

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 March 16, 2013 Teleconference

- That “Destination: Grace” be approved as the theme for the 2014 ISO of SAA International Convention, and that the ... [attached] logo ... be approved as the logo for the 2014 ISO of SAA International Convention.
 - That the ISO reimburse each board alternate up to \$1,000.00 for travel expenses to the Board Meeting and 2013 Conference.
 - That the ISO provide one member of the 2013 Conference Committee reimbursement of expenses in an amount of up to \$1,000 to attend the 2013 Conference.
 - The ISO provide the chair of the Conference Charter Committee reimbursement of expenses in an amount of up to \$1,000 to attend the 2013 Conference.
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Conference Charter Committee News

One of the major topics planned for discussion at the upcoming 2013 Conference will be the draft of the Conference Charter. This document is the result of several years work by the Conference Charter Committee (CCC).

Heretofore, the Conference has been viewed primarily as an annual meeting of delegates from SAA member groups. The Charter is intended to expand the important role of the Conference and to clarify its authority and responsibility as the effective voice of the fellowship within the ISO.

The Charter will be presented for open discussion and feedback this year, and it is anticipated that a final draft will then be prepared for presentation and possible adoption next year at the 2014 Conference.

The current draft of the Charter is posted in the Members Services area of the ISO service website (www.saa-iso.org) for review by all members of the fellowship. The username and password are available from the ISO office. Previous articles from *The Outer Circle* about the work of the CCC are also posted in the same area on the service website.

All members are encouraged to review the draft Charter. Comments and questions are welcomed by the CCC and may be sent to the ISO office at:

info@saa-recovery.org

ISO Structure Committee News

As a result of two years of study and discussions, the ISO Structure Committee (ISO-S) has submitted a proposal to the ISO Board of Trustees that includes two motions to amend the Bylaws of the ISO. One would change the way that the Board and ISO Literature Committee are elected. The other would change the service structure of the ISO from the current eight regions into approximately forty areas and would change the composition of the ISO Conference.

In addition, the ISO-S proposal includes two motions that would create Conference committees to assist with the implementation of the changes recommended in the Bylaws amendments.

Upon Board approval, these motions will be presented at the upcoming meeting of the 2013 Conference, for delegate discussion and possible adoption.

Drafts of the proposed motions, as well as previous TOC articles about the ISO-S work, are posted on the ISO service website at www.saa-iso.org. The username and password may be obtained from the ISO office.

All members of the fellowship are encouraged to review these documents. Comments or questions may be sent to the ISO at the below e-mail address, or may be brought directly to the upcoming 2013 Conference by duly elected delegates or alternate delegates.

info@saa-recovery.org

The ISO is pleased to announce the approval of
our newest piece of SAA literature:

***“Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings;
Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for “Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting,” the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing
this new addition to our SAA literature!

Literature Committee Highlights for the 2012-2013 Service Year

To say this last year has been busy and eventful would be quite an understatement.

LitCom has gone to great lengths as a team to move several projects past or at least close to the finish line in a year where fulfillment overcame disappointment, brilliance overcame challenges and the joy of accomplishment somehow managed to soften the sorrow of losing a committee member and good friend in Danny S. Indeed, Vancouver seems like so long ago.

I feel there is no easy way to sum up the entire year other than to list the work of the active subcommittees. So, here is a brief encapsulation:

Audio Review Subcommittee – This subcommittee continues to review audio recordings of past conferences and make recommendations to LitCom as to the appropriateness of each recording.

Audio Recordings – This subcommittee has completed three audio recordings of SAA literature.

Authors Group – This group is the only subcommittee of LitCom tasked with attracting writing talent and with creating future literature. Several current projects are: The Green Book Step Study Guide (large project), “Wisdom of Sponsorship” (a guide for becoming a sponsor), a pamphlet dealing with non-religious spirituality, and a “For Spouses” pamphlet.

Getting A Sponsor – This pamphlet has been in review over the last year within the sponsorship pamphlet subcommittee. There is a plan to move this piece forward in the review process during the Litcom meeting at the upcoming convention.

GLBT Pamphlet – This pamphlet provides good resources for the GLBT community and has just been approved by LitCom. This important document will be readied for production and sale as soon as possible.

ISO-S Work – LitCom continues to work with the ISO Structure Committee as it redefines itself in terms of how business will be conducted in the future.

Meditation Book – This large project continues to progress with over one hundred and ten meditations having completed the entire review and preparation process. Three hundred and sixty-six total meditations will move through the process to complete the book. Monthly workshop

teleconferences continue to create more meditations as well.

Meditation Booklet – This 52-meditation ‘short’ book will have one meditation for each week. Since this work can use 52 selected meditations from the completed group, it is anticipated to be completed sooner than the full length book.

Pamphlet/Booklet Review SC – This subcommittee has spent time this last service year reviewing the “Getting Started in SAA” booklet, which is an old legacy piece in need of updating.

Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings – This pamphlet, which provides information to help meetings be more welcoming to women, was approved at the mid-year meeting in Houston and is already available for sale.

The Outer Circle Newsletter – The bi-monthly newsletter of SAA continues to carry the message.

There are also a number of subcommittees which are not active at this time and are not listed.

The Literature Committee wishes to thank the ISO office and the Board of Trustees for their continued support and, most important, we wish to thank the entire fellowship for your support in the form of literature purchases in both printed and electronic form. Your continued support is what keeps the fellowship running.

Blessings to all!

Chris J.
Literature Committee Chair 2012-2013

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>	
<i>Safe & Sexually Sober Meetings</i>	

Meditation Book Vision Statement

(approved by the Literature Committee)

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

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

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

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the 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.

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.

June 23
July 28
August 25
September 22
October 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).

Submissions and a signed release form may be e-mailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at info@saa-recovery.org.

They may also be sent in hard copy by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee at ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

IMPORTANT

Please carefully read the following before submitting a personal story for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

Every story submitted for possible inclusion in the SAA book will be thoroughly reviewed and given in-depth consideration by the ISO Literature Committee, which is deeply grateful to every member who takes the time to write and submit a story.

The ISO of SAA, Inc. and the ISO Literature Committee do not guarantee that any particular story will appear in a future edition of the SAA book. Once submitted with a signed release form (located on the last page of this newsletter), the written story becomes the permanent property of the ISO of SAA, Inc., and may be edited or modified as deemed appropriate by the ISO Literature Committee.

Please also note that, while the ISO Literature Committee will acknowledge the initial receipt of a story, the ISO may or may not communicate further with the author about the suitability of the story or the likelihood of publication in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

Audio Version of SAA Green Book Available for the Visually Impaired

The National Library Service has produced an audio version of our SAA Green Book (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*). This audio book was produced by the government and is not available for sale by or use by the ISO of SAA, Inc. However, those who qualify for eligibility under the government guidelines may receive the SAA audio book from the National Library Service.

The website address for the National Library Service is:

www.loc.gov/nls/

***If you know of someone who could benefit from this service,
please let them know about this available format.***

GLBT Outreach Subcommittee

Your GLBT Outreach Sub Committee would like you to be aware of the following updates concerning our active projects:

1) The new GLBT booklet has been approved! The review & revision process was completed and the Literature Committee approved the final draft at their April meeting. The final draft has been forwarded to the office, and it will be produced and available for sale soon. Gratitude and appreciation goes out to all who helped make this a reality.

2) To enhance our public information/outreach abilities, the information for inclusion on the website sent to ISOPcom has been assigned a subcommittee. This subcommittee is reviewing the GLBT information submitted in addition to other outreach information such as men's and women's outreach. Concerns are clarity and consistency as well as adherence to our 12 steps and 12 traditions. This review will probably take another couple of months.

3) In regards to the organizing feedback groups project, this project will tie up already limited resources of the ISO for the maintenance of a page, so we are in need of reconsidering.

4) We are still in need of continuing information to update our GLBT meeting list regarding local areas. If you can assist, please reply to the below e-mail address, and let us know in what city you live and what meeting(s) you attend there. This would help us begin to collect a larger list of "GLBT friendly" meetings to which we may refer members when they inquire. If you are willing to be a contact for GLBT addicts in your area as well, please let us know.

As with the above and our other projects, we are seeking volunteers to help out. Please consider service with the GLBT Outreach Subcommittee.

For more information or to volunteer for GLBT Outreach activities, email us at the below e-mail address, or attend our monthly teleconference, which is the first Sunday of each month. Contact the ISO Office for call in information.

glbt@saa-recovery.org

Seventh Tradition Committee

LifeLine Partners

My Twelfth-Step Dilemma

Prior to my first SAA meeting I was isolating from important people in my life, thinking the only way I could find enjoyment was through acting out sexually. I envisioned a future of a continuous search for sexual partners through internet chat rooms, or of paying escorts for sex. It was the only future with any appeal, until I was discovered by my wife of 38 years. After she insisted I move out of the house for a month, consult with a therapist, and spend a week at a recovery center, it finally occurred to me I had a problem and could not solve it by myself.

I went to my first SAA meeting and found men with very similar problems and discovered that, with them, I could finally be honest. As I worked the steps with a sponsor, fear, loneliness, envy, and shame were replaced by a sense of peace, gratitude, self-worth, and a higher power at work in my life.

I started to help out at meetings, became a group treasurer, sponsored brothers in the program, and did other service work. I learned of the larger organization within SAA of Intergroup and ISO.

Even though I was doing 12th step work, I knew I really needed to do more. However, doing more was difficult with a marriage to repair, a house to maintain, and other family obligations needing my attention. What was I to do to pay back all that had been given me?

That question still bothers me a bit but I can do a small but very important part by being a LifeLine Partner. My wife saw how this program of recovery was changing me and readily agreed that we should give back monetarily. Now, rather than me hiding money in the dark for acting out, my wife and I give back a small amount each month in daylight to Lifeline Partners.

Viewing our credit card statement with a deduction for the ISO feels good. It feels good because I know that money I used to spend acting out is being used now by the ISO of SAA to help spread its message of recovery.

Last December my wife suggested we increase our LifeLine Partner contribution. What a joy to have her, recovery, and this fellowship in my life.

Tim T.

To learn more about LifeLine Partners:
<https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/>

ISO Income/Expense Summary as of March 31, 2013

	Mar 13	Monthly Avg	Jan - Mar 13
Income			
Sales	19,767.89	18,607.68	55,823.04
Shipping & Handling	1,805.95	1,901.90	5,705.70
Donations	29,722.50	25,477.67	76,433.02
Interest Earned	14.82	15.30	45.89
Convention Income	6,185.00	3,433.33	10,300.00
Delegate Meeting Income	800.00	283.33	850.00
Total Income	58,296.16	49,719.22	149,157.65
Cost of Goods Sold	8,734.81	7,507.60	22,522.81
Gross Profit	49,561.35	42,211.61	126,634.84
Expense			
Wages	17,257.40	18,422.11	55,266.34
Benefits	4,486.21	3,812.93	11,438.80
Payroll Taxes	1,415.92	1,596.48	4,789.43
Payroll Expenses	18.54	18.54	55.62
Insurance	984.91	555.31	1,665.93
Financial Charges	1,500.23	1,159.51	3,478.52
Communications	691.19	681.46	2,044.39
Occupancy Expenses	1,151.11	1,771.24	5,313.72
Office Expenses	1,205.37	1,417.08	4,251.23
The Outer Circle	1,094.20	876.81	2,630.44
Professional Fees	1,035.00	345.00	1,035.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	525.00
Bad Debts/Refunds	0.00	20.53	61.59
Travel-Related Expenses	1,034.40	2,874.08	8,622.24
Board/Committee Expenses	2,506.58	3,847.96	11,543.87
Convention Expenses	93.10	167.66	502.99
Total Expense	34,649.16	37,741.70	113,225.11
Net Income	14,912.19	4,469.91	13,409.73

Financial Results for March 2013

In the month of March we had a surplus of \$14,912.19. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$9,563.00. The increase in revenue of \$5,349.19 was mostly due to the Houston Giving Thanks event raising 4,187.32 more than budgeted. The total raised by the Houston Giving Thanks event was \$18,187.32 as of March 31.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$1,756.70 for March and has exceeded our estimate by \$3,594.45 for 2013.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$1,505.95 for March and have exceeded our estimate by 3,281.86 for 2013. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$420.00 in March and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,667.49 in 2013. Our chip sales exceeded our estimate by \$146.50 in March and has exceeded our estimate by \$287.35 in 2012.

Our total sales for March exceeded our estimate by \$4,227.89.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$3,462.82 for March and have exceeded our estimate by \$2,215.92 for 2013. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$861.68 in March but are \$3,442.90 below our estimate for 2013.

Our product inventory is valued at \$53,590.84

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$100.16 in March.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013):

- Sales have exceeded our budget estimate by \$9,203.04
- Donations are below our budget estimate by \$1,226.98
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$4,200.11
- Net surplus is below our budget estimate by \$1,547.27

Our operational reserve amount is \$136,100 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

[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 probably am still way busier than I anticipated that I would be at this point in my life, and so I often don't get home until late at night. One thing I like to do when I get home is turn on the classic movies channel on television and see what is on. My glib comment to others is that I don't care for any movies that were made after 1939, which is not entirely true. A couple of



*The topic for the Jan/Feb 2013 issue is
"The Only Requirement."*



weeks ago, for example, I saw for the first time in many years *The Sting*, a delightful feel-good movie from late 1973 that, while it might have been made after 1939, at least takes place during the decade of the thirties, 1936 to be exact. I originally saw it with my father while at home from grad school; not being familiar with a lot of the milieu or the language of the movie, I had difficulty completely following it, which is probably another reason why I fell headlong in love with the glorious Scott Joplin music, something I had no trouble following.

My father was clearly having the time of his life, nudging me each time one of the numerous plot twists was about to occur. Spoiler alert: I knew the ending was not what I was being led to believe because that was the only time in the entire movie where he didn't say anything; it was the "way" he wasn't saying anything that tipped me off.

Things became rocky between each of my parents and me later in life, probably an almost unavoidable result of my eventually starting to assert myself on matters about which I felt strongly. It would be easy for me to focus on those things which sadly colored my relationship with each of them in those final years. And yet, I choose not to do that, and focus instead the happier times, such as the time that my father and I saw *The*

Sting together.

I've been very excited to see what kind of response to we would get to this month's suggested topic of disclosure, and I haven't been disappointed. We got several good articles from a variety of viewpoints. My own opinion is that folks in our fellowship sometimes jump too quickly to do disclosures to people to whom they are close and who are prone to be hurt as a result. I hope these articles on disclosure will, if nothing else, stimulate thought and discussion among the members of our fellowship around this topic.

The topic for the Jan/Feb 2014 issue is *The Only Requirement*. This phrase of course refers to Tradition Three. I'm interested in hearing your experience, strength and hope around how the only requirement for membership, as discussed in Tradition Three, encouraged you while you considered whether the SAA program was for you. Remember that the topic for the July/August issue is *The Daily Inventory* (due May 5) and the topic for the September/October issue is that old favorite, Gratitude (due July 5). Articles on Steps and Traditions Seven and Eight and Traditions Nine and Ten respectively are also welcome for those two issues. I don't currently have the backlog of articles that I am used to having, so if you have articles on other topics that you are waiting to submit, this is a great time to send them to me.

Remember that the annual convention is coming soon. I hope to see you there!

Dear Will

Submitted by the Men's Outreach Committee

Dear Will,

I have been in SAA for about three years. I want to attend the convention this year and one of my friends from our local fellowship was going to go with me. However, he called me a couple of days ago and said he had changed his mind and would not be attending.

I live in a small town and nobody else I know is going to the convention. The thought of going to a convention with some 300 people I don't know terrifies me. I'm not going to ask you if I should go, because I know you will tell me that I should. Instead, I'll just be happy for some words of encouragement.

—Scared

Dear Scared,

First of all, Will never tells anybody that he or she "should" do anything. That comes powerfully close to taking another person's inventory which is something that Will really tries not to do. Will does hope, Scared, that you will consider going anyway and not let the prospect of being around 300-plus strange sex addicts frighten you.

Will remembers when he first went away to attend a large state university, which was located a gigantic forty miles from home. He was painfully shy at the time, as opposed to being the social giant that he is now. Will was frightened of meeting anybody else in his dormitory, although he did leave his door open in hopes that somebody would come in and meet him. His "open door" policy worked and he was soon in the process of crawling out of his shell.

Many years later, Will went back to school, and his new school was over a thousand miles from home. He chose to live on campus again even though he didn't know how, being as superannuated as he was, he would get along with the young whippersnappers in his dorm. He discovered to his horror that this particular university, unlike his first one, allowed dorm residents to pick their own roommates, so each person on Will's floor relied completely on his roommate and never ever met anybody else. Will found this situation, in a word, intolerable.

Will had too much respect for the boundaries of others to go around knocking on doors to meet whoever might be behind them. However, he

made the opportunity to meet people in the hall whenever he could and, as time went on, he introduced the men he met to other men he had also met in the hallways or the lounges. Before long, Will's wing was the most socially active wing in his large dormitory. Will would tell you that his resident assistant gave him that year's award for the one who had contributed the most to dorm life, but he is far too modest to brag on himself like that.

What, you ask, does this story have to do with anything? Well, believe it or not, Scared, Will was also nervous about attending his first convention. But he remembered his dorm experiences and how he learned from them that people are basically eager to meet others. So he is speaking from experience when he says that he thinks you would benefit from getting to meet other members of the SAA community, and that the conventions are a great way to do just that. Meeting your new roommate (see below) will be a great first step, and from there you can certainly proceed at your own rate at meeting others. You may well find, as Will did, that the new friendships you forge are the most valuable experience you have at the convention. And there are many regulars who have been attending the conventions for any number of years; so next year there will already be folks there whom you know. Besides that, conventions are fun!

The ISO office can help you find a roommate for the convention. Just call them at 800/477-8191 or email them at the below e-mail address.

info@saa-recovery.org

Will is looking forward to seeing you at the convention.

—Will

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,

There is a man who makes me feel very uncomfortable at meetings. I have been told by a couple of other men that this man apparently makes a point of doing this and has driven out several women. What can I do to feel safe?

—Intimidated

Dear Intimidated,

In my early years in SAA, I learned a motto that has become a sort of mantra for me. There are two kinds of business: your business and not your business. The first issue you speak about, how you are feeling, is absolutely your business. The second issue, what other people are saying, is not your business. In recovery one of the things we must learn if we are to achieve any kind of meaningful sobriety, is how to delineate what is ours from what is not-ours. Our own thoughts, feelings, and actions are pretty much the only thing that is ours. So let's talk about that.

If you feel uncomfortable around this person, or any person for that matter, you can develop some boundaries for how much you will interact with him. Your sponsor can help you. Here are some possible examples. Don't sit near him. If he sits near you, you can move quietly without making a scene. If he says something about you in your hearing, you can ignore it. If he comes to speak to you, excuse yourself from the conversation quickly. If he persists, then just politely but clearly state your truth. For example: "I'm not able to continue this conversation. Excuse me." Or "I'm not able to have a one-on-one conversation with you." Not a lot of ambiguity there.

With regard to the second issue, what other people are saying, that's gossip and not a thing you can control. Gossip is unhelpful, and icky, but human. People's behavior in meetings is best addressed by the group in a business meeting. That is especially true with regard to predatory behavior in meetings. It's best for the entire group to make a decision, even if the decision is not to address it. We have to accept life on life's terms, and change what we can change which in this case is how we as individuals respond to other individuals around whom we feel uncomfortable.

In service,
Grace

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

Living in the Shadows

by Paul P.

Quiet as I go,
Bold yet unafraid,
Will I get noticed?
Hoping the anxiety will fade.

Preplanned and calculating,
No one has to know,
Don't consider its gravity,
Unaware of a new low.

A one-track mind at work,
Wasted time again
Looking for happiness,
at secret places I have been.

Humiliation sets in,
Lies from an inner voice,
I get lost in myself,
Just another bad choice.

Secrecy and isolation,
cuts me off from it all,
Outcome unwanted,
the destruction and the fall.

Bad overtakes good,
emotional pain,
Willing to give it up,
decisions not so sane.

Recovery offers more
Hard work ahead
Faith in a higher power
Addiction close to dead.

Boundaries in place
Reason and hope
Work my program daily
I can and will cope.

Disclosure

by Cheri C.

When I came to SAA in October of 2007, all I knew was I couldn't stop my addictive sexual behavior. The only other thing I clearly remember knowing was that I would rather have died than told my husband. This is what I told my sponsor on our first phone call. She said, "You don't have to tell him today." So I didn't. I started working my steps and began to experience, over the next eighteen months, a spiritual awakening. This is how long it took for me to gain the sobriety and willingness to disclose anything to my husband. He didn't know about SAA or my behavior. This isn't necessarily what I would recommend for anyone else, but it was my experience. I would hide my copy of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* underneath a book cover of a popular author on the nightstand. Disclosure was the scariest word I had ever heard. Everyone in program had a different idea of whether I should disclose, when and how. Finally I was able to surrender the decision to my Higher Power. I was on Step Nine.

I asked my sponsor what to say, what day, what time, and would she give me a "script" - she said "I will support you whatever you decide." Gotta love those sponsors!

For me, the disclosure happened when asked directly, "Have you ever cheated?" I was weary of hiding. The blessing in disclosure after some time of sobriety was that I had a foundation and full reliance on God, that no matter what the outcome, this was the right thing to do. There was no rationalization, no justification, and no minimizing my behavior. I told the truth and said that I was a sex addict in recovery and sober for almost a year. I would love to tell you he welcomed the news with open arms, but he did not, he was physically sick and left – for a time. He did come back and did support me and we are still together today – almost four years later.

Although this happened in God's time, I realize now that while hiding my behaviors, even in recovery, I was still living a double life. The transparency and accountability were what I needed; I was able to complete my steps and begin carrying the message.

Experiences with Disclosure

by Ed G.

How do I tell someone that I am sexually addicted (yes, sex can be addictive) or that I have, perhaps, an unusual sexual appetite? Or, even worse, that I am a registered sex offender? Not easy questions and certainly there are no easy answers. Of course, if I fit the criteria for just being a sex addict, there may be nothing I have to disclose because I may not have caused harm to someone. On the other hand, as a sex offender, it means I have caused harm and am now required to register with both the state and police force in the community in which I am living; that might be difficult for someone to live with. If, however, I am pursuing a personal relationship with someone and it looks like the relationship has some long-term possibilities, then it is appropriate to disclose my addiction (or sexual habit(s)) before the relationship goes any further. It is better to disclose my sexual tendencies before they impact negatively after marriage (or before the relationship grows).

I read a story once about a registered sex offender who, when he got serious with someone, told her his status. The relationship usually ended right there. He now makes it a point to disclose his status on a first meeting to get the possible rejection over before either gets hurt.

Prior to my release, since I could not return to my old home because of the proximity to one of my victims, my wife purchased a home in a community well away from where we used to live. That was the first phase in my re-assimilation into society. The real estate agent was required by law to disclose to the owner that a sex offender would be living there and, therefore, he could decline selling to my wife. Thankfully, it did not bother him and the sale went through. One of the duties a parole officer has is to inform the immediate neighbors that a sex offender is moving in. That, needless to say, was not welcome news so I was not able to establish any neighborly relationships – nor did I try – until recently. A new family moved in directly behind our home and I did disclose to them what my status was. Fortunately, they were people who took the stance that “I did the crime and did the time” so we start fresh from there. Even after eight years, no other neighbor has taken the initiative to have contact with either me or my wife. I guess it is for the best.

When I got released, after a few months, I felt the need to rejoin a church community. I finally met up with the pastor of the church I wanted to attend. When I spoke with him about attending his church, there was some reluctance – understandably. I pretty much told him what had gone wrong in my life that brought me to the point of what I referred to as my moral and spiritual bankruptcy. He even called my parole officer to see if there was anything he could add. The parole officer told him simply to ask me and I

would tell him; and I did. That was the second phase in my process of re-assimilation. However, I did not get to go to the church of my choice for nearly five years; but was ministered to in other ways.

Of course, looking back, my “disclosure” was extremely public. I was a person heavily involved in my church and many community organizations. Because of that, when I was arrested and went to court, I made the front page of the local paper and TV news. However, after prison, I, having been locked up for four years, was in many ways a forgotten individual and living in a different community where few people knew me. Even now when I do run into someone I knew from my past life, there are mixed feelings. Some will talk with me, others avoid me. I now do attend the church of my choice and, as mentioned before, it took nearly five years before I was accepted – with certain caveats. And part of that means that only a handful of people in the church know my status. But that, too, is understandable. So that completes the third phase.

Disclosure does not mean dumping my whole story of what I did to those with whom you want to disclose. It simply means telling him or her that I am someone who did something of an inappropriate sexual nature and I may be a registered sex offender. From that point on it is up to that person to decide if I am someone with whom he or she wants to have neighborly relations. So far everything is working out quite well.

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our newest piece of SAA literature:

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is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for “Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting,” the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing
this new addition to our SAA literature!

Our Group Conscience on Disclosure

by Gene D.

When we were putting together a format for our recently formed SAA group, the Big Book Group, we were concerned about what has come to be perceived as one of the rites of passage for SAA group members in our area: complete disclosure to one's partner or spouse of all of one's addictive behaviors. Our members have seen or experienced the destruction of relationships and marriages after disclosure, often with severe collateral damage to children and other family members. We felt that a cautionary statement about disclosure should be included in our meeting format, just as statements about abstinence and recovery are included.

We held several group conscience meetings in the course of preparing the meeting format, and the following language was incorporated in the format with unanimous approval:

A brief word about disclosure for the newcomer: Many of us feel the need to disclose all of our addiction to our partners or spouses; many of us will be encouraged by therapists to make such a disclosure. In our group conscience, our Higher Power has revealed that except in exigent circumstances, disclosure is Ninth Step work and should only be undertaken as amends after thoroughly working the preceding eight steps and only with the guidance of one's sponsor, keeping in mind that the Ninth Step warns us against making direct amends to those we have harmed "when to do so would injure them or others." The bell cannot be unrung, and we should realize that the disclosure which relieves us of the guilty conscience that accompanies our secret sex lives may drive a knife into the hearts of our partners, a wound which they may find unbearable. The divorces and separations that our members have experienced after disclosure advise us to proceed with the utmost caution in this matter.

In our discussions leading up to the drafting of this statement, many of us were of the opinion that we should be sparing even in revealing to our loved ones that we are attending SAA meetings. While those of us in the group who have married or acquired partners after becoming sober in SAA have informed our intimate partners of our membership in SAA, we have seen no conceivable benefit in sharing the particulars of our addiction. When told of the practice of disclosure in SAA, one of our spouses, with over twenty years of working the steps in Al-Anon under her belt, was astounded that anyone could imagine that any good could come out of that disclosure. As some of us have said, our loved ones are neither our sponsors, our therapists nor our confessors; it is unfitting that we should thrust such a role on them.

Men's Outreach

Submitted by the Men's Outreach Committee

With so many ways of making contact with others today—texts, social network groups, and so forth — it's easy to forget the simple and effective one-on-one contact that the telephone provides. There's an immediacy about the telephone that the other methods, despite their convenience, do not come close to providing.

I do service work for another Twelve-Step program which involves taking the phones from the local Intergroup from five p.m. to seven a.m. the next morning four times a year. It's rare that I don't get at least one call in the middle of the night. Recently somebody called me at two a.m. from a major metropolitan area that rolls its Intergroup phones over to voicemail for the night. Word has gotten out that in my area we have a live person answering the phones all night. And this particular gentleman wasn't on the brink of acting out in his addiction. He just wanted to hear a friendly voice at an hour when many people might not have welcomed a phone call.

I think back to the time before I joined the SAA program, in fact before I even knew that the program existed. I did manage to find a small amount of literature about sex addiction in the local bookstore (this was back before the days of the internet). Still, new that I was, I didn't know from reading the literature whether or not I was a sex addict, since I didn't see my specific behaviors described in those books. Instead, I found myself asking those few friends who knew about my secret double life if they thought I had a sex addiction. Invariably, those friends said "no," although I don't know if it was because they really believed that. More likely, they either didn't know what sex addiction was or else they just didn't want to say anything to hurt my feelings.

I've heard people, while telling their stories, admit that they found Sex Addicts Anonymous by using an internet search engine. There are enough anonymous groups out there nowadays that it's simple to surmise that there must be one for sex addiction as well. After finding the program, it is a simple matter of finding meetings in one's area or finding one of the many telephone meetings. There are meetings for various sub-groups within our fellowship: meetings for women, meetings for GLBTs, even meetings for social workers and clergy. However, the largest sub-group, at least if I can believe attendance at our face-to-face meetings, is men. And yet, it's likely to be the men who are the least aware of groups specifically designed for them, possibly in part because there are so many opportunities for making face-to-face contact with another man. The SAA men's outreach phone list helps to fill in some of that gap.

The list is of course not restricted to a single metropolitan area. We currently have a list of over three hundred men who live all over the world.

Since it is daytime for somebody on the list all the time, especially as the program continues to reach into new countries, it is always possible to make contact with another man in the program.

And even among the spectrum of men on our phone list, there are sub-groups, such as men who are GLBT, or who speak another language, to give just two examples, which might help make them a more attractive choice for another man to call.

So what is missing from our outreach list? You. The list isn't just for men who are looking for help. It needs men who can offer help as well. You may have something to offer another man that you aren't even aware of. You may have something in your history or background that can help another man.

Or maybe you are a night owl or in a situation where you can take phone calls at night. "The Outer Circle" recently ran a poem talking about the difficulties that the author ran into during those wee hours of the morning. Maybe you are the one who can be there to help another man who is suffering in those pre-dawn hours.

So the SAA men's outreach list, despite having over three hundred men listed on it, can always use more. Please give some thought to joining the SAA men's outreach list. All it takes is a simple phone call or e-mail to the ISO office, and they can set you up. You will become a member of the list, and will have over three hundred new potential friends.

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/

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

Disclosure and the Ninth Step

by Jeff S.

I was interested to see “disclosure” suggested as a topic for this issue of *The Outer Circle* because, unlike many of the topics, this is not one that is specifically addressed in our SAA literature. True, there is plenty of discussion in all Twelve-Step literature of making amends; and yet disclosure is another area altogether. From what I have been able to glean at meetings, “disclosure,” at least in the sense I am using here, is more of a formal process where one sits down with one’s spouse or partner, usually with a therapist in attendance, and basically does what I would consider to be a First Step of his or her acting-out behaviors with that other person.

When I first came into the SAA program, over twenty years ago, I never heard anybody share about a formal disclosure process. In fact, I have only begun hearing about this type of disclosure in the last few years, and only in my area of the country. I can’t speak to whether disclosure has caught on in other parts of the country or world.

I was single when I came into the program, so even if formal disclosures had been something that therapists were recommending at the time, there would have been nobody to whom I would logically have made one. When I did eventually enter into a relationship, I did tell my partner, after a period of time, about my bottom-line behaviors and about the work I had done in the program to free myself from those behaviors. Since I was already, one day at a time, free of those behaviors, these never reached the level of behaviors that affected my partner or our relationship. On the other hand, I did feel that those were things about me that I wanted him to know, and so I chose to share them with him.

I have never been present to hear a person in the program do a formal disclosure to his or her spouse or partner. I’ve only occasionally heard at meetings of members sharing their concerns about either an upcoming disclosure or the aftermaths of such a disclosure. While I think it would go against the anonymity of the program for me to discuss any of the details of what I have heard at meetings, I think it is okay for me to share that I have felt extreme sadness at some of the things I have heard.

As I said, these complete no-holds-barred disclosures appear to me to be a relatively new thing that therapists are suggesting or even requiring of their patients. And yet, Bill W. discussed this matter in some detail on a couple of different occasions many years ago, and never very favorably. While on page 82 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, originally published in 1939, he does say, “*Perhaps* there are *some* cases where the utmost frankness is demanded” (emphasis added), he never comes close to saying that these kinds of disclosures should be routine for each person coming into recovery. By 1952, when Bill W. wrote the *Twelve and Twelve*, he did not

even allow for this possible exception, instead stating quite clearly on page 86, "There can only be one consideration which should qualify our desire for a complete disclosure of the damage we have done. That will arise in the occasional situation where to make a full revelation would seriously harm the one to whom we are making amends." And in case his intention in using these words leaves any room for doubt, he spells it out a sentence or two later: "We cannot, for example, unload a detailed account of extramarital adventuring upon the shoulders of our unsuspecting wife or husband."

The Ninth Step comes into play here in at least two different ways. First, to repeat something I have heard many times at meetings and outside of them, the Steps are in order for a reason. If I had indeed had somebody to whom I could have disclosed when I was fairly new in the program, I would not have had the experience of working the first eight Steps and possibly not even the Fourth Step moral inventory to give me some guidance in this area. Second, and probably even more clear-cut, are the explicit instructions in the second half of the Ninth Step, "except when to do so would injure them or others." As a newbie in the program, I could have been easily influenced by the suggestion of another with regard to doing a disclosure without having assimilated the great wisdom contained in these ten words.

I consider myself fortunate that the question of disclosure to a partner never came up for me, mostly because my methods of acting out were at odds to my having room in my life for a partner. I was able to disclose to my eventual partner in ways that were safe and non-threatening to both of us and to the relationship. I believe that the option of disclosing *may* be available to each person in SAA who is in a relationship. It is important always to remember, however, that the guidance of the Ninth Step is essential in doing any sort of disclosure, in terms of both timing and extent.

Practicing Character Assets

by Jim C.

Just this morning I was doing some research on the Internet, which led me to a publication dated summer 2008 from an organization with which I was affiliated back in the late 1970s. While the publication did not contain the information I was specifically seeking, I found several articles that were of interest to me because of the many people I knew in the industry it represented.

One item was a brief obituary of somebody I knew back in those long-ago days. At the time we both were living in another city and had worked together very briefly on a particular project. Eventually, each of us relocated to the city where I am now. I remember him as being somebody I respected. We did cross paths once over the last thirty years and spoke briefly.

After I recovered from my initial surprise of learning of his death, I did some further research and learned that he had died because of a physical defect that he had been carrying for some years.

I began thinking back over our brief and rather periodic relationship. I already knew that this man was successful in pursuing a career path that brought him many financial rewards. I then recalled that the last words he ever spoke to me were something that at the time I considered a bit of a slight. I don't remember what he actually said; I do know that his words, coupled with my knowledge of his financial success, played directly into my longstanding tendency to compare my insides with the outsides of others.

At the time I set the situation aside and told myself that the next time we crossed paths our parting would be more positive. After all, the perceived slight was really too small to give it more thought, especially with all the other major resentments I'm sure I was carrying at the time. I hadn't thought about it in years, and it didn't even come up immediately for me today. And yet, it has periodically returned today to haunt me; I'm certain that I have thought about it much more today, even not remembering the specifics, than I have in the last fifteen or twenty years since I last saw him.

The Twelve-Step program is here to help me in every area of my life, and not just in those large ongoing areas of my life where I see the necessity of relying on something such as the Serenity Prayer. In Step Six of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* (p. 42), it says "Part of the process of becoming entirely ready is to practice these character assets in our actions and choices, instead of our defects." And this was certainly an opportunity to practice a character asset.

I had a choice. I could allow this man, who passed on roughly five years

ago and whom I have not seen or thought about in many more years than that, to begin renting space in my head over an imagined slight. Granted, I couldn't even remember the specifics of what he said, but I was willing to, in retrospect, grant more importance to it than I even did when he was alive because I also now remembered that he was more financially successful than I am. Or I could rely on the principles of the program to give to him the same sort of understanding and, if it is not too strong a word, forgiveness that the program teaches me to give to somebody who is still currently in my life. Putting it that way, of course, the choice was obvious.

So I had a chance to work on two character defects today. I was able to forgive a slight that I probably would have done well to forgive at the time instead of just burying it beneath larger resentments. Also I had a chance to ask myself once again what I am gaining by comparing my financial status with that of another. I may not have gotten the answer to the original question I was researching today, and I probably got closer to having the answers to some more important questions, with looking at my character defects being the catalyst.

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this new addition to our SAA literature!

A Model for Living in the Present – Part Two

by Jim L

In Part One of this article, we laid the groundwork for living in the present by recognizing that many, if not most, of our troublesome, negative emotions stem from the past (resentment, regrets, shame, unmet expectations) or represent concerns about the future (fear, anxiety, unrealistic expectations, worry). We can now focus on how the principles learned in the Twelve Step program can break the ties to the past and the future and allow us to live in the present.

The operative word that is the key to releasing the tethers that bind me to the past is forgiveness. And forgiveness is a two-way street. I must accept God's forgiveness and I must forgive others. The power to forgive others flows from the realization that God has forgiven me. Resentment, regrets, and disappointment fade, when I can forgive others. I can be released from the past.

Occasionally, we hear someone say, "I have forgiven those who wronged me, but I just cannot forgive myself." Most often, this statement is really saying that I am not willing or able to accept God's forgiveness. If we really stop to think that God has forgiven us, how can we continue to blame ourselves? Perhaps we continue to suffer consequences, but we do not have to continue to carry the guilt and shame brought on by past actions.

The preparation for being able to accept God's forgiveness and to forgive others lies in the hard work of Steps Four, Five, Six, and Seven. These are the actions necessary to come to grips with what must be surrendered. We catalog our moral failings, the nature of our wrongs, and the character defects underlying our shortcomings. We then surrender them to God. We are reminded that in Step Three we decided – committed – to turn our will and our lives over to God, as we understand God. In Step Seven, we actually complete our surrender.

We continue by making a comprehensive list of persons we have harmed and being willing to make amends to them all. Then, with the advice and support of our sponsors, we make amends, being careful not to do further harm. In working Steps Eight and Nine, we have acknowledged our role in the harm we have done. For me, I could do this only after I recognized that God had forgiven me. I could then approach those I had harmed without a hidden agenda or a feeling that they had to forgive me. I could do what I needed to do, and they can respond as they wish without affecting my recovery.

The operative word in dealing with the future is trust. If I really trust God for the outcome, then I have no reason to be anxious or to worry. I can let go of expectations with the assurance that God's will is the best path for me to

travel. The byproduct of trusting God for the outcome is hope. And hope erases my concerns about tomorrow.

Read the Ninth Step promises (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp. 83-84). A “new freedom and a new happiness” are born out of releasing the tethers to the past and trusting God for the future – in other words, living in the present. As long as I try to deal with the past (a frustrating and fruitless endeavor) and control the events of the future (playing God), I will find that living in the present is practically impossible.

Finally, it is worth noting that Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are done only in the present. In Step Ten, I keep short accounts. I acknowledge and correct wrongs daily. Recognizing my wrongs every day makes me more vigilant and will eventually lead me to preventing recurrences of those wrongs.

In Step Eleven, I improve my conscious contact with God on a daily basis. I cannot pray or meditate yesterday. A daily practice of prayer and meditation helps me to order my thoughts, to recognize flaws in my thinking, and evaluate the locus of my feelings. I can only seek and receive God’s guidance in the present.

And in Step Twelve, I serve others today. I practice the principles of the program in all of my affairs today. I cannot go back and do Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve for yesterday. I can only do them today.

We often benefit from the experience, strength, and hope of other addicts in the program. We hear their experience – what they experienced in the past. We see their strength in the present. And we hear their hope for the future. My desire for all of us is that we will recognize that our strength to work the Twelve Step program today is bracketed by our experience and the experience of others from the past and our hope for the future, which is firmly rooted in God’s will for our lives.

When all is said and done, we actually have only one option – to live in the present.

Tradition Six

by Chris D.

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the June 1996 issue of the newsletter.]

"An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

The Sixth Tradition has always been a difficult one for all fellowships, and it has been especially hard for us, I believe, because of our relative youth as a fellowship and because there are several other fellowships that deal with sexual addiction. I offer here the thoughts of one member on the topic, with the understanding, of course, that there are others who will disagree, and that this is part of a healthy process of discussion which need not impair our unity.

The problems of money or property seem more clear-cut. If we lend our name or our endorsement to certain treatment centers or theories of treatment, for example, there is a danger that persons will use our name to attract customers to their enterprise, thus compromising our meetings, which are free vehicles of recovery, by introducing a profit motive.

It is the problem of prestige which is more subtle and lends itself to many different forms. Our human desire for prestige can take the guise of good intentions very easily, so if we complicate our program by mixing it with various therapies, it may seem like we are helping the still-suffering addict. In fact, it makes our simple, anonymous program seem more complicated and exciting, thus enhancing our prestige in our own eyes.

Associating our program with other fellowships causes confusion in our message. Being a young fellowship, we still offer outside literature, including *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to our members. This is understandable, but it does cause controversy. Many of our members are not alcoholics, but come directly to SAA. Alcoholics Anonymous can be very confusing to them, because it doesn't directly address sexual addiction. I foresee a day when we will offer only official SAA literature to our members. *[Editor's Note: That day has actually arrived. The conference delegates voted at the 2011 conference to stop selling non-SAA literature.]* When I say this, I've found that it threatens some of us. I've heard statements like, "Aren't we grateful to AA? Their program has worked for sixty years!" My answer is that I am grateful to my parents, but I no longer live with them or depend upon them. I moved out and made my own life. I believe that in the same way we will eventually need to establish our own independence, offering our unique experience, strength, and hope to sex addicts.

The fact that there are several other fellowships dealing with sexual addiction has led to dilemmas. Once again, good intentions have led us to make mistakes. When we list other fellowships on our meeting lists, that implies endorsement and association with those fellowships. Newcomers might wonder if we are the same as those other fellowships, and when they discover differences in the solutions offered, it can lead to worry and confusion. My belief is that we can make phone numbers or addresses of other fellowships available to those who ask, all the while making it clear that we are not associated with the other fellowships. But we ought never combine their schedules, phone lines, or literature with ours; otherwise, we confuse our message. It is up to those fellowships to practice the principle of attraction rather than promotion in making their programs available. Inter-fellowship dialogue needs to follow this Tradition, too, including discussion of common concerns and sharing of experiences in order to help ourselves, but never coordination of activities and services.

I have noticed that some scoff at all this and consider it as a barrier to carrying the message. It is difficult for me to convey how very important strict adherence to the Traditions really is. The Traditions keep us free! If we violate them or try to bypass them repeatedly, sooner or later we will damage the integrity of our groups. Without a clear message and sense of identity, the newcomer is not served.

Understand that I am only speaking of official services and activities of SAA. What we share as individuals, either in meetings or outside of them, is totally up to us. I am only speaking of cases where a meeting format implies an outside endorsement of some sort, or our service structure allies itself with an outside institution of some kind, and so forth. It is then that we need to step back, pause to be quiet, and ask God for guidance.

The love for our fellow addicts, which is the true principle of our unity, will keep us free. The Traditions are a direct expression of our Higher Power's love working through our groups. I am truly grateful to them. They have saved my life and will continue to save countless others as long as we preserve them.

E-mail Addresses

The following is a list of Board E-mail addresses and the LitCom e-mail addresses for the various regions, and the ISO staff E-mail addresses. The Board, LitCom, and the staff are always happy to hear from the fellowship.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees also receives a copy of e-mail to the service addresses of regional Board representatives.

Great Lakes Board Member and Alternate: BoardGL@saa-recovery.org
Intermountain Board Member and Alternate: BoardIM@saa-recovery.org
North Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardNC@saa-recovery.org
Northeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardNE@saa-recovery.org
North Pacific Board Member and Alternate: BoardNP@saa-recovery.org
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The Outer Circle Editor: toc@saa-recovery.org

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

ISO Office Mailing Address

PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Phone: 713-869-4902 or 800-477-8191, Fax: 713-692-0105

Website: www.saa-recovery.org

Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

The Outer Circle e-mail: toc@saa-recovery.org

Office Staff

Director of Operations: Joe H. director@saa-iso.org

Associate Director: Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

Information Technician: Jonathan C. webmaster@saa-recovery.org

Information Technician: DJ B. djb@saa-iso.org

Administrative Assistant : Philip A. philip@saa-iso.org

Administrative Assistant : Vann V. vannv@saa-iso.org

Prisoner Outreach: Klaus P. outreach@saa-recovery.org

The Outer Circle Staff

Literature Editor: Mike L. toc@saa-recovery.org

ISO News Editor: Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

Design & Layout : Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

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

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