


THE OUTER CIRCLE



**Get Out of
the Ring**
Fighting
addiction alone is
like trying to beat
a prize fighter

PLUS

Practical Prayer

Step Guide Submissions

New Outreach Tools





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

TOC articles contain the experiences and opinions of individual SAA members and do not represent the official views or positions of the ISO of SAA, Inc. or the SAA fellowship as a whole.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1998, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers” — especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 30. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 31.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

May - June 2018

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FROM THE EDITOR

What is the ISO? Head to the New Website to Find Out.

BY GARY T.

An entire International Service Organization exists to help groups carry out their primary purpose.

Ask the average person in our fellowship what the ISO is and you're likely to get a blank stare. But for me at least, the ISO gave me back my life. Back in 2008, when I hit bottom, I found myself on the ISO website taking the "Am I a Sex Addict?" self-assessment. (Spoiler alert, I was!)

Without that resource from the ISO, I might never have gotten into recovery and found a new way to live my life. But until about five years ago, I had no idea who or what the ISO was, either.

To put it simply, the ISO, or International Service Organization, exists to help the fellowship and member groups achieve our primary purpose of helping the sex addict who still suffers. To do so, it uses a variety of methods including the website that saved my life.

As the world gets more digital and people spend more of time on screens, a strong online presence is crucial. And now, the ISO offers an even better way to reach the still suffering addicts with a newly redesigned website that makes finding recovery easier than ever at www.saa-recovery.org.

It starts with the homepage, which now focuses on three key tools: a self assessment, a meeting locator and more information about SAA. The meeting locator is especially slick in helping newcomers find meetings in their area — but groups must ensure they are registered with the ISO for it to work. If you don't see your meeting listed email or call the ISO using the contact info on page 30.

So check it out for yourself and make sure your meetings are listed. And while you're there, get to know the ISO a little better — and how it can help you and your groups be of service.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

New Tools Available for Outreach and Connecting to Professionals

**BY PHILLIP B., PROGRAM
MANAGER OF PUBLIC INFORMATION,
COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL
COMMUNITY, AND 7TH
TRADITION**

Since 2015, the ISO has focused on providing real word resources that more and more groups are using to jump start these activities.

Cooperation with the professional community and public information are primary activities of SAA. Yet prior to 2015, few resources existed to assist groups in these efforts – mainly due to financial constraints. Since 2015, however, the ISO has focused on creating and providing real world resources that more and more groups are using to jump start these activities. These include:

- » The ISO Conference Kit: everything needed to exhibit at professional conferences: display banner, literature rack, literature, Client Referral Packets, full color flyers/letters, shipping and training for booth staff.
- » The ISO Print Notice Package: everything from technical assistance to the design and production of print ads placed in local newspapers to provide public information to thousands of people.
- » The ISO Mailing Package: offers everything groups need to send letters or post cards to introduce therapists, counselors, clergy, etc. to SAA.

As a result of this improved support, large scale print campaigns have reached hundreds of thousands in Houston, NYC, Phoenix, Vancouver, Toledo, and Atlanta. Mailings are happening in Dallas, Houston, New York City, Southeast Virginia, Phoenix, and Princeton, NJ. SAA has been or will be at conferences in North Carolina, Tucson, Washington D.C., Calgary, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, Athens, GA, Houston, Austin, Dallas, Phoenix, Norfolk, VA, San Francisco, and Virginia Beach, VA.

Take advantage of these services by contacting the Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community desk at the ISO office.

DEAR GRACE

Should I Take on Service Before Finishing the Steps?

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**While it's
important to stay
focused on the
steps, there are
many ways you
can get involved
and do service
now.**

Dear Grace,

I would like to do more service within the fellowship, especially for women, but have no idea what I can do beyond reading and sharing at meetings since I haven't finished the steps yet. How can I find service opportunities?

Signed, wanting to help

Dear Wanting to Help:

Your enthusiasm and desire to do service is to be commended! A sincere desire to give back is evidence of growth and the beginning of your spiritual awakening.

While it is important to stay focused on working the steps, there are many ways you can get involved and do service now. Here are a few:

- » Chair meetings, in person or on the phone.
- » Receive calls from newcomers, sharing your experience of getting started and finding a sponsor.
- » Contact the ISO (email info@saa-recovery.org) and ask for a list of various service committees and the times they meet. If you see one you would like to attend, they can give you the call-in information.
- » Attend a Women's Outreach Committee meeting (2nd Saturday of each month). Find out how by emailing (genoutreach.woc.chair@saa-iso.org).
- » Get a service position in your homegroup.
- » Go to your local Intergroup meeting and see what positions they have open. Starting at the local and/or intergroup level is a good idea if these are available.



Once you find a committee where you feel you can serve, you can choose from a number of different “work groups” that function under that committee to do the tasks assigned.

As our Green Book says: “However we do service, we receive much more than we give. First and foremost, our experience has shown that working with others safeguards our own abstinence. We keep the priceless gift of our sexual sobriety by being of service to other sex addicts. We receive many other gifts as well. We break out of the isolation and self-centeredness of our addiction. We grow as we practice generosity, empathy, and humility. We forge new bonds with others that nourish and sustain us. And we experience the joy and satisfaction of giving something of ourselves to a larger cause.”

The most important way we do service

in SAA is to sponsor other members. It is important not to get so caught up in committees and service work that we lose sight of working our own program and completing the 12 steps. Working the steps should be the first priority at this time, but if you can work on a service committee while still remaining committed to your step work, this would be a wonderful way to serve and learn more about how SAA committees work.

Grace

*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 (grace@saa-women.
org) receives. *Names have been
changed to protect anonymity.*

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Discovering a New Life Through Action

BY ROBBIE H.

For me, sobriety has more to do with what I am doing — living my life according to the spiritual principles of the program — than just not acting out.

I was 39 when I found my way into the rooms of SAA at the urging of my then partner. I was grateful to know that there might be relief from all my suffering and shocked to think that my suffering had a name: sex addiction. I had been oblivious to the fact that despite some very clear evidence (STDs, ruined relationships, demolished careers, financial ruin, estrangement from my family), I was indeed a sex addict. My disease had taken its toll on every aspect of my life, and I was willing to try a meeting, if not for me, for him and for our relationship.

I was fortunate enough to find a very welcoming fellowship when I entered SAA. That saying “Let us love you until you can love yourself” rang true. The group helped me to feel not alone, to feel understood, and to feel cared about. These meetings really provided a lot of relief from the pain of my addiction.

Unfortunately, that relief was such a respite from my disease that I started out only working a program of relief — not recovery. I somewhat committed to the program, found sponsors who would co-sign my half-hearted attempts at the circles, went to SAA meetings that focused on everything but the steps, and I remained somewhere between active addiction and recovery.

I gave myself credit for just going to meetings. I did not support others in phone calls and did not seek that same support for myself. I was a tourist and remained so for about a year and a half before I was ready to fully concede to my inner-most self that recovery requires more than attendance. Like many, my recovery would require not just a surrender, but profound surrender. I would need to be willing to do whatever it takes to get sexually abstinent and to stay abstinent...

Today, my inner circle consists of casual sex, anonymous sex, porn, adult businesses, flirting outside of a dating context, sexualized conversations, seeking images and materials with sexual intent, and masturbation. My sobriety date is May 1, 2009. I had stopped acting out prior to that date, but only on my terms. May 1 is my sobriety date because that is when I got a new sponsor, set a new definition for my sobriety and began working the SAA program. It is the single-most important date of my life: the date I finally surrendered, accepted all the help the steps have to offer and began my journey of recovery.

For me, sobriety has more to do with what I am doing — living my life according to the spiritual principles of the program — than just not acting out. Sobriety is the gift of living my life in the outer circle, of seeking to maintain a spiritual connection with my Higher Power, of learning to seek my Higher Power's will, not mine. Through working the steps and the program of SAA with a sponsor, I have learned that my spiritual life needs to be nourished on a regular and frequent basis.

What that means for me is a minimum of four SAA meetings per week, 15 minutes of step work each day, regular contact with my sponsor, a minimum of four outreach calls per day, a relationship with God through prayer and meditation, and acts of gratitude through service in the fellowship — a program my friends and I

call, “Drinking the Kool-Aid.”

I have been sober more than seven years now. The program I work today is much broader than the program I worked initially. It has to be. Today, my recovery affects every aspect of my life, much like my addiction did all those years.

I am not only sexually sober, but I also work to remain emotionally and spiritually sober. I have sponsored 75-plus men and women through the steps and currently sponsor 17. My step work continues to take me on regular study of the steps, the traditions and the spiritual principles of SAA.

One of my favorite sections of the Green Book is “The Steps Are The Spiritual Solution,” and they have been for me. Like the book says, they have led not only to a life of abstinence from (my) addictive sexual behavior but to a fulfilling life of service.

I came to SAA to relieve my pain, stayed in SAA and worked the program to get sober, and remain to this day to grow in my recovery and help others to do the same. And for this priceless gift of recovery, so astonishingly simple, so freely available, I am humbly grateful.

If you have five or more years of sobriety and would like to write a Living in Sobriety column, please contact toc@saa-recovery.org.



Practical Prayer

Whatever you call it, connecting with a Higher Power offers three key benefits

BY STEWART L.

In our fellowship we tout the power of prayer. We say that we “came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Or, we say that we need to ask our Higher Power to “remove our defects of character” or “humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.” These things that our program asks us to do are all prayers.

Furthermore, as we recover we use tools like gratitude lists and journaling to remind us of our progress. These are types of prayers as well. Some of our prayers are asking for help. Some are thanking our Higher Power for what we have. Even if you have not accepted a Higher Power into your life, it is a practical recovery tool.

I ask you to set aside preconceived religious notions and consider that the act of prayer is a powerful tool of recovery even before you “come to believe that a power greater than yourself can restore us to sanity.” I suggest that even if you do not yet have a higher power, prayer is a practical and useful tool of recovery that we often overlook because we consider it too close to the topic of religion. I suggest that

prayer is practical in three ways that can improve our recovery journey if we are willing to take the action.

First, praying for a person is good for them and good for us. Many of us came to recovery because we became overwhelmed by our addiction and let our guards down. Then our loved ones were able to see into our sordid alternate lives. This most probably caused terrible trauma in the lives of the people we care about most. A part of our recovery is accepting responsibility for what we have done, but it is also to make amends — a way to mitigate or acknowledge our wrong. Prayer is a great way to make that amends.

Praying for a person helps them, you and the relationship. When I pray for people I find my attitude toward them becomes much more positive. I find that any lingering resentments or challenges are lessened. I think it is because we are thinking of someone and hoping the prayer will be answered.

We are breaking the isolation our addiction caused and hoping something good will come from our thought, our prayer. Nothing but good can come from thinking more positively about another person, especially a loved one like a spouse.

Second, acknowledging good things in our life in a prayerful way cements the thought in our psyche. For example, we can make a gratitude list. It

Even if you have not accepted a Higher Power into your life, prayer is a practical recovery tool.

is a reminder of the good things in life. It is a reminder of the things we have to be thankful for. It is a reminder that we are not completely powerless. There are actions we can take. We can acknowledge the good things and be thankful.

Even if you question the existence of a Higher Power, it is good to reflect on what we are grateful for. This prayer says I am a person of the world and I have things in life that are good: Thank you! When we contemplate these things in prayer we make them a part of our lives and it is a concrete action we can point to every day of our recovery.

Third, meditative consideration (prayer) helps us understand our world and our place in it. Have you ever asked, “What am I going to do next?” And then wondered, how am I ever going to find the answer. In our “dog eat dog” world we forget that change takes time.

We have to learn to be patient and let recovery happen in us. We have to sit and think, unencumbered with the tasks of the day, and consider our options and choose what to do next. That consideration is the preparation

of a prayer that might be a signal to the universe that I accept that I need help.

In the midst of my recovery, I found that my Higher Power put people in front of me who were there to help. I just needed to ask, and I just needed to listen. God was speaking to me through them. I did not always know what to ask right away, but I prayed and concentrated and tried to figure out the next right thing.

That's why I say prayer is practical. It helps me see that I am a part of something bigger. It helps me be more positive about the people around me and more patient with them as I watch for the signs that my prayers might be answered. Finally, prayer helps me understand me and my Higher Power. It helps me know that I can do it if I keep trying.

Prayer could be what makes “acting as if” and treating the group as a Higher Power or “faking it till we make it” all begin to work. I think the secret is a lot of people are hoping and praying for us to get better. See, the circle begins again as we start thinking of other people and wishing good things for them. Then we start being grateful for the new friends we have, and we start seeing our place in the world. Prayer is powerful and you do not have to have religion to start. A little secret — I pray everyday to my God. I pray for Him to hear your prayers and mine. Prayer Is Practical.

Thanks for letting me share! ●

Leftovers from Addiction

By Bob B

Recently, my spouse asked me to give away a favorite winter coat that reminds her of my addiction. And yes, I had worn this specific coat during an acting out incident.

The good news: I agreed immediately to give it away, despite the fact that the coat is very practical and replacing it will be expensive.

This led me to reflect on what other “leftovers” I have from the time of my active addiction, several years ago.

The bad news: I have a song in my music collection because the artist was a favorite of a person I acted out with. Despite the niggling little reminder each time I listen to it, I never deleted the song.

The good news: after the coat incident, I deleted both that song and another specific song whose lyrics were very triggering for me.

The bad news: While I did get rid of any of the items I used during acting out, I've never expanded that to think about and get rid of any personal belongings that are particularly associated in my mind with my addiction.

If I want to be honest with myself, I will spend time today thinking about those items and getting rid of them, as well as pledging each time another one is discovered, to do the same. It's about progress, not perfection, but I intend to be capable of being honest with myself.

Adapted from The Check IN, the newsletter of the Indiana Intergroup



Stepping Up

The fellowship has asked for step study guides. Here's how to submit yours.

BY ROBBIE H.

For some time now the ISO Literature Committee has been compiling literature needs and requests submitted by the fellowship. This was done in a formal way through the Assessing Fellowship Literature Needs survey that was distributed online as well as in person at the 2016 Convention in Chicago.

One of the most requested pieces of literature is a guide for working the Twelve steps of SAA. Over the past couple of years, several step-working guides have been submitted to The ISO Literature Committee. This has brought up many questions as to the best way to fulfill this need. For instance, should just one “guide” be published, or should all that are submitted be published? If only one guide is published, will this be seen as “the official” step guide of SAA, thus minimizing the many other ways of working the steps. If all submissions are published, we could end up with dozens of “step working guides”, how would this affect the fellowship?

Over time, even more questions were considered. Some suggested that the fellowship already has a step working guide, called the SAA Green Book, therefore no other material is necessary. Others suggested that the SAA message of recovery says

that we are to work the steps in the same way that our sponsors worked the steps, therefore we need only to look to our sponsors regarding how best to work the steps.

As you can imagine, at times this was a very spirited and passionate discussion. For sure it took several months to come to any conclusions. In the end, we asked ourselves, and others in the fellowship, when the fellowship is asking for a guide as to how to work the steps, what specifically is being asked for; especially considering that the SAA Green Book is a “step working guide”. It seemed that specifically, what was being asked for, were worksheets, exercises, and other tools for completing each step.

To this end, The Literature Committee will begin working on compiling these types of tools into one place. What that final product will look like specifically is unknown at this time. It could be electronic, hard copy, or both. This will be left up to the publisher, i.e., the ISO Office.

Over the years, many worksheets, exercises, etc. have been used to work the steps in our fellowship. We are asking that you submit these to The Literature Committee. You may have a tool that works well for you regarding just one of the steps or you may have a complete package for all Twelve Steps. Either of these are encouraged to be submitted. There are some things to keep in mind when submitting these items.

- » Submissions need to be reflective of the SAA message of recovery (i.e. SAA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions);
- » No non-SAA copyrighted material will be used;
- » While material from other fellowships, religious organizations, or therapists may be valid ways of working the steps in our personal recoveries, for this project, they would be considered outside issues and thus be in conflict with Tradition 10;
- » The material should be written in such a way that the material for each step can be published as a standalone piece. For instance, if you submit material on five different steps, it is possible that only your material on two of those steps will be included;
- » The identified audience is that of sponsors. The intent is not to publish a document that individuals will use without the help of a sponsor. Please keep this in mind when submitting material.

Understanding that in a fellowship as diverse as SAA there is no single ‘correct’ way for each of us to work this simple program, we are looking for the diversity that our collective experience, strength, and hope entails. The Literature Committee is excited to work on this important project. The end result will be the potential for each of us to be of maximum service to others through sponsorship by incorporating the experience, strength, and hope of the entire fellowship into our personal recoveries.

If you have questions related to your potential submission(s), please submit them by email at *info@saa-recovery.org*, or by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270. ISO of SAA, Inc

LITERATURE COMMITTEE PRE-REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

To give your submission appropriate consideration for publication by the ISO of SAA, the Literature Committee needs relevant background information. Please answer the questions below. Attach additional pages if needed. Thank you in advance for providing this important information.

With whom should we communicate regarding this submission?

Name of Contact: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone numbers: _____

E-mail address: _____

Who is (are) the author(s) of this piece: _____

What is the demonstrated need for this piece? _____

Has this piece been subjected to review by an SAA group or persons other than the author? _____

Please explain: _____

Describe intended audience. _____

Describe how will this piece be used or distributed: _____
_____ ●

Sharing Struggles is Valuable Service

By **Anonymous**

Just completing Step Six, I stood there with my list of character defects in my hand — glaring at me as though they were poison that I couldn't be rid of quick enough. I got down on my knees and asked my Higher Power to remove these defects. I asked them to be removed so that I could be of service to others. I got up from my knees and went about my day.

The next morning, I again prayed to have these defects removed and continued to repeat the process daily. Within a week, I noticed some character defects were not a struggle, while others still plagued me on an almost daily basis. Soon, I began to doubt how I could be of service while struggling so much with my character defects. Why wasn't my Higher Power removing all of them?

Then one day, I honestly shared with a sponsee about these struggles. This opened up the conversation to some very vulnerable dialog. I learned a very important lesson. I can carry the message by working my program and remaining sober. But sometimes, I am of service because of my struggles — not because I overcame them.



Get Out of The Ring

**Fighting addiction
alone is like trying
to beat a prize
fighter.**

BY BRIAN H.

I'm almost 70 years old and did not discover SAA until I was 41. I always knew my acting out was wrong. Like everyone else, I tried everything I knew to stop and was 100 percent unsuccessful. When I began attending meetings I knew I was in the right place, but somehow never really was able to put all the pieces together so I could “stay stopped.”

Life was much better as the time between acting out episodes grew. I had a whole desk full of thirty-, sixty- and ninety-day chips. I also had a couple of six month and nine months and even one year, but my decade in the program never got me over the hump of staying abstinent long term.

I got a sponsor, worked the steps all the way through, but was still having slips. If there were a picture to represent “sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly,” my face would have been posted there as an example of slowly.

All of that changed about ten years ago.

I was meeting my sponsor for our weekly breakfast and he asked me how I was doing. I told it that I was fighting to stay out of the bubble. He asked me why I was fighting. That seemed like the dumbest question I had ever heard. Why was I fighting?? Really??? I'm an addict who did not want to be an addict, what was I

supposed to do?

Then he gave me a word picture that turned my recovery around 180 degrees.

He said “Let’s say your recovery is a boxing ring and your addict is Mike Tyson. Where are you standing in this picture?”

That was an easy one – “I’m in the ring,” I said.

He then asked “Why are you in the ring? Have you ever beaten Mike Tyson? Is there ever a chance you will?”

The answer was of course “no” I had tried for fifty years to beat my “Mike Tyson addict” and had been knocked out cold. There were times when I had stayed away and ran around the ring, but sooner or later he clobbered me, again and again. But where was I supposed to be if not in the ring?

My sponsor said, “You know you’re powerless in the ring, right?” I agreed. “So, get out of the ring!!!! When you do your surrenders in the morning, you give God your will and your life right?” The answer was yes. “So, that surrender puts God in the ring and takes you out of it. You give it to God and let Him fight the battle. Your problem is you are giving it to God, but still getting in the ring.”

At that moment, a light went on. I had been brought up in a churchgoing, God-honoring family and since my childhood had had a wonderful

I begged God to relieve me of my addiction. But he never did, and I concluded that He either could not or would not. So I would surrender, but not let go.

relationship with God in every area of my life except my addiction. I had, like many of you, begged God to relieve me of my addiction. But He never did, and after years of asking, I concluded that He either could not, or wasn’t willing to. So, I would surrender but not let go.

It does not work! One good reading of the opening part of “How It Works” tells us that. But we need to “let go absolutely.”

While far from perfect, my life today is lived in victory. I begin my day by praying my first three steps. I surrender my will and my life and then specifically my genitals, my eyes and my euphoric recall and fantasies. I give it to God, leave it there and go about my day not on defense, but on offense.

Do I still get tempted? Sure, but when I am I give it to God again. I tell him that this temptation is too big for me and He takes it — every time! Let go and let God. It took a long time, but I finally did, and it made all the difference. ●

DEAR WILL

Don't Take Responsibility for Absent Sponsors

BY WILL

Fortunately, there
is not just one
person for anyone
looking for help in
SAA.

Dear Will,

I was convicted of a sex crime I committed in my 20s. I was out briefly and then sent back to prison for not changing my address in time for the Sex Offender Registration Act.

A couple of years ago, someone gave me a Green Book and I got a sponsor through SAA. After I wrote him once and told him about my past, he never wrote back.

SAA seems like a safe place for me to learn and grow in my abstinence from deviant sexual behavior. But after not hearing back from my sponsor or getting a new one, I am thinking that maybe SAA won't accept me because of my past.

I get out on March 20 and would love to go to some meetings. But out of a concern for the fellowship, I am having second thoughts about going. I don't know if I will be welcome.

Thanks, Tim P.

Dear Tim,

First of all, congratulations on being released. I hope you find your adjustment to the outside world to be a smooth one.

It's impossible to know, Tim, why your first letter-writer never wrote back. There could be a variety of other reasons why he did not write back. His life may have gotten busy, or he could have encountered some sort of health issue, to name just two possibilities.

Sad to say, you are not the first prisoner I have heard of whose letter-writer stopped writing. A similar thing happens at outside SAA meetings;

people connect up with sponsors and then the sponsor becomes uncommunicative. Once again, this could be for a variety of reasons.

It's easy for people looking for help to take responsibility for the disappearance of the people. As an addict, I blame myself for anything that goes wrong in my life. Please do not think in those terms. Fortunately, there is not just one person for anyone looking for help in SAA. To paraphrase my father who grew up in Brooklyn, "Sponsors are like subway trains; if you miss one, there will be another one along in a few minutes."

If you were still in prison, I would encourage you to get back in touch with the ISO office and ask for another letter-writer (and I say the same thing to anybody still incarcerated who is in a situation similar to yours). Since you are out of prison, it is easier for you to exercise other options. You can get in touch with the office or check the website, find meetings in your area, attend, and find a sponsor that way. Your Higher Power will provide the right sponsor.

But you asked about the meetings themselves. I hear enough people mention in passing at meetings that they have been in prison to know that such



folks are somewhat common. Sometimes they give the details, especially when presenting their First Step or telling their story, but not always. I am not aware of people being rejected from meetings because of things they have done in their past, and I don't think that will be your experience either.

The main thing, Tim, is to persevere. Find the meetings you are most comfortable with and look for a sponsor until you find the right one. One day, you may even find that your experience, strength and hope will be invaluable to a person on the other side of the wall to whom you are writing.

Will

*If you have a question for Will,
please send an email to
men4saa@saa-recovery.org.*

STORIES OF SERVICE

Creating Powerful Connections

BY IAN S.

There is something that comes out of the most simple and mundane activities of service.

If you have a story of service to share, please send it to toc@saa-recovery.org.

I came to the fellowship of SAA in October 2013. At that time I was isolated, fearful, and lonely. Within months, my fellows in the program had taught me that my sex addiction grew in isolation and, to achieve health and freedom from addiction, I had to learn to connect with other people in a healthy way.

It was my sponsor who suggested that service was the way I would connect with others. After six months of continuous participation in the SAA program he asked that I commit to chairing a meeting for year. I said yes. That was my first step into a healthy social world and sustainable sobriety. Being responsible for a meeting helped me to move past my selfishness. As time went on and I actively listened to others share their experience with addiction at “my” meeting I became more compassionate and willing to learn.

Another way I connected was through service working with my fellows in jail and prison. Early in my program my sponsor asked that I drive him to a local jail to help his work with one of his sponsees. I was fearful but willing to do the work. This willingness to say yes to service even though I was uncomfortable represented a new maturity I had not expected. Since that time I have continued to be of service in this way with fellows who are now, or were at one time, incarcerated. Two of these fellows are now my very best friends.

Other ways I connect through service are in sponsoring others, participated in intergroup, socializing outside meetings, hospice work, and giving rides to and from meetings. All of this service to others is the cornerstone of my sobriety.

FROM THE BOARD

Convention, Conference Split in 2018

**BY MIKE L., AT LARGE
BOARD MEMBER.**

**The convention
will continue to
take place over
Memorial Day
weekend and
the conference is
moving to second
week of October.**

I remember being at a meeting some years ago where the person chairing the meeting suggested “service work” as a topic. It was not one of the more popular topics among the meetings I have attended over the years. I remember one person expressing resentment that the topic had even been suggested.

One of our sister fellowships is known for its emblem of a circle within a triangle. The three sides of the triangle represent the three parts of the program: recovery, unity, and service, which in some loose ways at least correspond to the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts.

When I was brand-new to the fellowship and for several years thereafter, I really didn't see service work as part of recovery, let alone an essential part of it. Just give me my meetings, be they ninety-in-ninety when I was new or several a week later on, and let me be. Besides, how much service work could possibly be needed? Things pretty much just happened, right?

However, I volunteered to be the delegate for my home group at the 1995 convention in Ann Arbor, my first-ever convention; this was back before there were separate names for the conference and the convention portions of the annual gathering. This was sort of passive service work: go to a day-and-a-half's worth of meetings, listen to some presentations and vote on them.

However, I had plenty of opportunities during that three-and-a-half day time frame to become aware of how much was needed.

FROM THE BOARD

I learned things that should have been obvious to me: For example, our literature didn't miraculously appear out of nowhere, like Minerva bursting out of Jupiter's head. It took a person or people to write the literature. Similarly, conventions didn't spontaneously happen; committees had to get together, many months or even years in advance, to plan them.

I remember seeing a table at that convention indicating that help was needed with the translation of our literature into Spanish. This grabbed my attention, since I had some knowledge of Spanish from many years of studying it in school, and so I jumped in. Things began slowly, with my calling into the then-quarterly teleconferences of the Literature Committee.

Since I was not a member of the Literature Committee at that time, I was normally scheduled for the beginning of the call; I could just call in for a few minutes, give my report, and go.

Over time, the translation work got bigger, and nowadays all of our increasing amount of literature has been translated into Spanish, as we begin to look at other languages as

well.

If you haven't tried doing service work for SAA, I encourage you to give it some thought. It could be something as simple as writing a letter to a prisoner once or twice a month or things that might occupy more of your time.

There are many types of service work, and you may find something that is as interesting to you as work involving the Spanish language was to me.

The folks involved in service work in SAA are a special breed. I think the work keeps us more intimately connected to the fellowship. Indeed, many of the folks in SAA with whom I have been friends the longest are the ones I met back in the 1990s when I first got involved in service work.

If you have questions as to where your help could be used, you might be able to get ideas from The Outer Circle. The office can also put you in touch with various committee chairs who could use help.

Anyway, I hope you will give service work a try and see how it enhances your recovery. Just a warning: It can be addictive!

Nominating Committee Invites Ongoing Participation

Hello from the Conference Steering Committee! We have taken seriously the feedback from the delegates of the 2017 Conference, having completed a thorough review by early Fall 2017.

We as a committee have discussed the opinions of the delegates while formulating service goals for the service year. So far we have reviewed the mission statement of the committee, and approved a set of operating procedures for the committee. We have reached consensus to play a more active role within the Conference Planning Committee.

We are exploring what the composition of the CSC may look like in 2020. We are also exploring the future responsibilities of the Conference delegates in 2020. In the future, the CSC may play a more in planning and execution of the annual meeting of the Conference.

Please keep in mind that while the committee may discuss and develop ideas to shape the annual meeting of the Conference, the delegates attending the Conference have the final approval on any matters brought before the delegates. The committee is but a trusted servant to the Conference.

The CSC will be at the 2018 Convention this coming May. We will have an information table on Saturday and Sunday, and will be hosting workshops on both days to provide information on the CSC. Please stop by the table and attend the workshops. The committee is developing a survey concerning the upcoming Conference in October 2018 which will be available at the table and the workshops.

Please take a moment to participate in this survey. The committee wishes to hear from both Convention attendees and the delegates to the Conference in Houston this year. During the coming two to three years of transition, the committee realizes that we must be open for feedback from the fellowship as the Conference matures as a separate event from the Convention, and the area formation process for home groups moves forward.

Any member of the fellowship may attend the monthly CSC meeting or any of the subcommittees of the CSC. Call the ISO office for the telephone number of the meeting you wish to attend by phone. Check the calendar under the ISO news segment of this issue for day and time of each meeting.

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Members of the fellowship can also provide feedback by email at csc.feedback@saa-iso.org. See you at the Convention in May, and the Conference in October.

Literature Committee Sunsets Out-dated Pamphlet

The Literature Committee regularly reviews existing SAA literature to determine whether changes would be of some benefit to the SAA Fellowship. During this process in 2016, it was determined that changes to the Abstinence and Boundaries Booklet might be appropriate. The following is a list of just some of those reasons:

- » Much of the text included quotes from the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book (the SAA Conference had previously passed a motion asking Literature Committee to remove AA material from our literature)
- » The original literature was written around the year 1988 and much has changed over the last 30 years that could be updated (i.e., internet, smart phones, etc.)
- » The majority of the stories were written by those with 18 months of sobriety or less (the most was three years). Our fellowship now has members with decades of sobriety that could share their experience, strength, and hope on the topics of abstinence and boundaries.
- » The title does not fit well with what is found within the document. Most of the stories do not include information on abstinence and boundaries.
- » When this literature was written, most of our current literature did not exist. We now have The Green Book (with stories in the back and chapters on abstinence and boundaries), Abstinence pamphlet, Three Circles pamphlet, among others.

As a result of this piece of literature being Conference-Approved (year 2000), the Literature Committee decided to ask The Conference to rescind their approval of the document prior to making any changes to it. Therefore, at the 2017 conference, the Literature Committee presented a motion asking for the removal of Conference-Approval.

During that process, the delegates at the conference began questioning whether this piece of literature is even needed any longer because of the reasons listed above (and others). The Literature Committee took this into

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consideration while discussing possible revisions to the document. Based on the reasons above, the feedback from both the conference delegates and other members of the fellowship, as well as the substantial rewrite that would need to take place, the Literature Committee decided (at the January 14th, 2018 meeting) to rescind their approval of the Abstinence and Boundaries Booklet.

Since this piece of literature is no longer Conference-Approved nor Literature Committee-Approved, it will no longer be sold by the ISO Office.

Thank you to all, Literature Committee members, conference delegates, and other members of the fellowship who have been involved in this process, as well as a huge thank you to those authors (pioneers in the early days of our fellowship) who were willing to serve the fellowship through the writing the original document

Long-Awaited SAA Meditation Book Available Soon

After more than ten years of planning and effort, the SAA Meditation Book is expected to go on sale in August.

Now poised for final proofing, the book represents about 1,000 hours of ISO staff hours, not to mention thousands of hours of volunteer work.

By about 2006, the Conference (Indianapolis) made it clear it wanted a daily meditation book for our program. A subcommittee of the Literature Committee started meeting in 2007. A fund raiser was held in the 2008 convention in Seattle. Steps were taken to advertise for an editor.

I got involved by simply attending a workshop in the Oakland Convention of 2009. The workshop was an opportunity for attendees to write meditations. Many other workshops at annual conventions and local retreats would follow. To this would be added the product of monthly “tele-workshops.” In Albuquerque (2010) the Literature Committee determined the make-up of the book (percentages of the Steps, Traditions, and other topics). We finally hired a professional editor, Don S.

A procedure was devised to process and organize the raw meditations. The editor would perform various edits and deliver them — with the help of the ISO office — to the Meditation Book Subcommittee (of the Literature

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Committee). The subcommittee would review and suggest more edits using a function of the ISO service website called the “Wiki.”

The output of the subcommittee would go on to the full Literature Committee would vote up or down on each.

Doing about eight to ten per month, we have managed to approve 369 meditations. The total number of meditations submitted was over 1,400 (349 authors). The number of authors represented in the books is 149.

Suffice it to say that some individuals gave a lot of themselves to this endeavor. I would especially like to thank Cecilia B. and Mike L. for input in writing this article.

In service,

Les J., Meditation Subcommittee Chair

Nomination Committee Lays Out Steps for Service Resumes

Would you like to be of service to newcomers in the coming years? Decades?

Would you like to be involved with others in shaping our fellowship for decades to come?

Or perhaps more simply: Have you ever wondered what it’s like to serve the fellowship at the international level?

Has your sponsor told you it’s time to give back? Have your fellow group members or intergroup members encouraged you to do more?

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, please submit a service resume. It doesn’t obligate you to accept any position. It simply indicates a willingness to explore the possibility, perhaps now, perhaps in the future. It also offers the chance to be connected with the Nominating Committee members and other trusted servants.

They can tell you more about the available positions, the skills and abilities that are required and desired, and the gifts they have experienced from international service. They can help you map this portion of your recovery

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journey.

The process is super simple.

1. Download the form off the service website. www.saa-iso.org under the “International Service” link in the left-hand menu. Or you can click this direct link: <https://saa-iso.org/docs/SaaServiceResume.docx>
2. Complete the form.
3. Email it to info@saa-recovery.org OR mail it to Nominating Committee, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

We look forward to hearing from you!

ISO Conference Nominating Committee members

New Intergroup is Founded to Further Support Women

Women in the SAA fellowship will soon have a new resource to support them: a women’s intergroup. This intergroup will utilize the flexibility, responsiveness, and autonomy of intergroups in developing new ways to reach out to women sex addicts who are still suffering, in line with Tradition Five.

The intergroup hopes to develop, fund and encourage retreats, workshops and other events as well as supporting individual women at these events. In doing so, the intergroup may partner with the ISO (especially the Women’s Outreach Committee) and various groups and areas.

The intergroup is inspired by the mission statement of the Women’s Outreach Committee (WOC): “to reach out to all women who desire to stop addictive sexual behavior, to assist these women in connecting with other SAA women, to provide a safe place for women to reach out to other women for support and sponsorship, and to give women a voice in the SAA fellowship.”

Anyone with an interest in helping with the forming or registering with the women’s intergroup may send email to saawomensIG@gmail.com.

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Board Approves Expenses for Professional Outreach Effort

Here's a look at the Board's actions during February and March:

February

- » Approved funding to pay for the exhibitor fee, mobile app ads (or print advertising in convention manual), etc. and travel expenses for the Program Manager of Outreach to conduct outreach to the professional community via an exhibitor table at the APA's 126th Annual Convention.

March

- » Approved motion to amend the Policy for Service Committee Functioning.

Higher Donations and Reduced Expenses Yield Much Smaller Deficit

In the month of March we had a deficit of \$3,475.56. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$14,108.00. The difference of \$10,632.44 was due mostly to our individual donations exceeding our estimate by \$8,240.07 and our expenses being lower than estimated by \$4,723.37.

Our SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate by \$3,084.25 in March. For the year we are at 71 percent of our estimated SAA Green Book sales. We expect Green Books sales to increase once the audio books are released.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$740.13 in March. For the year we are at 91.4 percent of our estimated pamphlet and booklet sales.

Our bronze medallion sales were below our estimate by \$585.00 in March. For the year we are at 99.63 percent of our estimated bronze medallion sales.

Our total sales for March were below our estimate by \$5,043.08 in March. For the year we are at 83.85 percent of our estimated sales. We expect our estimate to be closer to our budget once our Audio Green Book and our Meditation Book are made available for sale later in the year.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$8,240.07 in March. For the year we are at 93.45 percent of our estimated individual donations. The reason we exceeded our estimate was because we received three additional Houston Giving Thanks donations totaling \$9,000.00. Group donations exceeded our estimate

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by \$666.73 in March. For the year we are at 110.57 percent of our estimated group donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$60,884.15. Our expenses were below our estimate by \$4,723.37 in March. For the year we are at 95 percent of our estimated expenses. Our operational reserve is \$186,536.00 and is fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Calendar — Here are tentative ISO outreach and committee meeting times for the next several months. Meetings times change often. All times are Central Standard Time. To attend a committee meeting, you must be a member or be invited. If you're interested in joining a committee, email info@saa-recovery.org or call the ISO office.

First Sunday of the month

CSC: Policy & Procedure: 2:00 p.m.

Audio Review (odd months): 2:30 p.m.

Intergroup Communications: 3:00 p.m.

LGBT Outreach: 5:00 p.m.

Prisoner Outreach: 8:00 p.m.

First Saturday of the month

Author's Group: 4:00 p.m.

Second Saturday of the month

Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance: 8 a.m.

Women's Outreach: 4:00 p.m.

Second Sunday of the month

CSC: Conference Committee Structure:
2:00 p.m.

Literature Committee: 4:00 p.m.

General Outreach: 6:30 p.m.

Second Tuesday of the month

Seventh Tradition: 6:00 p.m.

Third Tuesday of the month

Nominating Committee: 5:00 p.m.

Third Saturday of the month

Area Coordinating Committee: 4:00 p.m.

CSC: Twelve Concepts Work Group: 12:00 p.m.

Third Sunday of the month

CSC: Charter & Bylaws: 2:00 p.m.

Information Systems and Online Presence
Committee: 2:00 p.m.

SE Region: 6:00 p.m.

Fourth Sunday of the month

Conference Steering Committee: 2:00 p.m.

CONTACT THE ISO

Want to connect with the International Service Organization website, staff, board of trustees, trusted servants, or special workers? Here's the contact info you need:

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

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Great Lakes

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LitCom: Doug S., Mike B. Robbie H. (2nd chair)
David M (chair); Steven P.; Gary T. (*The Outer Circle* editor)
LitComAL@saa-litcom.org

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The Outer Circle newsletter relies on submissions from the Fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts!

Deadlines for Submission and Topics

Jan/Feb:	"Taking Action"	Nov 5
Mar/Apr:	"Healthier Sexuality"	Jan 5
May/June:	"First Three Steps"	Mar 5
July/Aug:	"Prayer, Meditation"	May 5
Sept/Oct:	"Steps Six and Seven"	July 5
Nov/Dec:	"Giving Back"	Sept 5

Articles may be submitted by email to toc@saa-recovery.org or by mail to the ISO office. If possible, please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format. All articles must be accompanied by the **RELEASE FORM** at the bottom of this page.

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Articles can be anywhere from 500-1,000 words. The main guideline is to share your experience, strength, and hope in the principle of Step Twelve. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with.

Please don't worry about grammar and spelling. We'll clean that up for you.

General Release Form

In consideration of being reviewed for possible publication, I hereby transfer and release to the ISO of SAA, Inc (assignee) all legal rights to the publication of my submission(s) or any edited version thereof in any official ISO publication, including Sex Addicts Anonymous, The Outer Circle, the SAA meditation book, the SAA websites, or any other SAA program material, such as pamphlets, booklets and audio recordings.

With this submission, I transfer to the assignee without limitation the legal title and all literary rights, including copyright and/or trademark and the full right and license to reproduce, copy, edit for content, modify, distribute, and create derivatives from the submitted work. I understand that every effort will be made to safeguard my personal anonymity in the publication and distribution of this material. I also understand that I may or may not receive further communication regarding my submission prior to its publication.

I hereby further attest that I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization, and I hereby Release the assignee from any claim whatsoever by me or my successors.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

SAA TWELVE STEPS

- 1.** We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2.** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3.** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
- 4.** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5.** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6.** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7.** Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- 8.** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9.** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10.** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11.** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12.** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.