

THE OUTER CIRCLE

**All Together
Making meetings safer
and more welcoming**

PLUS

Why Outreach?

Returning to Sanity

Conference Wrap Ups





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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

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The Outer Circle Mission

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

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

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

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

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

January - February 2019

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FROM THE EDITOR

New Year, New Promises

BY GARY T.

**It's a great time
to encourage
your group to
look at what's
read in meetings
and ask if there's
a suitable SAA
replacement.**

Do me a favor. Turn to page 98 of the Green Book and read the last two paragraphs. Over the years, I've come to think of those two paragraphs as the SAA promises. Even more than a decade since I first heard those words, they still speak to me and my recovery. So when people tell me that SAA doesn't have any promises of its own, I simply direct them to that page.

The question about SAA promises is part of a larger overall discussion the fellowship has been having about itself as we continue to grow and evolve. For years, meetings have relied on AA literature for many of our readings, including the promises. But conference group conscience has made it clear that the fellowship thinks its time to replace AA language with SAA readings.

Why the insistence on rooting out AA language? Isn't that what our program was adapted from? The answer to both those questions is found in our traditions, which warn us against confusing our message with any other program so vital newcomers always know who we are.

As we start a new year in recovery, it's a great time to encourage your group to look at what's read in meetings and ask if there's a suitable SAA replacement. A good place to look is the Group Guide, which offers alternative readings to AA literature — except for the promises.

Which brings back to page 98. Several meetings in my area have replaced AA promises with what we lovingly call "Keep Coming Back." When those words are read at the end of the meeting — and the whole group chimes in on the final "keep coming back," I know newcomers and old timers alike are hearing our message. And it gives me goosebumps.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank You for the Opportunity to Serve

BY JOE H.

**This is my
last article as
Executive Director
of the ISO. I want
to thank the many
volunteers who
have provided so
much help over
the last ten years.**

It is a few days before Christmas and I am feeling grateful for the many blessings in my life. I have always had trouble expressing my gratitude but thanks to my recovery this has become easier.

This is my last article as the Executive Director of the ISO. I want to take this time to thank the many volunteers who have provided so much help to my staff and I over the last ten years. Together we have accomplished so much, such as our new outreach website, our meditation book, translation of our literature, multiple conventions, our cooperation with professionals and public information initiatives, several new literature publications, and the third edition of our SAA Green Book, to name just a few.

With our planned initiatives for 2019 and 2020, we are going to reach more suffering sex addicts than ever before. We are also working to develop an online environment for all SAA members to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other.

I have been in the SAA fellowship for 18 years and I owe my life to SAA. It was through working the steps of SAA that I became able to live a life of integrity and sobriety. SAA gave me two wonderful gifts. One is a sense of belonging to a community – a healthy community in SAA. The second was to always keep service a daily part of my life.

I am retiring and am looking forward to a simpler life. I wish everyone the best in their recovery and I hope you will continue to support the ISO in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

DEAR GRACE

How Can I Create Safe Phone Meetings?

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH COMMITTEE

With our primary
purpose in
mind and with
guidance from
our Higher Power,
a solution can be
found.

Dear Grace:

I am trying to attend telephone meetings but there has been an intruder interrupting the meetings saying inappropriate things and I am scared to go back. What should I do?

-Scared to call

Dear Scared:

Unfortunately, there are those in the world who have not yet found recovery and a way to live a new life. Our program gives us a framework for dealing with any challenging situations we encounter. One simple way to approach it uses the Serenity Prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..." No matter how strong our desire to intervene, we cannot change the actions of another person. The intruder is no exception. We can choose to view this person as another human who is sick as we have been sick and to pray for them.

"Although we cannot control all of the factors which prevent women or any other newcomers from coming back, there is much we can do to help women feel safe and welcome in our meetings," says the Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings pamphlet.

We each must focus on "the courage to change the things we can." Perhaps you could call your sponsor and other sober members of your meetings. Together you can devise a solution, such as listing the number privately or using technology to mute the disruptive caller, to continue the meeting without disruption. Some women have left the disrupted meeting and continued read-



ing literature on the phone with each other, or even changed over to an unlisted number in order to continue their meeting. Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message to the sex addict who still suffers (Tradition Five). With that purpose in mind and with guidance from Higher Power, a solution can be found.

“And the wisdom to know the difference...” When faced with any challenge, it is always helpful to examine any resentments you may be developing and search for the character defects that support them. In this case, “Scared to call,” you have already identified fear, a very common character defect. You can humbly ask God to remove this defect. In this way, you will be able to regain your serenity and continue to carry the message to others. It is even possible to develop gratitude for difficult situations, since they prompt us to dig deeper and continue our spiritual growth. As it says in Safe & Sexually Sober Meetings, “The most important thing we can do is to maintain our own sobriety through the spiritual growth that results from

working the steps.”

Meetings are useful and a great place to discuss the program. This incident may be the catalyst to seek out an additional meeting or new type of meeting. On the other hand, if you find you need to take a short break from meetings, don't panic. Ultimately our real safety and recovery is in God, as we understand God, and the real work of recovery lies in working the steps one on one with another member of the fellowship. Remember, our Higher Power is in charge, not us.

Blessings,

Grace

*Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: to reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail (grace@saa-women.org) receives. *Names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Seeing Life Through a New Lens

BY PAUL P.

This new perception has happened through a rigorous process of being honest with myself.

I have been in the SAA program for more than thirteen years and today I have more than seven years of sexual sobriety.

I have learned many lessons while on my journey in recovery. One of the most important guiding principles is looking at life differently now that I am sexually sober and in recovery. In other words, changing the lens through which I see life.

I am a photographer, and I view my subject using a lens. This lens allows me to see the subject in a certain way and I can accommodate distance by using a zoom lens. If I don't get the right image, I can switch the lens to get a different angle. For example, if I am viewing a mountain, I use a wide-angle lens.

In recovery, I had to switch the lens that I use in order to view the world in a healthier way allowing me to avoid relapses and to foster a better self-esteem. No longer do I only use the lens that saw everything in relation to fantasy, objectification, and escape. I have learned now to view the world (people, events, places) through a lens that allows me to appreciate the goodness of the person, place, or event. It is no longer about what I can gain out of the image by storing it in my mind.

Pornography allowed me to look at life with a distorted lens and I kept myself stuck each time that went back to viewing pornography. One day I realized a valuable lesson: these images were unhealthy and keeping me in the problem if I kept viewing people in this unhealthy way.

It has not been easy to start viewing the world through this different lens. This new perception has happened through a rigorous process of being

honest with myself. Sometimes that honesty means accepting all the ways I have been sabotaging my recovery in the past. Before I came into recovery, every person I saw was valued based on the external and how they may or may not satisfy my compulsive urges.

As I progressed in recovery, I now look at those people as someone's brother, sister, father, mother, son, or daughter. My lens was distorted prior to admitting my powerlessness and working the steps in SAA. I continually have to remind myself that I am entitled to the peace and serenity this program offers if I work the steps and apply the principles to my daily living.

When I am sober, I see the world more clearly as I am viewing it through the recovery lens. When I am working this program, my lens has changed dramatically, and I continually have to remind myself how valuable the lens metaphor has been in my program. Having achieved more than seven years of sobriety, I am so glad that I now have a new lens that guides me through so many situations. This is one of the most valuable lessons I have learned in recovery.

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

New Year, New Resolve

By Anonymous

The coming of a new year is the perfect opportunity to resolve to improve the quality of our lives.

The beginning of a new year is also a great time to review our program of recovery and to resolve to strive to better my life and my relationships.

When considering recovery resolutions, it comes down to asking three important questions in the new year:

Will I give in to my addiction and allow myself to relapse?

Will I give up on my recovery efforts all together and return to active addiction?

Or:

Will I give my all to recovery and live a sexually healthy life?

Choose wisely, your happiness and well-being rest in the balance.

Reprinted from The Check In Winter 2018, The newsletter of the Indiana Intergroup

Reaching Out



For Recovery



Doing outreach made the difference between sobriety and slipping

BY JOSH P.

W

hen I came into recovery, I didn't know what the purpose of outreach was. Like most of us, I was used to being alone and isolated in my addiction. The idea of calling people to see how their day was going and vice-versa seemed foreign to me. So when I met a fellow with more time than me and he told me

he was on the phone at least 500 minutes a month with program phone calls, I couldn't believe it! My bill had only maybe sixty minutes tops and that was for everything in my life. Same as with the text messages. For my ten texts that month he had about 100. I just couldn't believe how active in the program this man was. He was like the polar opposite of me.

As for my sexual sobriety, it didn't start the day I joined the program. It took me awhile to find my abstinence in this program. I joined in October 2013. A fellow member told me one night at fellowship, "Keep coming back 'til the magic happens." To this day, I'm glad I did.

It wasn't easy for me to get this far, nor has it been easy working the steps. What happened for me that changed my life for the better was hitting rock bottom, and what helped me walk forward through the sand storm of despair was the fellowship and the people who reached out to me. In other words, outreach.

When I made my phone calls, I no longer held anything back. I was more honest with people about every aspect of my life. I talked about where I was with my connection to my Higher Power, where I was with my step work, what it was like in my head, and any struggle I was going through. For the first six months, I even checked in with my sponsor if I had any suicidal thoughts. Whether it was 8 a.m. or 10 p.m., I would make phone calls. Even late-night calls, although I would do my absolute best to go to bed by 10 p.m. That's because I haven't experienced a lot of good things happening after that time.

Eventually there came a moment in my recovery when I was six months abstinent and still working on Step One for the fourth or fifth time. My home group had an open chair position for outreach. I didn't have much confidence in my recovery and was scared to take on the position, but I felt my Higher Power wanted me to do this, even if I felt my personal message of recovery wasn't that strong yet. I could still

help the addict who suffers inside and outside of these rooms. So I volunteered just barely meeting the group's sexual sobriety requirement, and I got voted in.

Right away I got to work seeing what I could do to be of service to my home group. I found out that a majority of our meetings weren't registered properly and our mail from the ISO was going every which way. So I updated everything, and figured out that our nicely done site wasn't registered with the ISO yet either. There was a lot of work that needed to be done, and working with another fellow, we were able to get everything straightened away.

Next came the challenging part, and that was making a comprehensive outreach strategy, which was part of my job as chair person. I looked into donating the Green Books to the local library (someone beat me to it), posted some fliers around other club houses about our meetings (that wasn't effective). Then came the most important tasks my group really wanted. The desire for a newcomer packet in our meeting space to be given to every newcomer and having our group's speaker recordings go online for anyone to listen to for free.

With the help of the coins and literature chair, we created a packet consisting of two pamphlets from the ISO and a meeting list card all attached together. Then came the

recordings and the business meetings about them. At one point, I got so upset during a business meeting that I almost gave up on the recordings all together. I took a week off from being the outreach chair under sponsorship guidance. I was taking everything about the project from the business meetings personal. Later, I realized that this was my defect of arrogance coming out. So what happened to the recordings?

Well it took a while — a little over six months actually to start getting them collected, edited, signed off, and reviewed by a subcommittee. But as of July, we had twenty speaker recordings available at our site for free. Every month, we keep adding to it. It took a while longer than I would've hoped, but through God's grace and a desire to help the addict who still suffers, we persevered and our group's dream became a reality.

Thanks to my work in outreach, my life today is very different from my life when I came into the fellowship. I'm now one of those guys who have more than 500 minutes a month in recovery phone calls. I have a surplus of phone calls to return; I'm doing my share of sponsorship; I even spoke for the first time on a panel with others about the importance of daily connection — i.e., outreach. I was taking part in the very speaker meetings where I remembered sitting in the audience wondering if I'll ever speak, wondering if my recovery will

Thanks to my outreach, my life today is very different from the life I came into the fellowship with. ...I believe my message of recovery is strong.

ever have a strong enough message, just as when I started out as the outreach chair.

Today I believe my message of recovery is strong. Recovery isn't just possible but probable.

When I came into the fellowship, I didn't know what it meant to care for another human being. I only knew how to care for myself. But thanks to the fellowship of SAA and all those whom I've had the pleasure of walking this path with, my life has changed for the better. I didn't understand many things, and there are still lessons for me as I walk this spiritual path of recovery.

As of this writing, I've been sexually sober more than three years and I'm finishing up Step Nine. I can attest to the phrase, "We will be amazed before we are half way through" because I'm amazed by the changes that have occurred in my life thus far. And many of them started with outreach. ●



All Together

Suggestions on how to make meetings safer and more welcoming

“We have the freedom to develop our meetings in different ways, in order to meet the varying needs of our diverse fellowship.” — Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 83

BY D.B. AND D.W., WOC

The following are measures various groups have taken to support newcomers, promote inclusion, and help everyone feel more at home in meetings. These ideas were collected from monthly conference calls hosted by the SAA Women’s Outreach Committee. These are only a few of the ways SAA groups are working to improve the atmosphere in their meetings; many more and different ideas can work for some groups – we can take what works for us and leave the rest.

- » Some groups meet with or interview prospective members face-to-face. (This is known as “Twelfth-stepping.”) They try to send two people of different genders to meet confidentially with a prospective member, because some people relate to one gender better than the other.
- » It has been helpful for newcomers to develop a trusting relationship with someone in the fellowship before attending a local meeting. This can be either an

in-person relationship or a long-distance one (for example, over the phone). Some meetings or inter-groups encourage this by having an information phone line. In areas with fewer women, the women's information line is answered by volunteers from other geographical locations.

- » Many groups have found it helpful to have a diverse and organized literature table. Some have a section for women, displaying SAA materials for and about women including the letter titled, "A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer - from other women members of SAA," the official SAA Women's Welcome Packet, or a locally assembled newcomer's packet for women (and a different one for men). Other items for the women's section might consist of Women's Outreach Committee (WOC) announcements including retreats and workshops, a list of women's stories from *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, information and schedules for local and telephone women's and mixed SAA meetings. There is also literature geared towards LGBT members, prisoners and former

prisoners, and those struggling with intimacy and sexual avoidance.

- » A number of groups have columns on their sign-in sheets or phone lists where people can indicate if they're willing to take calls from a person of a different gender.
- » In many groups, most regular attendees are male – even when they're listed as mixed. When a women newcomer enters the room, it's important to be sensitive and aware. Staring is inappropriate, but avoiding eye contact or ignoring them is equally inappropriate. Yet we also don't want to overwhelm them. We warmly welcome them.
- » Many meetings include a greeter as a service position. A person with solid recovery and a sponsor endorsement is ideal for that responsibility. It is helpful if the greeter is familiar with the resources available to newcomers. When there's a newcomer, it is appropriate for someone (greeter or not) to extend their hand, give their first name, and say, "Welcome!" If anyone enters the room after the meeting has already started (new or

Join the Conversation

The SAA Women's Outreach Committee (WOC) hosts monthly open conversations about the ways we're welcoming women newcomers into our meetings and encouraging their full participation in the fellowship. These free "Let's Talk" conference calls are open to all SAA members of any gender, who are to invited to share both what's going well for them in their groups as well as what challenges they're experiencing, so we can brainstorm possible solutions. Topics raised and discussed during past "Let's Talk" calls include diversity, inclusion, safety (including "13th Stepping"), training ideas, and the use of technology in meetings as a tool for

otherwise), someone could invite the person to join the group by gesturing to an open seat.

- » It can be off-putting if all seats are taken except for the two on either side of someone whose gender, ethnicity, or orientation does not represent the majority of those in the group. And yet, sometimes a person needs that space in order to feel safer. We encourage group members to practice awareness and compassion. Asking permission before sitting next to a person whom you don't know is a good idea.
- » Many members have learned to ask permission before touching, hugging, or holding hands.
- » Words or body language that a newcomer could interpret as imposing or pressuring will likely cause discomfort; inviting them to read, share, or pass gives them the ability to accept or decline the invitation. Offering to help is different than giving unsolicited advice.
- » One meeting secretary found that taking newcomers' phone numbers

and proactively reaching out to them during the week increases their likelihood of returning.

- » It is helpful if the meeting format (script) clearly states group conscience-approved boundaries around what is acceptable in the meeting and what is not (for example, not using profanity or graphic descriptions). Often, there is a suggestion that if a participant feels uncomfortable with the way someone is sharing, they may raise their hand, and the speaker will then be less specific in their sharing. Leaders are encouraged to model this when needed.
- » In meetings, we try to avoid words and behavior which call out anyone in the group differently from the rest of the members or imply inequality. For example, nobody is responded to differently after sharing; instead, every member is thanked for sharing the same way every time. A sign that says, "For Women and Men" is preferable to one that says, "Women Permitted." ●

increasing meeting diversity and attendance. You are encouraged to spread the word to other groups you attend and invite your SAA friends.

The call-in number is 712-770-4160 and the pass code is 410674. The meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- Tuesday, January 8, 2019, 20:00 (8:00 pm) Central
- Saturday, January 19, 2019, 16:00 (4:00 pm) Central
- Saturday, February 23, 2019, 16:00 (4:00 pm) Central
- Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 20:00 (8:00 pm) Central

Returned to Sanity



What Step Two really promises

BY KEITH G.

I am not sure if we, in SAA, give sufficient weight — or expectation — to the idea of sanity returning. In Step One, I admit that I am powerless to control that which “normies” can control. But in Step Two, by implication, I carry that even further: in believing that a power greater than me could restore me to sanity... I am admitting that I am insane.

But do I stay insane? Do I ever get my sanity back? Does my brain ever start working sanely again?

Step Two says that it is possible for a Power greater than me to restore my sanity. Step Two makes no sense if I stay insane. If I am destined to be insane forever, Step Two is worthless. However, if a Power greater than me can restore me to sanity, that seems like the logical result of the Steps: sanity.

Through working the Twelve Steps of SAA, my sanity can be returned to me. I'm no longer insane. Both oars are now in the water.

Sex Addicts Anonymous states on page 25 that sanity is possible for us in twelve-step recovery: “Step Two offers hope that sanity is possible...”

Again, the Green Book states on page 27: “The key to Step Two is not just believ-

ing in a Higher Power, but believing that this Power can and will restore us to sanity.”

What is this sanity that results from twelve-step recovery? Dictionary definitions of “sanity” can be helpful here:

- » *Oxford Living Dictionary*: The ability to think and behave in a normal and rational manner; sound mental health.
- » *Cambridge Dictionary*: The state of having a healthy mind and not being mentally ill; the fact of showing good judgment and understanding.
- » *Merriam-Webster*: The quality of being sane; especially: soundness or health of mind.

Let that sink in for a minute. My brain — which, on its own, is incapable of stopping me from acting out — can start working correctly. It can be restored to sanity — to being healthy and rational. I can show good judgment and understanding. My mind can keep me from acting out.

This sanity is promised to me as a result of:

- (1) a power greater than me.
- (2) my willingness.

And yet, this sanity is not promised to me forever and ever no matter what I do in the future. Twelve-step wisdom says that my sanity is dependent on staying in fit spiritual condition.

The sanity we are promised is long-

term and stable... and yet it is contingent. If I do not maintain good spiritual condition (i.e. if I stop my step work), then all bets are off. I will find my screws loosening again.

What about me: am I sane? Has my sanity returned? I don't feel comfortable saying that in the past tense. But I can comfortably say this: I feel sane-er. More sane. When obsessive thoughts start creeping back in, sanity enters my head and I contact my sponsor about it. And I do feel like the problem has been removed... to some degree.

The main problem for me as a sex addict is not that I cannot stop acting-out once I start. That is true; but if that were my main problem, then I could just keep myself from ever starting. Easy. Nothing to it.

No, my main problem is that I have a brain that — on its own — convinces me again and again that it is okay to start.

But working this twelve-step recovery program can enable God, as I understand God, to fix my brain. At some point, I can keep from acting out. I will seldom be interested in it; I will feel neutral toward it; I will recoil from it. I will react with sanity, as a normal person would.

I. Can. Be. Sane.

I. Can. Be. Healthy.

Now that's something worth working for. ●

DEAR WILL

Is There a 'Right' Way to Re-Work the Steps?

BY WILL

How much
you should do
differently will
be different with
each step.

Dear Will,

I have worked the Twelve Steps and thought I did a pretty thorough job, but I am still acting out on a regular basis. I am considering going back through the Steps and have gotten a new sponsor. I'm not trying to cut corners this second time around. On the other hand it doesn't seem like I should have to go back and make amends to people to whom I have already made them. I also think I must not have done a very thorough Fifth Step the last time or I wouldn't be in this situation. How should I proceed?

Trying to Do It Right This Time

Dear TTDIRT,

First, I want you let go of the idea that you must have done the steps wrong the last time. I believe that you did what you were capable of at the time, including the most thorough Fifth Step you could at the time.

How much you should do differently will be different with each step. For example, for your First Step, you may wish to go back and retell your whole story, or you may wish to just do a mini-First Step, sharing what has happened since you last did that step. You can discuss these matters with your new sponsor and see what works best for you.

But even before you get to the steps, you might want to take another look at your sex plan, in conjunction with the pamphlet, "Three Circles." There may be things you want to change in each of the circles, maybe adding some things to the inner circle or even removing things if

you and your sponsor think you have raised the bar too high. For your middle circle, you might take a look to see if there are activities that are leading you to acting out that you didn't think of before. As for your outer circle, are there activities you enjoy that you might be able to add, maybe things that would help you more directly in staying distracted from acting out? For example, I did most of my acting out late at night, so for parts of the year I would take a late-night job at a public radio station doing things I enjoyed, which helped to take my mind off of acting out.

There are things you can do as thoroughly as you did before, such as turning your will and life over to the care of God, as Step Three suggests. On the other hand, I don't think it is necessary to go back and repeat everything from your first Fourth Step unless, for example, you remember an old resentment or are still carrying one you listed the first time. Same with the Eighth and Ninth Steps. The most that should be necessary is to look to see who you might add to your Eighth Step list and your amends list, either because you forgot them the first time or because they have occurred recently.

Then again, and maybe as a trade-off, there are other steps that you can go into more deeply. I have found that



the more I work on my character defects the more defects I discover beneath the others, sort of like peeling off the layers of an onion. And the last three steps are an unending source of riches: taking your personal inventory, praying, meditating, and working with others. You can find new revelations in all of these steps.

So, TTDIRTT, congratulations on your decision to go back through the steps again. Just because of the work that the steps give you the opportunity to do, I think you will find them to be equally fulfilling this second time around, even if you are putting different emphases on them.

Will

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

STORIES OF SERVICE

A New View of Charity

BY NINO M.

I slowly began to understand the true power of service to others and what that can mean for your own sobriety.

When I first entered recovery I had done service work outside the program through volunteer work, but it was never on an ongoing basis. I was content to make myself feel good by offering a few hours of charity here and there, but I never stuck to a non-profit for any length of time because, like so many other things, I was too consumed by my addiction to let the goodness that works of charity touch me in that way. It didn't give me quite that hit the rush of acting-out did.

That started to change when I entered recovery and began giving up my addiction to God and meeting others in fellowship. I slowly began to understand the true power of service to others and what that can mean for my own sobriety.

I spent more than a year as a secretary of a meeting, helping create a weekly environment where others felt safe to share their accomplishments and setbacks, struggles, and sorrows and our shared addiction. That privileged position gave me a front row seat to the experiences of others and showed me the true value of sticking with service as I made myself available to others in ways I never had before.

Today I am looking at new ways to do service in SAA. It has been tough of late with a busy work schedule, but I'm determined not to let that sense of giving to others slip beneath the waves of distraction. Being of service is a fundamental part of my program, I now realize, and it always will be.

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

FROM THE BOARD

SAA Concepts Come into Focus at Conference

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

**Delegates
overwhelmingly
affirmed the work
the Concepts
Subcommittee of
the CSC has been
doing.**

I very much enjoyed the first-ever SAA stand-alone conference. Even though the group in attendance was a little bit smaller than I am used to from the joint conventions/conferences that I know and love, I still found plenty of opportunities through the five days for fellowship and growth. It was nice for me to be able to devote a little more time to the business needs of the fellowship without having to feel that I was missing out on workshops and the like to do so.

Probably the high point of the five days for me was seeing the delegates overwhelmingly affirm the work that the Concepts Subcommittee of the CSC has been doing over the last couple of years.

As we mentioned during our presentation on Friday afternoon, being able to work with this great committee on a document so potentially valuable for the fellowship has been a great joy. I found our presentation to be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on and summarize for the fellowship what we have been doing. In turn, we got some very valuable feedback during the course of our presentation.

It is pretty amazing to see how far the Concepts have come since we first began this work. Having little idea at first of how this project would grow, we started with a member of the subcommittee writing what were essentially paraphrases of the AA Concepts, just to get something down on paper (or screen, I guess) and give us a starting point on which

we could build. Other members of the subcommittee then looked at the Concepts of other twelve-step fellowships to see what other insights these fellowships might have. Reviewing these other texts gave us more ideas to weigh and consider. I believe our Concepts are a valuable distillation and extension of those created by other fellowships.

It is said that the Steps are the basis in every fellowship for each individual's recovery, and that the Traditions serve to promote the unity and fellowship of each individual group.

The Concepts summarize the service structure of the fellowship and provide guidelines for service. While our Concepts have their basis in the AA Concepts, I think they of necessity both range further than our original source and reflect the realities of our fellowship in a way that the Concepts of another fellowship could never do.

And while the feedback we got from the fellowship at the Conference was valuable, the work doesn't end there.

In the near future, we will be putting up on the SAA service website (www.saa-iso.org) a draft of the Twelve Concepts for your

review. As opposed to the short amount of time available to review the individual concepts in the time period leading up to and during the delegate meeting, this will be your opportunity to leisurely review and think about the Concepts, see what questions and suggestions you might have, and bring them back to the committee and to a future delegate conference.

I think the Concepts are so profound that they will allow plenty of opportunity for reflection. And while I think they are great now, I think that by the time this review process is over, they will be even better. Stay tuned for an e-mail address where you can send us your feedback.

There are other ways to get involved in the creation of the Concepts. We have completed for the moment our work on ten of the concepts.

However, two concepts still remain for us to write, and you, as so many others already have, can get involved in that process. Email the ISO office at info@saa-recovery.org for details on our monthly Saturday meetings. I look forward to seeing you at a future meeting.

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Delegates Provide Annual Conference Recap, Call to Service

The delegates to the Conference met in Houston, Texas, on October 12-13 to discuss business motions submitted to the Conference and elect members to the ISO Board of Trustees (Board), Literature Committee (LitCom), Area Coordinating Committee (ACC), and Nominating Committee (NomCom). Delegates also heard presentations on the ISO's work in public information and communication with the professional community, and from the ISO Seventh Tradition Committee. The ISO has set a goal to increase the amount of ongoing monthly LifeLine contributions from the current \$21,000/month to \$50,000/month by 2020. This will allow much more outreach to professionals, which was a hallmark of the highly-successful strategy of AA to destigmatize alcoholism and raise awareness of it as an illness.

On day one of the meeting, five members each were elected to the Board and LitCom and three to the ACC. The delegates also confirmed the continuing participation of one at-large member of the CSC. The CSC did not choose to fill the two other at-large positions allowed for in the CSC's founding documents. To be considered for these or other service positions, members can submit service resumes. The service resume template can be found at <https://saa-iso.org/svcl/index.php>.

The first motion considered by the Conference was to initiate a discussion of the purpose, function, composition and mode of election of the CSC. The motion passed 79 to 7. As a result, delegates participated in a structured discussion on the role of the CSC. The CSC plans to use this feedback as guidance for bringing forward a motion in 2019 to "reconstitute" the CSC. A significant focus of the delegate feedback was for the CSC to create and utilize effective channels for communication with SAA members, groups, and delegates.

Day two of the meeting opened with consideration of the ACC's motion to affirm the direction of the ACC's work in the area formation process thus far. To find out more about what happened with this and the other business motion brought by the ACC, see the companion news article on the following page.

The last motion considered was to affirm the process adopted by the CSC's Twelve Concepts Subcommittee in drafting the SAA Concepts for World Service. The motion passed 68 to 7. The Twelve Concepts Subcommittee hopes to

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bring a final draft to the annual meeting in 2019. Interestingly enough, there are only ten concepts so far. One has been folded into another and the last one doesn't seem to fit our fellowship. Some discussion revolved around the number twelve, and, if SAA could make do with only the ten on hand so far – something perhaps some might find a little unnerving!

The meeting concluded with an “open mic” period where delegates could provide general feedback or talk about what was happening with their local groups. Quite a few people spoke about their commitment to carry the “service orientation” seen at the Conference back with them and encourage others to service as well as follow through on action items they gleaned from the Conference.

We would like to encourage each reader to consider whether participating in international service in some way might be beneficial to his or her recovery. Those involved with international service can sincerely attest that it has been of significant benefit to theirs! Feel free to contact someone at the ISO office to talk about opportunities and help you get in contact with the appropriate members, trusted servants or service body.

ACC Reviews Actions Taken at Delegate Conference

At the 2018 annual meeting of the Conference in Houston, the Area Coordinating Committee (ACC) submitted two business motions. Here is a synopsis of the motions, background about them, and a summary of the discussion that took place and the actions taken.

2018-D0002 – Resolution to Affirm the Direction of the Draft Area Alignment. This motion presented background information on past business motions relevant to the creation of the Area Coordinating Committee and the area formation process.

Included as a handout to the motion was a document detailing factors considered by the ACC as it drafted the area alignment presented to delegates. The ACC based the draft on the proposals submitted by groups and the commonalities for area alignment approved by the Conference: geographic proximity, language, and electronic meeting modality.

The ACC presented the draft area alignment, and after significant discussion,

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the resolution to affirm the direction of the draft area alignment passed by a vote of 60 for and 20 against. Some of the main points made by delegates in the discussion of this motion were concerns about: The proportion of areas in the draft without formal Area proposals – only nineteen area proposals were received and included in the seventy-five areas proposed in the draft alignment,

- » The wide disparity in the number of groups in various proposed Areas,
- » The one-country/one area approach, and
- » The fellowship not being ready to transition to areas and that the time-line for implementation of the area formation process should perhaps be extended.

At the same time, several delegates pointed out that continued delay might be somewhat self-reinforcing, that the fellowship had been preparing for this for some time, and that the areas will be able to function. In general, the feedback on the alignment itself was positive — few speakers had complaints about specific areas. One other important point that was made is that almost all of the areas in the US were delineated after consulting with groups and intergroups in the area.

The ACC is grateful for the expressions of interest and support it received from the fellowship at the meeting in Houston. We now urge each member of the fellowship to answer the call to action for area formation, making sure your groups select Group Service Representatives (GSRs) and help develop and submit area proposals during this new service year.

The process doesn't have to be hard – if those interested in submitting an area proposal need some assistance with a list of the groups nearby or sharing another of the commonalities, a member of the ACC can provide a list of those groups with contact information. All that the organizers need to do is fill out the “Area Advocate” section of the Proposed Area Registration form located on the ACC page of the service website (saa-iso.org) and attach the spreadsheet received from the ACC. Please send completed forms and requests for support to acc.feedback@saa-iso.org.

CSC Summarizes Conference Actions, Looks Ahead to Future Work

The mission statement of the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) is to “support the Conference in being the spiritual guardian of international

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service and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA.” And who is “the Conference”? It is, in a sense, the entirety of the SAA fellowship as represented by delegates to the annual Conference. The 2018 Conference was recently held in Houston, with approximately 100 delegates, some representing areas and intergroups, and some representing individual meeting groups.

What does it mean to be a “spiritual guardian” of the steps and traditions? We took a big step to answer that as part of a group feedback session during the conference, where the delegates discussed, in small groups, answers to this and other questions. The CSC has all of the written feedback and will review it during our upcoming meetings. With this feedback, we hope to be more responsive to the Conference and Fellowship concerns.

Here are some of the items the CSC will be working on until next October’s conference:

- » Complete the Twelve Concepts for World Service of SAA
- » Draft an area guide to assist with maintaining an area, especially with respect to an area assembly.
- » Transfer the work of maintaining the Conference Charter from a CSC subcommittee to a Conference committee, responsible to you the fellowship through your conference delegates
- » Explore ways to keep in communication throughout the year with the fellowship through the conference delegates.
- » Develop and encourage roles and task items for conference delegates. With several elected trusted servants, the intent of the Conference is to have these delegates more involved with service between the October conferences.

We will include our efforts and requests for delegate service in future issues of *The Outer Circle* and emails.

In gratitude for service, Rich B

Intergroup Communications Committee Welcomes Participants

Greetings from the Intergroup Communication Committee (ICC)! The ICC connects intergroups and individual meetings around the world via monthly teleconference on the first Sunday of the month. As we proceed into 2019 our fellowship continues to grow with over 1800 meetings around the world. With this growth comes the need for continued unity and effectiveness as we strive both as individ-

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uals and as a fellowship to carry the SAA message to the sex addict still suffering.

The ICC encourages all intergroups and individual members without a local intergroup to participate and share their local experience or learn from the experience of others. By making this monthly connection across the fellowship, encouraging ongoing discussions via email and using resources on the wiki, the ICC is uniquely equipped to take steps to share “best practices” amongst the SAA intergroups and all interested members.

On the monthly call we discuss topical issues brought up in the moment by members on the call but also specific topics scheduled over the course of the year. No matter where you are in recovery or how long your home group has been in existence, there will be opportunities to take some recovery gold back to your local fellowship after each meeting. Here are a few examples of topics:

- » Welcoming and retaining newcomers (male and female)
- » Enhancing and encouraging sponsorship
- » Developing fellowship events: speaker meetings, speaker banquet events, retreats, recovery days, giving thanks fund raisers
- » Seeking the newcomer by sharing Public Information(PI) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) campaigns

The ICC has a collection of information received from the experience of the fellowship over the last several years on foundational basics like steps, traditions, sponsorship, and service; and also new developments like conducting an area caucus. These topics and more are available for each Intergroup to consider sharing with their respective meetings and can be accessed via the ICC wiki.

We intend to reach out to each intergroup with phone calls and/or emails in the coming weeks to inform and invite at least one member of each intergroup to join these monthly calls.

Please join us in this highly relevant effort! Meetings are held by teleconference on the first Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. CT and last about one hour. To join the meeting please email the ISO at info@saa-recovery.org or call them at 800-477-8191. They can provide you with more info about the ICC. Let them know you'd like to be placed on our email list and get access to the ICC wiki.

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CPC, PI, and Conference Initiatives Lead to Deficit

In the month of October we had a deficit of \$29,243.69. We budgeted for a deficit of \$24,348.00. Our estimate was off due to additional expenses for the Cooperation with Professionals and Public Information initiatives being over budget by \$3,631.41 and the 2018 conference exceeding the budget by \$3023.23.

Our SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate by \$1,408.53 in October. For the year we are at 76.12 percent of our estimated SAA Green Book sales. Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$579.16 in October. For the year we are at 83.12 percent of our estimated pamphlet and booklet sales. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$910.73 in October. For the year we are at 98.55 percent of our estimated bronze medallion sales.

Our total sales for October were below our estimate by \$1,504.16 in October. For the year we are at 82.81 percent of our estimated sales. We expect our estimate to be closer to our budget once our meditation book is made available for sale in December.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$308.09 in October. For the year we are at 99.39 percent of our estimated individual donations.

Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$5,457.94 in October. For the year we are at 112.28 percent of our estimated group donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$49,269.15.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$9,123.51 in October. For the year we are at 104.71 percent of our estimated expenses. Some of the additional expenses in October were due to exceeding our delegate meeting by \$3023.23 and additional expenses for the Cooperation with Professionals and Public Information initiatives being over budget by \$3,631.41. Our operational reserve is \$186,536.00 and is fully funded.

Board Approves New Executive Director

Here's a look at Board of Trustees actions over the last several months:

AUGUST

- » Approved the request for a grant of \$19,795.27 from the Greater Houston Commu-

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nity Foundation from the “Outreach Endowment Fund.”

- » Approved motion to elect five members to the Board

SEPTEMBER

- » Approved hotel sales agreement to host the 2020 international convention.

NOVEMBER

- » Approved new Executive Director contract
- » Amended policy on service committee functioning

New SAA Daily Meditation Book Available for Purchase

We are excited to announce that SAA’s long-awaited meditation book is now available!

Voices of Recovery is the response to requests from SAA members for a meditation book written and produced by the fellowship. This book is not the work of a single person. Numerous individuals have donated their time and talents to writing, reading, selecting, and editing the meditations. Each meditation is a reflection of the individual member’s own experience, strength, and hope in their own recovery process. The meditations may be read daily based on the date, by topic using the index, or by any other way the reader or group desires.

We pray that *Voices of Recovery* will aid individuals in their recovery and assist groups in carrying the SAA message!

Voices of Recovery may be purchased at our website store, here:
<https://saa-store.org/book/>

We have also recently published a few other new items that you may not be aware of. These include the “Hope of Recovery” pamphlet, the “Recommitting to Recovery” pamphlet, our “First Step to Intimacy” pamphlet, and our newly-revised “Writing to Prisoners” pamphlet. These may also be found at our online store: <https://saa-store.org/pamphlet/>.

CONTACT THE ISO

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

Office

ISO Office Mailing Address:
PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Phone: 713-869-4902 -or- 800-477-8191
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The Outer Circle

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Publications Manager: Cody S. codys@saa-iso.net

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

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Intermountain

Board: Bob H.; Alternate: Vacant
BoardIM@saa-recovery.org **North Central**
Board: Dawn S.; Alternate: Thea L.
BoardNC@saa-recovery.org

Northeast

LitCom: Don R.; Alternate: Valerie G.
LitComNE@saa-litcom.org

Southeast

LitCom: Garrett I. (Chair); LitComSE@saa-litcom.org

At Large

Board: Lisa S.; Bob L. (Chair); Mike L.; Stephen N.; Carl D.; Les J.; Mike S.; Richard N.; Wayne B.
BoardAL@saa-recovery.org
LitCom: Doug S.; Mike B.; Robbie H.; David M.; Steven P.; Bruce Mc.; Byard B.; Carol R.; Charlie K.; Deb W.; Gary T. (*The Outer Circle* editor)
LitComAL@saa-litcom.org

Calendar - All times are CST. To attend a meeting email info@saa-recovery.org or call the ISO

First Sunday of the month

CSC: Policy & Procedure: 2:00 p.m.
Intergroup Communications: 3:00 p.m.
LGBT Outreach: 5:00 p.m.
Prisoner Outreach: 8:00 p.m.

First Saturday of the month

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

Second Saturday of the month

Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance: 8 a.m.
Women's Outreach: 10 a.m.

Second Sunday of the month

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

Literature Committee: 4:00 p.m.

General Outreach: 6:30 p.m.

Second Thursday of the month

Seventh Tradition: 6:00 p.m.

Third Saturday of the month

Area Coordinating Committee: 4:00 p.m.
CSC: Twelve Concepts Work Group: 12:00 p.m.

Third Sunday of the month

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

Fourth Sunday of the month

Conference Steering Committee: 2:00 p.m.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

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

Deadlines for Submission and Topics

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

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

Here are some general writing guidelines:

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

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

General Release Form

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

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

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

SAA TWELVE STEPS

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