact with a higher power.

After over four years in recovery, my daily inventory most often becomes an opportunity for gratitude, a moment of pause in an otherwise still-busy but not chaotic life, a chance to reflect, to meditate, to cut myself some slack in that rope onto which I hold for support, as when we join hands at the end of a meeting, sharing strength, hope, acceptance, and self-acceptance.

I write this note in the morning while it is still dark, before the sun awakens me to a new day, unable to sleep, my mind turning over and over the detritus of my life, like wet clothes in an old squeaky dryer, like grain crushed to flour by a millstone spun by the steady flow of a mountain stream, like gravity pulling without rest on all within its influence.

This is part of my inventory, too. Not so much addressing the harm that I did nor fretting about the harm that I might do or that might be done to me. But accessing those hidden reserves of feeling inside me, including the old shame and embarrassment that survive deep within and that surface once in a while; revealing them to me and sharing them with others, dissipating more of the energy that they hold, like water released through a dam to lower the reservoir behind.

Perhaps one day I will breach that dam, let the water flow freely, careful not to flood the villages below but to fertilize their fields and drive their engines of creativity and ingenuity.

But in the meantime I work my program, do my daily inventory, reach out to others, gratefully accept help from others, and live my life with mindfulness and purpose. These are the assets in my inventory, and a daily accounting of them is a source of joy, growth and meaning.

My Story

by Bill Y.

Hello; my name is Bill. I'm an inmate. I'm sixty-five years old and I'm a sex offender. I crossed over the line from being a sex addict to being a sex offender. I never thought of myself as a sex addict, but after reading some stories in *The Outer Circle* and the SAA Green Book I realized that I was. I do remember going out to bars drinking and looking for sex. Even after I was married and had some children, it seemed I wanted sex even more.

But what put me into prison was not an addiction, but a fantasy I had. My fantasy had more control over me than a tank in a war zone. I wanted to fulfill that fantasy at any cost. The cost turned out to be very high. It cost me ten years in prison and twenty years probation, and I have to register as a sex offender for the rest of my life. I lost it all: a good wife, a house, and much more. But the biggest loss was my self-respect.

My life as a child was not a good one. I had my ups and downs. I was sexually abused until the age of fifteen. It seemed as if I had a tattoo on my head that said, "Here I am." My mother would have children and sell them. My mother and her husband were drunks. I think I could have gotten that addiction from them.

My older sister and I were both sexually abused and were sold as well. We were taken to California, where we lived until our new parents passed on. We were made wards of the state until somehow I was returned to Connecticut to live with my birth mother. My sister stayed in California in a foster home. I learned later that my sister was raped, but she learned how to live with the thoughts of it. She is doing well now.

I was about twelve years old when I was returned to live with my birth mother and stepfather. They would go out drinking, come home drunk, and abuse me. So I started staying out at night when I could. I would stay at a friend's house, sometimes for days. When it was safe to go home I would.

I married at the age of seventeen. I had a real bad drinking problem which I was able to overcome as time went on. When I was drinking I had sexual difficulties with my daughter. My wife and I divorced and I moved to another town. I did not see my family often.

As I said, I went to prison because of a fantasy I had. While in one of my sex offender classes I got some literature on some support groups in other states. I sent for more information. I received a letter from a person who was in SAA outreach. He lives in New York. We wrote back and forth for a while. He said he would be my sponsor. I have come to trust him very

much. I have told him my story and he has told me his. At this time we are working the Twelve-Step program through the mail. My sponsor has been on my side all the way. If I have any questions he does his best to answer them.

While reading *The Outer Circle* I found that they were looking for stories. I sent in mine, and I met another man who has also become a good friend. Without the help of SAA and my two new friends, I would be lost.

My goal when I get out of prison is to start a support group for sex offenders. I want to build a strong group.

Thank you, SAA, for all of your help.

Carrying the Message to the Addict Who Still Suffers... Overseas

by Andrés P.

Looking back to my first SAA meeting, I remember my struggle with the meetings in English. I also see the many blessings that were around me: I was able to find the SAA website and information about local meetings. I was living in Miami Beach and the local meeting was only a few blocks away. Although my perfectionism told me my English was awful, I was able to complete the Twelve Steps in English and surrendered my sex addiction to my Higher Power.

Today, free of the compulsive, addictive behaviors that brought me to the rooms of SAA, I wonder if I can do something to help the addicts who still suffer and who have cultural and or linguistic barriers preventing them from hearing and understanding the SAA message. Is there something I can do to help these people get the SAA message that saved my life?

I learned in SAA that I am not alone in my recovery or in my concern about the addict who still suffers but who is separated by cultural and linguistic barriers. During the 2008 Seattle convention, I found that other people had these same concerns. A committee had already been created to address these concerns and to provide support to other committees regarding international issues. This committee, the International Development Committee (IDC), has as its main mission to advise the Board and, under the Board's direction, to support the Literature Committee (LitCom), the office, the autonomous groups and the intergroups on international development issues. The committee discusses matters such as copyright of SAA materials and various translations. We are seeking professional translators in our fellowship to help with these translations. If you are willing and able to do this type of service work, it would be compensated in accordance with our Eighth Tradition.

We currently have a list of volunteers who speak other languages, including Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English, Flemish, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, and who are willing to be contacted through the main office. You are invited to join this list by emailing idc@saa-recovery.org. Perfection is not a requirement. We encourage you to ask your higher power or your sponsor if this would be a good opportunity for growth through service.

LitCom is very supportive of our endeavors. It has supported Spanish translations of our Green Book as well as most pamphlets and booklets. These versions have helped our fellowship grow in such countries as

Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Spain. The French version of our basic pamphlet is now available online. This year we have a great opportunity at LitCom for international development: We have two native Spanish speakers aboard and will be able to connect more with our Spanish-speaking community.

The situation in Latin America requires a lot of translation efforts. In other countries, a different approach is necessary as many in those countries have English as a second language.

Because many Europeans seem to speak or understand English, the need there is mostly for sponsors in English willing to understand and surrender cultural differences. Spatial limitations require sponsorship by phone, e-mail or Skype. Hundreds of recovering addicts in the United States have worked under these situations. We would like to have a pool of sober members who are willing to assist addicts overseas in awareness of cultural differences.

I want to extend an invitation to anyone who feels the call to service to people in other countries. Most requests the ISO office receives are in English, along with a very small number in Spanish. If we are successful in raising awareness of SAA in other countries, the number of requests in other languages may well rise. I particularly want to extend my invitation to all who know Spanish and who do not feel confident enough to use it. A few words could save a life.

Cultural issues are hard to deal with. We have found that some words are difficult to translate, not because of linguistic problems but instead because of cultural ones.

We have struggled to find a translation in Spanish for the phrase "acting out." At the 2010 Albuquerque convention, a man from Mexico suggested that the current translation, "actuación," brings thoughts to him of being on stage. We started brainstorming for alternative translations. He suggested "manifestación" as an approximate way of translating "acting out." While in Spanish it is correct to say "I manifest my addiction," it is more accurate to say "the addiction manifests itself." The expression "I manifested" without a direct object (as in "I act out") is somehow vague but it is much better than the current alternative, "I acted." In Spanish grammar, I am not one hundred percent responsible for my actions; instead, I am a victim of my sex addiction: "The addiction manifested itself." A corresponding English expression would be "it slipped my mind," as opposed to "I forgot." Another problematic word is "boundary," which in Spanish more commonly means "frontier" or "limit." One never hears someone say in Spanish, "I am setting a boundary." The closest I have heard is "I keep a distance" from a person or situation.

There is much room for discussion in just these two expressions. That is why I believe serving on this committee requires patience, a quality I sometimes feel I still lack. It takes patience to listen and discuss these matters, and the results may still not be optimal. It helps my recovery to slow down, breathe, and find the presence of my higher power in everything I do.

We recently started a Spanish meeting in Miami. It is very rewarding to see people attend the meeting and be able to listen to the message in their native tongue. When I hear it in Spanish, I connect to the Steps to a deeper extent and I go back to the years in my home country. Doing the steps in English, my brain connected mostly to my acting out in the United States, where my addiction became unmanageable. The Steps covered most of my acting out, but the language difference minimized my underlying character defects. This Spanish meeting allows me to connect to my childhood and to my early years of disconnection from my higher power.

There is a Spanish telemeeting on Wednesdays at 6:30pm Pacific Time that is open to all, even those who just want to practice their Spanish while carrying the message. Please join us.

Today I live a life of peace and serenity. I am learning the meaning of compassion and love. This could have not been possible without the support of my fellowship and the Twelve Steps that reconnected me to my higher power. Still, I often get into my race of thoughts and feelings of unworthiness and shame. This is where service plays an important part in my recovery. Once I start thinking and doing something about the addict out there without a word of recovery and comfort in his or her own language, any seeming drama disappears immediately from my life. I get a deep sense of gratitude and feel connected to my fellowship who accepts and loves me as I am. I used to carry a lot of resentment for not having perfect English and for being on the losing end of my cultural struggle. I felt I was "less than" in this country. Recovery has brought me to a place where being a native Spanish speaker is treasured and used for service.

There is a fine line between controlling and assuring that SAA groups worldwide adhere to the Steps and Traditions that have carried us for twenty-five years. The principle of attraction rather than promotion plays an important role in international development. It is easy to believe I am rescuing people; and I want to be of the mindset that every addict has a higher power who will bring the message when addict is ready, perhaps through SAA.

In summary, there are four basic ways in which to get involved:

First, do you speak a language other than English? Do you want to

practice our Fifth Tradition of carrying the message to the sex addict who still suffers? The IDC is looking for SAA members who are fluent or fairly fluent in languages other than English who are available to carry the message to newcomers or answer inquiries in the target language. Interested? Please contact the IDC at idc@saa-recovery.org. In the subject line, please write, "Language Service," and in the body of your message, please indicate what language or languages you speak. If you have questions, feel free to contact us at the same e-mail address.

Second, do you only speak English? International development does not mean development by foreigners; it means development across national boundaries. Currently non-English speakers are at a huge disadvantage in accessing the experience, strength and hope of SAA. If you are lucky enough to speak English and live in a country where SAA is already well-established, you are in an excellent position to support international development. Even if you do not speak the language, you can carry the message as a meeting member, sponsor or co-sponsor to people in other countries who do understand English and who can in turn pass on the message in their home language by starting local meetings and becoming sponsors themselves. But it has to start where the experience, strength and hope is. It has to start with you.

Third, you can call in to a telemeeting, internet chat, or webcall meeting, which often have members for whom English is a second language. Finally, you can offer long-range sponsorship by registering with one of the ISO outreach groups.

If you have questions, suggestions or just interest in international issues, please contact the IDC. I am alive today because of the message I heard long ago, and I am committed to reaching those who are separated, culturally or linguistically, from the message.

Reflections on Recovery, Part Four

by Karl W.

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

Outer Circle Honesty

Focusing on negativity or avoiding problems has never been a solution. It is only by looking for the good and removing myself from the center of the universe that I can find serenity.

I was feeling selfish and disconnected for a few days this week. That is not helpful to my recovery. I was not accepting of things the way they are. I wanted to be in a different place/in a different time. May I open my heart to love and find my outer circle. My serenity and recovery is the good stuff. Thinking too much, I get lost and flood myself with thoughts such as "the negative behaviors don't seem so bad."

When I am quiet and still, clarity and honesty seem to surface. Thank you for a few quiet moments. The hush of heaven holds my heart today. Thank you very much. Amen.

Continued To Take Inventory

Focusing on connection, I need to keep boundaries with my family, my relationships, and myself. I had some strong feelings that I wanted to give up on myself this week. I release that fear and know that my higher power will love me exactly as I am.

I need to stay on the sidewalk and not run into traffic. My thinking has been really bad at times and I need to check in with other people to get a handle on life circumstances. Inventory helps me to see things as they really are, and not as my addict would have me see them. The hush of heaven holds my heart today. Thank you very much. Amen.

Boundaries

I seem to be having a charge with other people's problems. When I was acting out in sexually addictive behavior I did not care about other people's issues, as I was self-centered and indifferent.

Now I look to a different issue—one of being connected, yet not being connected to fear and negativity. This is my work and I am in a holy moment. Recurring themes are "I don't want to be in my shoes, as that brings up

pain and unresolved issues.”

I can escape by trying to live with other people’s issues. My addict part loves this—any excuse to wallow in negativity. Today I stand in my own shoes. I am connected to others in love (not fear). I embrace the good and look to the light for warmth and healing. The hush of heaven holds my heart today. Thank you very much.

Amen.

Forgiveness

by Spencer M.

Part I

Angry,
resentful,
unable to smile or laugh.
That's how bad you hurt me.

And yet, you smile,
you laugh,
you live...
you don't even remember I exist.

I think about you every day;
have you thought about me once?
You constantly whisper in my ears,
even though I haven't seen you for years.

I hold on to this sacred pain;
I hold on to this chance for revenge,
as one would hold a priceless relic.

I was a beautiful, purple iris,
and you threw me on the ground,
and stained the sidewalk with purple dye
as your foot crushed my petals.

I was an innocent puppy,
abandoned on a country road,
unable to comprehend his owner
is never coming back.

And yet,
you smile,
you laugh,
you live,
you don't even remember I exist.

Part II

I want to smile,
to laugh,
to live,
to remember what it is to exist.

Today I woke up,
and realized I can't live this way...
not one more day.

I stood still as the grief barraged me;
I trembled as I let the anger overtake me,
and I felt every frozen emotion,
that as it thawed from frostbite,
the healing was more painful than the grievance itself.

I want to smile,
to laugh,
to live,
to remember what it is to exist.

I want to make a beautiful robe
from the purple dye of crushed flower petals.
I want a child to find an abandoned puppy,
and give him so much love,
that he forgets the owner who had forsaken him.

I want to smile,
to laugh,
to live...
I want to be happy.
I want to be free.

Today I made a decision to forgive.

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

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

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

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Mar-Apr 2012	Jan 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4, and "SAA as a 'We' Program"
May-Jun 2012	Mar 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6, and "Willingness"
Jul-Aug 2012	May 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8, and "Carrying the Message"
Sep-Oct 2012	July 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10
Nov-Dec 2012	Sep 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 11 & 12
Jan-Feb 2013	Nov 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 1 & 2

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