

Volume 17, Issue 2

March - April 2023

# THE OUTER CIRCLE

Carrying the message of hope to the still-suffering sex addict since 1988

## PLUS:

- TRADITIONS CONCLUSION
- ROCKY ROAD OF RECOVERY

## THE OUTREACH ISSUE



The Newsletter of SAA's International Service Organization



## 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 1988, *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 page 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.

**March - April 2023**

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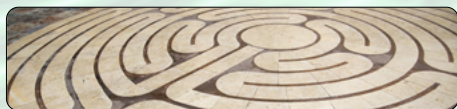
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Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see page 31).



# FROM THE EDITOR

## For the future: Shares and stories wanted

BY JIM L.

THE OUTER CIRCLE  
INTERIM EDITOR

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*All submissions  
should can be  
made on-line at  
saa-recovery.  
org/toc or sent  
to info@saa-  
recovery.org with  
a signed release.*

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In assuming the role of interim editor of *The Outer Circle*, I first want to thank Don S for his able editing over the past year. We will miss his experience and skills.

One challenge for *The Outer Circle* is to convince the members of the fellowship that others want to hear their stories and their insights. We never know when our experience, strength, and hope will be exactly what a struggling sister or brother needs to hear.

A feature article can be about the theme of an upcoming issue (see page 31) or about any recovery experience that confirms the validity of the SAA program of recovery. Features are typically 600-1200 words. In addition, special consideration will be given to stories of service (300-500 words) and to articles about living in sobriety (750-900 words).

I also want to thank the Women's Outreach Committee for their Dear Grace contributions, and to an anonymous "Will" who crafts the Dear Will column. In support of their thoughtful and consistent efforts, if you know someone who has a question about his or her recovery or about an issue that needs further clarification, encourage them to send the question to us at the URL or email below.

All submissions can be made on-line at [saa-recovery.org/toc](http://saa-recovery.org/toc) or sent to [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) with a signed release. We look forward to hearing from many of you and to a year full of insightful articles.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Moving Service to the Next Level

BY TRACY R.  
ACTING EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR, ISO OF SAA,  
INC.

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*Each of us has  
talents and  
abilities we can  
channel to help  
carry the SAA  
message.*

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“Service in SAA ranges from one-on-one outreach over a cup of coffee to the worldwide outreach performed by the International Service Organization (ISO).” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 75)

As I grow into my role as Acting Executive Director, I am moved to reflect on service and what that means to the ISO and to the sex addict who still suffers. When I first came into the fellowship of SAA, I never imagined myself serving in this position. I never even imagined myself staying sexually sober for several consecutive years. But, here I am: sober and serving. You just never know where your Higher Power will take you when you turn your will and your life over to the care of a loving God.

For me, sobriety and service in SAA consists of a series of stretches where I find myself going beyond my self-imposed limits. At first, it was all about me – how I felt, what I wanted, what I thought, and what I needed. As I worked the steps, this changed. As I received the amazing gifts of recovery and sobriety, I began to want others to experience these gifts too. I began to take actions to help make these gifts more available to those who needed and wanted them. I learned to step outside my comfort zone and make myself available to my sisters and brothers in recovery.

I am not unique. Each of us has the capacity to stretch and to grow in our recovery. Each of us has talents and abilities we can channel to help carry the SAA message.

We need members willing to serve so we can get the SAA message of hope and recovery out to those who are so desperate to hear it, to those who have no idea there is a way out of the devastation created by sex addiction.

To learn more about service at the local level, talk to your group’s and intergroup’s trusted servants. To learn more about service beyond the local level, visit the service website at <https://saa-iso.org>. If you’re interested in international service, visit <https://saa-iso.org/svc/index.php> where you can also submit a service resume.

# DEAR GRACE

## Welcoming Women into Mixed Meetings

BY WOMEN'S  
OUTREACH  
COMMITTEE

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*It is vital, if the  
meeting is listed as  
a mixed meeting,  
that everyone  
there treats it as  
such, which means  
that women are  
welcome. Period.*

---

Dear Grace,

I am a man in recovery attending a mixed meeting in my town, but we rarely have women. My wife has told me she does not want me attending meetings if women are present, and several of us in the meeting are in this situation.

Recently, a woman showed up to our meeting. We didn't know what to do. One of the other men in the group told her that some of our wives aren't comfortable with women attending our meetings. I don't know if she will come back. I hope she can find something that works for her, but her attending the meeting doesn't work for me. What do I do?

Signed,

Doesn't Work for Me

Dear Doesn't Work,

This experience is not unusual; however, our fellowship is a place for all suffering sex addicts. Often, it is human nature to separate ourselves based upon our differences. But when it comes to addiction, the pain we experience is universal. Very few of us have walked into the rooms of SAA without feeling this pain. The newcomer, male or female, holds a special place in our meeting for this reason.

The most important step to take is to welcome the woman newcomer to the mixed meeting, regardless of how uncomfortable you feel. It is vital, if the meeting is listed as a mixed meeting, that everyone there treats it as such, which means that women are welcome. Period.

To honor the traditions of Sex Addicts Anonymous, we simply cannot turn away from our pri-



mary purpose: to carry our message to the still-suffering sex addict. We cannot tell a woman she is not welcome when our meeting has declared itself to be mixed. If she has a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior, we should welcome her.

We are each responsible for our own recovery. Some may be so uncomfortable that they choose to leave the meeting for that session. If there are some in the group who are not able or willing to welcome women, perhaps they could start a separate meeting for men only. Please, make sure it is registered properly with the ISO as a “men-only” meeting.

In line with Tradition One, we have found that our recovery is enhanced and our groups and fellowship grow stronger when we recover together—men and women. Quite often, we or our spouses may fear contact with the opposite gender. This is natural because this was often the object of our acting out. However, experience has shown that, when we come together

*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.*

and really hear each other's stories, we find we are, in fact, the same, sharing the same disease and the same solution.

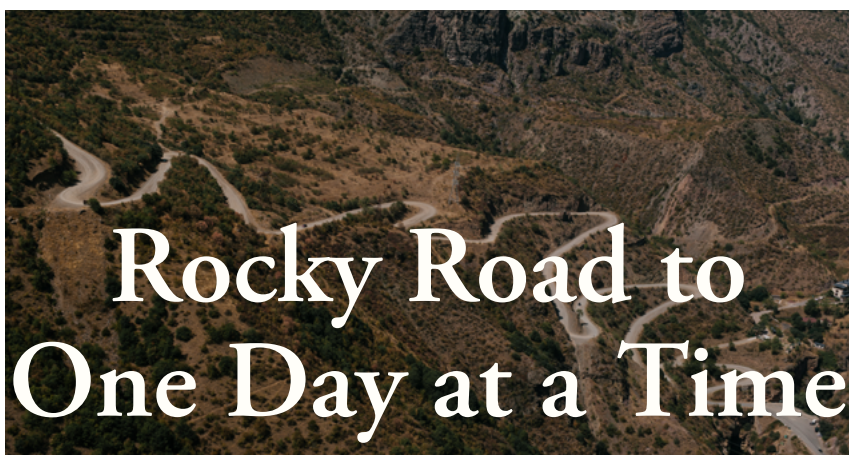
SAA provides resources addressing how to welcome women to meetings, such as “A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer” and “Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings—Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting” pamphlets. The Group Guide also gives guidelines for a group conscience and taking a group inventory. In addition, there are also audio recordings addressing the subject on the SAA website.

Thank you for writing.

**In service,  
Grace**

**Disclaimer:** We cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

**– SAA Women's Outreach  
Committee**



# Rocky Road to One Day at a Time

BY FRANK T

**M**y first couple of weeks in college I discovered sex with a girl who was willing and patient and who lead me in a direction I had never explored. Unlike other guys at younger ages, I had not masturbated until I was 18 years old. I started masturbating regularly when the girl dropped me. She said I didn't care about her. And I didn't.

I came to view women as objects for "love" and wished more of them had seen me that way. Porn supercharged my efforts for decades as I joined a cult, got married and divorced twice, was emotionally unavailable to my wives, and had affairs that I justified.

At one point, my first wife had three therapists. That's how passive-aggressive, blaming, and emotionally distant I was. A mutual friend said I was holding her back. How dare he! All she had to do was give me sex twice a week and pretend I loved her. That was her problem?!

My second wife was a clinical psychologist. Several years into the relationship I was seeing a therapist for being annoyed by my wife. She asked for permission to write a letter to my therapist, and I agreed. I read the letter and took it to my therapist. It was entirely about my being a sex addict. My therapist asked "Do you agree with this?" My answer was "Not even close! She is the problem."

My life had become very small. Only one friend plus alcohol, weed, porn, and short-lived affairs. I felt the impact of Michelangelo's words "Where



will you be when the double death is near?" I was physically alive but emotionally and spiritually dead.

I joined Alcoholics Anonymous, finding a wealth of value in its purpose and steps. It began to bring me back to life. After a couple years, I heard a speaker (now my sponsor) refer to sex addiction in his share. I approached him, and we talked on and off for about six months. He suggested I read about sex addiction. As a result, I realized how porn was killing me. He then suggested I come to a few SAA meetings, work Step One, and see how it felt.

I cannot describe the relief walking into the SAA meeting. Suddenly my lies, hiding, scheming, and double life were released. Here I could be truthful and work on the addiction that was killing my soul in the name of self-care. Here were people who spoke honestly and freely about their addiction and the massive costs of damaged relationships, arrests, diseases, and wrecked finances. I came face-to-face with my emotional isolation from others, my Higher Power, and myself. Working the steps opened the door to rescue!

I realized that I was, indeed, powerless over the addiction. I could not manage the negative consequences of acting out. I knew from AA that neither I nor anyone else had the

power to make me stop, and that there was a Higher Power that could and would if that Higher Power was sought. I worked the Twelve Steps of SAA—reading twelve-step literature with my sponsor. I wrote and discussed answers to questions for each step, and I stayed sober for a year. A couple of days after celebrating that year, I received a free subscription to a movie channel, and after watching ten minutes of an adult movie, I relapsed.

I am now sober from inner-circle behaviors for almost four years. I attend regular meetings and have served in several positions – secretary, treasurer, literature and meeting location liaison. I have worked the steps with multiple sponsees both in-person and by correspondence with three prisoners. A few sponsees relapsed and have not returned. Thankfully, I have stayed sober.

I recently traveled to Central America. I found myself in my middle circle, dangerously close to the inner circle—warm days, women with skimpy clothes, a nearby massage parlor. I called my sponsor. He suggested bookending each day with a member of SAA. It worked really well. For a brief time, I had forgotten that I was not alone. I re-learned that my recovery community is only a phone call away!

I work the Tenth Step daily and often do a quick spot check Step Ten when feeling awkward, rageful, afraid, contemptuous, or superior. I learned to recognize that I was fearful of not being “happy”—not getting the respect, love, control, approval, prestige, affection, emotional security, financial security, or comfort that I thought I deserved.

Working this program has shown me happiness comes from acceptance of myself and others, trust in my Higher Power, and service. Daily practice of Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are my best outer-circle efforts in maintaining my spiritual condition regardless of circumstances. Thus, I can keep my addiction at bay. ©

## **One Little Blade of Grass**

BY T. K.

The crack in the pavement was home for me.

My life, my heart grew so hard you see.

So gray, so lifeless my world had become

Till it cracked wide open to let in the sun.

The rain of my pain was just enough

To make me grow and to make me tough.

Damn the concrete so strong it may be,

My green little shoot will rise up and be free!!

# Higher Power Working through Outreach

BY YVONNE W

**T**he more I opened myself up to the idea of a Higher Power, the more I noticed “coincidences” and found myself asking, “What are the chances?” One way I noticed this was through outreach to other women. Here are just a few of many examples...

I once had a question about an upcoming meeting. When I was thinking of who to ask, a name popped in my head, so I texted her. She immediately texted back saying she was going through an extremely hard time at work, and it was a “god-send” that I “happened” to text her at that exact moment.

Another time I made a mistake at work, and I worried the consequences would be catastrophic. I decided to make outreach calls. For “some reason” the first person I decided to call was a woman that I don’t speak to very often. Wouldn’t you know she works in the field related to the mistake I made! She assured me that what I did wasn’t a big deal... and she was right!

Once, a friend in program was faced with a new acting-out opportunity. I was the first outreach call she made, leaving a voicemail explaining the situation. I felt there “must have been a reason” I was the first person she called, and I decided to share with her that the issue she was facing was the exact thing that was my rock bottom. I shared with her how progressive this disease is and that it won’t stop until we live in recovery.

Recently I called a newcomer to check-in. She was so glad I called because she was about to start sobbing from spending two days apart from her child. I instantly started bawling myself because that is about to be my situation with my kids. I was able to share that with her, and we cried together.

It’s been said that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety but connection. When I connect with others in the program, I connect with my Higher Power, too. ☺



BY PAUL W

**I** am writing this from a prison cell, but thanks to the Twelve Steps of SAA, I am liberated from the insidious, compulsive, and destructive behavior that landed me here in the first place.

Every story has a beginning and an end, but I find the “meaty” middle the most fascinating. Deviant sex, boundary violations, and inappropriate behavior have been a part of my life since I was young. My own trauma created in me an extremely distorted and jaded perception of love, affection, validation, and sexual behavior. Fast forward about fifteen years, and what have I left behind? A trail of broken promises, tarnished hearts, humiliation, and pathetic apologies. But most of all, I destroyed lives—not to mention being addicted to porn, masturbation, and deviant behavior.

Twenty-five-to-life! An appropriate sentence for an unforgivable act. Fast forward again to 2015. I continued to act out in a variety of ways in prison, and I was miserable. Deception, manipulation, and shame were my constant bedfellows. Something had to change.



Enter the Twelve Steps of SAA!

Steps One, Two, and Three were about getting rigorously honest about the unmanageability of my life. Turning my life over to my Higher Power required me to surrender and let God enter into my life.

Steps Four through Nine were about putting in the work to take full and uncompromising accountability for my past. Taking ownership of my choices paved the path for me to see that the wreckage of my past was my doing. No more blaming others or my past.

It was time to grow up and make genuine, lasting amends for my behavior. Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve were about living a life that afforded me happiness, introspective growth, and intrinsic satisfaction.

Beginning in 2016, I started holding meetings here in prison and still do to this day. Working with other men has been a Godsend for me. I find tremendous satisfaction in watching others put their lives together and carry the message to those still suffering.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to SAA! ☺

### Contact the ISO:

- » Phone: [713-869-4902](tel:713-869-4902)
- » Email: [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)
- » Board: [board@saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)
- » Literature Committee: [litcom@saa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@saa-recovery.org)
- » Conference Steering Committee (CSC): [csc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:csc@saa-recovery.org)
- » TOC Editor: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)
- » Submit literature to LitCom: [saa-recovery.org/submit](http://saa-recovery.org/submit)
- » Submit to *The Outer Circle*: [saa-recovery.org/toc](http://saa-recovery.org/toc)
- » Find a meeting: [saa-recovery.org/meetings](http://saa-recovery.org/meetings)
- » More on page 30



## Our Traditions and Their Roots: Conclusion

“Adhering to these principles safeguards  
our fellowship, thus protecting the  
recovery of each individual member.”  
(*Sex Addicts Anonymous* page 76)

*Editor's Note: This is the fourteenth in the series that looks to the Green Book's exposition of each Tradition, along with the history of the problem each Tradition sought to address from AA source material. Authors have varied across the series.*

BY ANONYMOUS

When I first joined SAA over a decade ago, I called into a telemeeting where I heard people talk about “working the Traditions.” One member lamented that, while he had worked the Steps with his sponsor, he was less faithful to working the Traditions. Others concurred.

Although I had not been in SAA very long, this was an odd notion to me. I had heard from other groups that we work the Steps, not the Tradi-

tions, to gain our sobriety. I even remember hearing the aphorism that the Steps teach us how to handle ourselves, but the Traditions teach us how to handle each other.

Years later, the notion of “working the Traditions” is still alien to me and to the program of SAA. As you see, those “other groups,” as confirmed by the Green Book, were the ones who were right.

First, a look back. This series began in January 2021, and now we have reached the final installment. We have seen how the Traditions came about in AA, what precisely they say, and how they are interpreted in SAA. It is fitting then to explain what the purpose of the Traditions is, the “what for.”

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## **The Traditions hold us together, even when our personalities and addiction try to pull us apart.**

---

We learn about the Steps at the local meeting (or group; the two are used interchangeably in SAA). There we learn from others how to work the Steps. At the local meeting we find a sponsor who guides

us through the Twelve Steps. We also learn to serve one another at the local meeting; likewise, we are reminded that SAA exists beyond just that meeting. The local meeting is the first building block of the fellowship but is not the fellowship itself.

There are other groups, and with other groups, we form intergroups – a voluntary association to serve a common set of meetings by geography, modality, or some other measure.

Each group is also part of an area and can join in the area assembly meetings. Areas are ways that service at the international level touches service at the local level.

Finally, there is that international component: the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous. Many people think of the ISO office as “the ISO,” but in truth, the ISO includes the Conference, the Board of Trustees, and the Literature Committee.

The Green Book tells us that, “at every level of our service structure, we are guided by the Twelve Traditions of SAA, as adapted from the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Just as the Steps teach us the spiritual

principles necessary for healthy individual recovery, the Traditions embody the spiritual principles necessary for the healthy functioning of our groups. Adhering to these principles safeguards our fellowship, thus protecting the recovery of each individual member. We have found that they also help us to act with integrity in our personal relationships and as responsible members of society” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 76).

As someone who has been involved with local and international service for seven years, I attest that the Traditions are essential. When personalities become strong, someone will point to Tradition Twelve. If someone starts to pull out their professional credentials in a meeting, someone else can appeal to Tradition Eight. If a group acts in a way that can bring scandal to the fellowship, Traditions Four and Ten are invoked. If a service committee starts to focus on something other than recovery from sex addiction through the Twelve Steps of SAA, members of that committee may object and point to Traditions Five and Ten. The list goes on. I cannot count the number of times that I have seen the Traditions keep us from going astray.

The Traditions hold us together, even when our personalities and addiction try to pull us apart.

If, on the one hand, a group or service committee never invokes the Traditions, or, on the other hand, if the Traditions are misconstrued with the Steps, that group or committee is in trouble. It is imperative that groups, committees, and the members who attend them be familiar with the Traditions, study and meditate on them, and not be afraid to invoke them.

If you have not followed this series from the beginning, I highly recommend that you read the past issues, starting in January 2021. You can find all archived issues of *The Outer Circle* at [www.saa-recovery.org/toc](http://www.saa-recovery.org/toc). ©



# The Twelve Traditions of SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. 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.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

# Is Outreach Necessary?

**IF NOT  
NOW,  
WHEN?**

**O**utreach is the natural outgrowth of working the Twelve Steps of SAA. As clearly stated in Step Twelve—as the result of working this program, of getting out of self, of having a spiritual awakening—we try to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

It does not say only to the addict who shows up at a meeting asking for help, but to any addict still suffering—clearly implying reaching beyond the confines of our meetings. Outreach is Step Twelve work!

The idea of reaching out to help others is typically far from our thinking when we first come to SAA and begin working the Twelve Steps. But as we work the steps and begin to emerge from our self-centeredness, we become aware of two important program realities.

The first is that someone—a loved one, a counselor, a friend, a pastor—told us about SAA. Or we searched sex addiction online and read about SAA or found

BY ANONYMOUS

a meeting. Or perhaps we read about SAA in a publication about sex addiction. Somehow someone reached out to us.

The second is that the program teaches us that the surest way to maintain our personal abstinence from addictive behaviors is to share the SAA message of recovery with another sex addict. Both clearly urge us to engage in outreach.

To hide the value of our program and the result of our spiritual awakening “under a bushel” would be a travesty. In addition, the motivation to engage in outreach grows from the spiritual principles of the program—especially, gratitude. It is out of gratitude for what we have received that we wish to share with others suffering from the same malady.

Outreach begins at home—in our local groups—through sponsoring, working with newcomers, and exploring ways the local group can make its existence known in the community. In support of these activities, the ISO maintains an informational website and can offer guidance—and in some instances financial aid—to reach out to professionals in our communities. The ISO also coordinates a large outreach effort to prisoners who seek help and supports other outreach committees that focus on ways of reaching specific demographic communities.

We know that the problem of sex addiction is widespread in our culture today, and we know that the stigma of sex addiction seems to be significantly more intense than other addictions. But we need to recall that the majority of still suffering sex addicts are unaware of our program—unaware that there is hope of recovery from their addictive behavior. Let us not be daunted by the stigma. Let us consider how we might reach out and be sure that our presence is known in our communities and beyond.

Outreach is not optional! Outreach is Step Twelve work. ©

*LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org) and clicking “Contribute.”*

# DEAR WILL

## Resting on my laurels?

BY WILL

---

*I encourage you to check in with people in your recovery groups: those who have maintained long-term sobriety and those who have suffered a relapse.*

---

Dear Will-

I need some help with something, as I am building a bit of a resentment toward my sponsor. I have been working with him for over a year now. I am sober, have been working the steps, completed my Fourth Step, and my life and relationship seem to be back on track. As a result, I have been busier with life and not able to make as many SAA meetings and have had to put off meeting with my sponsor as often as we used to. Recently my sponsor cautioned me to “not get too cocky, as it looked like I was beginning to rest on my laurels.” What do you think of this statement? I thought the whole point of recovery was to get sober so I could get back to living my best life.

Dear Best Life,

Congratulations on your sobriety, step work, and recovery. It's always good to hear about another brother in recovery who is seeing the fruits of working the steps.

Anytime I hear about a concern regarding a relationship, especially with one's sponsor, I usually think the best action is to lean into the relationship and communicate, ask questions, and seek first to understand before being understood. I would like to speak to the concept of resting on our laurels and hope this helps you as you consider your situation.

When I am thinking of resting on our laurels I think of taking our foot off the recovery gas or dialing back our program of recovery. When I was new in recovery, I was sick: spiritually, emotionally, physically, and sexually. Most areas of my life were affected by my addictive sexual behavior, in addi-



tion to how my addiction manifested in non-sexual terms.

SAA offered me a program of recovery, a medication, if you will, that helped me become healthy, as it seems it has for you. By working a daily program that included meetings, step work, phone calls, prayer and meditation, and service to others in recovery and beyond, I was able to regain my health. Today I view those recovery behaviors, or medications, that served to get me healthy as the same actions that will keep me healthy. Instead of viewing them as medications, those actions are now my vitamins that keep me healthy and allow me to continue growing. Getting healthy is one aspect of recovery, remaining healthy is another yet it takes similar action for me.

Please consider someone who has decided to work out or even become a body builder. They focus on exercise and nutrition to transform their bodies. Once they achieve their desired physical fitness they must maintain it for, if they rest on their laurels, they will dial down their program, cease to maintain their

gains. and will, in fact, return to their prior state.

I am wondering if your sponsor is seeing your situation in the same light. Could your sponsor be concerned that after you have worked so hard to work the steps, gain your sobriety, and improve your relationships, you might now be showing signs of resting on your laurels by doing less of what got you to this point?

I encourage you to check in with some of the people in your recovery groups: those who have maintained long-term sobriety and those who have suffered a relapse. It might be helpful to learn from them what role maintaining their recovery action or dialing it back (resting on their laurels) played in their sobriety and recovery. Resting on our laurels can be a real threat in recovery. Please do not let it threaten yours.

## Will

*If you have a question for Will, please  
send an email to*

**[Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org](mailto:Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org).**

# STORIES OF SERVICE

## Open Speaker Meetings

BY MIKE K

---

*Some have stated that these meetings help sustain the therapists' hope and faith in the effectiveness of the SAA program of recovery.*

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Some time ago, I heard about open speaker meetings as a potential outreach tool. Thinking it might be a good idea, I had no idea all that would be involved.

The first open speaker meeting in our area was scheduled before the pandemic, so it was held in person. We worked with a member of COSA to have a joint speaker meeting, and the meeting was well attended.

The SAA speaker focused a little too much on the problem and not enough on the solution. In addition, some COSA attendees said they were triggered by the COSA speaker. As a result, we were unable to hold another joint speaker meeting. Also, even though there were quite a few members who attended with their partners at that first open meeting, since then, partner attendance has tapered off and is now rare.

The meetings were planned to be held quarterly. The very next quarter more difficulty was encountered, when the attendees voiced disapproval of the speaker. Also, our members did not want to have the speaker meeting at the time of a regular meeting. The decision was made to move it to another time.

We also decided to use it as an opportunity to reach out to therapists. Locally, we had been attending mental health conferences for some time and collecting contact information for local therapists, professors, and students. So a small, dedicated team of local members gathered four days before the open meeting

to call therapists. Those making the calls found that their shame decreased as they participated in that process, just as it had when attending mental health conferences. This was a surprising positive benefit of these events. Although no one was required to acknowledge being a sex addict at the meetings, most of us were able to do so, illustrating similar shame-reducing effects.

A new member of our local group had attended the school of social work at a local university. We parlayed that relationship into a couple of invitations to speak to their class on addictions. As a result, we always make sure to include the social work professor when we send out the invitation to our open meetings.

We have found that a small but steady number of therapists, professors, and students attend our open meetings. Since going virtual, we have abandoned the pre-meeting calls. Currently, the meetings are still held by teleconference. We hope to begin hybrid meetings in the near future and to re-establish the pre-meeting calls.

How many sex addicts have been reached by these efforts? It's hard to say. In any case, we are definitely forging strong relationships with some of the therapists in the area. Some have stated to the members participating in the open speaker meetings that these meetings help sustain the therapists' hope and faith in the effectiveness of the SAA program of recovery.

*Stories of Service inspire others to be of service. Send your 250-300-word story to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).*



BY MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTORS

**O**utreach is fundamental to the twelve-step program. It grows out of Step Twelve—carrying the SAA message of recovery to the addict who still suffers—and Tradition Five, which adds focus to carrying the message by noting it to be the primary purpose of our groups. While outreach is primarily done at the local level by individual members and local groups, the ISO encourages and supports those efforts in multiple ways.

The ISO can coordinate outreach efforts that extend beyond the local groups or that require resources beyond what a local group can afford. Through its outreach committees, the ISO can generate ideas that can help individuals and local groups in expanding their efforts in their own locales.

For example, the ISO maintains a publicly accessible website with extensive information about SAA and a meeting search capability. A significant percentage of newcomers have found us by searching on-line for information or help for sex addiction. The ISO publishes SAA literature, including two books, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, often referred to as the Green Book, and *Voices of Recovery*, a compendium of daily meditations written by members of the fellowship for members of the fellowship. Both are available through the ISO [online bookstore](#) and at major booksellers. Additional pamphlets and booklets on various aspects of sex addiction are published and are available through the ISO bookstore.

The following are short descriptions of the primary outreach committees within the ISO, all of which welcome the participation of members of the fellowship. They can also serve as a good introduction for a member who is possibly interested in service opportunities at the international level.

### ***Prisoner Outreach Committee (POC)***

One of the earliest outreach efforts supported by the ISO was to coordinate the process of reaching out to prisoners, who requested information or literature from the ISO. The committee advises the office on matters related to prisoner outreach and encourages members of the fellowship to participate by writing to prisoners and offering



to sponsor them by correspondence. In addition, the writers/sponsors are encouraged to assist prisoners with starting SAA meetings inside prisons.

### ***Women's Outreach Committee (WOC)***

Another early effort by the ISO was to encourage women who are suffering from sex addiction to seek help despite the fact that most mixed-gender meetings are attended mostly by men. Those support efforts include overseeing the content of a woman's page on the SAA website, hosting a women-only room at the annual SAA convention, maintaining a "Grace List" of women willing to share with other women seeking help, and writing a regular column, entitled Dear Grace, in *The Outer Circle*.

### ***LGBT Outreach Committee***

This outreach committee develops material and avenues of response to inquiries to assure members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities that they are welcome in the SAA fellowship. Among their outreach efforts is an extensive email list of members willing to sponsor members of those communities.

### ***Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance Awareness Committee (ISAAC)***

The focus of this committee is to raise awareness of intimacy and sexual avoidance (anorexia) issues among members of the SAA fellowship and beyond. Their efforts include developing print literature and website content, responding to inquiries about intimacy avoidance, and participating in conventions and retreats with a focus on avoidant behavior.

### ***Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee (PI-CPC)***

For the past few years, PI-CPC has been very active in identifying ways of communicating effectively with various professional communities, such as therapists, clergy, and attorneys, as well as probation and parole officers. The committee has produced website content and multiple new pamphlets for use in reaching out to and talking with professionals, including providing materials for professionals to give to their clients. Also available is a postcard giving an overview of SAA for sending to local therapists. Additional materials are under development.

### ***Reaching Underserved Communities (RUCC)***

This committee was created to help with implementation of the Board of Trustees' strategic goal to improve our outreach to underserved communities, including non-US parts of the world. After all, we are an international organization. The committee is identifying barriers and generating achievable tactics in an effort to be sure that underserved communities have access and feel welcome in the SAA fellowship.

For more information on these committees, email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org). ©

# FROM THE BOARD

## Strategic Goal #1: Improve Communication

BY BOB H & JIM L

BOARD MEMBERS

*We value your  
input. Email the  
board at [board@  
saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)*

This is the first in a series of articles about the Board-adopted strategic goals for the ISO. Goal #1 is to improve communication within the ISO and beyond.

Communication within the ISO and with areas, groups, and members is a core function of the service organization. While publications, telephone calls, and postal mail continue to be the most basic forms of communication, the rapid development of electronic means has introduced many new, creative possibilities—email, text, and video-conference capabilities being the most prominent. But the question remains: which and when is each mode most effective?

In order to assess the current status of communication within the ISO and to recommend tactics to improve communication, the goal #1 work-group is looking at the following:

- Audiences
  - Internal
  - External
- Modes of communication
  - Person-to-person (primarily telephone and text)
  - Postal mail
  - Email
  - Publications
  - Websites
  - Events
- Content issues
  - Subject line
  - Appearance
  - Clarity

### Approved Board Actions

#### December

- Approved hybrid Conference meeting for 2023

To evaluate current practices and recommend improvements, the work-group plans a series of focus groups—small sessions targeting different demographic segments of the fellowship to explore attitudes, preferences, and roadblocks. It is anticipated that this will yield ideas for the development of specific tactics to improve communication within the ISO and throughout the fellowship.

The timeline currently plans to offer a final report to the Board by May or June 2023.

# ISO NEWS

## Service as Transformation

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There is a quality of service that I find is rarely talked about in relationship to our recovery. It has to do with the way that service changes us—helping us to move from being selfish and self-centered to becoming more “others focused.” It is probably a common assumption that service is done in response to an identified need or a problem that must be solved. Ultimately, however, service benefits us—the server as well as the person served. Often, we are the ones who benefit most.

Transformation is a noun which is defined as “a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance.” The transformation that occurs in choosing to be of service is deeper than mere appearances. It goes to the heart of the matter, transforming each of us from who we were to a totally new person. Service isn’t always just waiting for someone to ask but stepping forward when we realize that we have the ability to help alleviate a problem or provide assistance.

It has been my experience that we are often preoccupied with the needs of our local groups—to set-up before, to chair, to close-up after, to serve as a greeter or even treasurer. At times we fail to remember that rotation of service is a principle in our recovery program and allow someone to remain in a position too long. In that regard, rotation also prevents burnout.

We all need members who are willing to be of service, but we need to remember that others need the opportunity to experience the same transformation we have experienced, because we all need to be involved in service just as it is essential that we carry the SAA message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers. Please consider that transformation is possible and that you can say “yes” to service today.

To complete a service résumé for possible service at the International level, use this link (email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) for the password):

- <https://www.saa-iso.org/mbrs/nomcom/index.php>.

Tim A., Chair

ISO Conference Nominating Committee

## Let’s Talk Groups, Intergroups, and Areas

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We are delighted to announce the topic for our next “Let’s Talk” session, which will be held on March 18th at 1PM CST, via Zoom. The topic for this discussion will be:

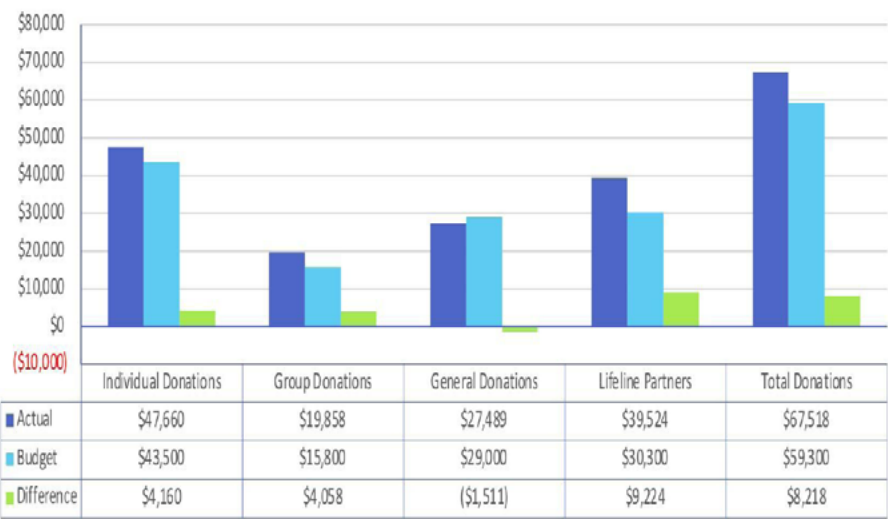
***“The difference between an SAA Intergroup and an SAA Area”***

While intergroups have existed for a long time in cities and regions where many SAA meetings have formed, the area concept is relatively new in SAA. For those who are new to SAA, and even for some long-timers, the difference between intergroups and areas may need to be clarified. In this “Let’s Talk” session, we will discuss their differences in purpose and function. Join us on March 18 and bring a recovery friend, as well! If you would like information on how to attend, please email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org).

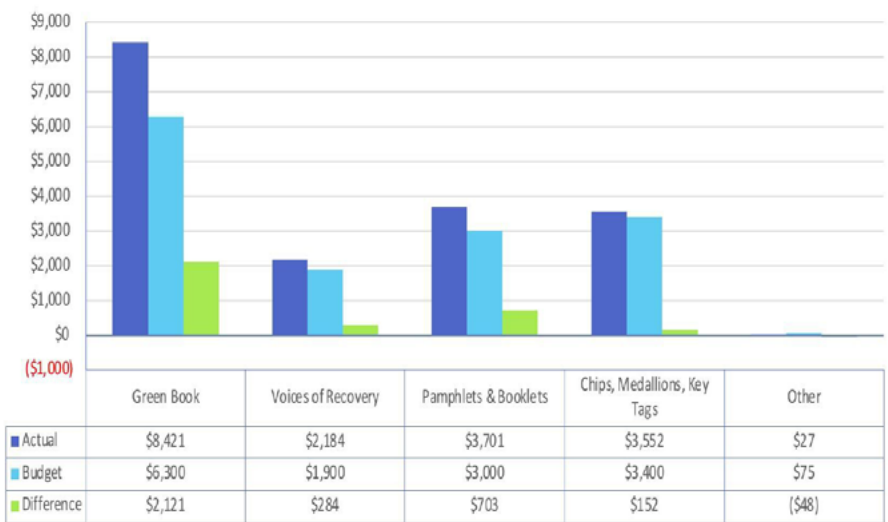
# ISO NEWS

## Financial Summary\*

January 2023 Donations

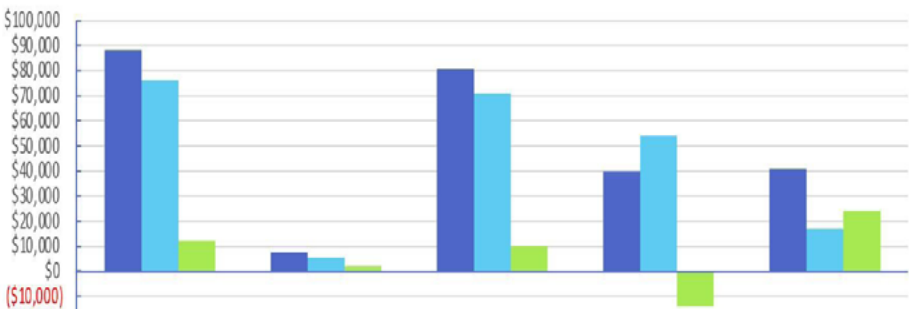


January 2023 Sales



# ISO NEWS

January 2023 Net Income



	Total Income	Cost of Goods Sold	Gross Income	Total ISO Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
Actual	\$88,296	\$7,486	\$80,810	\$39,850	\$40,960
Budget	\$76,331	\$5,441	\$70,890	\$54,028	\$16,862
Difference	\$11,965	\$2,044	\$9,920	(\$14,178)	\$24,098

Donations continue to exceed budget in all categories except General Donations which were below budget. General donations are probably down because in-person meetings remain down.

SAA Green Book sales are increasing. *Voices of Recovery* sales are slowing down but are still over budget. Sales of other items are slightly above budget.

Sales and donations were over budget in nearly every category and expenses were below budget. Donations have increased due in large part to the generous response of our members and groups to last year’s financial crisis. Expenses are down because we have two fewer employees in the office but this will change if and when we hire new staff.

\*Note: Since the fiscal year begins January 1, the January information is the same as the year-to date information. In the future, year-to-date information will be included.

Tracy R  
*Acting Executive Director*



# CONTACT THE ISO

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## The Outer Circle

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Community, and 7th Tradition Manager: Phillip B  
Information Technician and Prison Outreach Manager:  
Jonathan C  
Information Technician: DJ B  
Administrative Assistant: Jerry B  
Administrative Assistant: Evan E  
Administrative Assistant: Harvey A

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

## Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

### Board

Bill I; BJ M; Bob H; Bob L (Chair); Carl D;  
Eddie N; Jim L; Karen S; Les J; Michelle W;  
Wayne K

Board: [board@saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)  
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LitCom: [litcom@saa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@saa-recovery.org)

### Literature Committee

Cara A; Chris D; David C; Deb W; Jackie J (Vice  
chair); Jim P; Juan K; Maud D (Secretary); Mike K;  
Rachel R (Chair); Ruth UK; Stephen P; Zach R.

## Calendar

The most up-to-date committee schedule and information about joining any ISO Committee  
can be found at [saa-iso.org](http://saa-iso.org).

## Prisoner Letter Writing Program

Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more—whether you are in the free world or in prison—contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email ([info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

## PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, contact [PhillipB@saa-iso.net](mailto:PhillipB@saa-iso.net) or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

## LifeLine Partners

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org) and clicking “Contribute.”

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

## Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

*The Outer Circle* newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship.

Don't worry if you're not a writer. Tell us your story and we'll do the rest. If we have any questions, we'll contact you.

There are three ways to submit your story.

- First, you can submit online at [saa-recovery.org/toc](http://saa-recovery.org/toc). This is the easiest for most people.
- Second, email [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org). If possible, include a copy of the release form below.
- Third, mail your submission, with the release form, to ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Requested deadlines and suggested topics are below. Email [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org) if you have any questions.

Deadlines for Submission and Topics		
Jan/Feb:	"Boundaries"	Dec 1
Mar/Apr:	"Outreach"	Feb 1
May/June:	"Tools"	Apr 1
July/Aug:	"Gratitude"	June 1
Sept/Oct:	"Spiritual Awakening"	Aug 1
Nov/Dec:	"Fellowship"	Oct 1

### 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.

