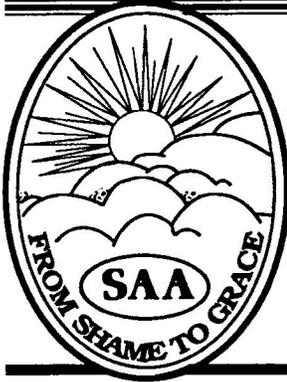


The SAA Newsletter
THE Plain Brown Rapper

50¢



February, 1992 Edition

The purpose of the Newsletter is to be a voice of the SAA membership. Written by and for brothers and sisters recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors; to be informative, sensitive and expressing the experiences, strength, and hope of recovering members. It is intended as an additional tool of recovery for those working the twelve-step SAA program.

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P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403 — Telephone 612-339-0217

My Story

At an early age I discovered my (Lutheran minister) father's pornography collection. To this day I recall the adrenaline rush I experienced, thumbing through those glossy pages filled with the seemingly golden-bronzed bodies. Thus began this quest, sort of a journey for the ultimate sexual rush. Little would I know that this trance-like quest would take me down society's dark and dangerous places. Into the tunnels of shame and darkness, my acting out had progressed to the point of a quest for the "ultimate orgasm" which for my addict was death.

This journey of darkness led me to the point in my late twenties when my acting out, accompanied with alcohol and drugs, was way out of control. I became so afraid of the progression of my acting out, I tried to reach out and find someone in the mental health community to help me; spending a great deal of money to find the "cure." My bottom was going deeper and deeper. I finally came to the point of my seeking out an alcohol treatment center. My sex addiction was not something that was easily talked about and when I did talk about it, I was told, "Stop your denial process and concentrate on your allergy to alcohol." I was told time and time again, "Don't drink and go to AA meetings."

I became abstinent from alcohol, but the nightmare behavior would still get me. All the while, I was abusing a chemical not talked about in AA meetings: inhalants/rush/poppers. This allowed my mind to shut off the activities of my acting out. I eventually learned about the SAA program. At the first meeting I knew that I was no longer alone. Like a black sheep, I had finally found a home.

Meanwhile my sales career progressed into a sales management position and I was relocated to the Northeast. My job required me to be on the road at least five nights a week, traveling through an eleven-state region. I was unprepared for the life of hotels, airports, and rental cars. My acting out once again went into full swing. I tried to seek out SAA meetings in the cities I frequented and became frustrated with the lack of our hard-to-find meetings. Each city I traveled had it's own unique red light district, and I would base my trips on the type of acting out fantasy each city offered. It seemed like the acting out spots were easier to find than the meetings.

After three years of this life-style I was faced with a decision: To accept a position that would keep me home every night, resulting in a drastic pay cut, or facing the consequence of my acting out which was death. Around this time the country was becoming more aware of the devastation of AIDS. My level had progressed to a level of acting out which put me in the highest risk group.

Continued on Page 11

A Seventh Tradition Birthday Gift

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Recovery,

I hope that you are aware that one of the national goals adopted at the 1991 convention is for the NSO to establish a three-month operating reserve fund so that office and staff expenses can be covered in the event of a shortage.

For a long time now, the NSO has been existing on a month-to-month basis and has not been able to make any progress on this goal. Furthermore, at the writing of this letter, the NSO was in a crisis situation with only \$89 in its general operating account.

I know that I speak for many, myself included, when I say that this fellowship has saved and changed my life in more ways than I can count. As a result, I feel that I owe this fellowship a BIG DEBT OF GRATITUDE. I am hoping you feel the same way, too.

This month, one way that I will be expressing my gratitude to the fellowship is by sharing my recovery birthday with it. This month I will have three years of recovery from my bottom-line behaviors—that's 1,092 days. If I multiply that by just a penny it equals \$10.92. On my birthday, I plan to contribute \$10.92 to NSO, and I am making a commitment to make a contribution each year on my birthday, based on the number of days I've been sober. I realize that in the past, I have spent hundreds of dollars pursuing my addiction, and it should be nothing for me to part with a few dollars to help the program which has kept me alive.

There are thousands of us in the program, and if each one of us would make a commitment to do this, we could really help NSO to get on its feet and carry the message to millions around the world. I urge you to adopt this tradition and contribute a little extra on your birthday. If you can contribute more, all the better, but even a penny a day would make a great impact if we all did it.

Peace and grace be with you!

Sincerely, your brother in recovery,

— Ed G.

Help Wanted

The N.S.O. Office is looking for local Twin Cities volunteers who would be willing to input/edit articles for the PBR. You would be typing into a computer articles and stories received at the office from around the country. You can use your own IBM-compatible computer (5-1/4", low-density drive) or the N.S.O. Office computer. It is recommended that you have experience in editing or a strong knowledge of English usage. If you would like further details, please call or write the N.S.O. Office, attn: Lisa.

Addiction, Rewards, and Recovery

In my experience as a multiply-addicted person and in my work as an addiction counselor, I have found that recovery needs to be a rewarding experience or addictive behavior returns.

In my professional work with chemically addicted clients, I was often perplexed that clients who were cocaine addicted seemed to have a more difficult time sobering up in the treatment setting. My unproven perception came to be that the cocaine addicts were still more "in love" with the high and the life-style. I felt like I couldn't reach them—like I had no way to offer them an alternative they would see as more rewarding. All of this reminds me of how rewarding my sex addiction was at certain times in my acting out. The grandiosity of the cocaine addicts felt much like the delusion under which I suffered.

I remember when I started SAA recovery how hard it was to drop the delusion—the euphoric recall. I had to believe there was something better for me.

I thank God now there were sober, healthy men there for me who invited me into recovery.

In my experience some of the rewards have been slow. But giving recovery a chance put me in a position to have close friendships, heal a lot of my shame, become educated, gain meaningful employment, and develop a relationship with my Higher Power. Each of these are incredible rewards which I am grateful for. I'm glad I've continued to do the work of recovery for the rewards follow.

Douglas P.

SAA 1992 Annual Convention Ramada Inn, Tucson, AZ May 22-24

The serenity of the Sonoran Desert will provide a fitting setting as Tucson, Arizona hosts the 1992 Annual Convention of SAA International. In keeping with our southwestern style, the theme for the spiritual gathering will be "La Promesa de Gracia," which is Spanish for "The Promise of Grace."

The event is to be held from May 22 through 24 at the downtown Ramada Inn of Tucson, and is being coordinated by the Tucson SAA Intergroup hope to see you in Tucson this spring!

(Continued from Page 3)

2. Motion given, Seconded, and unanimously carried that the NSO Personnel Committee will work on a cooperative basis with counterparts designated by the Twin Cities Intergroup as a Joint Committee to oversee shared personnel and facilities to include supervision and evaluation of shared staff.
The Board reiterated that this effort was to occur concurrent with the NSO continuing to proceed to establish its own operations.
3. Motion given, Seconded, and unanimously carried that all Board members (current and those whose term expired in June, 1991) are invited to submit specific instances of unsatisfactory performance (or lack of performance) to the Personnel Committee; Interim Chair Gregory to so invite former Board members. All such communication is to be submitted directly to the Review Committee named in item 1 above.
4. Motion given, Seconded, and unanimously carried that a Committee of the Board be created to draft Personnel Policies and Guidelines; the Committee to be established at the Nov. 10 Teleconference and a draft paper submitted for the upcoming Mid-Winter meeting. The Policies and Guidelines will also deal with sobriety guidelines for both staff and Board members.
5. Motion given, Seconded, and unanimously carried that an employment agreement be drafted to govern the employment of the Office Manager, and that such a document be utilized for subsequent staff members. The initial agreement is to be for six months ending June 30, 1992, with an option to renew.
6. Motion given, Seconded, and unanimously carried that conceptually the Board will explore how to establish a formal mechanism for the fellowship to express and have heard complaints and/or gossip, such matters to be a part of the Board's Mid-Winter meeting agenda.

Board member John B. (North Central) made concluding remarks and indicated that this would be his last Board meeting and that he would be submitting his resignation effective prior to the November 10 Teleconference.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m., CST with the Serenity Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

<i>Gregory M.</i>	<i>Douglas P.</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>

N.S.O. Board Teleconference, 11/10/91

Present:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Linda M.— | Lit. Chair |
| Ed G.— | S.W. Representative |
| Gregory M.— | Interim Chair/P. & N.W. Representative |
| Arnold D.— | G.L. Representative |
| Grant J.— | N.C. Representative |
| Karl H.— | At Large member |
| Kathy C.— | S.C. Representative |
| Jill S.— | Twin Cities At Large member |
| Douglas P. — | Staff |

Absent:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Alice C.— | S.E. Representative |
| Art F.— | Twin Cities At Large member
(medical absence) |

The board voted to appoint Grant J. (the elected board alternate) to serve on the board for the remainder of the N.C. term, through May of 1992.

The board entertained nominations for Chairperson. Arnold D. was unanimously elected to serve as Chair.

Karl read the letter of resignation of the former Chair of the board.

There were follow-up items regarding the last teleconference:

1. Jill reported on the status of cooperation with the T.C. Intergroup separation committee.
2. There was discussion of progress on the letter of apology going to staff.
3. A committee was established to draft guidelines to govern staff and board: Art, Greg, and Grant volunteered to serve.
4. Discussed progress on the drafting of an employment agreement.

Specific goal responsibility by members for the year was tabled.

Linda M. delivered a Literature Committee report (see Dec. PBR).

Prison Outreach progress was discussed. The board responded to a request from the Prison Outreach committee by voting to grant a 50%-off price to incarcerated people wanting recovery, with the understanding that this discount only pertains to SAA literature.

The Inter-fellowship Chicago meeting was reported on by Karl and Jill who were the SAA attendees. They stated it was a positive meeting, and the group in attendance compiled a number of recommendations, which will not be shared with all until all who participated there have seen and agree on the wording of the proposals/report.

The upcoming Mid-Winter board meeting was discussed. (17-20th of Jan., 1992 in Mpls.) Raising travel money was a major topic of concern, and there was interest in developing a more coherent policy about travel expenses.

Ed gave an update on the progress for the 1992 convention to be held in Tucson.

Respectfully submitted,

<i>Gregory M.</i>	<i>Douglas P.</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>

SAA ORDERING INFORMATION — Winter/Spring 1992

Mail to: S.A.A. Literature, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403; phone (612) 871-1520

Please allow five weeks for delivery. Prices include shipping and handling. With overseas orders, please include an additional 20% to help defray the additional postage, and expect a longer delivery time (items shipped surface mail only). Orders of more than \$25.00 within the United States, please use a non-PO Box address so that we may ship packages U.P.S.

National Service Organization Approved Items

QUANTITY	TOTAL AMOUNT
_____ <i>S.A.A. Group Guide</i>	@ 4.50
_____ <i>Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A.</i>	@ 2.50
_____	or 12 for 25.00
_____ <i>First Step to Recovery</i>	@ 1.25
_____	or 12 for 10.00
_____ <i>S.A.A. Self-Assessment Brochures</i>	@ .25
_____	or 10 for 2.00
_____ NEW! <i>The Bubble</i> — An analogy that describes what it is like to be in the addiction	@ .25
_____	or 10 for 2.00
_____ <i>The Plain Brown Rapper</i> (1 year)	@ 6.00
_____ <i>The Plain Brown Rapper</i> group subscription rates (1 year, each)	
_____ 10 or more to the same address	@ 3.00
_____ <i>S.A.A. Fellowship Directory</i>	@ 3.50
_____ <i>S.A.A. Medallions</i>	@ 2.50
_____ Blank 6 MO 18 MO 4 YR 7 YR 10 YR	
_____ 1 MO 9 MO 2 YR 5 YR 8 YR 11 YR	
_____ 3 MO 1 YR 3 YR 6 YR 9 YR 12 YR	
_____ Aluminum S.A.A. Medallions (available only with blank sobriety date)	@ 1.50

"CARRYING THE MESSAGE" CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES

QUANTITY	TOTAL AMOUNT
_____ 1. <i>The Founding of S.A.A.</i> , Pat C.	@ 6.00
_____ 2. <i>Multiple addictions</i> , Barbara B.	@ 6.00
_____ 3. <i>Measuring and Celebrating Progress</i> , Rich S.	@ 6.00
_____ 4. <i>Exploring Healthy Sexuality</i> , Douglas P.	@ 6.00
_____ 5. <i>Sharing our Recovery — Three stories: S.A.A., COSA, and a Couple</i>	@ 6.00
_____ 6. <i>Sharing our recovery Part Two</i>	@ 6.00
_____ 7. <i>Personal Stories</i> , Gregory M., Linda M.	@ 6.00
_____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order any six tapes for the price of five	@ 30.00

MICHIGAN 1991 CONFERENCE - AUDIO TAPES

QUANTITY	TOTAL AMOUNT
_____ 1. <i>Prison Outreach</i> , Arnold D.	@ 6.00
_____ 2. <i>Jill's Story</i>	@ 6.00
_____ 3. <i>Healthy Sexuality</i> , Kevin	@ 6.00
_____ 4. <i>Sponsorship</i> , Jeannie O.	@ 6.00
_____ 5. <i>Long-Term Sobriety</i> , Francie	@ 6.00
_____ 6. <i>Adult Child</i> , Grant	@ 6.00

Twin Cities S.A.A. Intergroup Items

_____ Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts	@ 2.50
_____	12 for 25.00
_____ Exploring Healthy Sexuality	@ 3.50
_____	12 for 35.00

Other Recovery Items

_____ Answers in the Heart (meditations)	@ 9.00
_____ Out of the Shadows (Carnes)	@ 11.00
_____ Hope and Recovery	@ 12.00

Mn. residents add 6.5% sales tax

Total Enclosed

Make checks payable to SAA literature

Ship to (please print clearly):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Literature Description

N.S.O. Approved Items:

1. **S.A.A. Group Guide** — A complete guide including a suggested meeting agenda, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, tools of the program, The Promises, How it Works, etc.
2. **Abstinence and Boundaries in S.A.A.** — A booklet of contributions made by S.A.A. members sharing their written sexual sobriety programs. This booklet is a helpful tool for individuals who are in the process of defining both abstinence and boundaries in their own program.
3. **First Step To Recovery** — A helpful booklet (guide) for preparing a first step presentation. The guide is useful in facilitating addicts in viewing the differing areas of their powerlessness and unmanageability.
4. **S.A.A. Self-Assessment Brochure** — This pamphlet is a tool for people seeking to find out if they have a sexual addiction.
5. **The Plain Brown Rapper** — The National Service Organization of S.A.A.'s monthly newsletter, filled with fellowship updates regarding upcoming events, personal stories, and N.S.O. information. This newsletter is written by and for the S.A.A. membership.
6. **The Bubble** — An analogy that describes what it is like to be in the addiction.
7. **S.A.A. Medallions** — The S.A.A. "From Shame To Grace" medallions are both a keepsake and a staple of recovery, helping S.A.A. members build and honor a positive history. An aluminum version (with blank sobriety date) is available at a reduced cost.
8. 1990 "Carrying the Message" Conference audiotapes and 1991 "Having Had a Spiritual Awakening" Conference audiotapes — A selection of powerful recovery presentations from the conferences. (Note: These items have been approved by the N.S.O. Literature Committee, but have not yet been approved by the N.S.O. through the National Convention process.)

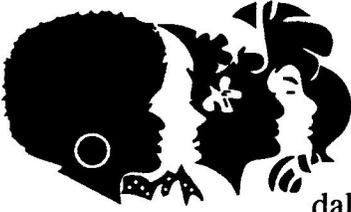
Twin Cities Intergroup approved Items:

9. **Getting Started in S.A.A., a beginner's packet for recovering sex addicts** — This newcomer booklet offers a great deal of information which helps to ground people in the program of S.A.A. The booklet focuses on answering questions beginners often have about recovery from sexual addiction. Many people already in the program have found it very helpful to read this booklet.
10. **Exploring Healthy Sexuality** — A collection of personal stories on what healthy sexuality has come to mean to some members of S.A.A. in their recoveries.

Other Recovery Items:

11. *Answers In The Heart*, Hazelden
A daily meditation book written by a female and male member of S.A.A.
12. *Out Of The Shadows*, Dr. Patrick Carnes
This was the first book explaining and detailing sexual addiction.
13. *Hope And Recovery*, Compcare/paperback
A "Big Book" styled book for recovering sex addicts. Includes a section of personal stories.

In keeping with the sixth tradition, S.A.A. offers no opinion on non-program materials. We choose to sell these items as a means of offering resource options, but they do not necessarily represent S.A.A.



Women in Recovery

Recently, I asked for and got a four-year medallion presented to me in both of my meetings, so I am particularly aware of how grateful I am for my recovery. My involvement with the mixed group for the last six months has taught me some important and beautiful lessons about my sexual addiction, but it is my women's group which is the backbone of my recovery program. Before I came to SAA I didn't have many real friends (though I thought I did). More importantly, I was not a loving friend to myself. Self-loathing and a tendency to be hard (even brutal) with myself is still my most damaging defect of character. Although sharing experiences and feelings with the women in my home group has diminished the strength of this character defect in many ways, it is still the biggest single obstacle to my continued growth.

Over the years, as I have sat in meetings and listened to other women talk about their pain and struggle, I have felt compassion and admiration for them precisely because of those feelings and struggles that they were most ashamed of. I was able to offer them love, understanding, and gentleness in a much more spontaneous and genuine fashion than I could give to myself. At first I couldn't see the discrepancy between my treatment of self and others. Shame blinded me. But eventually the illogic became unavoidably obvious to me and I had to start examining and rejecting my own negative core beliefs. It was in loving other women, sex addicts like myself, that I took the first steps toward self-acceptance and love.

Recently, on two separate occasions, I received lessons about self-acceptance from women in my group. I was feeling a great deal of pain and

confusion about some things and talked about it in group. I talked about my own shortcomings and what I felt that I needed to do to change things. When someone suggested that I was being unduly hard on myself, I listened respectfully, but privately I dismissed it: "I've heard that before." I will never forget the next feedback that I got from one of the women that I cherish the most. She actually began to cry because she felt so saddened and helpless in the face of my own indefatigable, negative self-talk. I was surprised, confused, and deeply moved by her tears: to think that someone else could be hurt by my self-loathing!

Since I am somewhat stubborn (even dogmatic, some might say) God must have felt that I needed another lesson about how my negative self-image impacts the people who care about me. A few days later I was talking with another friend from that group. She offered me some compassion and caring and, as is my wont—when I'm really feeling down—I said some things that had the effect of subtly negating the positive feedback that she offered me.

This woman friend did not respond with tears, but rather, she got somewhat angry because I was dismissing what she said and was not letting her care about me. Again, I was surprised, confused, and deeply moved: to think that someone else could feel anger, rejection, and even insult because of my own self-loathing.

The over-arching lesson, for me, is that since self-loathing is the kissing cousin of self-pity, the solutions are very much the same. I need to take the focus off myself and allow myself to be touched by the people and situations outside myself that are wonderful and good. In other words: be appreciative for what I have and who I am.

— Lisa G.

Spirituality in SAA

What I tried so hard to do was to be part of a realm greater than me—greater than the present; to create the circumstances around romance: waiting for those fleeting moments of euphoria—for the promise of fulfillment, the promise of completeness, the promise of wholeness. The promise of worth seemed to be within my grasp or at least very close at hand. The excitement itself leading up to the euphoria was part of a realm greater than myself. Something I couldn't create but I could make happen. The only ingredient I needed was a woman. A woman who was attractive and desirable by our social standards, thereby making me desirable and acceptable also.

This pull within me, the desire to be part of a realm greater than me, the wanting to feel complete and whole, is a real part of me, it's a natural thing. I believe it's a deep inner yearning from my soul put there by God drawing me back to him, my creator. The fulfillment I crave is the spiritual part of my recovery. The spiritual part gives my life meaning, the part that makes the hard parts of my life and recovery worthwhile.

Once I take my place in this beautiful, magnificent universe God has created and realize that I am already part of a realm greater than me, I no longer have to try to expend energy on trying to get in—I'm already in! I don't have to manipulate, scheme, tap-dance, seduce, or perform for it. It's my birthright—I was born into it.

The realm that is greater than me is the here and now. It is realized through the part of my soul that needs to be completed and fulfilled. The part that appreciates, longs for, and values the intangible, the vague, the intuitive, the obscure. I want to experience more of everything I can't touch. Like trust, wisdom, connectedness, relatedness, intuition, acceptance, intimacy, spirituality, and natural love. A good example of that side of my soul is trusting my Higher Power, God.

Trusting that my way to happiness and my purpose here on earth is to live in God's light and believing He will give me the clarity, strength, and courage to do that. Risking that my Heavenly Father will not abandon me during my journey. If I let Him, He will gently, lovingly lead me back to Him, back to completeness.

Another example is appreciating the beauty of a flower just for what it is, not trying to understand it in

botanical terms, how it got that way and why. I believe that God created me with a part that needs to worship, to be in awe, to hold Him sacred. I value that part of me. The things I have worshipped in the past have been misguided attempts at spirituality. Now that I know that God is not punitive, but loving, accepting, and on my side, I feel safe coming back home to Him.

— *Michael M.*
Mpls., MN

A Glimpse

In the jail cell I promised God that I would tell my story to whoever would listen. Since 1979, when I was arrested for rape, I've told my story to many people. My disease has been progressive—I started out window peeping and ended up raping. At the end of my acting out I no longer cared about getting caught or about anything else in life. As much as I hate to admit it, I liked what my addiction had become and, frankly, if I hadn't been arrested I wouldn't have stopped. My only love was my addiction.

Now twelve years later I'm proud of who I am. I wonder to myself, was I given a gift from God, was I lucky, or was I simply determined to change? In the past, death was inside me surrounded by loneliness and rage. I was obsessed with thoughts of how to get high from sex. People were objects to be manipulated, to get what I wanted. Lies were tools to keep me out of trouble.

Thank God that after three years of locked-up treatment and after finding S.A.A., my mind is clear—at least for today. I no longer think the devil controls my mind and I know that I am responsible for all my actions. Women no longer intimidate me because I don't put them on a pedestal; I am able to see them as equals—as people with feelings. Thank God that I see things differently now.

This is just a glimpse into the feelings and beliefs of a sex offender, a sex offender who got a second chance. Thank God that I asked for help and that I have a good program. There is hope for change because I chose to seek it.

A person who is learning to be different,

— *Bruce P.*



The Child Within

A Path to Trust

Sometimes my recovery and growth from childhood to adult seem similar to walking along a path in the woods. I have traveled the path a long way, but when I look back, I seem to be lost. I can't let this bother me because if I look back the horror of being lost or what might be following me may envelope me. So I keep going deeper and deeper. Finally, the cold, fear, loneliness, and terror are too much. I turn around, running for my life back the way I came until I find my previous footsteps, which I can follow though I am still filled with fear, until I am home again.

So it is that I now find myself going back the way I came to try to understand why I don't trust. The footsteps—for awhile—were missing. But I have now gone back far enough to see them as they meandered from one side of the path to the other.

There, as a baby, is where I first became violently ill. We made a sudden move to another state and my baby security things were packed away. It was dark inside the car and I didn't know what was going on. All I knew was to be terribly sick. For the next twenty years, whenever I became ill, I would be violently ill, often ending up in the hospital. The doctors never knew why.

Here I am at five, standing in front of my mother as she yells at my drunken father, telling him never to come back again. I am yelling at him, too, but I don't know why. After he leaves, she tells me he is really a nice man, but has a problem. I don't understand. I don't see my father again for 25 years. He calls me once a year, though, to tell me he loves me, but we don't talk long because he's usually drunk.

In elementary school, I would occasionally go with friends and their fathers to functions. I remember earnestly wishing I also had a dad; wondering what it would be like. So for a few hours I pretended I had a dad, until it was time for me to go home.

I remember in sixth grade my cousin who was my best friend, even though he was two years older than me. We had a really good time together and I really looked up to him. But I didn't like it when he would do things to me sexually and he would want me to do things to him sexually.

One of my favorite times of my life was in junior high when I belonged to a club for boys without fathers. We all had this thing in common, and it was run by a man who took us on all kinds of fun trips. He really cared about us all and made each of us feel so special. And when they arrested him for molesting one of the kids, I didn't want to belong to any clubs anymore.

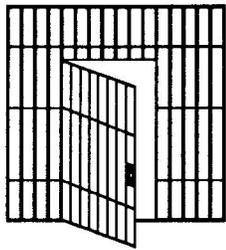
There are other shadows along the path, some more foreboding than others. But I have found that, when going back the way I came, they really are only shadows, and they whisper to me why it is I do not trust. So I am learning to take that trust shadow into the light . . . and watch it disappear.

— Michael S.
Minneapolis, MN

My Newborn Life

*Out of the wreckage of my past
washing up to shore
with unidentified fragments, scrambled and
disarrayed,
I leave my mix of iridescence and beauty.
Shards of pain and
Stones of hollow sadness swept smooth
swirl in the outgoing tide.
But there I am
A speck of pearl hidden in the crevice of a shell
tiny and precious
waiting to grow.
Oceanic fluid soothes me and
I begin my newborn life.*

— Marea N.



Prison Outreach Update

“I’d love to help in reaching out to fellow sex addicts who are in prison, but . . . well . . . it’s scary to think about. I certainly couldn’t visit someone in one of those places! Writing letters? Well . . . what would I say? Aren’t they a lot different than me? Would it be safe?”

These are all very legitimate questions and concerns when someone is considering prison outreach work. Often these fears are too great an obstacle to overcome, and prevent people from doing anything at all to help. But there are many things which can be done that don’t include contact with prison inmates.

The Prison Outreach Committee can always use help in coordinating our efforts. Currently, we are preparing a mailing of S.A.A. information to send to approximately 4,000 correctional institutions around the country. We have the potential to contact many incarcerated sex addicts with the offer of help and hope. But this will take a lot of work and money.

We cannot do this work without proper funding. Many individuals and groups (especially in Michigan) have made great financial sacrifices to make literature and help available to prison inmates. We have greatly appreciated these and other contributions. The Prison Outreach Committee has set up a fund to collect money on a national level and distribute it where it is most needed to reach out to prisoners.

This is where you can be of help. Whether or not you choose to have direct contact with inmates, you can have a profound effect on our efforts to let these men and women know that there is hope and that we care. Several groups have made a pledge to contribute a certain amount each month to prison outreach. Will you join with us in this most crucial and rewarding twelfth-step work? Please send your contributions earmarked for Prison Outreach to the N.S.O. office, P.O. Box 3038, Mpls. MN 55403.

— Gary L.

A Traditional Column

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

In the AA ‘Twelve and Twelve’ there is an anecdote about how Bill W. wrestled with this tradition. It demonstrates how the group conscience can serve to save us from ourselves, and how the group conscience is often truly a greater wisdom than is possible from any one individual.

Bill W. was hard up for money and as usual spending a lot of time working with drunks. When the proprietor of the hospital where he did a lot of twelfth-step work offered him office space to help alcoholics in a professional capacity, and when he said that Bill deserved to make money like the rest of the recovering alcoholics, Bill seriously considered it. Bill became even more convinced of the appropriateness of the proposal when he had “a seeming flash of divine guidance” as he raced home on the subway. When he enthusiastically told his wife, Lois, about it she wasn’t as excited as he expected. That night he went to his meeting as usual and excitedly told them about his idea. About this he writes, “Never shall I forget their impassive faces, and the steady gaze they focused upon me. With waning enthusiasm, my tale trailed off to the end. There was a long silence. Almost timidly, one of my friends began to speak. ‘We know how hard up you are, Bill. It bothers us a lot. We’ve often wondered what we might do about it. But I think I speak for everyone here when I say that what you now propose bothers us an awful lot more.’ The speaker’s voice grew more confident. ‘Don’t you realize,’ he went on, ‘that you can never become a professional? As generous as Charlie has been to us, don’t you see that we can’t tie this thing up with his hospital or any other? You tell us that Charlie’s proposal is ethical. Sure, it’s ethical, but what we’ve got won’t run on ethics only; it has to be better. Sure Charlie’s idea is good, but it isn’t good enough. This is a matter of life and death, Bill, and nothing but the very best will do!’ Challengingly, my friends looked at me as their spokesman continued. ‘Bill, haven’t you often said right here in this meeting that sometimes the good is the enemy of the best? Well, this is a plain case of it. You can’t do this thing to us!’

So spoke the group conscience. The group was right and I was wrong; the voice on the subway was not the voice of God. Here was the true voice, welling up out of my friends. I listened, and—thank God—I obeyed.”

— Elizabeth G.

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After great struggle I resigned from this career and took a local sales job. I jumped back into regular SAA meeting attendance, working with a healthy SAA sponsor, and being honest. I am finally finding the promises of recovery coming true for me. I am now experiencing a level of sobriety that in the past I could only have wished for. I am learning through my recovery that I am a walking miracle. I am healthy, HIV negative, and very grateful for a Higher Power which has led me to safety all of these years.

It is great to view the SAA program in action. Watching new members who have been abandoned through their addiction, come into this fellowship and sigh a sigh of relief to have finally found a home. It is fun to ponder the "pioneering spirit" of the SAA fellowship. I feel it is similar to AA when Bob and Bill started the AA fellowship. We both provide homes of hope for the socially scorned. I feel it is a blessing to be an early traveler and thankful for all of the people before me who have worked hard to carry the message.

We who are recovering from the shame of sexual addiction are truly miracles. I am grateful to be among you. With love,

— David R.
Orlando FL

Faithful Fiver and Trusted Tenner

The Faithful Fiver and Trusted Tenner Program has been inaugurated to help give N.S.O. a sound, predictable financial base for outreach activities and to support member services.

You will be provided with preaddressed envelopes for your convenience. Records of your contributions will be treated as highly confidential and will be available only to the two people required to process and account for your contributions. After the close of the year a receipt will be sent to you for your tax purposes.

You may withdraw your pledge or modify it at any time by notifying the N.S.O. Office.

INDIVIDUAL PLEDGE CARD

Out of gratitude and in support of conveying the message to others, I hereby pledge to:

...Be a Faithful Fiver

I pledge to contribute \$5.00 per month, in addition to regular support through my meetings, to the work of the National Service Organization.

...Be a Trusted Tenner

I Pledge to contribute \$10.00 per month, in addition to regular support through my meetings, to the work of the National Service Organization.

I wish to make my contributions:

- Monthly
 Quarterly
 Annually

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Home group _____

S.A.A. Unity, Not S.A.A. Uniformity

At a recent meeting I attended, a gentleman told his story. It was a story that moved me to tears no matter how much I relied on any machismo I had to try to hold them back. My shame was playing an old tape to me saying, "real men never cry in public." However, I also knew that I was experiencing a cleansing, for I really felt this man's feelings as though they were my very own.

As the man talked, he less than subtly revealed that he was an evangelical Christian and that Jesus was a part of his higher power. Having the same higher power myself, I am used to hearing "it" preached in theatrical and imposing ways that turn me off. I didn't feel that this man was doing this. Yes, he might have appeared a bit theatrical, but I felt that his apparent theatrics were simply demonstrative expressions of a real intimacy he has come to have with his higher power. These expressions he shared revealed a closeness that he wanted to feel.

After the meeting a few people gathered behind the man's back to talk about what he said. As I listened to them I heard what I perceived to be anger and judgement. They appeared angry that the man was "preaching," because he referred to a higher power that they felt represented a 2000-year-old "shame-based organized religion." They appeared uncomfortable and seemed to feel that "boundaries should be set" to prevent future speakers from "talking about religion instead of spirituality." They even talked about confronting the speaker about what he said later on.

In telling his story, the man talked about being picked on as a kid, a feeling that I identified with a lot. What I saw after the meeting was a rerun. I felt picked on along with the man and felt hurt and angry. A story that helped my healing progress was slashed in a more critical way than any Siskel and Ebert "two thumbs down" movie review.

In evangelical circles, I have often heard fellow Christians "throw the baby out with the bath water" in their refusal to appreciate possible truths from other points of view. I have seen an "us vs. them" mentality that was an obstacle to me developing my intimacy with the higher power they preached. What I sensed after the recent meeting was a reverse fundamentalism with the same "us vs. them" mentality, in this case "spiritual vs. religious."

If we don't have the same higher power as the speaker, can't we at least appreciate that person's recovery as spectators? Can't we learn to develop an intimacy with our own higher power from one talking about developing an intimacy with a different higher power? S.A.A. unity is not the same thing as S.A.A. uniformity. "Religion" is just as acceptable a form of spirituality as any other. A speaker adhering to it as a part of his/her spiritual program ought to be freely allowed to talk about it without being censored for "preaching." Whether or not we "have issues" with "religion," we need to emphasize cheering-on the recovery of the speaker in order to enhance S.A.A. unity. After all, we grow in our own personal recovery, in some mysterious way, by doing so.

— Ross M.
San Diego

Do you have a story, an experience of growth, or would you just like to share your emotions and feelings? Please write The Plain Brown Rapper. Your brothers and sisters in SAA would like to hear from you. We have much to share with each other. Please write to PBR Editor, c/o SAA, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403. If you can submit your writing on a computer disk (either 800K Macintosh or IBM), that would be greatly appreciated. Please ensure that all IBM disks (either 5-1/4 or 3-1/2 inch) are formatted consistent with their physical density (i.e., high-density disks formatted high density; low-density disks formatted low density). Please submit all writings for the March newsletter by January 21, 1991.

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