

# The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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## **The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees at the June 16, 2012 Teleconference**

- That the Board approves: (1) That the ISO office discontinue the sale of non-SAA literature and video once current stock is exhausted. Non-SAA items, for the purpose of this motion, would be comprised of books and videos that are not produced by the fellowship and specifically for the fellowship, (2) That the AA Big Book and the 12 X 12 continue to be purchased and sent for free by ISO to prisoners, so that sponsors may use them with prisoners as traditional and necessary tools in working prisoners' programs of recovery.
  - That the Board approves funding for up to twelve Literature Committee representatives for two days of mid-year face-to-face meetings to be held in Houston, Texas on November 2nd and 3rd 2012, with arrival on November 1st and departure on November 4th. Standard travel reimbursements are requested.
  - That the Board approve a mid-year caucus meeting for the SE region for the following purposes: (1) To encourage participation in ISO activities at the regional level, and (2) To conduct any business that may arise, including planning for future regional caucuses.
- 

## **Volunteer Services Needed**

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

*Not sure where to get started?*

*Contact the ISO!*

or go to [www.saa-iso.org/](http://www.saa-iso.org/)

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

## ISO Structure Committee Prepares for 2013

The ISO Structure Committee (ISO-S) continues to make progress. Initially, the Committee was asked by the Board of Trustees to review the current ISO structure, to identify weaknesses that might impede future growth, and to propose improvements that would better position the ISO to fulfill its mission to serve member groups by helping them carry their message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers.

The first phase, occurring between January 2011 and May 2012, identified several specific weaknesses in the functionality of the current structure. These issues are detailed in the report presented to the Conference in Vancouver and may be found in the Members' Area of the ISO service website.

One major recommendation was to create roughly forty "Areas" to replace the existing eight regions. Groups within an Area would then meet together annually at assemblies made up of General Service Representatives (GSRs) elected by the groups in that Area. Each Area would, in turn, elect a delegate, and these Area delegates would comprise the international Conference.

This model would result in several desirable changes. The Conference would be smaller and more manageable. Issues coming before the Conference would have received prior consideration by Area assemblies. Groups throughout the fellowship would have the opportunity to bring issues to their respective Areas for discussion and possible submission to the Conference as a business motion or resolution.

Benefits of this model would include 1) a greater voice in ISO affairs for every member group, 2) graduated service opportunities to prepare members of the fellowship for service at the international level, and 3) year-round participation in ISO activities by more trusted servants.

This model has been endorsed by the ISO Board of Trustees, and the Vancouver ISO Conference delegates agreed to devote the 2013 Conference, to consideration of the proposals being developed by the ISO-S and the Conference Charter Committee (CCC).

In preparing for the Summerlin Conference and consideration by the delegates, the ISO-S is now working on the details of how the proposal might be implemented. Toward that end, the ISO-S has formed five work groups (WGs):

- Area Definition WG to describe the purpose of Areas and to suggest criteria that might be used to define Areas.
- Nominating Committee WG to propose structures and procedures for

nominating trusted servants for service at the international level – Board, LitCom, and Conference.

- Bylaws WG to identify changes that would need to be made in the ISO Bylaws to accommodate the proposed new model and to prepare any business motions needed.
- Communications WG to plan a strategy for communicating the ongoing work of the ISO-S to members of the fellowship in a timely and efficient manner and to respond to questions and suggestions received from the Fellowship.
- CCC Liaison WG to ensure that ISO-S and CCC are moving forward together.

If you wish to receive periodic reports on ISO-S activities by email, please ask the ISO office to add you to the general mailing list. If you wish to offer comments or suggestions to the ISO-S, they may be sent to the ISO Director of Operations.

## Conference Charter Committee Plans Busy Year

In anticipation of the 2013 Conference, the Conference Charter Committee (CCC) has set ambitious goals for the 2012-2013 service year. Most importantly, the CCC plans to have a draft of a Conference Charter to present to the delegates for discussion in 2013.

The intent of the Charter is to define the purpose and general guiding principles of the ISO Conference, its composition and basic structure, its general responsibilities, and its relationship to the other components of the corporation, namely the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee, and the ISO office. The CCC envisions that the role of the Conference would be expanded beyond the current annual meeting to include year-round service activities in support of the ISO mission.

It is further anticipated that the nitty-gritty operational details of the Conference would not be contained in the Charter but would be spelled out in a Conference service manual, which would be developed after agreement is reached on the new expanded role of the Conference.

The CCC will continue to study the histories and charters of other Twelve Step fellowships in gratitude for the experience of those who have gone before us. In addition, the CCC will be examining the legal implications that might result from an expanded role of the Conference.

In an effort to keep the fellowship informed of the progress being made, the CCC will use multiple modes of communication. The current draft Charter is available now in the Members' Services area of the ISO service website ([www.saa-iso.org](http://www.saa-iso.org)). When new drafts are available, they will be posted with the date in the file name to facilitate finding the latest version.

In addition, the CCC will publish periodic reports in *The Outer Circle* and will send regular email reports via the various ISO mailing lists. A teleworkshop on the draft Charter is being planned for later in the year.

If you are not already on one of the ISO email lists, please send a request to the office to be added. Comments and suggestions may be addressed to the office. Please be sure to indicate in the subject line that it is intended for the CCC.

## Notes from the ISO Literature Committee

The second half of Step Ten tells me that when I am wrong I need to promptly admit it. So here it is: I admit that, in early to mid August, I found myself being distracted from some of my Literature Committee tasks from time to time. With the source of the distractions now in the past, I can update my inventory.

So this inventory is: volleyball, archery, high diving, swimming, soccer (football to those in Europe), 4 by 400 meter relay and ping-pong so fast that the game was a blur. I can assure everyone that I was not doing any of these things. Instead, I was watching them on TV.

Watching the Olympics was fun but now it is time to get back to business.

So, what “events” is Literature Committee currently up to?

- Audio Productions – More SAA pamphlets are being recorded to audio.
- Audio Review – Review of conference recordings continue to ensure quality. Consider this working committee to be a “referee” in the conference audio event.
- Authors Group – Future pieces of literature are being considered or crafted such as a “how to sponsor” booklet, a 12-Step Study Guide based on the Green Book, a “For the Spouses” pamphlet and the history monograph.
- Meditation Book – There are now about sixty-four meditations that have completed the approval process and many more moving in that direction. Monthly meditation writing workshops continue. (Join in on one and go for the ‘gold’ of getting your work published!)
- Outer Circle Newsletter – You’re reading it now. Enjoy!
- A redesigned Three Circles pamphlet is being considered by LitCom for approval. As pamphlets are being reviewed and rewritten they will then be published in this handsome format.
- The Retaining Women pamphlet is once again moving forward.
- A survey-based form for finding the literature needs of the fellowship has been drafted.
- The Sponsorship Pamphlet for sponsees is now being reviewed and rewritten at the subcommittee Level.
- The Sexual Offender pamphlet is once again making progress.

So, as everyone can see, Literature Committee has a number of 'events' taking place as this is written. Some are further along than others but one thing is certain: they all are going for the gold. Better yet, they're all going for the ink!

Chris J.

Literature Committee Chair

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## Electronic Formats Available!

### SAA e-Book

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

The eBook can be purchased from the ISO office, or online from the SAA Store at [www.saa-store.org/book/](http://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 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 from the SAA store at [www.saa-store.org/audio](http://www.saa-store.org/audio).

We will be uploading the remaining past convention years as we get them formatted.

## 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 a maximum of 275 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.”**

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## **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.

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## 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.

September 23

October 28

November 25

December 23

January 27

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](http://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](mailto: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*.

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### **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/](http://www.loc.gov/nls/)**

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

## **From the 7th Tradition Committee**

### ***LifeLine Partners...***

LifeLine Partner contributions are growing:

**We are now at 44% of our goal!**

After just one Seventh Tradition Committee meeting since the 2012 conference, LifeLine Partner contributions are definitely on the rise. More help in getting the word out is needed in order to reach our goal of contributions reaching \$20,000 per month.

Helping out is easy! Just be willing to distribute our "Make a Difference" packet to groups, intergroups, caucuses, or anywhere our membership assembles. So many are unaware of the LifeLine Partner program and how their contributions can really make a difference in our ability to more effectively get our message of recovery out to those in need. When members learn how easy it is to give back, most readily get involved. All they need is some encouragement and a pamphlet to read.

Groups are considering becoming LifeLines too. Currently, the majority of groups do not give on a regular basis. Groups considering LifeLine Partners as a way of giving would help in making a difference.

As you read this, please consider taking part in our push to make LifeLine Partners work. You can do this by taking part in our Seventh Tradition Committee work. We meet monthly for about an hour on a teleconference exchanging information on what has been working and offering ideas on how to get our information out. It really is easy, and doing this work will go a long way in helping our ISO in doing its work of spreading our wonderful message of SAA recovery.

Contact the ISO office for packets to help in our service work, or to join the Seventh Tradition Committee. Please leave your contact information (First name last initial, phone number and email). It is a great way to give back.

Tim T.  
Seventh Tradition Committee Chair

Ps. If you are interested in signing up to be a *LifeLine Partner*, just call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191, and they will get you started.

Or, you can sign up online at: [\*\*https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/\*\*](https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/)

## **Women's Outreach**

The Women's Outreach Subcommittee (WOSC) has several projects that are ongoing and is working hard to provide outreach to the woman sex addict who still suffers. Current projects for the WOSC:

- Maintain SAA Women's Outreach list
- Respond to Grace email
- Dear Grace Outer Circle Article
- Annual Women's Retreat
- Annual ISO Convention Welcome to Women (Women's Room, Women's Table and Women Only Meetings)
- Retaining Women in Meetings Pamphlet
- Revising Women's page on ISO website
- Safety in Meetings Workgroup

This committee meets every 2nd Saturday at 10 am CST. If you are interested in joining this committee, please email us.

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

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## **General Outreach**

General Outreach meets the 2nd Sunday of each month at 7pm CST. We are a Service Committee dedicated to our primary purpose. Our committee is composed of members from the various subcommittees, although any member wishing to be of service is welcome to be a part of General Outreach. The subcommittees include Public Information, Men's Outreach, Women's Outreach, GLBT Outreach, Young People's Outreach, and Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Outreach.

Some of the outreach efforts currently being considered:

- Outreach to Clergy
- Annual Women's Retreat
- Literature efforts - creating pamphlets with specific focus
- Safety in Meetings
- Outreach to Mental Health professionals
- Standard PSA that can be used by local groups in efforts of outreach.

Currently, all the subcommittees have a lot of work they would like to accomplish, but are hindered by a lack of participation from the members of our fellowship. If you have an interest in any of the subcommittees, please contact the ISO Office.

## **GLBT Outreach**

Since the 2008 Seattle Convention, your GLBT Outreach Subcommittee has been involved in projects to provide information about SAA to the GLBT communities including:

- Funding a Public Service Announcement for 18 months in *The Advocate* national newsmagazine, until it ceased national newsstand distribution and went to subscription only availability;
- Development of a pamphlet, currently pending LitCom approval, a draft of which can be seen on the Bay Area SAA website at [www.bayareasaa.org/index.php?p=glbt](http://www.bayareasaa.org/index.php?p=glbt)
- Mailing of Outreach cards to GLBT friendly therapists and treatment centers

Current Projects in the hopper for discussion include:

- Transgender Outreach
- International Outreach
- GLBT Retreat
- Asking members for suggestions on PSA's in local or regional publications
- Organizing literature distribution to health clinics and treatment centers
- Organizing feedback groups.

All of these projects are in need of volunteers. We are also looking for more ways to provide public information about SAA to the GLBT communities. For more information, or to attend our monthly teleconference, contact the ISO Office for call in information.

To volunteer for GLBT Outreach activities, email the GLBT Outreach Committee.

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

## **Author's Group**

The Author's Group of the Literature Committee is a group of people who have an interest in helping the fellowship get more literature. As our fellowship grows, the Literature Committee will transition to being more centered on the supervisory aspects of producing literature while the actual writing is done elsewhere. The Author's Group is one such "elsewhere."

Over the past year, we wrote a pamphlet introducing Sponsorship to the individual fresh to the fellowship and submitted that to the LitCom for approval. We pulled together a booklet of people's experiences of being a sponsor in our program (and we want more such experiences). We have a "stop sign" version of the Three Circles form. We have a first cut on some step study worksheets based on the Green Book.

If you have experience in writing and would like to help, we have a number of other ideas that we would like to see writers for. The Author's Group is an inclusive group. You do not need to have been voted as a representative.

If this sounds interesting and you would like to help out, please see the suggested guidelines for international service and talk to your sponsor. Then, contact the ISO and ask to be included in the Author's Group email list and to take part in the monthly conference calls.

## ISO Income/Expense Summary As of July 31, 2012

	July 2012
<b>Income</b>	
<b>Sales</b>	17,407.60
<b>Shipping &amp; Handling</b>	1,835.25
<b>Donations</b>	21,913.07
<b>Interest Earned</b>	24.68
<b>Other Income</b>	91.55
<b>Convention Income</b>	9,282.37
<b>Total Income</b>	50,554.52
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>	5,543.07
<b>Gross Profit</b>	45,011.45
<b>Expense</b>	
<b>Wages</b>	23,979.13
<b>Benefits</b>	4,178.07
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	2,147.00
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	24.74
<b>Insurance</b>	340.69
<b>Financial Charges</b>	937.83
<b>Communications</b>	606.34
<b>Occupancy Expenses</b>	1,294.49
<b>Office Expenses</b>	671.27
<b>The Outer Circle</b>	1,256.85
<b>Professional Fees</b>	1,035.00
<b>Depreciation</b>	175.00
<b>Bad Debts/Refunds</b>	-162.10
<b>Board/Committee Expenses</b>	874.38
<b>Convention Expenses</b>	6,832.04
<b>Total Expense</b>	44,190.73
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>820.72</b>

## Financial Results for July 2012

In July we started using a new budget. This is a six month budget which will be replaced with a new calendar year budget starting January 1, 2013.

In the month of July we had a surplus of \$820.72. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$317.00.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$349.36 for July.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$15.26 for July. Our bronze medallion sales were below our estimate by \$675.00 in July. Our plastic chip sales exceeded our estimate by \$153.00 in July.

Our total sales for July were below our estimate by \$277.40.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$855.80 for July. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$2,227.27 for July.

Our product inventory is valued at \$34,939.73.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$12,918.73 in July. Most of the excess in expenses were due to booking convention expenses of \$6,832.04 in July instead of June. Payroll numbers appear higher this month due to final payout of acquired benefits on an employee who was laid off. This caused our payroll to exceed our estimate by \$4,314.00.

Summary of the current six month budget (July 2011 to December 2012):

- Sales are below our estimate by \$277.40
- Donations exceeded our estimate by \$3,083.07
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$12,918.73
- Net surplus has exceeded our budget estimate by \$1,137.72

Our operational reserve amount is \$131,921.00 and is fully funded. This is the estimated amount necessary to run the office for four months, and is reset each January.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,  
Joe H.  
Director of Operations  
[\*\*director@saa-iso.org\*\*](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)

*[Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of The Outer Circle reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.]*

## From the Editor by Mike L.

Greetings to all of you. It is the second of August as I write this, which means the two-month period of watching out for hurricanes has begun; in fact, as if on schedule, a tropical depression popped up in the Gulf just yesterday. Following up on these short-term prospects will get my day off to a sobering start for the next couple of months, yet not as sobering as the constant reminders of climate change that I encounter.



*“I want to open up the pages of the  
May/June 2013 Outer Circle to  
those who have had experiences  
with giving disclosures”*



I was in New York City at the beginning of July, the first time I have been there in the summer since we went as a family for the 1965 World's Fair (“back when we still had an ozone layer,” as one of my friends up there put it). As hot as I am used to it getting in Houston, I was completely unprepared for the asphalt-driven heat in the Big Apple. I normally get around the city by subway, and the subway platforms, which can sometimes be several levels below the ground, were even worse.

Another reminder of climate change came just yesterday evening; a letter I received at my P.O. box from an environmental group notified me of the recent extinction of a subspecies of giant tortoises. The last surviving member of that species died at the end of June.

It is all very depressing, and yet I check these news items daily, the same way I used to religiously watch my now-mostly-defunct soap operas back in the 1980s, while I was isolating during the week because of my addiction, saving up my energy for the weekends.

And yet I want to believe there is hope. I read that the genes from the tortoise subspecies have survived, so perhaps it can be coaxed back. And there is still the occasional climate change skeptic who presents some supportable evidence that the information we are receiving on an almost-daily basis may be exaggerated. I'm not talking about the ones who give a knee-jerk denial to any kind of evidence, no matter how definitive and frightening.

Are we in the last days? I've heard that so many times during my adult life that I've gotten a bit skeptical about it. Still, is it time to give up my car, or stop traveling by plane? While waiting for or developing on my own some kind of meaningful program to tell me what I can do as an individual to help support life on the planet, I still have the SAA program and my other recovery groups who daily remind me that there are things I can be doing to help others and to make my life better. And I continue to try to do so.

So now it's time to suggest the topic for the May/June 2013 issue of The Outer Circle. One of the workshops at the Vancouver convention dealt with disclosure. I was not able to attend that workshop because of conflicting obligations, and there does not appear to be a recording of that workshop. Up until recently, I did not hear much about disclosures in the many years since I first joined the fellowship in 1991. I have certainly had the opportunity to form my own opinion about disclosures from what I have heard at our local meetings, and maybe I'm only hearing one side of the story. So, especially since there is no recording of the disclosure workshop in Vancouver, I want to open up the pages of the May/June 2013 Outer Circle to those who have had experiences with giving disclosures to a spouse or significant other. What has been the result of your doing a disclosure? How has it affected your program? These are just a couple of possibilities to where this question could go. I think the issue is important enough that I'd be willing to devote the entire literature section of the May/June 2013 Outer Circle to this topic if we were to get enough articles. So have at it.

That's all for now. I look forward to talking to you again next month, and enjoy this issue of the newsletter.

## 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,

How do I know if my relationship with my sponsor is healthy?

—Questioning

Dear Questioning,

That's a great question! Healthy sponsorship looks different to different members. Different approaches and personalities work for different individuals. Some have found it helpful to ask themselves the following questions when looking for a sponsor or questioning whether the sponsor relationship they have is healthy:

- 1) Does my sponsoring relationship feel supportive and encouraging?
- 2) Does my sponsor or co-sponsor have a sponsor, and is he or she working the steps?
- 3) Do I feel I can be honest without fear of being shamed or judged?
- 4) Have I been honest about my needs and feelings with my sponsor and have I given that relationship an opportunity to grow and develop as I grow and change in recovery?
- 5) Does my sponsor model healthy boundaries and limits (i.e., speaking from his or her own experience instead of giving advice)?
- 6) Is my sponsor's time and attention given freely? Are there expectations (stated or implied) that I provide money or favors in order to maintain the relationship? Do I find myself in competition with other sponsees?
- 7) Does my sponsor have what I want (i.e., a spiritual awakening as a result of working the steps)?

8) Does my sponsor encourage me to rely on my higher power?

A healthy sponsor relationship can be very healing and supportive, and at other times may feel confusing and conflicting. Reaching out, being honest and asking other trusted members for their experience can be very helpful.

Sometimes we grow beyond what one sponsor can offer. As we grow and change in recovery we may find ourselves needing something different. With honesty and openness, the sponsoring relationship may change with us, but sometimes it cannot.

The important thing is that we care for ourselves and remain gentle and accepting of ourselves through this process. None of these guidelines are set in stone. As we grow and our needs change, we are welcome to change sponsors.

Blessings,

—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

# Brian's Story

by Gene D.

This is the story of Brian B. It is a story that he can no longer tell. I am telling it because I don't want him to be forgotten or for what he did to go unrecognized.

Brian grew up in a wealthy Texas family. When he was thirteen years old, he went on a camping trip with his new brother-in-law. On that trip, his brother-in-law tied him to a tree and raped him. Brian immediately forgot what had happened to him, but that unremembered trauma drove him into sexual insanity.

He went to seminary and married. He found a job as a youth minister at a church in Colorado. In that position, he organized camping trips for young teenage boys. At nights in the woods, he would crawl into the sleeping bags of his charges and fondle them. He could not stop doing this, and the contradiction between his behavior and his faith was driving him crazy. He left his wife, came back to Texas and found SAA. I became his sponsor.

Brian had a passion for his recovery. He worked the steps hard and was brutally honest with himself. He found Bob, a skillful and compassionate therapist, a psychologist who had worked in the federal prison system for twenty-five years. Brian confessed all to Bob. Working with Bob, Brian recovered the memory of his rape, and in a flash, what he had thought was insanity became logical: as with so many victims of sexual assaults, he was reenacting what had happened to him. The pieces fit. His victims were young boys, around thirteen years of age, who looked very much like what Brian looked like at the age when he was raped, with the same lonely and pliant personality that had been his at that age. Because he was at base a gentle and compassionate man, his nature forbade that his molestation progress beyond fondling—although one cannot say what it could have ripened into had it not been abated by Brian's recovery.

With that memory and that understanding, the darkness was shattered; there was light in Brian's life. Bob knew, as I did, that Brian was no longer the threat to young boys that he had once been. The Dallas police knew Bob well and trusted his instincts. When Bob told them about Brian, they had no interest in Brian because Bob assured them he was no threat and, moreover, all his crimes had been in Colorado, not Texas.

Brian was quite aware of how he had manipulated his environment to get close to young boys. He felt that anyone who sought out a youth ministry should be suspect. If one's child was at a sleep-away camp, he advised that the best way to protect the child from molestation was to visit unannounced and randomly. No predator would groom a child who might have a parent appearing at an inconvenient time.

When Brian reached his Ninth Step, he decided he needed to go back to Colorado to talk to the boys he had molested. I have never been one to counsel the disclosure that so many therapists advise. To tell his wife about escapades of which she has no knowledge might unburden the sex addict of his guilt, but that unburdening would drive a knife into her heart, causing a wound which might never heal. This I know from personal experience. The exception I have always made is disclosure can be made where it will provide some benefit. For example, to relieve her sense of confusion about her failed marriage, it may be useful for an ex-wife to know that the crazy feelings she had in her marriage were not because she was insane, but because her former husband had been an active sex addict.

Brian's plan fell squarely into this exception. He knew that the severity of sexual trauma does not necessarily correlate to the harm that it does. He didn't rape his victims, but that wasn't to say that the buried memory of what he had done wouldn't drive some of them to repeat Brian's arc into sexual insanity. He received my blessing and went back to Colorado with his therapist, who would monitor the exchanges with his victims.

The first few interviews went well, but it was not long before one victim, by then a young man, could not deal with what had happened to him and raced away in a panic. The police soon arrested Brian, and he became a front page serial molester story. He was sentenced to eighteen years in prison.

We corresponded some, but I only visited him once in prison. His faith deepened in prison. He felt he had done the right thing in going to his victims. While his arrest had interrupted his plan, all his victims were told what had happened to them because Brian made sure that his confession named all of them and told precisely what he had done to them.

The Colorado prison system put him in a special unit for offenders, and he was receiving therapy. He was coming to know much about himself. I am quite sure that he would have lived a productive and valuable life. He planned to write and give talks on how molesters operate and how to protect one's children from predators, but it was not to be. He died in prison before his release.

His therapist, too, has died, and I am the only one who knows his story. He is one of my heroes. He risked his life by doing the next right thing. Some might say that he lost his life, but I'm not so sure of that. I think he may have found something more important, more transcendent, by doing what his recovery and the God of his understanding told him he needed to do.

I know of no more powerful Ninth Step story. I do not want that story to be lost or him to be forgotten. "Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

## What an Amends Can Be by Stew F.

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

Making an amends has a great value in many ways. Doing so is a great way of showing respect to others for my behaviors that have harmed them; it is also a way of being respectful to myself by taking action. I know from experience that taking action can give great insight, as opposed to obtaining insight to change behavior. It is often in action that I change.

Yet there is another value in making amends, and this is for my emotional health. The act of doing making the amends allows me to unburden myself of unfinished business and lets me clarify distortions in my role. I often walk around with semi-colons, a sentence that is grammatically not quite finished. Until I take the action to turn that semi-colon to a period, I cannot go on to the next stage of my life; I am basically stuck in a role and in a behavior. Unfinished business has me dealing with other people the same way I did with the person or persons with whom I have the unfinished business. Basically I'm walking around with role distortions.

Making an amends is also a way of dealing with the issue of grief: of owning up to my behavior and trying to make things right, of course, but also a way of saying good-bye to someone. It is the grief of old behaviors, of time and opportunities and possibilities lost, due to my sexually addictive behavior.

I remember doing an exercise in a group where I wanted to address someone whom I had harmed with my behavior. The former partner was figuratively put in an empty chair. The group members literally pressed their hands on my shoulders. The weight was almost unbearable, but the point was made. I cried during this time (I am welling up as I am writing this—I still have many regrets), until with the help of the group I was able to express my remorse to the woman I had mistreated. The weight of the group members soon lifted. I felt as if I was going to float away. I completed the business I had with this former partner. The semi-colon had become a period. This also allowed me to see other people in a new and less distorted way. In some ways I don't think things are ever completely resolved. For me, it is lowering the volume which makes my feelings a little more manageable.

When it hasn't been possible to make a direct amends, for example, when it would harm someone or when the person was no longer around—as I have gotten older this has been the case on a number of occasions—I often found it useful to write a letter to that person expressing my desire to own up to my behavior and trying to make things right.

I have also experienced the value of acting in (as opposed to acting out)—the attempt at an amends by putting the person I have hurt in an empty chair and having the conversation, and doing my best at role-reversal with the person. The experience had many positive consequences: understanding the other person better, unburdening myself of much of the shame and guilt I have been carrying around, and developing a new way of behaving, like an actor increasing his ability to express himself in new and effective ways. I found myself able not to act in such overt sexually inappropriate ways with new partners. (I always wondered why therapists were called “shrinks”—mine was more of a “stretch.”)

The most important lesson about Step Nine and making an amends was that the process helped me make an amends to myself as well and to forgive myself for old self destructive behaviors. Even though I had been lost for years, I was now attaining the hope of serenity by playing a new role with a different script.

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## **Making Contact**

by William Y.

I agree one hundred percent with the concept behind the Ninth Step. In my case, I had to be prepared to have a different outcome to my attempt to work the Step than I had expected.

I had made the mistake of asking a third party to make contact with my victim. I had no idea that just asking how somebody was would prevent me from making parole, as it did. As a result, I had to sit in prison for another eight months before I was given a new parole date.

I do believe that contact with my victims can play a good part in getting some kind of closure on both sides. But if my victim says “no,” then I have to back off and let it go.

I was lucky to get another chance. I did write to my outreach person from SAA and my second friend from SAA as well. The information they gave me was very helpful. I think SAA has helped me a lot, so keep up the good work!

## LifeLine Partner

by Paul M.

I have listened to NPR on the radio going and coming from work for many years. Hearing their fund raising year after year, I finally decided a few years ago to become a sustaining member. This is where one commits to giving a set donation each month so NPR can bring informative programming to the listener each day.

Then I heard Joe H. talk about LifeLine Partnerships at the 2011 Convention. I learned how SAA needs sustaining members (LifeLine Partners) to have a steady income to plan a budget for all the projects the ISO is trying to do to bring our message to the addict that still suffers.

I listen and donate to NPR because it informs me of current news and expands my mind. I decided to donate to the ISO because SAA saved my life, relationship and expanded my spiritual connection.

At the 2012 Convention, Joe again spoke about the LifeLine Partner program. The push this year is to increase our LifeLine Partner donations from \$7,000 per month to \$20,000 per month.

We currently have 1,300 meetings worldwide. If each meeting has about 10 members, and only 10% (just one person in each meeting) gave \$20 per month, we could have \$26,000 per month coming into the ISO.

The ISO wants to translate our literature into many languages, create a daily meditation book, and improve our database to manage our meeting locations and email distribution lists; there are many, many more projects waiting to be done. These projects take money, and a steady income will enable the ISO to plan and budget for project funding.

As of August 23, 2012, the ISO has 221 members donating \$8,893.00 per month. You can see or current status on the website thermometer:

<https://saa-recovery.org>

And if you are willing, you can sign up to be a LifeLine Partner:

<https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/>.

As I said earlier, SAA saved my life, and I know my donation will help ISO reach the addict that still suffers.

And that is one way I follow the Seventh Tradition and practice the Twelfth Step.

—Paul M

## Step Nine

by Ed G.

If I have carefully followed the procedures in Step Eight, I should have a surprisingly long list of victims and extended victims to whom I owe amends. For clarification, extended victims are the family, friends, and associates of the victim and of myself. There is no such thing as only one person affected by my actions. And even if I were only guilty of indirect sexual conduct, i.e., the use of the internet and other non-contact sexual behavior, I wouldn't think for a moment that I have no victims. Every time I view pornographic material, and perhaps share it with others, I am re-victimizing those individuals who have families and friends as well who may at some point find out about their activities.

First, it may not be possible to make amends directly. The direct contact could dredge up feelings better left in the past. To make personal contact I must assess the situation and discuss with family or through a third party whether a direct apology would be appropriate. If direct contact is deemed inappropriate, there are essentially two other methods by which I can achieve at least a degree of making amends:

- 1) Through a willing third party passing my sincere regrets to the victims and appropriate extended victims, and
- 2) By writing a sincere letter of apology to the victims and such appropriate extended victims:
  - a) If I find that my victims and extended victims would be amenable to receiving such a letter, I would send it either by mail or through a third party; or,
  - b) I would write the letter expressing my sincere regrets, and then destroy it.

By using method 2) listed above, I may at least achieve the spirit of Step Nine without causing any further harm. I have emphasized the word "sincere" because that is something that must be worked on as I peel back my life in Steps Four through Seven.

It must be further emphasized that my amends are not done to be self-serving; that is, seeking understanding, compassion, forgiveness, or love. "What's done cannot be undone," but the making of amends may go a long way in finding peace of mind in the present and future of all concerned.

And I must remember to do no harm!

## The Maintenance Steps in Early Sobriety

by Bruce M.

Long ago, when I first started sponsoring, HP gave me a nudge. The nudge said: let your new sponsees work the last three Steps right away, right along with the first three Steps.

I could see the wisdom of this. Steering them clear of the heavy-duty amends of Step Nine, I pointed out to them that Step Ten said, "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it," and that saying "I'm sorry," was something any child knew how to do. And so they began to admit the minor delays in their day, the wee wrongs, the bumps and missteps. They had fun with it.

I saw too that there was no need whatsoever to delay their developing a morning practice and prayer. They needn't wait until they got through the first ten Steps to be allowed to pray and meditate; they could do it right away. And so each of them starts up right away with a spiritual practice.

Finally, I asked them to throw themselves into service right away. I asked that they arrive at the meeting ten minutes early, so as to help put up chairs, set out literature, and talk to new members. I asked that they take on minor service positions, like being the tea servant or the clean-up person. That way they saw that they belonged; they belonged because in their own way and by this service, they too could carry the message. Step Twelve, worked right off the bat, became a significant help in their abstinence and recovery.

And I told them as they did these things to remember what Step they were working by doing them.

This practice helped them once they had finished Step Nine and came upon the last three Steps in the usual order. We worked them formally then; we did not give them short shrift; we worked them deeply; we hung out in each one for a month or more. But now they were not so daunted by them, for they had been practicing them all along. Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve were old friends.

Doing this fortified their program. It made them consciously aware of working the Steps in action. And it made them aware that engaging the Steps with their own lives was not a privilege for the spiritually advanced, but open to one and all. The Steps did not have to be earned. And they knew that I was doing them too. For there I was, sponsoring them. And they saw the good and passed on the practice to their own sponsees accordingly.

## I Wish I Had Known About SAA Before Landing Here!

by Pren N.

While I am wary of some therapists, a group and a sponsor who hold me accountable is more effective (and a lot cheaper!). Had I known about SAA sooner, I probably would not now be detained indefinitely because I *might* commit another crime!

Here are a few things I have learned from my SAA group, treatment, other reading, and from life. I offer them in the hope that they will save someone else the fate I have experienced:

1) It does not matter whether or not I think the laws are fair. A life sentence is easy to get in many states. As a sex offender, I have found prison to be hell. I ask myself, were those few moments of illicit sexual excitement worth the risk?

2) The first psychologist I saw for therapy said that pedophilia is common and normal, but he suggested that I find someone over eighteen so as not to be arrested again. He did not say a thing about the harm I could cause victims. This is unfortunate, as even in my most selfish days I was against hurting anyone and was naïve about the fact that I was no doubt causing harm. Treatment psychologists now call everyone under eighteen a victim with harm done. While that may not always be true, it is true that some kids will do almost anything to be accepted—even things they do not want to do. Yes, I may think that some children “initiate” things, but do they really, or do my actions or manner actually initiate them? Children who have been molested may “initiate” contact with us, thinking that being molested is the only way to get attention or love. If a child wanting love submits to sex, hoping for love, and is then dumped, he or she is usually going to be hurt deeply. In any event, kids are never mature enough to make valid decisions about sex with an adult. It is always wrong for an adult to take advantage of a child (or anyone).

I sincerely hope that anyone who secretly still hopes to meet his or her sexual needs through children will put the brakes on, change his or her thinking before harming a victim and self, sincerely seek help, get a tough accountability partner, and listen to him or her.

# Addiction is Boundary Failure

## by Barry M.

A boundary protects people. When I was an addict in active addiction, I was in in boundary failure. My behavior violated commitments, social rules, and even laws. I harmed my own physical, spiritual, and mental health as well. Recovery means having a set of boundaries that protect me as the addict and those around me. I found it helpful to write down these boundaries so they were clear to me and to my recovery support team.

There are three types of boundaries: 1) Boundaries that protect me from the harmful behavior of others. 2) Boundaries that protect others from my harmful behavior. 3) Boundaries that protect me from my own harmful behavior.

I protect myself from the harmful behavior of others by staying out of situations where harmful behavior is likely. I state my preferences to others in terms of how I want to be treated and what I will not tolerate from them. If someone says something to me or about me that is hurtful, I set an internal boundary to protect myself from taking on their shame and/or rage. If my boundaries are violated, I do not respond by violating others. Rather, I hold others accountable for their behavior while taking steps to ensure my boundaries are not violated again.

I protect others from my harmful behavior by staying out of situations in which I have harmed people in the past. I accept responsibility for the harm I have caused others and do a living amends every day to avoid hurting them again. I respect other people's boundaries.

I acknowledge that my behavior has harmed me in the past. I set my bottom line boundaries (which cover those behaviors that are offensive) with a sponsor and I do not violate them. I set my middle circle boundaries (which cover those behaviors that lead me to violate my bottom line boundaries) with a sponsor and I call for help when I start to engage in them.

When I was in early recovery, I did not have enough experience to be able to set my own boundaries or to adhere to them without needing a lot of help with the process. I could have initially set extreme boundaries. For example, I could have felt so guilty about hurting other people that I made a boundary against having any friends whatsoever. Yet isolation is not a healthy response to relationship problems. A sponsor can help the addict define and practice friendship in healthy ways.

One way I could have gotten into trouble with boundaries was by considering making exceptions. Rationalization and justification were the means by which I stayed in active addiction. Being in recovery, I could not

afford to go back to these means. I was able to change some boundaries over time, but only in consultation with others. If I find I have loosened my boundaries too far, I can reset them again (again, in consultation with others).

Recovery boundaries should not feel like a straightjacket. When they are properly defined and adhered to, they protect me and those around me, and help me thrive in this world.

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## A Poem

by John in Houston

I shared the following poem with my recovery group. I wrote it to help me have something to repeat in my mind when I am triggered or feeling weak in my recovery. It has been helpful to me. Someone in my group suggested that I submit it to the SAA newsletter. I hope it might help someone else.

Loss of the spirit of God in my life.

Loss of my family through heartache and strife.

Chances for prison, divorce and disease—

Nothing I'm thinking is worth all of these.

Lost opportunities seldom return.

Lost growth is progress I never will earn.

I need to do step work, make phone calls and pray.

Replace these sad outcomes with victory today!

## H.O.W.

by Ray W.

Honesty is where the path to sexual sobriety began for me. Over the course of several years I had lied to myself and had not been willing to acknowledge that my sexual acting out was a problem, let alone an addiction. New ways of acting out degraded me more and more, but were not enough to inspire a meaningful look at my behavior. Even after marrying and having children, I resumed acting out and engaging in sexual activities I had once considered beneath me. In the spring of 2004 I went too far and was placed on probation for three years. That is when I both wanted my life to change and was ready for it, so I began therapy and an honest look at my life. Years later I am willing and able to accept the nature of my addiction and am constantly striving to manage it.

Open-mindedness closely accompanies honesty as I continue the journey. I made progress with careful examination of suggestions from a therapist, group members, SAA members, and my sponsor. Every time something seemed ridiculous, I kept quiet. Not reacting has also helped me control some of the addictive behaviors. Moments, minutes, hours, and sometimes days later, I thought about it with an open mind. In a couple of cases the subjects still didn't apply to me (visiting strip clubs, for example). Nevertheless, when it did apply (wearing certain clothes), I moved further along the way to healthier living.

During the initial days of therapy and also SAA I had to remind myself regularly to be open-minded. Early on there were a lot of behaviors and thinking I didn't want to confront and change. Dedication to becoming healthy, staying with my family, and avoiding something worse than probation kept me going. Nearly losing my wife and children opened my eyes to how important they are to me. Eventually I became open-minded enough to accept that my recovery had to take first place in my life. Step work is an ongoing process through which I keep discovering new things about myself and ways to improve. Sharing my story with others in group and SAA has been a tremendous help and now I seek such opportunities.

Willingness is the third and probably most important component to successful sobriety. If the desire to stay sober wanes, my addiction remains present to try to regain control. Living passionately and with a meaningful purpose is what I prefer to the insane alternative. Like the SAA Green Book says, "All we have to do is become willing, and leave the rest to our Higher Power." It took a lot for me to see the truth about my life and the need to make drastic changes. Now I apply my innate powers of will toward living a healthy life.

God alone knows the exact plan he has for my life as I continue sharing,

reaching out to others and striving to become “the best version of myself.” Nothing is impossible as long as willingness and submission to my Higher Power remain. Each of us has something significant to offer and contribute. Success for me is found in continually working the Steps, even after setbacks, and remaining aware of my dependence on my Higher Power in everything. Simply put, with complete honesty, cautionary open-mindedness, and constant willingness, the H.O.W. is answered.

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## Loving Life

by Geoff S.

I once read a meditation that dealt with death and loss. When I first read it, it spoke to me strongly enough of my own difficulty with grief that I printed it out. Tidying up a heap of papers this morning I found it again; it spoke strongly once more, but this time differently. It spoke of dealing with my addiction.

Sex addiction started out being a friend, turned into a lover, and then became an all-consuming mistress. This addiction now has to be put to death, has to die, so that my soul, the real me that God created, can start to live. The meditation reminded me that both the dying and the living are processes that have to be gone through.

The caterpillar goes into a cocoon and a butterfly emerges. My healing was like the cocoon; I could have reversed it to become a caterpillar again. Even when I emerged as a butterfly there was still a little bit of caterpillar inside of me. Another similarity is that if someone opens the cocoon for the butterfly then the butterfly does not live. I too have to do the cocoon work myself, without the help of magic healing wands. Others are there to guide me with the work but I have to do it myself.

The caterpillar can only see “my way”; the butterfly sees lots of ways. It can see the paradox that is Life, that is God. And it can love God, love life and love itself. That, if anything, was my resolution for this year, to come to love myself. In loving myself I will come to love God and love Life.

## The 2010 Convention Changed My Life

by Spencer M.

My first sponsor encouraged me to go to the 2009 convention in the Bay Area, but I didn't do it. I guess everything happens in its right time. But after a year in total relapse and watching my life begin to unravel again to pre-SAA standards, I decided to go to the SAA Convention in Albuquerque in 2010. I decided it was time to get serious about recovery, and going to this convention might just be the step I needed. I didn't know anyone there and found a roommate through the ISO.

I had ten hours of sobriety when I registered for the convention that day in late May. I had gone on a three-day vacation before the convention near a national park. I acted out the whole time during those three days. I wasn't planning to have one last hurrah right before the convention, thinking that I was going to get sober at the convention and leave. I was just living the way I knew how to live, and didn't think much about it.

I met my long-distance telephone sponsor from Miami in person for the first time at the convention. We had talked on the phone for more than a year, but we got to finally meet each other in person. It was very special to me. And then I attended the opening meeting of the convention. When the speaker talked about writing a letter firing the God of her childhood, I was astonished. I had never heard of such a thing! It seemed revolutionary to me: scary and exciting at once. And then she talked about writing a letter hiring the Higher Power she wanted in her life. Hearing this speaker and this idea changed my life. I went home and took a piece of typing paper, and on one side wrote a letter firing God, and on the other side, a letter hiring my Higher Power. That letter helped free me of some of the guilt and shame I had been harboring over being gay. It was no mistake I was in that room hearing that speaker at the very moment. I was exactly where I was supposed to be. And my ears were finally opened to hear what I needed to hear to get better.

At this convention, I met the three people I talk to every day: my current sponsor, a good friend from Florida, and my partner. This convention was definitely life-changing for me. And the convention marks my sobriety date—May 28, 2010. With God's help, I have been sober since that SAA convention.

## How I Came to Believe

by Anonymous

During my third time in prison for a sex crime, I spent over twenty years of a twenty-five year sentence before realizing that I might die before I finished this time. This motivated me to begin exercising, something I didn't do regularly before I was nearly sixty. My bones and popping, creaking old joints don't agree that it is good for me.

I would like to share a bit of my experience, strength, and hope with you today. My recovery began when I turned myself in. Back then, the jail where I was incarcerated had SAA meetings, and a therapist my family paid to come see me in jail talked me into going to the meetings.

What I heard there blew me away: people sharing experiences similar to mine. It was the only time I'd ever heard anyone talk honestly about that sort of thing. After hearing this enough, I got a sense of safety that allowed me to begin to talk about myself honestly for the first time.

That was nearly twenty years ago. Since then, the National Service Organization has become the International Service Organization, *The Plain Brown Rapper* has become *The Outer Circle*, and the fellowship has adopted a basic text of its own. I am told that the jail where I was initially no longer has SAA meetings.

A third of my life has passed in here. I have been reviewed for parole seven times. Nobody on the Board has ever voted to release me. Most of my prison time has passed without any chance to attend officially authorized SAA meetings. My main link to recovery has been the newsletter. I sincerely appreciate the fellowship making this publication available because it lets me know that recovery is still around and that my people are still out there.

It's not that easy or safe sharing about my past without some kind of structured meeting place that follows a tradition for membership which requires a desire for recovery, even though over fifty percent of the people who are locked up with me are also sex offenders. Would that it were otherwise.

My hope is to be released someday and be allowed to attend meetings again. I've tasted a little bit of that and hope to enjoy more. My hope is that this will help me to find relief from past unmanageability and something closer to sanity.

God bless you.

## A Recovery Story

by John R.

I was married in 1976. We had a difficult time. I am ADHD. I was always deciding what we would do. I was always very angry with everyone, but particularly with my wife because she always got it wrong and I was very controlling. I told her where we would go on vacations and which restaurant we would visit. I told her when we would have sex and what kind of sex. She once asked me when I would ever have enough and I told her I would tell her when and if that ever happened.

Since 1964 I had sex outside of my marriage with two women for a short time but I also had sex with one person I met in high school. That continued until 2006, forty-four years, until I disclosed to my wife that I was cheating on her. She kicked me out of the house and I started therapy. My therapist told me I had to go to a treatment facility. I spent six weeks in alcohol treatment and six weeks working on sex addiction, including working the steps. During that time I realized that I was a very evil man and that I had completely destroyed my wife's self-esteem. On my last day at the center my wife called to say that she wanted a divorce. When I got back home she had moved all my stuff to a condo about one block from my home. Every morning I would go up to her house to have breakfast and every evening I would go there to spend time with her and my three-year-old grandson. I tried to make amends and tell my wife how much I loved her.

I left the treatment facility on January 7, 2007. I had three slips in the first month I got back. Since then I have not acted out, and it has now been more than five years. I started weekly therapy and I went to two or three SAA meetings a week. My wife allowed me to come home in October 2009, thirty-four months later. Since then my life has become almost perfect. My wife and I are having our best relationship ever. I have not been angry with anyone in five and a half years. My wife works with me in our business. My son got out of the Army, went to work with us, and he is incredible. We have recently hired four new employees who are all perfect. My company is making money.

About one year ago, probably because everything was going so good and I came to believe that someone was really taking care of me, I jumped head first into my faith, I know I am forgiven and that, other than my wife, is the most important thing in my life.

The Steps, therapy, the SAA meetings, they all work. Thank God!

## Recovery—Getting Through the Wave

by Stewart F.

In a movie I saw, the principal character is a very smart, hard-working, somewhat driven executive of an overnight cargo shipping company who doesn't have clearly defined priorities between his wife and his job. After a horrific plane accident, he finds himself on a deserted island, the only survivor of the crash. He spends the first part of his time on the island just trying to keep alive, along with setting a goal of getting off the island. He tries to find the tools within himself and tools around him. He soon realizes how alone he is.

He tries to get off the island but, no matter what he does, he cannot get through an impenetrable wave that blocks the island from the sea. He keeps getting pushed back, injuring himself in the process. Some resources come to him from the wreckage of the plane, which help him to adapt to his new isolated home. He now has more tools, but he still can't get through the wave.

After he has spent several years of survival on the island, trying to stay sane, another piece of the plane wreckage makes his way to shore, something solid. He sees this as a gift, maybe from a higher power. It is an opportunity to try some new things to get himself off this island.

Through acts of spontaneity and creativity and courage to change the things that he can, he builds a craft that he hopes can get him through the wave, which is continually the barrier to a different life ("We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us."). He tries to get through the wave, the wave that has frustrated him by pushing him back over and over, and that once almost took his life. He takes a leap of faith to the possibilities of a new life. This time he makes it through. A spiritual awakening perhaps, a moment of serenity. He knows that he can't go back to the familiar island that has kept him safe and where he was able to survive. He looks back somewhat longingly, even sad, but now he looks forward to a vast ocean, a new destination, not knowing where he is going or if he will survive; indeed, not certain of anything. He knows that he has to keep going, to literally survive one day, even one hour, at a time. He knows that all change requires giving up something. He knows that he had to get through that wave, away from the island that transformed him, hoping and trusting that maybe he would be transformed again.

He did what he had to do to survive, as he is doing now; he had to have the courage to accept life on life's terms, the courage to change what he could. The wave, pushing him back, getting in the way of a new life, has kept him trapped, like an addiction. He makes it through the wave, a new person with an unknown destination.

## 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.

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

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

**Second:** Send your article: by e-mail to: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)  
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**Third:** Send in the below **Release Form**. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

Submission Deadlines & Suggested Topics		
Next Issues	Deadline	Suggested Topics
Jan-Feb 2013	Nov 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 1 & 2, and “ <i>Friendship within SAA</i> ”
Mar-Apr 2013	Jan 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4, and “ <i>Spiritual Experiences</i> ”
May-Jun 2013	Mar 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6, and “ <i>Disclosure</i> ”
Jul-Aug 2013	May 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8
Sep-Oct 2013	July 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10
Nov-Dec 2013	Sep 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 11 & 12

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