

THE OUTER CIRCLE

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

FELLOWSHIP

PLUS:

- FINDING WHERE WE BELONG
- SOBRIETY AND OUR PARTNERS
- CONNECTION





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.

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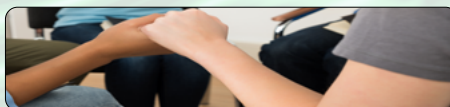
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Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see page 31).

FROM THE EDITOR

Fellowship

BY ALEX B.

THE OUTER CIRCLE
EDITOR

*If you feel inspired
to share your story,
remember they
can be submitted
online ([https://
saa-recovery.org/
news-events/saa-
newsletter/](https://saa-recovery.org/news-events/saa-newsletter/)) or via
[toc@saa-recovery.
org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).*

A common phrase I hear echoing around the rooms of recovery is, “The opposite of addiction is connection.” In this issue of *The Outer Circle*, I’m pleased to explore the concept of connecting through fellowship.

Fellowship sits at the heart of my recovery program. It is the core resource I come back to when I need strength and the power to face difficult moments. I have been in recovery long enough to know my luck: Rather than stumbling to find fellowship in recovery, my fellowship rose around me.

I didn’t have to awkwardly seek out friendly connections in parking lots or conference calls. A strong circle of recovery regulars materialized as I built my practice, lifting me up when I was down and guiding me through some dark times.

I know that others have not had it so easy, so I make a point to reach out – through service obligations, exchanging phone numbers, or just asking someone a question – so that I can pass along the wisdom the program of SAA has given me. In carrying on this fellowship, I turn over my individuality to the higher power of a group of committed folks who are striving toward a brighter future.

Fellowship depends on each of us making connections with others. I hope this issue, the last of 2023, helps you connect and find fellowship with your brothers and sisters in recovery.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Working together

BY TRACY R.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ISO OF SAA, INC.**

*Every time we
reach out to
one another,
whether virtually
or in person, it
provides a unique
opportunity
for growth and
connection while
strengthening our
spiritual program.*

The 2023 annual meeting of the ISO Conference was held on October 7th and 8th in Houston. This was our first hybrid conference, and overall, it went well. Participation in the Conference and in ISO service continues to be light, with only fifty voting members present. Attendance was split relatively evenly between virtual and in-person attendees. All the motions passed, including Conference approval of five pamphlets geared towards fellowship members and four related to PI/CPC (Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community). The ACC (Area Coordinating Committee) was dissolved, and its responsibilities passed to the CSC (Conference Steering Committee).

With the Conference behind us, we now shift focus to the convention ahead of us. The annual ISO convention provides a fantastic opportunity to gather together to enhance and celebrate our recovery. The workshops and the speakers bring new insights and awareness, while the meals and less structured times allow us to join in fellowship with old and new friends. I have attended several conventions over the years and have walked away from each one with renewed enthusiasm for and joy in the SAA program and fellowship.

The convention is primarily an in-person event (although we do hope to have a scaled-down virtual component). For me, a synergy occurs when I am physically in a room with others that cannot be reproduced electronically. The isolation of the COVID pandemic really showed me just how much I need that face-to-face contact, so I take advantage of all opportunities to do so.

Every time we reach out to one another, whether virtually or in person, it provides a unique opportunity for growth and connection while strengthening our spiritual program. I encourage every reader to take some time today to connect with a fellow traveler on this recovery journey.

DEAR GRACE

Safety at conventions

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE

*Those
unaccustomed
to mixed-gender
recovery settings
may want to
prepare for a
convention by
attending mixed-
gender SAA
meetings locally or
online.*

Dear Grace,

I am interested in going to an SAA convention. Is it safe for a woman to attend?

Ms. Hesitant

Dear Ms. Hesitant,

Yes! For years, people of all genders in the fellowship have enjoyed safely attending the annual convention of the International Service Organization of SAA. Many members value connecting with recovering sex addicts from different parts of the world in settings outside of meetings. The conventions include speakers, workshops, and meetings with various focuses, as well as outer circle activities such as karaoke, talent shows, and excursions to local sites.

However, these events can seem daunting at first. Members may feel overwhelmed being in a larger group of recovering sex addicts. We may not be accustomed to attending mixed-gender SAA meetings. We might be afraid we'll be triggered by something or act out in some way at the event. However, with a little preparation and support, SAA conventions can be a tremendous boost to recovery!

Those unaccustomed to mixed-gender recovery settings may want to prepare for a convention by attending mixed-gender SAA meetings locally or online. A trusted friend in recovery can be invited for support! Information about meetings can be found on the main SAA website, saa-recovery.org.

It is beneficial to make some decisions ahead of time. For example, members might plan ways to use a hotel room for self-care instead of acting out, stay connected with people who support their recovery, and set boundaries and guidelines for interacting with others. Talking with other recovering sex addicts about their experiences attending conventions may help us know what to expect and how to safely navigate the event.

Sometimes during recovery meetings or events, we might hear something that brings up feelings, images, or urges. While uncomfortable, this is a common part of recovery from sex addiction. Many

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.*



find it important to have an “In Case of Emergency” (ICE) plan. It could include a list of signs and symptoms of being triggered to help you recognize when that’s happening, ideas for calming your nervous system and connecting with your Higher Power, and phone numbers of support people to text. Conventions and local SAA retreats often ask for volunteers to serve as temporary “onsite sponsors.”

At the convention, there are rooms for relaxing and connecting with smaller groups of people. One of these is the Women’s Outreach Room, a place where women can eat a snack, have a conversation with a friend or sponsor, or hold a spontaneous women’s meeting. Another place to find serenity is the Meditation Room, where pillows, soft lighting, and gentle sounds create an atmosphere of peace where members of any gender can sit quietly and meditate together (or in solitude, if the room is empty).

Some members may want a roommate for accountability and to share hotel room expenses. Others may need a room to themselves for solitude and privacy for talking with a sponsor or making or

receiving support calls. Some need to surround themselves with people of the same gender, while others of us feel safer in mixed-gender situations. We each may have our own unique set of needs. It is our responsibility to discover these needs and ask for help in getting them met.

We cannot recover alone! SAA retreats and conventions can provide opportunities to step a little outside our comfort zones and grow in recovery, and there are ways to do so safely, with the help and support of others in recovery.

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



BY ANONYMOUS

Sex Addicts Anonymous is not my first twelve-step fellowship, but it is the fellowship where I found my home. For years, I sat in twelve-step meetings, longing for connection. Even though I knew I belonged in those rooms, there was a sense of community and camaraderie happening in there that I did not share.

As I sat in those rooms, someone would occasionally tell a story about a zebra:

“All my life I felt different, separate, like I did not quite fit in. Then I came into this fellowship, and for the first time, I belonged – truly belonged. I found my people, and I learned that all my life, I had been a zebra running with a herd of horses. Now I have found the zebras, and I am running with my herd at last. Now I am home.”

I heard that story over and over. I knew I was a zebra, that I belonged in those recovery rooms with those people. Yet I continued to feel different – like I didn’t quite fit in. I felt increasingly more isolated and separated.

Then, I found SAA. The SAA meetings I attended were women’s accountability meetings. At the beginning of every meeting, when we all introduced ourselves, we included our inner circle behaviors and length of abstinence from those behaviors. When I first heard other women list the same behaviors that had

caused me such shame, and then I heard that these women had been sexually sober for years, I knew there was hope for me too. As these women shared their stories and I shared mine, I began to shed my sense of separation and disconnection.

In SAA, I found my herd. I don't really know what animal we are or even if we are all the same creature. And it doesn't really matter. What I do know is that I am finally home. For the first time, I truly belong. I have found my place in Sex Addicts Anonymous. I am no longer alone.

That is a miracle in itself. But there's more. Finding my herd in SAA has given me the ability to connect with many other herds. I now feel like a zebra among zebras. Where before I couldn't connect with the rest of the animals around me, now I can. I can also expand and connect with other communities in new ways. I can be comfortable in the tech community, in the LGBT community, in my spiritual community – in pretty much any group with whom I choose to engage.

By finding my people in SAA, I have started to find my people everywhere. As I worked the steps with my SAA sponsor, got sexually sober, and started getting involved in service, I learned to love and accept myself just as I am. I haven't acted out in over fifteen years and no longer live in shame. I now use my experiences with addiction and recovery to help others find their own path to freedom from shame to grace. In addition to finding my herd in SAA, I found myself.

I am now at home in my own skin, and I can take that sense of home with me with everyone I encounter wherever I go. ☺





BY KEITH

My wife helped me write this article, which is an attempt to describe how she approached my recovery. In this article, I list the different elements of her approach – which are *italicized and bold* – followed by my thoughts on how that item helped me recover.

The SAA Twelve Steps are clear that my focus should be on my issues – my side of the street, if you will. Though I would have liked to determine her behavior, I should not. But then again, she also should not determine mine. My recovery work with my sponsor was its own set of tasks, and my wife had to determine for herself the approach she should take. I have found it ironic that the approach she took – though perhaps not the approach that many spouses or partners try to take – actually helped me to recover.

How did she help me recover from sex addiction? The brief answer: She adopted a hands-off approach and tried to take actions that would enable her to take care of herself. This wasn't a "plan" that she adopted to help me get sober; these actions were to help her survive.

I did not try to fix him with sex.

At the time, I thought sex would have helped; and if she had offered, I would have accepted. Gladly. However, I would have still been sick; just not yet facing it.

How did her action – or, in this case, her inaction – help me recover? She didn't mask the problem, nor did she help me to mask it. She was afraid, but she didn't let that fear lead her to try to control me with sex. Her refusal to fix me with sex helped encourage me to work this program.

I gave him enough rope to hang himself. I noticed progress but would not commend him until that progress had been sustained and continued over several months.

She neither encouraged nor discouraged my involvement in the program. How did this help me recover? She forced me to find my encouragement from the local SAA fellowship, from my sponsor, and from a power greater than me.

I read the literature his sponsor asked him to read. I tried as much as I could to understand about twelve-step recovery from the actual group and writings – not from those outside SAA or twelve-step recovery.

She tried to understand addiction and recovery. This was tough because she is not an addict.

How did this help me recover? It allowed us to discuss readings and ideas from the literature and from our program, how they applied to me, and how they gave me hope and strength. It allowed us to listen to speaker recordings together. Also, having her engaged – even just a little bit – was encouraging to me.

I did not try to be his sponsor. I did not research or recommend other programs that seemed to make more sense to me. I did not try to manage or direct his recovery, or demand that he take certain actions for recovery.

How did this help me recover? She never opposed what my sponsor or the SAA program said that I should do. She let the program do whatever the program was going to do.

I asked questions when I wanted to know something, but also understood that there were specific details about his addictive behaviors that I did not need to know.

How did her willingness to live with incomplete information help me recover? If I had provided too many details by, for example, naming specific people, those details could have come between her and those other people. And if the details I shared had caused her to lose friendships or relationships or to think worse of others, that would have been another source of shame for me. She allowed me to be detailed with my sponsor and in my Fifth Step, but she didn't require that same detail. I could make amends to her directly for what I had done without her having to know every person's name or every specific detail.

I made sure I had some money that I could access for myself in case this program did not work and he did not stop acting out.

How did this help me recover from sex addiction? This was not enough to make me stop acting out, but these plans she had made were powerful incentive for me to keep working the program. She wanted this program to get me sober, but she was prepared to get on with her life if it did not.

I've finished sharing what my wife did. It is possible for an addict's spouse or partner to influence recovery in a positive way, or to influence it in a negative way. My wife and I discovered that her hands-off approach worked extremely well for us – for my recovery from sex addiction and for our marriage. If a spouse or partner tries to take a more active role or tries to manage the addict's recovery, that could end up being more harmful than helpful.

I want to close with something my wife wrote recently, about how she would describe our marriage and how she would describe me, as we currently are. These statements she wrote are an indication of the change in my life due to the SAA program and a power greater than me. She makes these statements now because none of them were true before I found SAA.

It is possible for an addict's spouse or partner to influence recovery in a positive way, or to influence it in a negative way. My wife and I discovered that her hands-off approach worked extremely well for us – for my recovery from sex addiction and for our marriage.

Her title: Healthy Characteristics of our Marriage and Relationship

He listens to my points of view, opinions, ideas, etc. and doesn't automatically or immediately begin pointing out the weaknesses or problems.

He respects me as a "person" and not a combination of "parts," and he seems to view me as an equal.

He evaluates his responses and admits when he has been disrespectful, dismissive, or judgmental.

He's my best friend. I don't need anyone else.

He thinks of my needs and wants and does things without me asking.

He notices what is important to me.

He is introspective. When he gets irritated or frustrated and angry, he apologizes for his mood.

He acknowledges when his mother is unkind to me and apologizes for her behavior. He doesn't make excuses for her or take her side. I know he puts me first.

There is something missing from this list: She didn't say one word about sex. The single most prominent characteristic that had been true about my life – my obsession with sex – didn't rate mentioning. (Like, "He no longer pressures me for sex.") It didn't cross her mind. That blows me away. That is due to the SAA program; it is not something I was able to accomplish myself.

No question my recovery has significantly helped my marriage. But, unexpectedly, my wife's decision to limit her involvement significantly helped my recovery. In staying back

and letting the SAA program work, she helped me recover. This concept is not a guarantee that marriages will be repaired, but can help a sex addict have more realistic expectations for recovery and the partner's role in that recovery journey. And in that realization, therein lies hope.

My message to any spouse or partner who is reading this article: Please don't try to manage the addict's recovery. It will probably be better if you allow the SAA program and the addict's sponsor to handle that.

My message to the addict, regarding the spouse or partner: Don't expect them to be too engaged in your recovery. If they take a hands-off approach, they may be trying to take care of themselves and manage their expectations for the outcome of your recovery. Just take these steps, follow your sponsor's suggestions, and let the SAA program help you recover. If you do that, it will give your fellowship with your partner the best chance of succeeding. ©

Voices of Fellowship: Hand-in-hand with fellowship. By Anonymous, North Carolina

My first meeting was at a group that emphasized anonymity, so the address was given out by a trusted servant over the phone. I had no idea how isolated I was; making a phone call was very difficult for me. But from that very first phone call I felt the fellowship and heard the call of the program.

On the other end of the line was someone who understood. I could tell he really knew what it was like to want to stop and not be able to on will power alone. His way of talking freely about his addiction convinced me to attend one meeting. He said he'd wait outside to show me through the large building. About half a year later he became my second sponsor and I still both attend and enjoy being of service to that meeting.

Getting involved got me swept up in both the fellowship and the program, going with several others to out-of-town events. I met my current sponsor on one of these trips, doing fun activities and having lunch together. Some program friends even met my family as we were meeting to travel to out-of-town events. Some fellowship friends have moved on. When a good friend won't take my calls anymore, I try to remind myself that if they want the hope of recovery in SAA, they will be back — it's just a question for them and their Higher Power. My hope is to be here when they do.

I used to trash-talk fellowship, feeling self-righteous about my recovery on my terms. Now I see that it's not that either fellowship or program is the way to happiness — it's more fun to do both. If I had taken the literature and tried to work just the program without the fellowship, I wouldn't be sober.

I've had the joy and the privilege of walking alongside quite a few sincere sex addicts as they work all twelve steps while staying sober. That program work leads to increased fellowship as our connections grow and our relationships deepen.



Healing Through Connection

BY BRIAN O.

When I hear the word fellowship I think of connection, hope, and mutual support. In active sex addiction, I denied myself those experiences in favor of isolation, lies, and self-centeredness.

I came into SAA the day after discovery by my partner. All the plates I had kept in the air to cover one lie with another came crashing down in an instant. I felt faint, nauseated, and desperately wanted to escape. My partner made a sound filled with so much pain it pierced through my denial and began to wake me up from years of gaslighting and harmful behaviors.

My first SAA meeting was an online meeting the next day. I was fearful of losing my marriage, friends, home, and career. I remember the members that were in that meeting: Their welcoming smiles and relatable nods as I shared why I was there, and their generous offers to share phone numbers with me. People I did not know twenty-four hours earlier spent time on the phone with me as I laid on the ground, sobbing, broken, and distraught. I was told to keep taking deep breaths and keep coming back. Over the next few days, members called to check in. I felt comforted by what I now know to be a power greater than myself, as experienced through the collective love and compassion in the fellowship of SAA. My Higher Power works through the

willingness of SAA members who have experienced similar pain but also know that recovery is possible. After a time, I searched the ISO website and found three names and phone numbers to contact for an LGBT workshop. As a gay man, I felt comfortable reaching out to these people. I texted the numbers and within several hours, each member got back to me. I cried, told a bit of my story, and was encouraged to attend as many meetings as I could so I could begin connecting with the fellowship. One of the members I called that day is still my sponsor now.

My partner and I were traveling away from home for two months, which meant my commitment to make ninety meetings in ninety days was done through phone and online meetings in the beginning. I slowly began to call people from across the country with whom I had connected, and started to feel better. I found a common understanding in the shared feelings of desperation that drove my active addiction – past unhealed trauma which included sexual, physical, and emotional abuse from my childhood. I found members who had been in the same war as me, years ago, who developed ways to survive that no longer worked as an adult. I saw how recovery was transforming them and how happy they seemed,

and I wanted that for myself. I called members every day, including my sponsor; when I was filled with fear, I was met with love, compassion, experience, strength, and hope. I was assured that this too shall pass, and that no feeling is so bad that acting out won't make it worse. I started to feel loveable because of the love I was being shown by the fellowship.

For me, those two months away were an opportunity to immerse myself deeply into recovery work. When I was preparing to come home, I was terrified I would return to acting out behaviors. I called a fellow addict from my hometown and told her I was scared that I would go back to my old ways. She calmly said, "Well, you don't have to. There is another way." This simple truth shook me out of panic and pointed me towards the solution.

When I returned home and was going to attend my first in-person meeting, it felt like I was in my first meeting all over again. It was a large group in a large room, and I was looking for a place to hide – which is not easy to do in a circle. When I was offered an opportunity to share as a newcomer, I was received with love and acceptance. Members came up to me after the meeting with warm smiles and offered me their phone numbers. I craved connection with these people, but I also felt a deep fear of being seen and known

for who I really am. These feelings made no sense – since I had no trouble placing myself in life-threatening situations in my addiction – but approaching a member after a meeting filled me with panic and avoidance. I came to realize I was experiencing healing that was positive and new to me, and it would take gentleness as well as willingness and action for change to occur.

I felt loveable because of the love I was being shown by the fellowship.

As I worked my First Step and began to share my story more honestly with my sponsor, I started to feel an unburdening of secrets I had been holding on to for years. The things I swore I would never tell another person I was now sharing with another recovering sex addict. This new sense of belonging to a fellowship that promises a transformation from shame to grace slowly replaced my self-imposed isolation. I took service positions in the meetings I attended and connected in a deeper way to a solution that really works. I began moving away from self-centeredness and perfectionism, humbling myself to ask for help from members who had experience to share. I began to make connections with fellowship members that healed

old, wounded parts of me, and I wanted more.

The freedom that comes from working the Twelve Steps of SAA with a sponsor has opened my heart to connections with people that I didn't know were possible. The daily texts and phone calls that I make and receive are part of an admission of powerlessness. I heard a member in a meeting say, "When I admit my powerlessness, it means I don't have to have any more failed attempts. When I admit my powerlessness and rely on the wisdom and strength of the fellowship, it means I never have to be alone ever again, one day at a time."

In the weeks following discovery, I prayed desperately to God, asking for help repeatedly. What greeted me in SAA were people who assured me that I was not the horrible things I told myself I was. I realize now that every meeting I attended, every phone call I picked up, and every honest share I heard was an answer to my desperate prayers for help in those first few weeks. The fellowship of SAA is a power greater than me alone.

The first time I laughed again after discovery was during fellowship with members before a meeting. I realized then that I can be a recovering sex addict and be happy. I am now a grateful member in a large family where I am safe, welcomed and loved. I found a home in the fellowship of SAA.©

Voices of Fellowship: My recovering story so far.

By Dana T., incarcerated in Arizona

I am so glad my SAA sponsor has been there during my journey. I was very skeptical at first, and apprehensive that SAA would not work. Looking back, it has only worked because I put in the work.

People say they want to change, but if they don't put in any effort then it really shows they aren't sincere about their claim.

It takes time to change. It isn't a fast cure. It took a long time for an addict to get to where they are, so it won't go away overnight. In fact, it won't ever really go away. That's why I know I'll be working the program every day for the rest of my life.

How do I do recovery in prison? Since I'm here for the remainder of my life, why would I care if I changed? These are tough questions most addicts may never have to face, but for me they are crucial questions to comprehend.

Through many sleepless nights and some very timely advice from several important people in my life, I decided I would do something I had never done in my life: Purposefully seek to change my thoughts and behaviors in a positive way.

I was nervous, but making changes is difficult and scary. As I began to change, I lost my fear of being judged or discovered. I could be free to feel safe in sharing. I no longer had to hide. I could be honest for the first time in my life, especially with myself. As I worked through the Twelve Steps, I began to understand what harm my addiction had caused to me and to many people that I love in my life. My life was renewed with new meaning and purpose, as explained in Step Twelve. My journey inspired me to help other addicts in the way I had been helped.

I sought out ways to be of service to others and found I could help in many, many ways. I learned sign language to help deaf inmates. Now I translate for them and often help them navigate through medical appointments and classes. I assist others who have serious mental illnesses. I live in a dorm exclusively for the mentally ill, helping them with paperwork, day-to-day activities, and dealing with difficult thoughts and feelings. I also help inmates make plans to succeed when they are released and return to society. Most of these people struggle with addiction, and I'm able to share my recovery story with them and encourage them to make a change for themselves. I guide these inmates as they plan where they will live, work, get treatment, and numerous other things.

My life is full of peace and happiness because I have a real purpose instead of the insanity I lived with when I was pursuing my own selfish desires. I am fulfilled when I help others in my fellowship find their recovery, and I'm growing stronger every day.

DEAR WILL

What are the benefits?

BY WILL

*Participating
in fellowship
provided me
an opportunity
to get out of
my isolation,
something that
was part of the
addiction for
many of us.*

Dear Will,

I feel a little silly writing to you. There are probably much bigger issues to address, but I either just needed somewhere to vent or could use some experience, strength, and hope.

I had been working with the same sponsor for about two years. He was very casual and didn't put too much pressure or demands on me as to how I work my program. He was more of a resource when I really needed it. Unfortunately, he relapsed and went away to inpatient treatment. I was lucky enough to find another sponsor, someone who has some sober time under his belt and doesn't seem to struggle with his addiction. My new sponsor expects me to go to a couple meetings a week, call other people between meetings, meet with him weekly to review my step work, and start going to fellowship after one of my weekly SAA meetings.

That is where my issue lies. I can see the value in the step work and meetings, and I am getting better about the phone calls, but I am not so sure about going to fellowship to sit around and eat pie and drink coffee when I am already doing so much for my recovery. Did I just get an ornery sponsor or is there really a benefit to this?

Sincerely,

Mr. Uncertain

Dear Mr. Uncertain,

Thanks for writing in. Like you, I too have had multiple sponsors during my recovery in SAA. Most of the time I was told that the suggestions being made by my sponsor were based on how they were sponsored in the program, what worked for them, and areas that seemed to offer opportunities

for growth for me. Your sponsor and the other people who go to fellowship after meetings may be the best people to whom your question could be posed, but I can share my experience with fellowship and its role in my recovery.

I found the “meeting after the meeting” at fellowship gave me a chance to expand upon what was offered at the meeting. At fellowship I could engage with others about the topic of the meeting. I could ask questions about what was shared and could participate in back-and-forth conversations with others in a way not offered at most meetings. Participating in fellowship provided me an opportunity to get out of my isolation, something that was part of the addiction for many of us. During fellowship, I could engage socially with others who knew about me, my addiction, my challenges, and could and would provide recovery-based support and boundaries as needed. I found that fellowship was kind of like the prac-

tice test of life where I could learn to be with others without relying on my addiction. Fellowship was a place where I learned how to interact with women without making them part of my fantasies, something I did not know how to do before recovery and before going to fellowship. Finally, fellowship gave me a chance to interact with people I may not normally interact with during a regular meeting. It was a great place to find a new sponsor, provide support to others, and it is eventually where I have met a number of men I have sponsored.

These are just a few of the benefits I received from going to fellowship. Your sponsor may have specific reasons they want you to go. Maybe you should give it a try and see what you think!

Will

*If you have a question for Will,
please send an email to
Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.*



STORIES OF SERVICE

2024 Convention: Your Support is Needed Now

BY TIM A

**CHAIR
2024 7TH TRADITION
SUBCOMMITTEE**

*It is not too early
to think of ways
that you can
participate in the
next convention.*

With the 2023 Annual ISO Conference in the rearview mirror, it is time to set our sights on the next annual SAA convention. The Convention Planning Committee has already started meeting and, as with every year, your early support is essential to the success of this important annual event.

It is not too early to think of ways that you can participate in the next convention, whether it is by getting involved with the planning committee or planning to give a workshop at the convention. There are usually more than thirty different workshops, focus groups, and panels that comprise the annual SAA convention. There are also twelve-step meetings, including LGBT and L2/L3, as well as women and men-focused meetings. Registration on the ISO convention website will soon be live, and you'll be able to register and start planning your trip.

One way that you can also contribute to the success of the convention is by giving a donation and earmarking it for the convention planning committee's Seventh Tradition fundraising efforts. Large or small, every bit helps reach our goal.

One way that would be very helpful is by becoming a LifeLine Partner, making a monthly contribution to the work of the ISO, and again earmarking it as a contribution toward the efforts of the convention. From the time your contribution starts up through the

convention itself, your monthly contribution helps the planning committee reach its fundraising goal, and after the convention provides ongoing support to the important work the ISO does in supporting SAA groups in their primary purpose of carrying the SAA message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers.

To donate via...

- On the outreach website (saa-recovery.org): Click on the “Donate” button and designate “2024 Convention” in the notes.
- Using text-to-donate: Text **CONV7** to **91999** for 2024 convention donations or text **CONV7FA** to **91999** for 2024 convention scholarships

However you decide to get involved, your contribution to this important annual event will demonstrate your support for not only those from the local intergroup and the Convention Planning Committee, but also to all who will attend next year’s convention – a group that we hope will include you!



Stories of Service inspire others to be of service. Send your 250-300-word story to toc@saa-recovery.org.

FROM THE BOARD

New Service Year Began in October

BY JIM L
MEMBER OF THE BOARD

*We value your
input. Email the
board at*

board@saa-recovery.org

After a successful annual meeting of the Conference, the Board of Trustees is ready to embark on a new service year. Notable from this past year is a decision to combine the annual meeting of the Conference and the convention as soon as logistically and financially feasible. By December, the feasibility studies will have been completed and the Board will know whether we can proceed in 2024 with a joint conference/convention.

In addition, the Board approved a bid by an inter-group to host the 2025 international convention. Details will be distributed by email later, but the 2025 host city is a rapidly growing city with an impressive number of IT companies basing their operations there. The local fellowship is growing and is enthusiastically looking forward to hosting the convention.

Board Actions

October 2023

- Approved host city for 2025 convention

ISO Service

Although there is no way to ensure participation in ISO activities by members of local SAA groups, the new area structure does provide an avenue for sending input to the ISO and receiving news and other announcements from the ISO. By holding area assembly meetings, the GSRs from all of the groups in that area can discuss issues of mutual concern and bring to the ISO questions, comments, and recommendations for consideration by any of the committees within the ISO.

In the last issue of *The Outer Circle*, Tracy R, Executive Director of the ISO, wrote an impassioned call for members to communicate with the ISO, and the areas provide an easy way to communicate.

The new service year will be punctuated by the development of tactics to implement the strategic goals previously adopted by the Board. In addition, the Finance and Operations Internal Standing Committee and the Long-range Planning Committee will be exploring ways to improve the financial stability of the ISO.

Stay tuned for more news from the Board in the coming months.

ISO NEWS

Do you have computer skills?

The Information Systems and Online Presence Committee (ISOPCom), a joint committee between the Literature Committee, Board, and the office, seeks volunteers who are able and willing to help with the ISO's technical computer needs. These include, but are not limited to, web design (especially JavaScript, CSS, and PHP), database management, and security. If you are skilled in these or similar areas and would like to use your skills to serve the fellowship, email info@saa-recovery.org.

Service Opportunities at the International Level

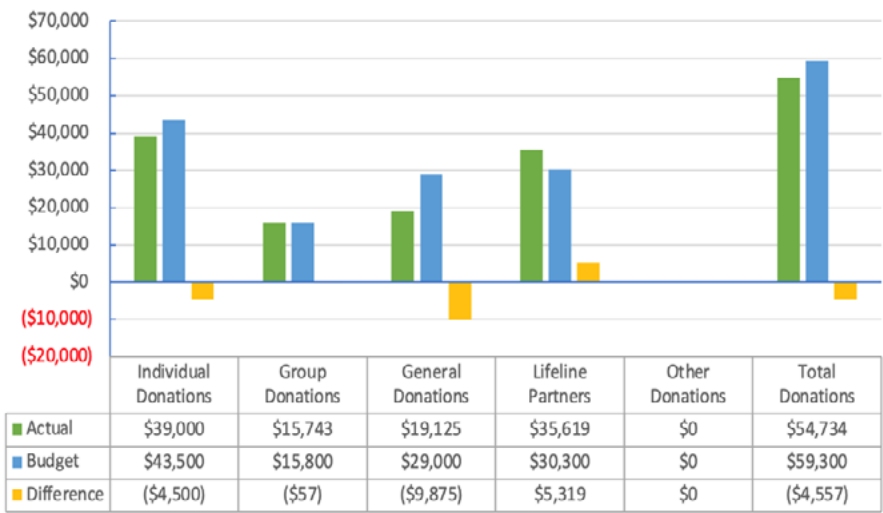
The Conference Nominating Committee (NomCom) presents a slate of nominees at the annual Conference to fill open positions on the Board of Trustees, Literature Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Conference Area Coordinating Committee, and Conference Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees and you meet the guidelines for international service, we encourage you to fill out a service résumé!

For more information about the positions and for a copy of the Guidelines for International Service, please visit the service website saa-iso.org and click on the International Service tab. Contact the ISO office via phone, (713) 869-4902, or email, info@saa-recovery.org, for the username and password to access these documents.

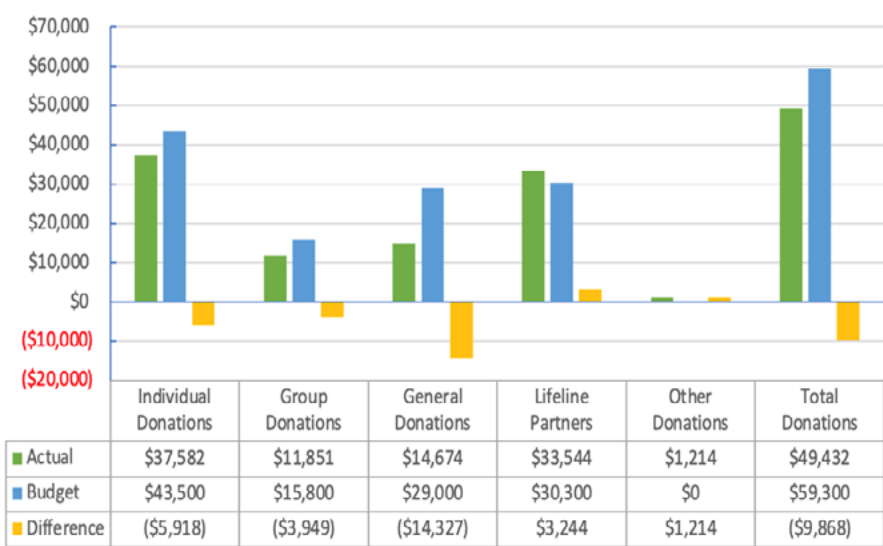
Completed service résumés should be emailed to info@saa-recovery.org or mailed to Nominating Committee, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

August 2023 Donations



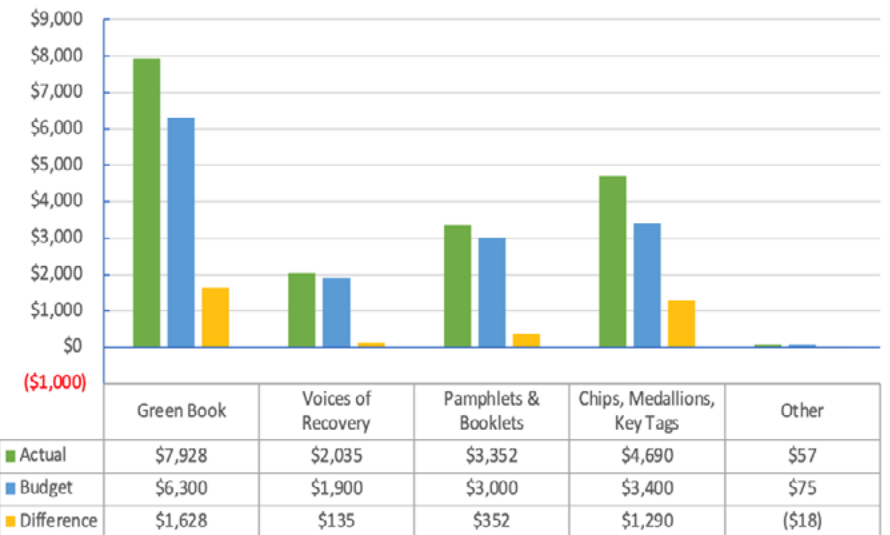
September 2023 Donations



2023 YTD Donations (to September)

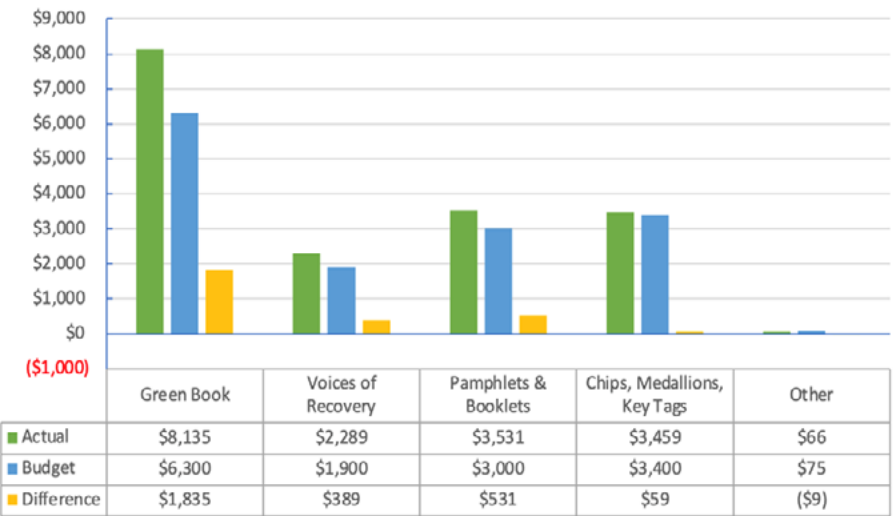


August 2023 Sales

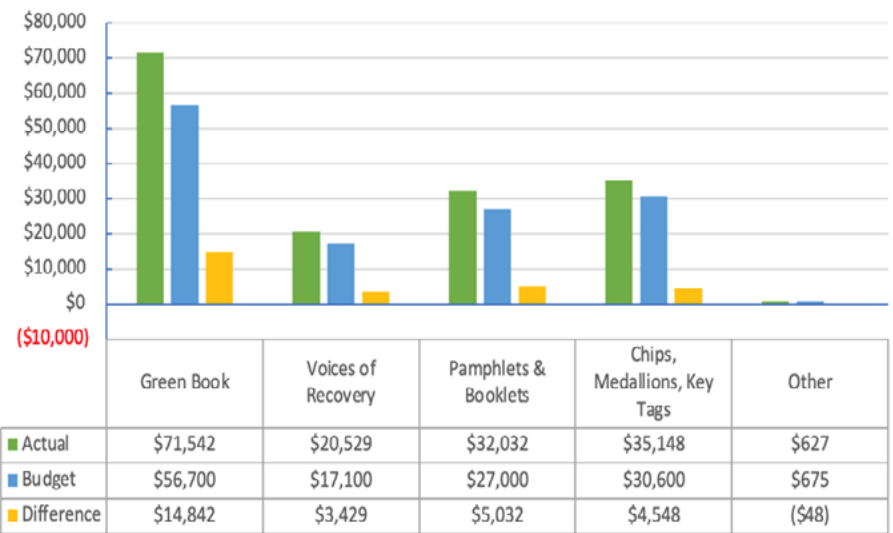


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

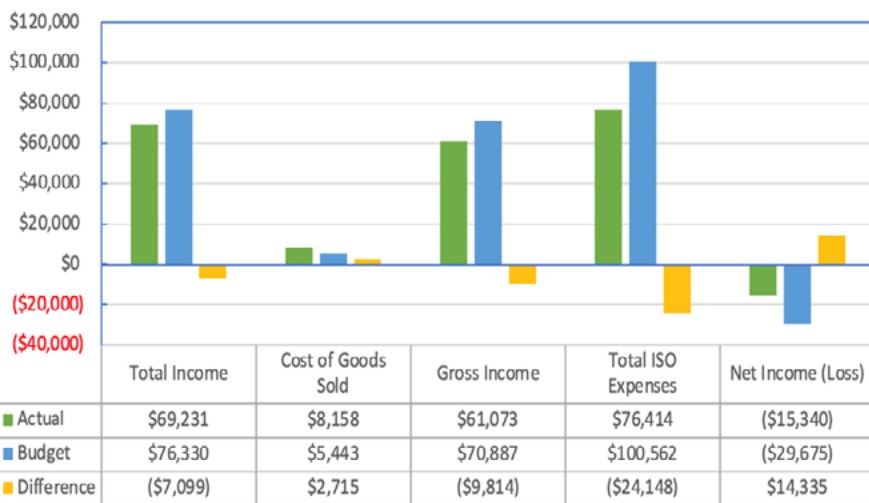
September 2023 Sales



2023 YTD Sales (to September)



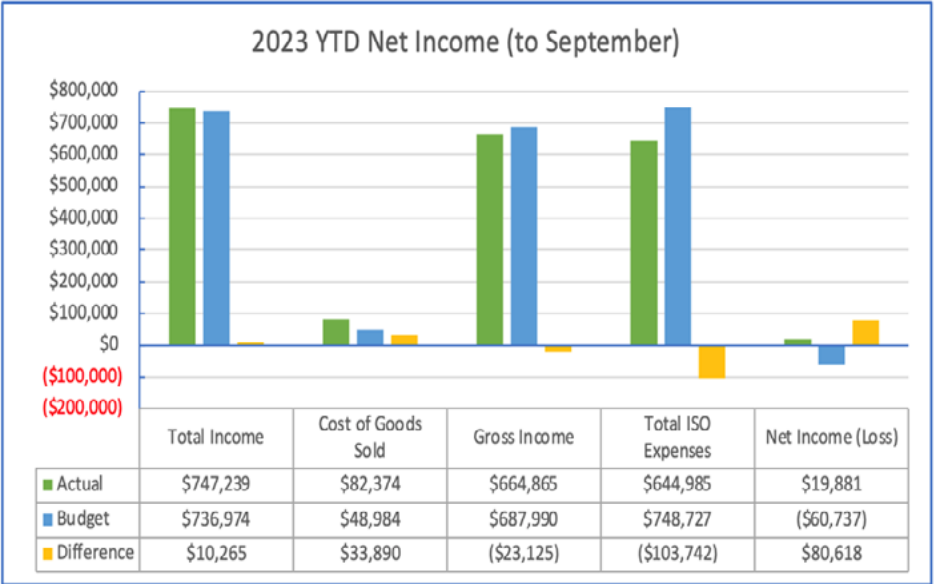
August 2023 Net Income



September 2023 Net Income



FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Donations continue to drop. All categories of donations, with the exception of LifeLine Partners, are below budget for the year to date, as are total donations.

Sales remain steady and are above budget for the year.

Wages and benefits continue to remain below budget due to the resignation of two staff members, effective December 31, 2022, who had not been replaced at the time of these financial statements. We have now hired a contract accountant.

There is a substantial gap between actual and budgeted expenses because the audit, which was budgeted for August, has not been completed, so that expense has not yet been incurred.

Because of these and other lesser items, our net income remains above budget, but this will begin to change with the addition of the accountant, the upcoming audit payment, and other items.

Tracy R.
Executive Director

Voices of Fellowship: Creating the Trans Community I Needed
By Anonymous

I came into recovery in August 2016 as the only non-binary person in my intergroup, and one of two women. My transness has been a huge part of my addiction and recovery story, and I struggled with chronic relapsing for years, unable to find a true feeling of the fellowship that I saw so many cis fellows enjoying. People wouldn't return my calls, and my group was not a place where I felt comfortable talking about my gender identity as it intersected with recovery.

In 2021, a few months sober and not really working with a sponsor, I started a virtual meeting specifically for trans, gender-nonconforming, and gender-questioning sex addicts. I found my sponsor there, who is also trans/nonbinary, and many people whom I now call weekly. Through the support of this community, I have almost three years of sobriety. I feel a deep connection with my fellow addicts for the first time in my life, and have been able to grow significantly in recovery by working in a space where my transness is understood and respected.

I created the support community I and so many others in the trans community needed, when it was nonexistent, and now it helps so many, all over the world, from Hawaii to Canada to the UK to Germany. My trans sponsee has a trans sponsee. Recovery in action. It's a wonderful feeling.

CONTACT THE ISO

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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.

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Board

Bill I (Chair); BJ M; Bob H; Brian S (Treasurer);
Carl D; Carol Ann M; Eddie N; Jim L (Secretary);
Karen S (Vice-chair); Michelle W;
Tim A (Vice-secretary); Wayne K

Board: board@saa-recovery.org

CSC: csc@saa-recovery.org

LitCom: litcom@saa-recovery.org

Literature Committee

Alex B (TOC Editor); Chris D; Darren S; David
C; Deb W; Jim P; Juan K; Mike K; Peter L; Ruth
(Chair); Sergio; 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.

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), 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 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 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. This is the easiest for most people.
- Second, email 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 if you have any questions.

Issue	Deadline	Topic
» January/February	» December 1	» Sponsorship
» March/April	» February 1	» Outer circle
» May/June	» April 1	» From shame to grace
» July/August	» June 1	» Higher Power
» September/October	» August 1	» The pathway
» November/December	» October 1	» Amends

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 AND TWELVE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Steps of SAA

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.

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.