

The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Volume 6, Issue 1

January - February 2012



**THE ISO ENCOURAGES GROUPS TO REPRODUCE
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The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees at the October 15, 2011 teleconference:

- Approved the 2013 Hotel Contract.
 - Approved a goal to increase contributions through Lifeline partners from \$6,000 per month to \$20,000 per month.
-

Preparing SAA for the Future

Reviewing ISO Structure and Function

A Joint Letter from the ISO Structure Committee and the Conference Charter Committee

During the past ten years, the number of groups registered with the International Service Organization of SAA (ISO) has more than doubled. While this remarkable growth speaks of a healthy and vibrant fellowship, it also results in new challenges for all of the components of the ISO – the Conference, the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee (LitCom), and the international office. Although the current structure has served the fellowship well, it seems prudent, as the fellowship continues to grow, to address the issues that may lead to functional and operational inefficiencies in the future and to recommend changes that would enhance the capacity of the ISO to serve and support member groups in their primary purpose of carrying the SAA message to the addict who still suffers.

For the past eighteen months, two groups of trusted servants have been working in parallel on long-range planning for the ISO. The Conference Charter Committee (CCC), a committee established by a vote of the delegates in 2009, is developing a foundational document that will detail the purpose, organization, and operating procedures for the delegate Conference. Under consideration are changes that would better prepare delegates for participation in the Conference and would establish standard business procedures that would allow the Conference to be more thoughtful and productive. In addition, the CCC is working toward having the Conference assume more responsibility for committee activities that have operated exclusively under the Board in the past.

The ISO Structure Work Group, which formally became a committee of the Board after the 2011 Houston convention (ISO-S Committee) and includes non-Board members, is addressing the overall structure of the ISO with an eye toward ways of increasing capacity and efficiency of the ISO in its

efforts to support member groups in carrying the SAA message. Among the issues under review are the following:

- size and composition of the Board and LitCom,
- election procedures for Board and LitCom members, and
- roles and responsibilities of the ISO Conference, Board, LitCom, and office, and the functional relationships among those four primary components of the ISO.

In conjunction with the CCC, the ISO-S is also looking at several other issues, such as optimal size of the ISO Conference, experience and sobriety levels of delegates, need for local and regional consideration of motions coming before the Conference, and expansion of the fellowship internationally. It is anticipated that the LitCom will also participate in discussions about optimal Committee size, election procedures, and relationships among the ISO components.

Although no concrete proposals have yet emerged, the CCC and ISO-S Committee anticipate that the concepts being discussed will be ready for presentation and discussion during the 2012 Conference and Convention. For more information about either of these committees, please contact the ISO office.

713-869-4902

800-477-8191

info@saa-recovery.org

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 at the bottom of the 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. ***Please note that we have found that using "I" rather than "We" in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger meditation message.***

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>
<i>Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance</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 each month at 5:00 p.m. Central Time and last until 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 22

Sunday February 26

Sunday, March 25

Sunday, April 22

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*.

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 who could benefit from this service,
please let them know about this exciting development!***

Compulsive Sexual Avoidance

New Pamphlet Available!

The ISO is pleased to announce approval

of a new piece of SAA literature:

“Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance A Return to Intimacy”

is now available online at the ISO website:

www.saa-store.org

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing

this new addition to SAA literature!

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.

LifeLine Partners

Amends to Those I Can Not Contact

Many of us have acted out in ways that did damage to others who we can not or should not contact in order to make amends. The people I hurt may have been through affairs, prostitutes, or chance encounters — it does not matter. Making indirect amends of some kind is very appropriate.

Obviously working all steps of our program is the answer. Service work, Step Twelve, is a major part of this kind of amend. If doing enough service work is not possible because of family or career obligations, please consider a monthly contribution to Lifeline Partners.

Contributing \$30 a month to Lifeline Partners offers me knowledge that on a consistent basis I am helping the addict who still suffers. I do not miss the money that comes out automatically from my credit card account, especially when I realize it is a fraction of what I spent on my addiction.

When I became aware of Lifeline Partners the decision was an easy choice. I am happy to be involved.

Tim T

Men's Outreach

The Men's Outreach Committee is pleased to announce that the inaugural "Dear Will" column appears on page 20 of this issue of The Outer Circle. If you have a question that relates to your experiences as a man in the SAA program, please e-mail us with your question.

We are currently working on a men's page for the SAA webpage. We are especially looking to talk about challenges to getting involved in the SAA program that relate to your experiences as a man, so if you have any experience, strength and hope around these challenges, please e-mail us.

Finally, we will soon begin work on a men's outreach pamphlet to be submitted to the Literature Committee. More information on this pamphlet will be forthcoming.

If you are interested in being involved with men's outreach, please write to us. We normally meet the third Sunday of the month, although the meeting date and time do change from time to time. We hope you can join us!

You can e-mail us at:

genoutreach.men@saa-recovery.org

Public Information

I have gotten a lot of spiritual growth and personal satisfaction from doing Public Information Service work. I have had the privilege of working with a group of people dedicated to serving the still suffering addict.

The Fifth Tradition states that our main goal is to help the still suffering sex addict and what a better way to do this than through PI service. When I joined this committee we had the task of creating a Speakers Bureau and training speakers.

As a group we had to learn what all of this entailed and then we had to put a game plan together to get there. As a result each of us had the opportunity to examine our Twelve Traditions and put them into practical use; all of this was a new experience for me.

Through many hours of brainstorming, writing, discussion, and arriving at a group conscience we were able to put together a Speakers Bureau and train selected speakers to represent the ISO in the media. Our speakers have successfully given interviews locally, nationally and throughout the world via radio, TV, Internet, magazines, and newspapers.

What an honor it has been to be part of something that has the potential to impact so many people. That is why I do service on the Public Information Subcommittee.

Clif W.

Outgoing Public Information Subcommittee Chair,
Board Liaison to General Outreach and its subcommittees,
Current North Pacific Board Alternate.

International Development

Under the direction of the Board the International Development Committee supports the Literature Committee, office, autonomous groups and Intergroups on issues of international development by assisting with the use and translation of key tools and leaflets, foreign-language web-call meetings, a pool of foreign-language members and sponsors, and international Intergroup support.

You have been fortunate enough to hear the message in a language you understand, so regardless of your nationality, international development starts with YOU.

There will be an International Panel at the 2012 convention, focusing on

being an SAA pioneer in your country, and possibly in other countries (by long distance meetings and sponsorship).

We are looking for people with the following:

- any linguistic skills for sponsorship or handling simple enquiries
- willingness to participate on the International Panel directly or via teleconference
- willingness to participate in foreign-language webcall meetings

To volunteer, please consider e-mailing us at:

fdc@saa-recovery.org

Bay Area Santa Cruz Retreat

Mark your calendars for the annual 2012 Bay Area SAA retreat. It will begin on Friday, March 16, and end on Sunday, March 18. Once again, the location is Happy Valley Conference Center, nestled in a beautiful redwood grove in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

For the past fourteen years, Bay Area SAA fellowship has convened a retreat in the lovely Santa Cruz area in mid-March. 2011 was no exception. Though last year's event endured a three-inch rainstorm, the fun, friendship, sobriety and healing were as good as ever. The event had the largest attendance ever: 140 people, with a healthy contingent from outside the immediate Bay Area.

This year's weekend will be packed with a multitude of workshops, three guest speakers, the inimitable Talent/No Talent Show, and a disco dance. There will be an opening meeting on Friday night, two meetings on Saturday, and a closing meeting on Sunday. In addition, there are lots of ad hoc events, such as sponsor-sponsee step work, games, and of course one-on-one conversations. Talk about Outer Circle!

We would love to have you attend, whether or not you live in the great North Pacific region of SAA.

You can contact Bill I. at 510-420-8625 to learn more.

ISO Income/Expense Summary As of November 30, 2011

	Nov 2011	Monthly Avg	Jul - Nov 2011
Income			
Sales	15,005.87	15,340.86	76,704.28
Shipping & Handling	1,354.50	1,332.22	6,661.09
Donations	44,363.18	25,581.67	127,908.36
Delegate Meeting Registration	0.00	1.00	5.00
Interest Earned	28.97	31.37	156.86
Other Income	38.59	9.70	48.49
Total Income	60,791.11	42,296.82	211,484.08
Cost of Goods Sold	6,716.60	7,484.21	37,421.06
Gross Profit	54,074.51	34,812.60	174,063.02
Expense			
Wages	18,277.24	18,299.88	91,499.40
Insurance	320.54	320.54	1,602.70
Payroll Taxes	1,538.22	1,494.78	7,473.90
Employee Benefits (Not Wages)	3,453.27	3,700.72	18,503.60
Travel-Related	1,030.17	1,518.81	7,594.07
Office Postage	3.20	49.56	247.80
Communications	774.96	775.24	3,876.20
Office Expense	582.83	839.54	4,197.69
Occupancy Expenses	1,243.46	1,425.00	7,125.01
Board/Committee Expense	1,723.24	1,308.52	6,542.60
The Outer Circle	1,798.00	1,534.01	7,670.03
Financial Charges	1,150.01	927.48	4,637.42
Bad Debts/Refunds	64.64	160.87	804.37
Translating/Literature Projects	0.00	200.00	1,000.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	875.00
Payroll Expenses	18.66	18.39	91.96
Total Expense	32,153.44	32,748.35	163,741.75
Net Income	21,921.07	2,064.25	10,321.27

Financial Results for November 2011

In the month of November we showed a surplus of \$21,921.07. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$23,921.70. This was below our estimated surplus by \$2,000.63.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$24.57 for November and has exceeded our estimate by \$1,530.86 for the current service year.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$35.67 for November but are below our estimate by \$879.81 for the current service year. Our bronze medallions exceeded our estimate by \$329.56 in November and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,873.53 for the current service year. Our chips were below our estimate by \$34.74 in November and are below our estimate by \$512.08 for the current service year.

Our total sales for November were below our estimate by \$1,750.13.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$7.45 for November but are below our estimate by \$294.74 for the current service year. Group donations were below our estimate by \$1,444.27 for November but have exceeded our estimate by \$6,363.10 for the current service year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$37,380.71.

Our expenses were below our estimate by \$379.86 in November.

Summary of the current service year: (July 1, 2011 to November 30, 2011)

- Sales are below our budget estimate by \$7,075.72
- Donations have exceeded our budget estimate by \$6,068.36
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$5,567.40
- Net surplus is below our budget estimate by \$6,619.38

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

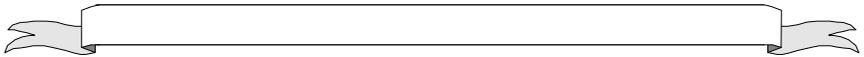
director@saa-iso.org

[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.]

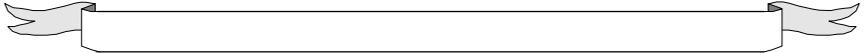
From the Editor

by Mike L.

Although this issue is appearing as the first issue of the new year, I am, as usual, writing this piece just a couple of days before Thanksgiving. I hope that you had a particularly happy and blessed holiday season.



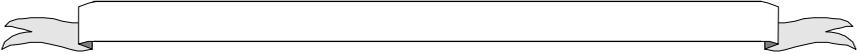
Looking ahead to the Sept./Oct. 2012 issue. The topic for that issue is "Working the SAA Program."



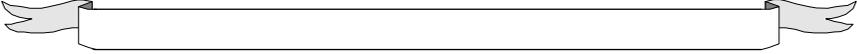
I recently had the opportunity of going through a process where I was asked to write down some things that I really hated or resented and then share about them. Then, after writing down some things for which I was grateful (Thanksgiving being just around the corner, after all), I was then asked to go back to the first list and see if I could find anything to be grateful for in the things that I hated or resented. Amazingly, I was able to find something to be grateful for in each case (although one or two of them were a bit of a stretch). I got a new perspective on things from having done that simple process.

And that perspective has been of some benefit to me as well, especially since the year 2011 had more than its share of losses for me. I left the house one morning to find one of my cats lying out in the middle of the street. He looked like he was asleep, and of course he wasn't. I would have happily gone to my grave never having gone through that experience, one that I hope will never come your way. I also lost some responsibilities that I enjoyed, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes not. In each case I was sad, although in each case I found a gift at the other end of the loss. And finally, I found myself setting boundaries around a couple of codependent relationships, despite the sadness that I felt in having backed off from those relationships.

On the other hand, there was a lot of good in 2011. I continued the work toward my goal of fully reintegrating myself into the various groups in which I had previously been active. A highlight of this reintegration process was, at my sponsor's request, telling my story at an SAA meeting in October, the same meeting where I did my First Step back in 1991. There is still one more group in which I am looking to become more actively involved, and I will likely end up postponing that work for 2012.



*Focus on the SAA solution,
SAA literature, the SAA program in
general, and use "I" statements.
Observing these guidelines almost
guarantees that you will produce a
story that fits well within the pages of
The Outer Circle.*



I once heard a recording of an old radio broadcast from the 1930s where the speaker was talking about what a wonderful invention radio was, and how it enabled each of us to be in contact with others all over the world. How she would have loved the internet! I have learned all kinds of things from it. Just last night, I had the chance to read a rather lengthy piece in somebody's blog about unconditional love, tolerance, and understanding, and how I am called to show these qualities to others. I cannot withhold those qualities from those who are not exactly like me, or exactly the way I want them to be. This was a great piece for me to read just prior to the holiday season where my judgments and preconceived notions and fears of the future can start to rear their ugly heads, spoiling things for me.

When I was in grad school, I was part of an editorial team for a publication our department put out for a brief while. Other members of the team pointed out to me that I never turned down any articles and wanted to publish all of them. There are times when I want to take a similar tack with *The Outer Circle*, and so I am grateful for the efforts of the oversight committee who help to point out things that might make this article or that a less-than-optimal addition to the publication.

So now you know that, if you send in an article, I want to print it. If you

observe a few guidelines when preparing your article, the chances that I will be able to do so will be much greater:

First, please focus on the solution rather than the problem. Our program teaches us that "there is a solution," and I want to know what that has been for you.

Next, remember that our traditions teach that SAA has no opinion on outside issues. The outside issue that comes up the most has to do with religious teachings and beliefs, and not just western religions. Instead, tell me about your experiences with the SAA program, as opposed to the many other paths to recovery. How did you benefit from working the Steps, working with a sponsor, going to meetings, turning things over to a Higher Power?

Third, I'm really looking for quotations from our own growing body of recovery literature. Certainly the occasional quote from the recovery literature of other fellowships is a boon, and yet so much in our own literature is of real benefit. I find this to be especially true of our Green Book, so many single sentences of which can provide the fodder for an entire article. I can close my eyes and point to just about anything in the book and think, "Gee, that would make a great article."

Finally, speak from your own experience, strength and hope. Accordingly, "I" statements are much more effective than "we" statements. Please rephrase "you" statements, such as "you should," "you must," or imperatives directing the reader to take an action (e.g., "Try," "Do," "Go," etc.) to reflect your own ESH with taking that action.

So there you have it: focus on the SAA solution, SAA literature, the SAA program in general, and use "I" statements. Observing these guidelines almost guarantees that you will produce a story that fits well within the pages of *The Outer Circle*.

I'll even make it easy, at least looking ahead to the Sept./Oct. 2012 issue. The topic for that issue is "Working the SAA Program." This is a pretty open-ended topic, where you could talk about working the Steps in SAA, or any other aspect of the SAA program. Of course, I will also be looking for articles on Steps and Traditions Nine and Ten for that issue. The deadline for the issue is July 5. If you're interested in writing a topic article for May/June (convention time again already!), remember that the topic for that issue is "Willingness," the Steps and Traditions are Five and Six, and that the deadline is March 5.

Anyway, I wish you the happiest of New Years. I look forward to talking with you again in the next issue.

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.

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 hear there's a phone list of women members. It would be great to be able to call women in recovery. How can I get this list?

Willing

Dear Willing:

I commend you for reaching out for support from other women members. The list you've heard about is probably the "SAA Women's Outreach List" maintained by the SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee (WOSC) as part of our effort to reach out to women newcomers in SAA and help them find support. We hope it helps to build a sense of community among women in SAA, because many women have the experience of being the only woman, or one of a few women, in their local meeting.

To receive the list, please email grace@saa-women.org and request to be added. You will receive a reply with further instructions on what information you need to provide to be on the list. You may feel uncomfortable placing your name on this group phone list. Be assured there is some flexibility in what information is included, to help maintain anonymity. You may decide to use only your first name or a nickname; you may include your phone number only, your e-mail address only, or both forms of contact information. In reality, the list does not have every woman in SAA on it, only those who choose this form of networking. You may choose, instead, to request numbers from members at face-to-face meetings, telemeetings, and online meetings.

You may have noticed that I use the phrase "request to be added" rather than simply "request to receive a copy" of the list. We hope that you will join the list and thereby become part of the community. By putting our names on the outreach list, we commit to our own recovery. We take a step out of isolation and make ourselves available to others. Service deepens our program at every stage of recovery. No matter how new you are, when you reach out to others, you do as much for yourself as for them. Always, the simple action of answering a phone call or email is a service.

Whether you decide to join the list or not, always feel free to email me. I look forward to hearing about your progress in recovery!

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

New Electronic Formats Available!

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

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.

Dear Will

Submitted by SAA Men's Outreach Subcommittee

Dear Will:

I go to a meeting on a night when there is a second meeting in the same room shortly after the conclusion of the first one. A woman whom I had never seen before came to the earlier meeting, and she really triggered me. I had a hard time focusing on the meeting. I wasn't the only one who was triggered, as several of us shared at the later meeting how difficult a time we had with her at the meeting. What do I do in a situation like that?

Out of Options

Dear Out:

We cannot live a happy, joyous, and free life in recovery if we live in fear of possible triggers or try to avoid all triggers present in everyday life. You were quite fortunate that you had your group right there to support you and help you work the program when some shaky moments came up. Usually I have to make the effort to pick up a phone and call someone in my group and talk to them about whatever situation I am going through.

Our recovery group is about tolerance and acceptance and trying to "help out the sex addict who still suffers". The woman in question, triggering or not, was probably in the meeting for the exact same reason you were, and that is to get help. I know it is hard, but in times like that, she should be looked upon as a sick person needing help trying to get well rather than a sexual object. This is not an easy leap to make, but I have found with the help of my Higher Power, I can do the right thing.

While praying to my God for only knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out, I can stay surrendered to Him and actually have the strength to do the next right thing. If just praying alone does not give you the strength, then you can call on your brothers in the program. They can help you out, and even the fact that they felt the same as you is comforting. However, make sure that recovery comes first whatever action is taken. If you are triggered and go act out, how is that being helpful to your fellows in recovery? Maybe using the knowledge that you do not have to go and act out whenever a triggering woman comes to a meeting, and then going and doing the next right thing may help her in the future or others who were similarly triggered. You never know. My recovery has told me that staying surrendered and doing the right thing, even with no knowledge or control of the results, is enough to keep me sober today.

Will

Working Both Ends of Step One

by Ralph C.

In A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Bill W. reminds his readers (in the chapter on Step Six) that only Step One "can be practiced with absolute perfection." Every time I read that line, I sigh and roll my eyes. I haven't practiced Step One perfectly yet—at least not for more than a day or two at a time, and probably it's more like an hour or two. The encouraging news is that I think I have the beginning of a handle on just why this is.

Step One suggests I admit I am powerless over my sex addiction, which I'm happy and ready to do—right now, this moment, wholeheartedly. "Ralph is powerless over his sex addiction. Said and done. Amen!" If only this Step stopped there, I'd be doing just fine. But it doesn't, and that's the catch, at least for me. Step One goes on to suggest that I also admit that my life "had become unmanageable," and this is the point where I begin to bargain with my recovery, preventing me from practicing the step "with absolute perfection," and in the process putting myself and my sexual sobriety at serious risk.

The truth is that, even when circumstances are at their most horrendous, I somehow can't get the belief out of my head that I can "manage" the situation. Whatever the consequences of my actions, I'm convinced I'll still somehow be able to spin things just enough to come out unscathed—that even though no one before me has been able to do it, I'm the one guy who can pull it off.

This is delusional thinking, of course, pure and simple, that flies directly in the face of my own life's experiences. My reasoning always went something like this: "Whatever it is that I'm doing, even though I know it's wrong, I'm way too smart to get caught. If I somehow do get caught, no one's going to really care. And if I somehow get caught and somebody cares, I'll be able to talk myself out of the situation. After all, I can talk a tree out of casting a shadow on a sunny day. In other words, I'll get home free—no matter what happens."

Stating it bluntly, I had little or no willingness in those days to understand or admit that my behavior affected others—and underneath it all was the sad and tragic fact that I really didn't much care one way or the other, even if it did. With this kind of view of the world, it makes perfect sense that I would believe that virtually every situation I got myself into was "manageable."

Of course, any good sponsor would ask me, "So how's that working for you?" Having personally visited the first two of the three ultimate destinations of unchecked addiction—jails, institutions, and death—my honest answer can only be that it wasn't working at all.

Our fellowship suggests that there is a better path. What years of recovery have taught me is that, whether I'm acting out or not, my behaviors always come at a cost—even when outward appearances might suggest I'm "getting away" with something—and that cost means the difference between serenity and an unmanageable life. An unmanageable life is the price I pay for making poor choices in my actions.

How do I learn the difference between a "poor" choice and a "good" one? The answer here, as always, comes through seeking a deepening humility and reliance on a power greater than myself—"more spiritual development." For me, living prior to recovery was essentially a boundaryless existence: I couldn't set and hold boundaries of my own (because of lack of self-esteem and fear), or acknowledge and honor the boundaries of others (because of selfishness, self-centeredness, fear and lack of compassion). Today I understand, as someone who is much wiser than I once wrote, that "recovery means the end of old ways of behaving." This requires me to admit every day the second part of Step One: that my life was unmanageable, and will remain unmanageable if I refuse to set and enforce healthy boundaries, and honor and respect the boundaries of those around me. To do this, I need help: I need to be able to admit that I need help; to recognize when I need help; to ask for help when needed, from my higher power and others; and to be open to accepting that help when it is extended to me.

To admit that I am powerless over sex addiction and that my life has become unmanageable is truly to practice Step One with "absolute perfection." It is the beginning of my recovery, and the end of my isolation from others and from a loving and compassionate universe.

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:

Tradition One

by Dave R.

Tradition One. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.

The paradox of this statement is the well known tradition of new groups starting out of strong differences of opinion and resentments. Yet, groups splitting off like that are important to the vitality of the fellowship.

In my local area, there have been strong differences of opinion and a number of groups have split off from the initial group. Because these new groups have continued to explore the Steps and Traditions, they have brought new understandings of how a Higher Power works to bring recovery to the addict who still suffers. We have gained because they have served addicts who were not being served by the existing group(s).

It seems that when a group breaks off like that, there are strong feelings on both sides. I have had the opportunity to defend the right of each side to do what it does. The Traditions are clear: Each group has the right to be wrong. Often by exercising that right, the new group has discovered new insight into the vastness of methods that our Higher Power uses to help the struggling addict.

Allow me to quote from the Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet, "The A.A. Group...Where it all begins":

"Further clarification of an A.A. group may be found in the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, Concept Twelve, Warranty Six:

"• no penalties to be inflicted for nonconformity to A.A. principles; . . .

"• each A.A. group to conduct its internal affairs as it wishes—it being merely requested to abstain from acts that might injure A.A. as a whole; . . .

"Some A.A.s come together as specialized A.A. groups—for men, women, young people, doctors, gays and others. If the members are all alcoholics, and if they open the door to all alcoholics who seek help, regardless of profession, gender, or other distinction, and meet all the other aspects defining an A.A. group, they may call themselves an A.A. group."

This is part of living with grace—that acceptance of the struggling addict or group even while I may think that they are doing wrong.

The challenge is Tradition One. Groups have a tendency to form a local "clique" and not realize the power of working together. Instead of "unity" being found within one group or one meeting, we express that unity in forming intergroups and international fellowships. When we work together, we get to demonstrate to each other the grace that our Higher Power has granted us, and by working together—even with our differences—we accomplish more than we can separately.

Step Two

by Mario C.

When I first came into Twelve-Step recovery, I had long ago rejected the concept of God that I had been taught while I was growing up, namely that God was sitting on a cloud up there waiting to hurl a thunderbolt at me at the first false step. With such a concept of God, it did not take me long after I moved away from home to reject any sort of Higher Power altogether. For years I lived with only myself at the helm, which worked after a fashion, except of course in those cases where I got myself into scrapes that I could not escape on my own.

So when I came into Twelve-Step recovery, one of the stumbling blocks I encountered when first reading the Steps was that I was going to have to develop some sort of a concept of a Higher Power. Fortunately, I was told that I could make the group my Higher Power, so I went that route for quite some time. Little did I know that I was going to have my own experience with what the Green Book says on page 27: "And in time we discover that our faith grows not so much from a set of abstract beliefs, but from daily practical experiences of recovery and healing, as observed in others and ourselves." Actually I was not all that open at the very first to personal observations of others, let alone of myself, preferring my chosen routes of occasional church attendance and reading about God and spirituality.

As part of my recovery process, however, I began attending speaker meetings in SAA and in other Twelve-Step fellowships without giving much thought to what I would actually hear at those meetings. And what I heard was others' experiences with their Higher Powers, some of which seemed truly miraculous. I wondered if I could have similar experiences by developing a relationship with a Higher Power.

So I gave it a try. I was doing my Sixth and Seventh Step work on character defects anyway. While the progress I was making in some of those defects, anger in particular, was miniscule compared to where my recovery has taken me since then, my progress seemed huge at the time. Because I did see some real progress that matched what I had heard others share, however, I continued to put my faith in faith. Having gained a foothold through these experiences, I could then take another look at the abstract beliefs I so long ago rejected and found that I had an increased willingness to accept those as well.

I think the key word in the quote above is "practical." Just as I have been told that "I can't think myself into right acting, I have to act myself into right thinking," I wasn't able to develop a faith in a Higher Power just by wishing it to be so. I had to act as though I believed my Higher Power could do for me what others' had done for them, and sure enough, I learned that indeed he could.

Tradition Two

by Jonas D.

One of the things I constantly struggle with is a desire to be in control, a wish to see things be done in just the way I want them to be done, preferably with me running the show. It is of course this “my way or the highway” attitude that played a large part in my eventually landing on the steps of recovery.

Tradition Two addresses this shortcoming of mine from a couple of different angles. First is the angle of the group conscience. In SAA meetings this takes a very simple and straightforward form. Somebody calls a group conscience to address an issue that he or she considers to be of importance, the group conscience happens at the appointed time, a decision is reached, and everybody moves on.

I thought this was a smart way of doing business, and was always impressed to see how well it was accepted in our groups. Even the ones who were outspoken in their opposition to a particular issue could usually support the decision reached. I always found this attitude to be something of a shocker, since I have struggled so much with acceptance. Being able to reach a degree of peace around group conscience decisions with which I disagreed both helped me to have a little more faith in a Higher Power (see the Step with the same number as this Tradition), and to accept similar decisions reached through similar group consciences outside of the SAA fellowship.

An even bigger concept to me was that of the trusted servant. As the Green Book says, “Those of us who are chosen by our groups to carry out the decisions called for by group conscience are known as *trusted servants*” (p. 80). Because being in a position of leadership, looked up to by many, has always been important to me, I found it unfathomable that the leader is only a trusted servant, as the text of the Tradition states. I think I struggled with this concept even more than with the concept of the group conscience. Why would somebody want to take on the responsibilities of being a leader without the accompanying prestige? (Yes, it’s about me.)

And yet, once I began to grasp this concept, I got untold blessings from it. I think the biggest one was that I could happily play any role in any activity I was involved in within the SAA fellowship because I could see my contribution as equally valuable to that of the leader, er, trusted servant. And once I was able to have this attitude within the fellowship, I was able to take it to my activities outside of the fellowship as well, which led to a greater respect for my participation in even those activities where I was not the nominal leader.

So once again I was able to see the wisdom of yet another of our traditions. The ultimate gift was the same as I have so often encountered, that if I can

apply what I learn from the SAA traditions to my SAA program, I experience more growth. However, this growth seems particularly obvious to me with Tradition Two, because it helps me so much with bringing my ego into balance.

Spiders and Recovery, Part Two

by Jeremy G.

When I wrote the first part of "Spiders and Recovery," I never thought that *The Outer Circle* would publish it. In fact, the article was published last March/April and the editor asked me to expand on it. Now I guess my hand is forced.

In the middle of this web of life is me, the sex addict, the spider. Why start in the middle? one may ask. Another may say, the middle is always boring. Man, are you missing out.

When an insect gets caught in a spider's web, it sends out vibrations throughout the whole web. However, the spider never runs away from this vibration. She always runs straight to the source.

Now that I have learned the steps and built our web of protection, it is time to take the next step, which is sponsorship.

Step Twelve is exactly what sponsorship is all about, "to carry this message to other sex addicts and to *practice* these principles in our lives." I really do not agree with the word "tried" in Step Twelve, but it is there for a reason. This reason, I think, is that some may never be ready to help another directly. It's not because they are not able to help others, it is because it is not their calling.

I think it takes a special person to be able to help someone through the Steps. The first time I tried it, I failed, almost to the destruction of both of us. If it had not been for my sponsor's gentle hand, I would have been in a great amount of trouble.

Being a sponsor can be like being the spider in the middle of the web. If a sponsee has been working regularly with a sponsor and then falls or needs help, the sponsor may well feel it because the sponsor will notice that the sponsee has fallen out of contact or is behaving in a different way than previously. Then the sponsor goes directly to the source of the disturbance. Where the sponsor differs from the spider is that, while spiders eat their prey, in this case the sponsor does just the opposite, removing the guilt, shame, and negative issues that are consuming the

sponsee.

The great thing about our web is that help is only a call, click, or text away. In today's world of technology there is no excuse of "I could not get there, so I acted out." That is justification, one of the many risk factors of our addiction. Even if the sponsee only has the option of writing a letter, there is no excuse.

Here in prison, my resources are very limited but I use those that I can, and I keep many people close at hand who understand sex addiction. Believe it or not, many of them are not even sex addicts, just people I have shared our message of hope with.

So, as I have learned, the web is our lifeline, our safety net, and it is our network not only of resources, but of sponsorship. I have learned to work the web because if I do not, I may end up getting twenty years in prison, which is what I am doing. I could get a life sentence or even die.

It doesn't matter if I am in prison or free on the outside, I have to spread the message of hope in recovery.

* * *

To give an update on my son whom I mentioned in the first article:

One morning he was riding the couple of blocks to school with his mom. Unfortunately he asked the question I wanted to be the one to answer.

My son caused such a disturbance wanting to know why I was locked up that his mother had to stop the car. After wiping away her own tears, she explained why I was in here. At the age of eight, my son was told things even an adult could not prepare for. After she told him why I was in here, he was okay, but became very quiet.

About a week after this, I was able to speak to him on the phone. In fact, he demanded to speak with me. In this phone contact, I asked him what he thought and felt about why I was in this prison. "I'm cool with it; I know you ain't gonna do that ever again. Now, those people need to let you out so you can be with me."

My heart was crushed by my son's words. I almost could not speak. As I choked away the tears, I said, "Son, I love you very much and will be home one day, but because of the wrong I have done, I must stay here."

Going back to the web, now my son of only nine years is part of it. If I fall, he falls, and falling is out of the question. Even if I do fall, I must never give up. I will use the web of life to help pull me up. With all these lifelines, getting up will be better (and easier) than staying down.

Amends by Larry E.

Thoughts in my head of the half-life I've led,
causing so many tears to be shed.
Make a list, the Book says, of those I harmed,
those disarmed, those alarmed.
Those harmed I know from Step Four below
where I listed all of my deeds and woe.
Now Step Eight beckons, my brain ripe and fecund.
So I don't delay, not a second
To see who should be on the list, all those I dissed,
to be sure no one's missed.

The list once it's made reveals from the shade
all those I betrayed.
That woman, that man,
that child with no power or plan,
Some named, some nameless,
some friends blamed and blameless,
Every one who I hurt, even me.

Am I ready to make amends,
to make it right, to make the pain end?
Am I ready to proceed; seek serenity, have humility,
take responsibility?
To cause no harm to whom I approach;
careful, mindful, beyond reproach;
To gather my courage, put fear into storage,
and anchor my heart at a spiritual moorage.

To make the amend, and then, like bamboo to bend.
Who knows how it ends?
Walk away knowing empathy's flowing,
wisdom is growing, recovery's showing.
It's a blessing, a gift,
a step off the cliff, a time for shift
From thinking of me
only to others who've known me.
To offer compassion without expectation.

Humility

by Barry M.

Is there anything more crucial and yet more difficult than humility? Fortunately, our literature wisely distinguishes humility from humiliation, though the two are easily and frequently confused. Spiritual writers also help us to make the distinction

I am further helped by a prisoner from the SAA fellowship awaiting judgment and then sentencing in a United Kingdom prison. He has recently been poring over the meditative reflections, some in journal format, of another spiritual monk or monastic who bears witness to the link between despair and humility—or the plain lack of it—to addiction. That is, without humility, we may well be fated to the despair of mere selfishness or undue self-love and self-pity. Humility has the promise, I think, of putting us in warm thermal current touch with trustworthy others, who understand and may be open and willing to hear us, as in turn, we connect with them.

In a recent prison cell letter, R. shares: “Certainly in here, besides my own addicted mind, I see many other severely addicted souls and the accompanying behaviour, speech and actions. It seems to primarily come in two flavours, self-pity or denial. Both are places which lack humility. Of course, my aversion to humility is a fear that it will be seen as a weakness and exploited. What a narrow road we must follow. Like a mountain track with danger of rockfall from above and steep cliffs below! My kind of terrain!”

One sure fear of surrendering our undue pride to humility is the fear of “being used,” walked on or over; and/or subtly exploited. We thus may well raise up defences to try to protect ourselves. But in the process, we may end up trying to protect ourselves unduly from the summons and the gift of humility—and hence the gift of being open to trustworthy others. If and when active in our rituals and actual addictive processes, we are anything but humble, just as we are when we are under the obsessive grip of deceptive fantasies and eventual, compulsive acting out, where and when others are served up for our selfish, self-centered, and utterly brief pleasures. May the otherwise predictable process and pattern of the addictive-rooted move from obsessing to acting out, be interrupted? May the summons and the gift of the virtue of humility be such a catalyst or medicine?

Let it be.

Intimacy Phobia

by Conrad C.

Three weeks ago words came out of my mouth at my home group meeting that I could hardly believe. During my share I said: "I need to claim my membership in this family." (I, Conrad, actually said this. I couldn't believe it.) I explained that I was not going to be present for the personal story meeting on the fourth Friday (Memorial Day Weekend) because of my Mom's birthday party in Louisville. I told them I needed to share my First Step with them; and I asked if I could do it on the third Friday. Then I said: "I am asking you to consider making this accommodation for me; and I am worthy of your consideration." (If I hadn't been there, I wouldn't believe I could say such a thing.) I immediately felt proud that I was speaking up for myself and ashamed of my self-centeredness. The group conscience agreed that I am worthy, the request was reasonable and they wanted to hear my story without waiting another month. I nearly cried; but my defenses are up too much to do that in front of my group.

A week later, I shared my addiction history. When I finished, my group's response was overwhelming. I absorbed as much as I could and then began to shut down. I was stunned that I couldn't take in all the love and support that was offered to me. Love and intimacy always made me feel uneasy; but I wanted what my group was giving me. I wanted to stretch my capacity and feel their love without the uneasiness and resistance. This would take some time. Yesterday, when I went to my meeting, I felt closer to my group. I'm not sure; but I think I actually felt (and enjoyed) intimacy. I think I am bonding with them. It's only a beginning; but my shell is cracking; and I'm starting to accept intimacy. I like it. I want more; and it's there for me. I only have to continue to open up to the experience. I think this is what I've always wanted/feared. Now, the fear is gone. I just experienced the biggest shift of my life. I'll never be the same again. Thank God, I'll never be the same again. I am something new.

Easy Does It

by Ed G.

How many times have I heard the expression “Easy Does It”? Probably more than I care or am able to count. But it is an important part of my recovery. Why? It took a long time to get to the situation I found myself in and that brought me to SAA. It will not be, nor has it ever been, an easy process to reverse the years of wrong thinking.

There is another phrase I often hear that in a way ties into the above title. That phrase is “Don’t sweat the small stuff.” I have heard that one as well in a variety of contexts. Of course, what is generally meant by that phrase is that I should keep my eye on the big picture and everything else will fall into place. Ah, if it only worked that way with my addiction. Unfortunately, if the various small things aren’t addressed early enough, they can become big things in their own right.

For me, the “big picture” is achieving sexual sobriety. And to achieve that goal, I am going to have to “sweat the small stuff,” which I’m thinking of here as being the Twelve Steps of SAA. This is by no means an easy task that can be taken lightly, because those steps are made up of a lot of even smaller stuff that I didn’t sweat over early on. And that brings me full circle to “Easy Does It.”

Each Step is an important part of my journey towards achieving sexual sobriety and requires me to give deep thought to my responses. I am going to have to look at myself microscopically (the “small stuff”) in order to see how I arrived at my sexually addictive state of being. I may never be able to put my finger on that one “defining moment” that started me on the road to my addiction. However, if I apply the “Easy Does It” to each Step along the way, I may find that, if I had really sweated the “small stuff” earlier in life, I probably wouldn’t be where I was when I came into the program.

That is why I say “Easy Does It.” It is because I am now paying attention to the “small stuff” so my journey to my goal of sexual sobriety will be on the right track.

Thought for the Month

by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the January 1991 issue of the SAA newsletter.]

A new year always reminds me of starting over fresh; sort of a mid-winter "spring." It's a hard concept to accept when one has grown up feeling that all past failures and mistakes build upon each other like bricks in a wall. But, ideally, shouldn't each new day be a beginning without blemish, a New Year Day?

"One day at a time" means every morning is New Year's Day. Spring, rebirth, all rolled into one. My past mistakes are just that: past. If they were now, they would be current, not past. Sometimes I equate past with "ongoing." But that is a confusion, for though I may suffer recurring consequences, the mistake is not "now," only the consequences. Shame, fear, and guilt belong in the past. Clarity, courage, and serenity are my tools against consequences.

I may make a mistake or fail at something today. But tonight—somewhere around 12:00 midnight—when I am sleeping peacefully with soft dreams, I pass through a silent, yet amazingly powerful shield of love called Grace, which divides my past from my present. Who I was has vanished, and who I am is now. And I will rise from my bed knowing my New Year's Day has begun again.

One Statement About Abstinence

Submitted by SAA Los Angeles

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the January 1990 issue of the SAA newsletter. I have heard it read many times over the years as part of the readings for the first meeting of the month in a number of my local groups. Some groups have now replaced this statement with a newer abstinence statement which can be found on page 21 of our Group Guide, and which comes from pages 14-15 of "Sex Addicts Anonymous."]

The below statement, especially the sentence beginning "the lust of the mind," gave me a lot of hope and encouragement in my early days of SAA, at which time this statement had been in print barely over a year. In hopes that it will encourage some of our readers who may not be familiar with it, I am reprinting it here.]

Our primary purpose is to abstain from sexually compulsive behavior, and help others achieve abstinence. In line with this purpose, we feel that a brief statement regarding the meaning of abstinence is in order.

First, we define abstinence in terms of behavior rather than mental states. We do not focus our efforts upon abstaining from mental "lust," but from compulsive behavior. Just as AA focuses on the need to stop the behavior of drinking, and OA focuses on compulsive eating as the point of abstinence, so SAA focuses on compulsive sexual acting out. The lust of the mind may take years to drain away as one works the Twelve Steps of recovery; abstinence from the destructive behaviors, however, can begin today, and is the basic foundation upon which all subsequent growth depends. "Progress rather than perfection" is the atmosphere for growth that we seek to promote.

Secondly, abstinence will be different for each member of SAA, depending upon what behaviors are compulsive and lead to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. Some addicts can engage in sexual behaviors from which other addicts find they must abstain; in SAA, we leave the choice up to the individual.

Finally, abstinence does not imply the complete elimination of sexuality from the addict's life, whether married or single; rather, it lays the foundation for learning a new approach to the experience of sex and relationships which is non-compulsive and non-destructive. Such an approach is possible to all who earnestly desire it.

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
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