

# The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Volume 6, Issue 6

November - December 2012



**THE ISO ENCOURAGES GROUPS TO REPRODUCE  
*THE OUTER CIRCLE*, SO THAT COPIES WILL BE  
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**The following actions were approved by  
the Board of Trustees at the  
July 21, 2012 Teleconference**

- Motion approved that Kevin K. of Houston, Texas, former ISO Trustee and Board Chair, be appointed as a voting member of the Policy Internal Standing Committee for the 2012-2013 service year.
- 

**The following actions were approved by  
the Board of Trustees at the  
August 18, 2012 Teleconference**

- Motion approved that the Board approve a mid-year caucus meeting for the NE 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 Conference Charter**

### **Take a look at the draft and join the discussion**

The ISO Conference Charter Committee invites you to understand, discuss, and give your feedback on the current draft of a Conference charter.

The Conference Charter Committee (CCC) was established by the delegate Conference to draft a document (charter) that would improve the ability of the Conference to serve the fellowship and thereby enhance our capacity to carry our message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers.

The CCC has been working on that task for more than two years and expects to present a draft charter to the delegates at the next international Conference.

What can you do?

The CCC would greatly appreciate feedback from the fellowship at large on the current draft document, which is available in the Member Services area of the ISO service website at <https://www.saa-iso.org>. The username and password may be obtained from the ISO office at 800-447-8191, or at the e-mail address below. Follow the links to the Conference Charter Committee, then to the Conference Charter Document (Draft).

The CCC recommends that you read the draft charter and discuss it locally. Then send any comments or questions you may have to the CCC at the ISO office address below.

In addition, the CCC is planning three tele-workshops to give members of the fellowship opportunity to make comments and ask questions. They are tentatively scheduled at the following times:

Saturday, February 9, 2013 11:00 AM Central Time  
Saturday, February 23, 2013 2:00 PM Central Time  
Tuesday, March 5, 2013 7:00 PM Central Time

Please send any comments or questions about the draft charter to:

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

## Proposed Change from Regions to Areas

The transition from regions to areas, as proposed by the ISO Structure Committee, would result in several changes in the way member groups participate in ISO activities. The intent is to give members of the fellowship a greater voice in shaping the policies and the future of SAA.

The ISO was established to facilitate the primary purpose of local groups and to achieve economies of scale in matters such as publishing literature. The Conference, which serves as the effective voice of the fellowship within the ISO, currently consists of delegates from less than fifteen per cent of the member groups registered with the ISO. This hardly represents an informed group conscience of the fellowship. In addition, during each of the past several years, at least a third of the delegates are attending their very first Conference and many of them admit to having no idea what is going on. Some even fail to meet the sobriety guidelines adopted by the Conference for delegates.

In addition, the current organization results in many delegates arriving at the Conference ill-prepared to represent the group conscience of their local groups on the issues to be discussed and decided. This is most clearly evidenced by the wild swings in vote tallies that have occurred at past Conferences.

The Area concept would address these issues in the following ways:

- More groups would be able to participate in Area assemblies than have been able to participate in the international Conferences, because of closer proximity of assembly meetings and the resulting decrease costs. Each group would send a representative (Group Service Representative, or GSR) as their voice to the Area assembly.
- Issues of interest or concern to individual groups could be brought to Area assemblies. At that level, they could be discussed and, if deemed of sufficient importance, could be forwarded for consideration by the Conference. Practically, this means that the issues reaching the international Conference would have been thoroughly considered at two levels – local groups and the Area assembly – prior to coming before the Conference.
- Each Area would elect a delegate to attend the international Conference as the official representative from that Area. This approach would achieve a smaller, more manageable Conference of

roughly 40 delegates representing Areas. Presumably, all of those delegates would have received input from the member groups in their Area and their Area assembly prior to coming to the Conference. It is proposed that any member of the fellowship attending the international convention could be able to attend the Conference meeting, but only the Area delegates would have a vote on official business.

- Because Board and Literature Committee members are presently elected by regional caucuses, the transition to Areas would necessitate changing the way those trusted servants are elected in order to maintain optimal sizes for those important ISO service bodies. Although the details of this part of the proposal have not been worked out at the time of this printing, it is envisioned that Areas would nominate candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Literature Committee and that one or more nominating committees would be established to vet the candidates and present the Conference with a slate of qualified nominees for both of those ISO entities. A similar process may well be established to elect trusted servants for leadership positions within the Conference. The latter issue falls within the purview of the Conference Charter Committee.
- Areas might also provide additional encouragement and support for member groups and serve as a training ground and source of volunteers for international service in the future.

The ISO Structure Committee feels that this approach would offer a significant improvement in the way that the ISO operates and the way that the ISO supports local member groups. Many more details will be worked out over the months leading up to the next Conference and convention. At that time, the delegates participating in the 2013 Conference will have the opportunity to discuss and possibly take action on these proposed changes, as they consider their implications for the future of the ISO. Of course, many more details will have to be addressed after the Conference, if the Conference agrees that this approach would be beneficial for the ISO and the fellowship at large.

Questions or comments about the ISO-S proposal may be routed through the below e-mail address.

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

## 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 e-mail) 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.

November 25  
December 30 (5th Sunday)  
January 27  
February 24  
March 24  
April 28

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 2013 Convention Committee**

Greetings from the 2013 Oasis of Serenity International SAA Convention Committee!

We have been working diligently for well over a year to get things together for an awesome 2013 International Convention experience for all of our SAA members and their guests.

Very soon, if not already, you should see our registration flyer in your mailboxes and up on the website, as well as forms requesting speakers and workshop presenters.

Please get your convention speaker and workshop submissions in as soon as possible as the convention program is the core of the convention experience and we want to get that organized sooner than later.

Since the convention location fellowship is mighty but small, we welcome anyone who can volunteer before and during the convention. We meet the second Saturday of each month. Contact the ISO office for more information.

Or, if you would like to participate but do not live in the convention area, you can contact us through the ISO office, and we will organize a cell phone you can call into to participate!

We are still looking for someone to lead our No One Stands Alone/Welcome Committee, which is a very important committee.

Our first official fundraiser and giving thanks for the opportunity to host the convention is scheduled for noon on November 10<sup>th</sup> if you happen to be in the area. We will have food, drinks, a silent auction, and 50/50 raffle drawing. Contact the ISO office for more information.

We hope to see some of you there!

Have a great holiday season and look to hear from us again very soon!

In service,  
Kelley K.  
Convention Program Sub-Committee Chair  
ISO Board Liaison to Convention Committee

## **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.

## An Appeal to Groups for LifeLine Partners

Dear Friends in Recovery,

At the 2012 Conference in Vancouver, the ISO Seventh Tradition Committee reintroduced LifeLine Partners as a means for individuals to commit to monthly donations to the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc. (ISO). Donations to LifeLine Partners aid the ISO tremendously because they provide a steady and reliable source of income.

At the Conference, the committee set a goal of increasing donations from about \$7,000 per month to \$20,000 per month. Currently we are at 46% of our goal, with contributions increasing every month!

In addition to *individuals* who are LifeLine Partners, we would also like to invite *groups* to consider committing to recurring donations via LifeLine Partners.

As with an individual commitment, a *group* commitment could be funded by a group credit card or checking account, or even a group member's credit card (the group could then reimburse that member).

Typically, a group's Seventh Tradition funds go to local group needs, intergroup needs, and then some funds are passed on to the ISO. While these contributions are greatly appreciated, this source of income is unsteady and unpredictable. The monthly fluctuations in funding make it very hard to budget for new and ongoing initiatives.

Regular *Group* LifeLine Partner donations would help fund current activities of the ISO such as:

- Publishing the *Outer Circle* newsletter
- Maintaining outreach via our website, telephone service, and a database of all registered groups
- Maintaining the SAA store, which provides literature and recordings
- Providing information to the media about our program of recovery
- Coordinating, planning, and on-site management of the annual conference
- Coordinating the communication and activities of the board of trustees and its committees

Equally - and perhaps more - important, the financial support from member groups would help the ISO to further carry the SAA message to suffering sex addicts by:

- Increasing awareness of our program of recovery on a global

scale

- Translating recovery literature and websites to other languages
- Enhancing and maintaining outreach and service via our website (the primary resource for reaching and helping sex addicts)
- Continuing outreach to sex addicts who are incarcerated
- Preparing our program to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population of new members

## **We hope you will consider asking your group to sign up as a LifeLine Partner.**

If each of our 1,300 groups only made a \$15 monthly pledge, we could easily meet the goal we set at the 2012 Conference!

Groups can join online at [www.saa-recovery.org/lifelinepartners](http://www.saa-recovery.org/lifelinepartners) or over the phone by calling 800-477-8191.

We thank you for your service and support!

Seventh Tradition Committee

## **Women's Outreach Subcommittee**

The Women's Outreach Subcommittee (WOSC) held the Second Annual Women's retreat in September 2012. Fifteen Women attended the retreat, and just as in 2011, the retreat was fully self-supporting.

The local fellowship in Minnesota did an amazing job hosting this retreat, and the WOSC is grateful for their efforts!

We look forward to working with another local fellowship in putting on the retreat in 2013. If a local fellowship is interested in hosting the retreat, please contact the ISO, so they may forward your interest to the WOSC.

The WOSC is also working on updating the responses for the Grace e-mail.

We are also working on Literature ideas, safety in meetings, and investigating the possibility of becoming a Conference Committee.

If you are interested in the work of the WOSC, please contact the ISO office and asked to be added to the Women's Outreach Committee e-mail list.

Yours in service,

The Women's Outreach Subcommittee of General Outreach



## GLBT Outreach Subcommittee

As reported in our last news item, we are looking for more ways to provide public information about SAA to the GLBT communities. Many of us spent countless hours perusing the "personal ads" in GLBT publications and websites. Could we take a few minutes to inquire whether our local publications and websites will print the following PSA at low or no cost? Community event sections of non-GLBT local or regional newspapers and websites are also venues that can be explored. There are some limited funds available in the GLBT Outreach designated fund for such activities.

A "Letter to Media Outlets" can be adapted from the Bay Area Intergroup website at [www.bayareasaa.org](http://www.bayareasaa.org), which also contains form letters which can be used for contacting other outside professionals.

The following PSA used in a national GLBT newsmagazine was provided by the ISO office at that time:

**Need Help dealing with compulsive sexual behaviors?**

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) is a fellowship of men & women who share their experience, strength & hope to abstain from their addictive sexual behaviors. Info & meetings: [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org).

Call 800-477-8191 or 713-869-4902

Please let us know if we can assist you further in your local efforts to help member groups carry their message to the sex addict who still suffers.

Two other projects that are being worked on are:

- International outreach
- Organizing feedback groups

We are still looking for volunteers to help out with these projects, and the ones reported on in the Sep/Oct issue, that have unfortunately been tabled due to lack of volunteers. One dedicated committee member at the September committee meeting spoke to the greater question of how people are called to service - that the point of service is that I get to stay sober. Please consider service with the GLBT Outreach Subcommittee.

To attend our monthly teleconference, which is the first Sunday of each month., contact the ISO Office for call in information. To volunteer for GLBT Outreach activities, e-mail us at the below e-mail address.

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

## ISO Income/Expense Summary As of September 30, 2012

	Sep 12	Monthly Avg	Jul - Sep 12
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Sales</b>	17,158.76	16,702.32	50,106.97
<b>Shipping &amp; Handling</b>	1,737.35	1,723.32	5,169.95
<b>Donations</b>	15,291.00	21,932.96	65,798.87
<b>Interest Earned</b>	22.46	23.84	71.53
<b>Other Income</b>	0.00	30.52	91.55
<b>Convention Income</b>	0.00	3,060.79	9,182.37
<b>Delegate Meeting Income</b>	10.00	3.33	10.00
<b>Total Income</b>	34,219.57	43,477.08	130,431.24
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>	6,304.29	5,762.04	17,286.13
<b>Gross Profit</b>	27,915.28	37,715.04	113,145.11
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Wages</b>	17,600.12	19,717.50	59,152.49
<b>Benefits</b>	3,479.73	3,704.62	11,113.87
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	1,354.44	1,629.24	4,887.71
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	20.09	21.13	63.38
<b>Insurance</b>	340.69	340.69	1,022.07
<b>Financial Charges</b>	524.30	888.50	2,665.50
<b>Communications</b>	690.33	828.95	2,486.86
<b>Occupancy Expenses</b>	1,326.38	1,299.33	3,898.00
<b>Office Expenses</b>	84.45	583.15	1,749.45
<b>The Outer Circle</b>	1,318.05	1,087.43	3,262.30
<b>Professional Fees</b>	1,035.00	1,035.00	3,105.00
<b>Depreciation</b>	175.00	175.00	525.00
<b>Bad Debts/Refunds</b>	0.00	-25.42	-76.26
<b>Travel-Related Expenses</b>	2,251.54	1,283.65	3,850.94
<b>Board/Committee Expenses</b>	1,512.37	1,367.52	4,102.55
<b>Convention Expenses</b>	0.00	2,277.35	6,832.04
<b>Total Expense</b>	31,712.49	36,213.63	108,640.90
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-3,797.21</b>	<b>1,501.40</b>	<b>4,504.21</b>

## Financial Results for September 2012

In the month of September we had a deficit of \$3,797.21. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$5,969.00. The increase in revenue of \$2,171.79 was due in part to reduced expenses in salary.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book was below our estimate by \$439.50 for September and is below our estimate for the service year by \$199.19.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$167.74 for September and are below our estimate by \$1,124.18 for the service year. Our bronze medallion sales were below our estimate by \$345.00 in September and are below our estimate by 2,190.00 for the service year. Our Chips exceeded our estimate by \$78.50 in September and have exceeded our budget by 299.36 for the service year.

Our total sales for September were below our estimate by \$526.24 and are below our estimate by 2,948.03 for the service year.

Individual donations were below our estimate by \$1,291.84 for September but have exceeded our estimate by \$5,549.46 for the service year. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$52.84 for September and have exceeded our estimate by \$5,859.41 for the service year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$34,259.03.

Our expenses were below our estimate by \$2,911.51 in September but have exceeded our estimate by \$9,597.90 for the service year. The majority of the excess in expenses were due to booking convention expenses of \$6,832.04 in July instead of June.

Summary of the current six month budget: (July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012)

- Sales are below our estimate by \$2,948.03
- Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$11,408.87
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$9,587.90
- Net surplus has exceeded our budget estimate by \$12,792.21

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.

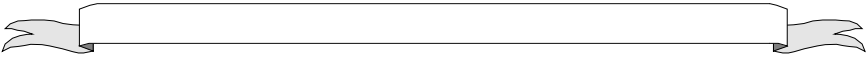
In Your Service,  
Joe H.  
Director of Operations  
[director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)

*[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.]*

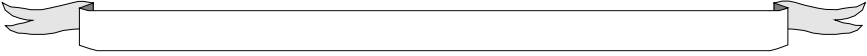
## From the Editor by Mike L.

I want to take a few minutes (or rather a few lines of space) this issue to pay tribute to the unsung heroes of *The Outer Circle*, and that is our wonderful Outer Circle Oversight Committee. The Committee adds a lot to the quality of the publication, and so I want to explain how they do that.

Every two months, I take the articles I have received, which come to me by



*This brings me to the topic for the July/  
August 2013 issue of The Outer Circle.  
It is "the daily inventory."*



both e-mail and snail mail, and put together about twelve pages' worth. Normally I do this based on in the order that the articles have arrived, and those articles that are on the topic of the issue, on the Steps and Traditions of that issue, are continuing columns (think *Dear Grace*) and so forth automatically go to the head of the class. After that, it's FIFO.

I normally try to give every article a chance. There are a couple of types of articles that I don't generally consider for publication; these articles don't make it to the oversight committee.

The first is the article with the heavily religious bent (this may be a redundant statement, since I never get articles with light religious bents). This includes articles with a deep reliance on the eastern religions, and not just those articles that rely heavily on those of the United States. I've heard many shares in meetings over the years from people who were beaten over the head with religion, and believe these kinds of articles could easily be triggering.

The second kind of article is of the variety that I call "scholarly." A writer

takes it upon him- or herself to summarize a book or article that the author has recently read; these books are normally not SAA literature, and thus can safely be considered to be “outside issues.” An alternative to these kinds of summaries are the articles where the author attempts to come up with a theory of what constitutes sex addiction. These articles can often contain statements such as “addicts are this” or “addicts do that,” sometimes softened to “we are this” or “we do that.” I try to edit out these kinds of statements even in articles that aren’t of this scholarly nature and replace them with “I” statements.

I do make an exception for articles that give a number of quotes from AA literature; I am puzzled still to be getting such articles, given the large amount of our own literature that we have now. On the other hand, we have carved out an exception for some AA literature to be sent for free into the prisons; one of the arguments of those who advanced the motion to do so at the last delegate conference was that folks who have been around for a while learned the program from AA literature and so are most comfortable passing on that message using the same literature.

Anyway, the articles that go to the oversight committee are articles that I think have some sort of potential, and usually a great deal of potential. The “Letter to the Editor” this issue indicates that the overall quality of the articles has improved over the years. While I can see the writer’s point, we have some really excellent articles in our archives as well. If I find myself running low on articles I will, rather than use every article I have, use one or two articles from older issues of the newsletter. This gives me a little reserve for the next issue while I try to drum up some more articles. (There are two such older articles in the current issue so hint, hint.)

With the two exceptions I mentioned, and some rare minor exceptions, such as articles that focus on the problem rather than the solution, I try, as I said, to give each article a chance, and when I send my twelve pages to the oversight committee, I almost never make any sort of comment on any of them. A speaker at a convention some years ago mentioned speakers he had heard who he considered to be absolutely horrible, and inevitably as soon as that speaker had finished, the person next to him turned and said, “Wasn’t that the best speaker you ever heard?” Similarly, even in articles that I don’t care for, I figure that the oversight committee may see things in them that I did not. Or perhaps I will be wondering if the oversight committee will agree with me that an article, while discussing a worthwhile topic, was too negative in tone.

Then I sit back and wait for the responses from the oversight committee. It often turns out to be the case that our commentators will agree that the article is worth publishing. Sometimes they disagree with each other, and then I have to weigh the arguments and make my best decision as to whether to print an article, or replace it with another one.

The main point I am making here is that I don't think *The Outer Circle* would be of the quality it is if it were not for the hard work and dedication of the oversight committee. And now the pitch: It is not necessary to be a member of the Literature Committee to be a member of the oversight committee. So if reviewing the articles ahead of time is something that would appeal to you, drop me an e-mail and let me know. You can write to me at [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).

If you don't have access to e-mail, we can communicate by regular mail, although the process would be slower and you would have less time to make your comments and get them back to me.

This brings me to the topic for the July/August 2013 issue of *The Outer Circle*. It is "the daily inventory." While this is more reminiscent of the Tenth Step which would normally be one of the topics for the September/October issue, a daily inventory is appropriate at any time, and not just in the late summer/early fall; at least I hope so. So, what have been your experiences with the Tenth Step, and how have they affected your recovery?

I've gone a little over the space I normally allot to myself for this part of the publication. So, without further ado, I will close for now. I look forward to talking with you again next issue.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I'm trying to write this as if you and I were old SAA buddies talking over a cup of coffee.

A little background: I've been a member of AA since September 10, 1985, and haven't had a drink since then. I've been active in service work at the group, district and area level. I'm an avid reader of the *Grapevine*. I joined SAA in 2004, and as soon as I found *The Outer Circle* (can't remember the original name, I think the *Brown Wrapper*), I became a regular reader. I also produced copies for some of my group members to see if I could stir up some interest.

When I first started reading *The Outer Circle* I was disappointed; I took most of the writers' inventories, and of course they came up short. I based my criticism on the "quality" of the *Grapevine*, forgetting that *The Outer Circle* was in its infancy and so were its writers.

Now having six months in the Harris County Jail and another ten months in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice behind me, I've caught up with all back issues of *The Outer Circle* and have been amazed at the quality of the stories. These guys have "got it together" and spend more time on "what happened and what it's like now." Before (it seemed to me) it was "what it was like." In other words, they were spending too much time in the Problem and not much in the Solution. I'm gratified to see that it has changed. Several of the stories have "hit me" and I share those with my wife and my SAA sponsor.

The short version of this letter is: I'm grateful to SAA, *The Outer Circle*, and those SAA members who take the time to share their "experience, strength, and hope" with me on a personal and intimate level. I'm not quite sure how all that changed, but I think God had a hand in it.

In fellowship,

Joe U.

## My Home Group is a Telemeeting

by Rich B.

My home group is a telemeeting. I have no SAA face-to-face meetings in my town that anyone attends except me. So my home group is a special group of telemeetings that meets six times a week. It is called “Big Book Study for Sex Addicts.” (The days and times of the meetings can be found on [saatalk.org](http://saatalk.org). or on the SAA website under “telemeetings.”)

My home group meets by phone six times a week—on the phone. Big Book Study telemeetings are open, except for one women’s-only meeting. It is a place where men and women sex addicts safely gather to study the precise, clear cut instructions the original one hundred recovered alcoholics followed with a sponsor to be free of their obsession to drink.

Big Book study telemeetings are not a place to get current. They are not a place to hear about other people’s addictive sexual behaviors.

Big Book Study telemeetings are safe places where brothers and sisters in recovery meet and extract the precise instructions from each paragraph in the Big Book so that they may better apply the instructions to their lives and more effectively pass these instructions on to others.

My home group taught me that (1) the best place to get current and specific is with a sponsor, and (2) getting a sponsor and working the Steps is where real recovery takes place. I also learned that I couldn’t get recovery by only attending meetings. My home group did not teach me that. My addiction taught me that. Relapses and slips taught me that this is not a program of attendance. This is not a spectator sport. I had to get out of my seat, walk down onto the field of play, and get a sponsor.

I found my sponsor at a telemeeting. That is where I learned that he needed me as much as I needed him—well, that’s what he told me, and I believed it because he was spending all this time with me. He used the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* to guide me through the Twelve Steps.

This is what happened to me in my telemeeting home group and how I got sober. I still pick up the phone several times a week, dial in, and “arrive” at my home group telemeeting—without even getting out of my pajamas.

My home group also taught me the answer to the question, why study the Big Book? The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* is the purest, most undiluted instruction manual in existence of how a spiritual awakening can be achieved by working the Twelve Steps with a sponsor in a timely manner. I find familiar voices in my Home Group meeting.

I hear people who have recovered telling newcomers how the precise



instructions worked for them. I hear shared the names and phone numbers of people who have had a spiritual awakening as the result of working the Steps out of the Big Book with a sponsor. I hear that these people have the time and willingness to work with a newcomer like me.

My home group telemeeting recognizes that each of us must go outside the meeting room and approach the addict who still suffers in his wind-up joint—at a mission, at a prison, at a pre-release center. I learned from my home group telemeeting that it is not good enough to sit at a meeting and wait until an addict falls into my lap.

I learned from my home group that the only thing each of us knows is what we did to get sober and happy and free. In our case, it was working the Twelve Steps out of the Big Book with a sponsor. So it is only natural for us to start up other Big Book Studies for Sex Addicts wherever we are. All we need is another sex addict, a resentment, and an understanding wife.

Carrying the message to addicts and starting other Big Book studies for sex addicts are duties I happily carry out. I learned all this from my home group telemeetings—Big Book Study for Sex Addicts.

Other home groups probably do things slightly differently. That is okay because we are all autonomous. There is only one central fact for us. If we have worked the steps with a sponsor and had a spiritual awakening as the result of the steps, then, as we read on page 25 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, “The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.”

*[Editor’s Note: 1) Not all telemeetings are Big Book studies; each meeting determines its own format and content; 2) Although some members of our fellowship use the AA Big Book as a guide for working the Steps, there are others who exclusively use the SAA Green Book and still others who use both the foundational AA pieces and the SAA Green Book in their own programs and with their sponsees.]*

## A Very Special “Home Group” by Anonymous

I want to share a little about a recent experience I had with an SAA group in another area. I have anguished over whether to name the group and have decided, out of an abundance of caution, not to. My friends, you know who you are, and I hope you know who I am.

This group takes the Saturday before Labor Day and celebrates the anniversary of SAA in that area. I was invited to attend the second anniversary back in 1999 and enjoyed myself so much that I went again in 2000. After that, well, life got in the way, and each year I found a reason not to go. This despite running into somebody from that group each year at the convention those years that I have attended and saying “Yes, I’ll think about it.”

Well, this year, I finally decided to go back for the fifteenth anniversary. Because I was late making a reservation, I couldn’t do a simple Friday-to-Monday trip without having to pay extra, so I decided to do a Thursday-to-Tuesday trip which was a little more reasonable.

One of the members of the fellowship met me Thursday evening at my hotel and we had a chance to spend some time together. We grabbed a quick bite to eat and he showed me around town. I got back to the hotel doubly excited about my decision to come.

I had Friday, a work day, pretty much to myself. That evening, my new friend from the evening before and I, there being no SAA meeting in town, went to a meeting of another Twelve-Step group. As he dropped me off afterwards, he told me to expect a call at around 10 pm from the man who would bring me to the next day’s anniversary celebration. Feeling like Scrooge after Marley’s warning, I went back to my room. Sure enough, at 10 pm I got the anticipated call.

Saturday was the celebration, which consisted of several workshops. I was happy to see several of the members I had known from 1999 and 2000; they presented the bulk of the workshops. I was blown away by the growth in the members and of the fellowship as a whole.

The celebration, which was supposed to end with an SAA meeting in the evening, actually ended a little earlier because of a miscommunication with the church. A couple of members of the group took it upon themselves to make sure I had entertainment for the evening. We visited a beautiful spot in town and just sat near the water and talked for several hours.

I had Sunday morning to myself, and then got to spend most of the rest of the day with these two members and one other. We ate at a restaurant

where the President ate a couple of years ago; the restaurant still lists the item he ordered on its menu as the "Presidential Choice."

Monday was another work day so I spent some time walking around town. After a couple of hours I started getting that sensation of "uh oh, I'm getting a sunburn." So I hightailed it to the nearest bus and spent the rest of the day inside. My original host from Friday night came and got me that night and we made it to an SAA meeting.

All good things must end, so Tuesday it was back to the airport. I was very glad that I had decided to do a five-night trip. My only regret was missing seeing the museum which was within walking distance of where I was staying. Not having learned until Sunday afternoon about it, it was too late for me to go, since they are closed on Mondays. Just another reason for me to go back for the sixteenth anniversary, which I have already promised to do.

Being at this location for the Labor Day weekend and renewing some very old SAA acquaintances, as well as making some new ones, reminded me in a sense of what it was like being new in SAA and still feeling very much a part of the fellowship, the same sense I have had when visiting SAA in other areas of the country. While I can't say that this group is an actual home group (anyway, I have one of those already), I do feel like this is going to be my "Labor Day Weekend Home Group." Thanks to all of you who made my Labor Day Weekend something very special this year.

## 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 just started attending SAA meetings and am overwhelmed with all the new things I am asked to do in order to stay sober. Do I really need to spend so much time going to meetings, making phone calls, and doing Step work? How long will it take for me to recover?

Overwhelmed

Dear Overwhelmed,

Thank you for these great questions! Your first question is much easier to answer than the second, so I'll begin there.

Of course, being overwhelmed was often part of the problem. So it is not surprising that many times, new members struggle with all the things suggested to them in the program. Many of us were overwhelmed by the idea of making outreach calls, working the Steps, and attending meetings. It may be helpful to consider how much time we spent (per day, per week, etc.) active in our addiction, and become willing to commit as much time towards our recovery. As our new behaviors become more engrained, we find ourselves more willing to devote the time. For example, many of us have found that meetings, which at first were a struggle to attend, soon became the spiritual highlight of our day.

It is helpful to remember that abstinence and recovery look different to each member. Suggestions from members are just that, suggestions and not requirements. It is sometimes a good idea to take what you like and leave the rest. As you work the steps with your sponsor, it will become clear what things work for you to help you stay abstinent.

Your second question, how long it will take for you to recover, is impossible for us to answer. We simply do not know how long it will take for you to work the Twelve Steps! Recovery does not happen overnight. We have

found it beneficial to take recovery one day at a time and one minute at a time if necessary. Strong emotional and physical feelings may come up as we distance ourselves from our old behaviors. As we work the Steps, we develop trust in our fellow sex addicts, our sponsor, our Higher Power, and ourselves. Most important: "Working the Twelve Steps leads to a spiritual transformation." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 20).

We are powerless over our addiction. Working the Twelve Steps with a sponsor (and usually by showing up at meetings) is the foundation of our recovery. You will be amazed at the miracles that working this program can bring.

In service,  
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

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## Lust in the Night

by Larry E.

Awakened by my thoughts  
In pitch black night  
Lit only by the glare  
Of a street light below  
And the luminous glow  
Of a clock keeping vigil.

I resettle my head on the pillow,  
Breathe deep and exhale,  
Stretch this way and that,  
Try to calm my thoughts.  
But sleep won't return  
So I rise to face myself.

My old bones resist movement.  
My puffy eyes dry and stinging

From what I imagine  
By staring too long during the past day  
At the flickering computer screen  
On which appear the objects of my lust.

Things of metal and plastic,  
Of gears and coils of wire,  
Of smooth glass and spongy rubber  
That would smell of oil and paint  
And would be satisfying solid  
Were they real in my grasp.

But they are visions only,  
Images pulled from thin air,  
From a storeroom somewhere  
Far away where I will never really be,  
But that tempt me to reach  
To sooth an itch that I cannot scratch.

The irony is not lost on me  
As I write about these visions  
To exorcise them from my head  
On a thing of metal and glass,  
The object of lust once held,  
Its grasp on me released by possession.

I suppose that the lust of objects  
Is better than the lust of bodies  
That was the bane of my past.  
But I treated those bodies as objects, too,  
Though made of flesh, bone and muscle,  
Distinctions without much difference.

It is the power of lust that wakes me,  
No matter what the focus,  
That leaves me wanting,  
Feeling vaguely unfulfilled,  
Makes me resent not having  
And keeps me from the rest I need.

The promise of serenity assures me  
That the lust of the mind  
Will drain away over time.  
But it also is said that time never waits,  
And soon night will fade into the past.  
Will dawn find me fresh or faded?

Having revealed what caused me to wake,  
I feel some relief from longing.  
The power of lust is broken  
By conscious contemplation,  
By simple words written down,  
By the same mind that longing unsettled.

How does this work? Damned if I know.  
I suppose vigilance brought to bear  
On the present reality with the faith  
That I do not need to grasp all things,  
That I just need to listen and be mindful,  
To discover what it is I need to know now.

My wakeful interlude almost over,  
Calm seems to flow from within  
Like a warm blanket drawn around me.  
I place my head back on the pillow,  
My inner voice still again, the critic quiet.  
The sounds of night lull me back to sleep.

# Spiritual Awakening Is the Focus

by Jim L.

Step Twelve is very clear. The focus of the twelve-step program is spiritual awakening.

Steps One through Nine will get us there. Steps Ten and Eleven will reinforce the work of the first nine Steps. And Step Twelve tells us what it takes to hang out there and to grow and mature in recovery.

One way of looking at the process suggested by the Twelve Steps that I have found helpful is to group the Steps according to their common purposes.

In Steps One and Two, I admit the depth of my addiction and recognize that I am not capable of achieving a solution. I come to the realization, however, that I am not hopeless—that the God of my understanding has the power to restore me to sanity.

In Steps Three through Seven, I take the actions necessary to identify and surrender to God my wrongs, my character defects, and my shortcomings. In effect, these Steps teach me, even though I don't understand how it will happen, that I can trust God. God is reliable where I am not reliable and where I have failed.

In Steps Eight and Nine, I take additional actions that are designed to repair and restore relationships with others whom I have harmed. Being careful not to inflict more harm, I do what I need to do and leave the outcome to God—a second mini-surrender.

In Steps Ten and Eleven, I incorporate into my lifestyle the actions necessary to maintain my own honesty and accountability, and I fervently pray for God's will to replace my will in my daily activities. I reaffirm repeatedly my tendency to go astray and my ongoing need for guidance. I become conscious of God in my life.

In Step Twelve, I further buttress my recovery by working with other addicts and practicing the principles of the program in every aspect of my life. I can live daily on the basis of my conscious contact with God as the result of a spiritual awakening.

I have learned—sometimes with difficulty—that the twelve-step program is not a cafeteria-style plan. I cannot choose a Step here and a Step there and expect to reach the desired result of the program. It is a method that, if followed systematically, will result in the spiritual awakening, as promised.

According to Roget's Twenty-First Century Thesaurus, the opposite of systematic is chaotic, disorderly, and confused. Do any of those adjectives



sound familiar as descriptive of our lives before recovery? I can certainly understand from experience what chaos, disorder, and confusion mean, and I can find, in reflecting on their meaning, motivation to work the Twelve Steps as originally suggested—in a committed and systematic way.

The spiritual awakening occurs as I systematically align my will with God's will. For me, the system—the “how-to”—was found in the Twelve Steps.

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## Willingness

Barry M.

When I got into recovery, I didn't know how to become a person with a life worth living. The goal seemed impossibly far away and the way to it was a mystery. Three words I heard—willingness, courage, and hope—helped me, but willingness helped me more than all the others. With willingness, I could face whatever I needed to face.

Early recovery was perhaps the most painful and confusing period of my life. I faced physical and emotional withdrawal from my addiction, consequences from other people and institutions, and a recovery program that could seem baffling. Willingness allowed me to face all these obstacles.

As an addict new to recovery, I faced lots of stress. As a typical addict, I didn't seek recovery until unmanageability had taken over my life. I had the potential of facing serious consequences; I have heard others share possible consequences that could have included loss of a job, relationship, children, friends, or home. My stress was high, but my primary coping mechanism, the addiction, didn't work anymore. Powerful feelings of fear, guilt, pain, and anger rose up, but, without different ways of coping, I, as an addict new to recovery, felt hopeless and desperate. I needed new ways to cope.

In early recovery, I learned about the addictive cycle, which is the endless vicious loop that kept me enslaved to my unhealthy behaviors. As is often the case, my cycle began with negative beliefs about myself, which led to distorted thinking and obsession, then to preoccupation. Preoccupation led to acting out, which led to shame and remorse, which reinforced the negative beliefs about oneself.

I learned that in order to escape addiction and live in recovery, I needed to create a recovery cycle. The recovery cycle started with healthy beliefs about myself. I supported these beliefs by practicing affirmations, which

are positive statements about myself. I needed people who could help me stay connected to reality, so I checked my thinking with others to see if it was distorted. I replaced my distorted views of the world with healthier views. I replaced my unhealthy obsessions and preoccupations with a positive focus on the things I cared about most – my family, job, and community. Instead of acting out, I acted in ways that aligned with my values. Instead of feeling shame, I felt gratitude.

My Three Circles helped me make the necessary changes. When I made my Three Circles, I listed in the inner circle those things I would absolutely refrain from doing. In the middle circle, I listed those that led me down the slippery slope to acting out. In the outer circle, I listed the healthy behaviors I was willing to commit to doing. I no longer lived in my inner circle; now I was living in the outer circle.

When I made my Circles, I encountered old beliefs that I wouldn't be able to cope without my drug. I feared deprivation, and I had to acknowledge that fear. I can identify with those I have heard share that they became addicts because they felt deprived of love, security, and acceptance. Addiction gave me a temporary "fix" to my feelings of deprivation; when acting out, I felt like I had it all, even if this feeling was based in delusion. When I entered recovery and faced the permanent loss of my addictive coping behaviors, my fear of deprivation and the stress that went with it could likely have risen again.

As an addict, I am used to quick fixes. Recovery is not a quick fix. The "interest" in my physical, emotional, and spiritual accounts accrued slowly at first. The changes that were taking place in me were not that noticeable at first, although I think others noticed them. One of the benefits of staying connected to the program was that others could tell me the changes they saw in me.

Those artists in the past who have worked within the boundaries of their art as they existed at the time learned that to use constraints—to commit to certain paths and to avoid others—meant opening up more options. They knew that by avoiding certain paths, new ones became available. As an addict, I found that that by giving up certain behaviors, other activities become available. Giving up an unhealthy use of media can lead to more reading. Giving up isolation can lead to more friendships. Giving up addictive relationships can lead to a healthy relationship. By learning to let go of my old habits, I learned about the new ones that would sustain me.

Withdrawal can take months. Consequences can last for years. With willingness, I was able to figure out how to face them, decide what I need to give up, and become ready for the healthy alternatives. With faith and trust that there was a better way, and I was able to get through those difficult early days of recovery.

## The Active Serenity Prayer

by Doug

*[Editor's Note: Here is a brief gem from the November 1994 issue of the newsletter.]*

One of my most helpful recovery tools has been what I call the Active Serenity Prayer. I learned the Serenity Prayer before I became involved with SAA. But at one time it was just a collection of words. I did not see how to apply it to real situations. However, one of the promises of SAA is that we will, through our Higher Power, "intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us" (AA Big Book, p. 84). To me that meant there had to be a role that I played in concert with my Higher Power, and that role was to turn the situation over to Him and let Him walk me through the solution.

So I decided that I should take an active role in the prayer, not just asking for the serenity, the courage, and the wisdom. I decided to take it on faith that, once asked, it had been given. So with the new-found wisdom for the situation granted by my Higher Power I am able to dissect the situation or feeling. To admit those things which are beyond my control and accept them. To admit honestly what I need to have the courage to change. And to set a goal or plan to change that part I can control. I have found on many occasions that this active prayer has given me a direction or tool which I have been able to recognize and invoke in similar situations.

The final role in my Active Serenity Prayer is to acknowledge the new-found wisdom and to thank my Higher Power for caring enough for me to grant my prayer.

## Sweeping Away the Debris: An Amends

by Amy J.

There were tears in his eyes as I offered my amends. This was my initial attempt at making things right with someone. My list of harms consisted of some I considered easy and some I anticipated to be near-impossible. This one was undoubtedly the one that should come first. The harm in my estimation wasn't the worst, nor would this amends be the hardest. God was steady in His insistence though that this was crucial.

I made an appointment. The church was in sight when the engine on my car stalled out. I coasted to the side of the road. My only thought was, "If I have to leave my car and walk I will; any lengths." The engine turned over. When I arrived I was greeted by my pastor and friend Dave. At that moment I'm sure he had no idea why I had come.

"What brings you in?" I launched into my story. "I'm in a spiritual program of recovery. I've realized that my actions over the last several years have been very selfish. I've wasted a lot of time being resentful and I regret it deeply. I'm sorry if I hurt you and Susan. Please forgive me and tell me what I can do to make it right."

He sat for a moment. I noticed tears in his eyes. He asked me about the program. I told him forthrightly about my problem and the solution. I told him that I was no longer in charge of my life. I experienced a sensation of honesty and of letting God be in charge. It was good to look into my pastor's eyes and see tears of joy and reconciliation. I left experiencing a closeness to my pastor and to God that I hadn't known in years. At church the next Sunday I was free to connect with God with no resentment or guilt.

But the story didn't end there. God in His perfect timing and wisdom led me to do that amends first because just a few months later my pastor was diagnosed with a fast-growing cancer. This vibrant strong man quickly grew weak and sick. If I hadn't done that amends first, as God directed, I would have felt the guilt and sadness of that broken relationship forever. I probably would have had fear and guilt, and anger at God. Instead I have peace, our relationship is healed, and I am free to walk in the knowledge that God is in control no matter what.

## **Prayer**

by Bruce M.

What I ask for is  
to sit here begging for You,  
desperate as I once was  
when I first came before You and threw  
myself down on my knees  
and pleaded and wept  
and asked for succor.

Let me come that way again  
every time  
and seek sanctuary from myself  
in the sound embrace  
of Your vast and latitudinous arms.

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## **ABCs of Recovery**

by Ray W.

- Step One: Acceptance Bringing Change
- Step Two: Almighty Breaking Cycles
- Step Three: Allowing Better Choices
- Step Four: Access Bravely Considered
- Step Five: Audience Bearing Confession
- Step Six: Anticipating Blotting Characteristics
- Step Seven: Ashamedly Beseeking Conversion
- Step Eight: Acknowledging Betrayals Caused
- Step Nine: Actively Bringing Concessions
- Step Ten: Adjusting Blights Continually
- Step Eleven: Attaining Brighter Consciousness
- Step Twelve: Attesting Before Companions

## The Key

by Anonymous

*[Editor's note: It has been a while since we have run an article on prisoner outreach, formerly called "prison outreach." The following article, which also originally appeared in the November 1994 issue of the newsletter, wonderfully expresses the tribulations and joys of being involved in prisoner outreach.]*

It was in January of 1992 that I attended my first state intergroup meeting. I was very grateful to SAA for the gifts I had received and wanted to do something to repay the fellowship for those gifts. Also, I wanted to see if carrying the message would enhance my own recovery. I sat in three meetings without saying very much. In July 1992, at the Michigan Intergroup Meeting, Arnold D., the prison outreach chairperson of SAA, stated that he needed some help with writing letters to prisoners who had asked our fellowship for support for their addictions which had cost them their liberty. This seemed like something I could do: write a few letters myself, and try to convince others to do the same. I volunteered to take on this project in West Michigan.

Our letter-writing program in West Michigan was having some limited results, when out of the blue I received a letter from the Brooks Correctional Facility of Muskegon, inquiring as to the possibilities of establishing an SAA group at that facility. I wasted no time in contacting the assistant deputy warden who had written the letter. I told her that we would do our best to find volunteers for her facility and that, if we could, we would be willing to chair meetings on a weekly basis. I was able to recruit four other men besides myself. Bill G. had already been involved in prison outreach in the past, although he had not been allowed to conduct meetings at another prison that was also in Muskegon. Bill was very supportive of our outreach to the Brooks facility. Dan D., Ken B., and Bill L. were also to become volunteers at this prison. We were all given background investigations, were all sent through an orientation by the facility, and were issued ID cards. We scheduled our first meeting on October 4, 1992.

One of the most memorable nights of my life happened as we twelfth-stepped eleven prisoners into SAA. For those who read these lines and believe that this would be a very frightening experience, I can assure you it was...*for the prisoners!* After all, our fellowship deals with some very painful and personal issues—issues that these men had never discussed frankly with anyone. It took a few meetings, but the prisoners built trust for each other and for the volunteers. I have often thought back to that first night at Brooks and marveled at the various places that prison outreach has taken me.

Since that time, Michigan SAA has conducted meetings at eight prisons. We in Grand Rapids are currently involved in four. One of my favorite recollections is the first SAA meeting in the prison Bill G. had been initially refused. On August 4, 1993, Bill G. chaired the first meeting there. I paraphrase the promise that states that "sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, they will always materialize..." (paraphrased from the AA Big Book, p. 84). I have come to believe those promises.

Despite never having had much ability to relate to women, I found I was able to facilitate a successful outreach to a woman's facility, the Crane Facility, in Coldwater, Michigan. What a gift for me to be able to help in this way! I will always be proud of the efforts made by the woman volunteers at Crane. They did not receive the support of the psych staff at Crane, and so the group that was established eventually died because of a lack of referrals. The volunteers hung in there, though, and this was especially impressive as the drive for most of them was over one hundred miles each way. Someday, God willing, Crane will have a group.

I feel that I should explain why I do this type of service work. I never believed that sexual addiction could ever be of any use to myself or to anyone. Yet here was an opportunity to put that addiction to use in a positive way. I can chair meetings for people who want desperately to change, people who want more than anything to believe that there is hope.

I also believe that if men and women who have committed a sexual crime can abstain from their behavior, then perhaps a potential victim need never suffer the horror of being a victim of sexual abuse. If only one person is spared by all of our efforts in prison outreach, than all of our efforts are worth it, and we have made amends. I know in my heart that we will do a lot better than one; we already have.

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



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

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

**Second:** Send your article: by e-mail to: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)  
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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 “ <i>The Daily Inventory</i> ”
Sep-Oct 2013	July 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10
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